Session XIII. — 1828.

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Philadelphia, Aug. 6, 1828.

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met, pursuant to adjournment, and was opened with a sermon by the Moderator, the Rev. Gilbert McMaster, from Isaiah 62:4, "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married."

The public service being ended the Synod adjourned till tomorrow at 10 o'clock A.M.

Eodem loco. Thursday, Aug. 7, 1828.

Synod met agreeably to adjournment and was constituted.

 $\underline{Gilbert}\ \underline{McMaster}, \underline{Moderator}.$

John Black, Clerk.

The Court proceeded to ascertain the members of the present Synod, when there appeared duly certified from the —

Northern Presbytery. ——						
Ministers.	Elders.	Congregations.				
	James Nelson	New York.				
James R. Johnston		Newburgh.				
James R. Willson	Robert Hadden	Coldenham.				
James Christie	John McMurray	Albany.				
Gilbert McMaster		Duanesburgh.				
	William Cunningham	Schenectady.				
Melancthon B. Williams		Kortright.				
William L. Roberts	Alexander McCrea Clyde and Galen.					
James Milligan		Ryegate.				
William Gibson						
—— Philadelphia Presbytery. ——						
	Robert Orr	Philadelphia.				
John Gibson	John Anderson	Baltimore.				
Samuel W. Crawford	John Thomson	Conococheague.				

—— Pittsburgh Presbytery. ——						
John Black	William Gormley	Pittsburgh.				
Gordon T. Ewing		Cannonsburgh.				
	Robert Brown	Greensburgh.				
Jonathan Gill		Thompson's Run, etc.				
—— Southern Presbytery. ——						
Hugh McMillan		Rocky Creek.				

Rev. James Christie was called to the Moderator's chair, and Rev. John Black was continued Synod's Clerk.

On motion, Rev. Alex, McLeod of the Northern Presbytery, and Rev. Samuel B. Wylie of the Philadelphia Presbytery, were invited to seats as consultative members. They took their seats accordingly.

Rev. Samuel W. Crawford was appointed Assistant Clerk.

- 1. The Minutes of the former Synod were read, corrected, and approved.
- 2. The Committee appointed to revise the Rules, and adopt them to a Representative Synod, were called on to report. They presented a draft of Rules which was read and referred.
- 3. Resolved, That the future meetings of this Synod, during the present sessions, shall be from 9 o'clock A.M. to 1 o'clock P.M., and no meeting in the afternoon unless by special provision by Synod.
- 4. The Committee on Foreign Correspondence was called on to report. They reported that they had transmitted the Synodical Address to the sister Synods of Britain and Ireland, but had received no answer.

Synod adjourned to meet this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

The Moderator concluded by prayer.

Eodem die et loco. 4 o'clock, P.M.

The Court met and was constituted. Same members \underline{ut} \underline{supra} with the exception of Rev. Samuel W. Crawford, who had leave of absence.

1. The Court proceeded to the appointment of Standing Committees, as follows: —

- (1). <u>Unfinished Business</u> Revs. Hugh McMillan and Jonathan Gill.
- (2). <u>Presbyterial Reports</u> Revs. James Milligan and W. L. Roberts.
- (3). Signs of the Times Revs. J. R. Willson and John Gibson.
- (4). Discipline Rev. Gilbert McMaster and elder Alexander McCrea.
- (5). Foreign Correspondence Revs. J. R. Willson and S. W. Crawford.
- (6). Travelling Expenses Rev. M. B. Williams and elders John Thomson, Robert Brown and Robert Orr.
- 2. It was moved by Dr. J. R. Willson, and seconded by Dr. S. B. Wylie, that a Committee be appointed to enquire into the expediency of appointing a Committee on the subject of Candidates for the Ministry. Decided in the negative.
- 3. Presbyterial Reports were called for. The Northern Presbytery presented their report, which was read and referred to the Committee on Presbyterial Reports. The Philadelphia Presbytery were not in readiness to report. The Pittsburgh Presbytery presented their report, which was read and referred to the Committee on Presbyterial Reports.
- 4. Rev. John Black presented to Synod a call on the Rev. Samuel M. Willson from the congregations of Shenango, Mercer and Neshannock, within the boundaries of the Pittsburgh Presbytery. The Synod order this call to be referred to the Northern Presbytery that they may present it to Mr. Willson.
- 5. A communication from the Associate Synod of North America was presented to Synod by the Chairman of the Committee appointed to confer with a Committee of said Associate Synod. This communication was read and referred to the above Committee to report thereon. This communication is as follows: An Extract from the Minutes of the Associate Synod of North America:

The Committee appointed to prepare the draft of a Letter to be sent to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod reported, and their report was adopted, and the Letter ordered to be transmitted by a Committee to the Committee of said Synod. On motion, <u>Resolved</u>, That the Revs. Andrew Stark, Thomas Beveridge and James Martin be appointed a Committee to meet and confer with the Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, or any Committee which said Synod may appoint.

Attest: Andrew Herron, Synod Clerk. Philadelphia, June 3, 1828.

Philadelphia, June 4, 1828.

To the Rev. S. B. Wylie, John Black and Gilbert McMaster.

Rev. and Dear Brethren: —

We have been directed by the Associate Synod of North America, of which we are members, to transmit to you the enclosed Letter to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. We have also enclosed an extract from the Minutes of the Associate Synod by which you will see that they have appointed us a Committee to confer with you, or with any Committee which your Synod may appoint for that purpose. We have only further to notice that it will give us great pleasure to hear from you as soon as it may suit your convenience. Any communication to us may be sent to the Rev. Mr. Beveridge, Philadelphia.

We remain, Rev. and Dear Brethren,

Yours, etc.
Andrew Stark.
Thomas Beveridge.
James Martin.

Philadelphia, 4th. June, 1828.

To the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church:

Dear Brethren:

It is a ground of thanksgiving to our common Lord that there is, as you observe, so much coincidence between your views and ours of truth and duty; and we sincerely wish that this coincidence, according to His word, may be extended to every part of our Christian profession. We lament, indeed, that there is still so much difference in our views of several points of truth and duty. This induced us to send you the Letter to which you refer, in order to point out two things which manifestly tend to continue and to widen the difference between us. One is your imputing tenets to us without so much as quoting our words which are supposed to express them. By our words we do not mean any words that may be found in the controversial writings of individuals, but the words of our judicial deeds or declarations, such as the Answers of the Associate Presbytery to Mr. Nairn's Reasons of Dissent, and the Declaration of their principles concerning

Civil Government. The other thing which tends to widen the difference is, that the language of your statement of the tenets held by yourselves and by us is such as we know not how to reconcile to that candor and fairness that ought to be studied in all our representations of any matter in dispute between us and our neighbors. For example: It should not be said or insinuated that we deny that Christians ought to determine their political allegiance by the moral character of the civil institutions. For we never said that Christians owe allegiance to such institutions otherwise than as they bear the moral character of being contrary to usurpation and tyranny; nor did we ever say that we owe any obedience to the commands of civil rulers that are contrary to the commands of God; though we hold that the infidelity or the difference of magistrates from us in religion does not take away their civil authority, or our obligations to obey them in their lawful commands. It should not be said that we ever denied that all the nations are bound to acknowledge the Messiah, for we hold that every nation depends absolutely on Him, as God, for its continued existence and for all the benefits of its civil state; and that every nation or civil society, where the gospel of Christ is known, ought to acknowledge the moral obligations their people are under to be subject to Christ as Mediator, and to be faithful members of His church; that is, to be Christians, though civil rulers have no authority or power in or over the church, which is Christ's independent and spiritual kingdom: no authority or power to compel persons to become professors of the Christian religion, or to make that profession the condition of their having the common privileges of citizens, or to persecute any for not receiving or professing the truths of Christ while they are peaceable members of civil society.

It ought not to be said that we ever denied that people in forming civil constitutions ought to make the revealed will of God their rule, though we hold that the relation between rulers and their people, like the relations between parents and their children, and between masters and their servants, is founded in the <u>law of nature</u>; it is not founded in supernatural revelations like the relation between ministers and the members of

the church. At the same time, we always held that whatever belongs to the law of God, according to the law of nature, also belongs to his law as more perfectly exhibited in his word. It ought not to be said that we ever denied that Christ, as Mediator, governs the world by God's appointment; if, by the governing the world, be meant his ordering, disposing, and over-ruling all things to the good of his body, the church; though we have always denied that his governing and ordering natural things to their natural ends belongs to his mediatory office: because his governing or ordering natural things to their natural ends belongs to him naturally and necessarily as God, and is equally ascribed to all the persons of the Godhead, and cannot be said to be by special appointment like his mediatory office.

We have never denied that believers owe to the covenant of grace what is peculiar to them with regard to their temporal enjoyments; though we cannot account the participation of those things, which is common to them with the rest of the world, a participation of the benefits of the covenant of grace, because the partaking of the benefits of that covenant is our partaking of Christ, or of what Christ is made of God to us; but he is made unto us, not what is common to us, with the rest of the world, but such peculiar benefits as wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. The benefits of the covenant of grace are saving faith, and such other benefits as are received by faith. As to the standing of the world it may be said to be, in the order of things, settled in the divine purpose for the bringing forth of all the events that shall ever take place in it. The standing of the earth is equally supposed in all the works, whether of mercy or of judgment, that God purposes to accomplish upon it. How then can it be said that nothing else required the standing of the world but the administration of the covenant of grace? or that the interposition or mediation of Christ is the sole cause of its standing?

Thus, brethren, we disavow the tenets referred to above and imputed to us in your publication entitled "Reformation Principles Exhibited." We disavow them in our "Declaration

and Testimony," and we have <u>always</u> disavowed them.

We appeal to the Acts of the Associate Presbytery, and of the Associate Synod, on the subject referred to in your Letter, from which Acts we have not seen any sufficient reason to We most cordially approve of your proposal of our appointing a Committee to correspond with your Committee, by word or writing; and as we have in our Letter specified six tenets unjustly imputed to us in your work entitled "Reformation Principles Exhibited;" and as you are not prepared to say that the writings of the Secession never afforded ground to believe these tenets to have been principles of the Associate Church, we take it for granted that you are prepared to state the grounds which you have for the assertions made in your Testimony; and we propose, in the first place, that your Committee should lay before ours the passages in which these six tenets are contained; always remembering that by our writings must be understood our subordinate standards, particularly the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Judicial Testimony of the Associate Presbytery published in 1737, the Associate Presbytery's Answers to Mr. Nairn's Reasons of Dissent, with the Declaration of their principles concerning Civil Government. and our own Declaration and Testimony, for the doctrine and order of the church of Christ.

With earnest prayers that the Lord may direct you into all truth and duty, we remain, dear brethren,

Yours, etc.

<u>Francis Pringle</u>, <u>Moderator</u>. <u>Andrew Herron</u>, <u>Synod Clerk</u>.

6. A communication was received from the united societies of Morris Town, New Athens, Cadiz and Londonderry, Ohio, on the subject of Covenanting, publishing a book, etc. It was referred to the Committee on Discipline.

7. A letter from Mr. James Miller of Clark's Run, Ohio, was received and read. On motion it was resolved that he have leave to withdraw his letter.

Adjourned till tomorrow at 9 o'clock A.M.

Eodem loco. Aug. 8, 1828.

Synod met and was called to order. Same members \underline{ut} antea.

Rev. James R. Johnston, a delegate from the Northern Presbytery, appeared and took his seat.

- 1. The Minutes of the former sederunt were read and approved.
- 2. The Southern Presbytery presented their report, which was read and referred. A part of this report had respect to a case of discipline. This part was referred to the Committee on Discipline.
- 3. The Committee on Unfinished Business stated that they had nothing to report.
- 4. On motion, Rev. Hugh McMillan was added to the Committee on Presbyterial Reports.
- 5. The Chairman of the Committee on Presbyterial Reports, the Rev. James Milligan, read part of the report of that Committee with a view to bring before Synod the case of Robert McKee, a licentiate under the care of the Northern Presbytery. fama clamosa had for some time prevailed that he had united himself with a lodge of Freemasons, in Tennessee, the truth of which he had frankly acknowledged. had been made upon Mr. McKee by the congregation of Galway, which had not been put into his hands until this matter should be fully investigated. The Northern Presbytery request the advice of Synod on the premises. ject was then taken under consideration by Synod. moved by Rev. James Milligan, and seconded by Rev. W. L. Roberts, that Mr. McKee be referred back to the Northern Presbytery for trial; and, if no obstacle, upon the examination of the case and trial of the candidate, appear, that he be ordained. This was made the order of the day for tomorrow morning.
- 6. The Committee on the Signs of the Times reported. This report was considered too voluminous, and was referred to the same Committee to reduce to smaller bounds and make some verbal alterations.
- 7. Resolved, That the monies contributed to the Contingent Fund be at the disposal of the Committee on the Travelling Expenses.

8. The Committee on the revision of the Rules in order to adopt them to a Representative Synod, were called upon to report. They reported a draft of Rules, which was read and referred to the same Committee to make some alterations.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock A.M. tomorrow.

Aug. 9. 1828. Eodem loco.

Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator. Same members ut antea.

- 1. The Minutes of the preceding sederunt were read and approved.
- 2. The Philadelphia Presbytery presented their report, which was read and referred to the Committee on Presbyterial Reports. This report states that they have under their care one licentiate, Mr. John Fisher, who was licensed Aug. 3, 1828; and four students of theology, viz: Messrs. Samuel M. Gayley, George Scott, Thomas McKinley and Samuel McKinney.
- 3. The order of the day was called for. This was the resolution of the Rev. James Milligan relative to Mr. Robert McKee. This was set aside, and Synod agreed to the following:

Whereas, Mr. Robert McKee has confessed the truth of the <u>fama clamosa</u> of having united himself to a society of Freemasons in Nashville, Tenn., therefore,

Resolved, That this Synod view his conduct in the premises as utterly inconsistent with his obligations as a Christian, and particularly as a member of this church and a preacher of the everlasting gospel; and do stamp it with marked disapprobation, and refer the whole case to the Presbytery under whose care Mr. McKee is at present placed.

4. The Committee on Discipline, to whom was referred the communication from New Athens, Ohio, and also the reference from the Presbytery of South Carolina, presented the following report, which was adopted by Synod, viz: —

The paper from New Athens presents three subjects of request. First, that the Synod furnish the petitioners with reasons by which they may repel the reproaches cast upon us on account of our infrequency of public covenanting. Second, That we should speedily engage in that work.

<u>Third</u>, That we should enquire into the propriety of republishing the book designated in that communication.

Your Committee respectfully remark: That to furnish reasons in refutations of all the hard sayings, evil surmisings and misrepresentations of enemies would be an endless task. It is better, in general, to leave the vindication of their principles and administrations, under the good providence of God, to their course of conduct. It may in this case, nevertheless, be observed, that the non-concurrence of the civil state is not, and never was, an obstacle in the our way of covenanting; that the allegation is equally unfounded, that the express terms and forms of our venerable covenants are viewed as necessarily to be retained in our covenant bond, when renewed. The doctrine and practice of this Church, at all times, refute such representations.

Your Committee beg leave further to remark, that the ill-advised urging of frequent renewal of covenant deeds seems to be predicated upon a latent, if not an avowed, denial of the perpetual obligation of such deeds, and manifests a disregard of the import of a habitual recognition of such obligation in the usual course of ecclesiastical administrations.

The principle of the man would be little valued, and his act would be scorned, who, ever time he paid the interest on his legally executed bond, in proof of his integrity and to bind himself more firmly, should insist upon giving an added engagement and renewed subscription. We are admonished by the partial and untimely covenanting of some who have attempted it, not to be rash upon this very solemn subject.

In regard to the second request, we remark, that we are in correspondence with our brethren in Britain and Ireland upon the subject, and it is trusted that as soon as the call of Providence to the work is distinctly heard, we shall not be found disobedient.

Upon the third request we only remark, that it is inexpedient for this Synod to take any measures for the publication of books other than the standards of the church.

Your Committee recommend that, at a convenient time, the Clerk of Synod be directed to forward a copy of this report to the petitioners.

Upon the case from the Southern Presbytery your Committee perceive no difficulty to the removal of which the power of that Presbytery is inadequate; and would, therefore, only suggest that to preach the word of God purely, and to attend judicative meetings where able and there give such counsel as his experience enables him to furnish, is perhaps all that should be expected from Mr. Donnelly in the circumstances in which he is placed.

Your Committee further recommend to Synod that, in the distribution of the labors of probationers or others, the condition of the Southern District of our Church be duly remembered.

5. The Committee on the Signs of the Times reported. They presented an amended draft of causes of fasting and thanksgiving, which was approved, and five hundred copies ordered to be printed. The first Thursday of November next was appointed as a day of thanksgiving; and the first Thursday of February, 1829, as a day of fasting and humiliation.

Adjourned to meet on Monday at 9 o'clock, A.M. The Moderator concluded by prayer.

Eodem loco. Aug. 11, 1828.

Synod met agreeably to adjournment. Same members \underline{ut} $\underline{antea}.$

- 1. The Minutes of the last sederunt were read and approved.
- 2. The Committee on the Rules adapted to a Representative Synod reported certain amendments, which were adopted. The court directed the Clerk of Synod to write out a copy of the Rules as now amended, and order them to be published with the Minutes of Synod.
- 3. The Committee on Presbyterial Reports reported as follows: In contemplating the state of the Church through the medium of the communications from the inferior judicatories, we have great cause of thankfulness that the Lord is saying to our Church, "Fear not, lengthen thy cords and strengthen

thy stakes." Our congregations are increasing in number and magnitude. A goodly number of young men are coming forward in whom, we trust, the vacancies shall have a fulfillment of the promise, "I will give you pastors according to my heart, that shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

The communication from Pittsburgh, we are happy to state, has no reference but is replete with intelligence which invites all their brethren to congratulate that Presbytery and give thanks to the giver of all good. It reports the ordination and settlement of Rev. Gordon T. Ewing in the congregation of Cannonsburgh, Oct. 23, 1827. They have under their care one licentiate, Mr. John Black, who received license April 22, 1828.

The report from the South is of a mixed character. It is pleasant to hear that the hearts of the children are turned to the testimony of their fathers, and that notwithstanding the afflux of population to the West, and the territorial deficiencies of that region, our members there are not diminished. We are sorry to find that the weight of ministerial labor devalues almost entirely upon Mr. McMillan. With our Rev. brother Madden, who, it seems, is by bodily indisposition unable to exercise ministerial functions, we ought to sympathize; and for the edification and comfort of his flock all our disposable aid should be put in requisition.

You have two ministers without particular charge, the Rev. Samuel M. Willson and the Rev. Robert Gibson, on your list, and six licentiates. One of these, however, by a higher court, released from your control, and probably about to be translated to the upper and better country. Mr. John H. Symmes is certified to the Pittsburgh Presbytery. Mr. Ebenezer Cooper wishes to have some time to study. We recommend him to the Northern Presbytery where he may study and preach to his own and others edification. Afterward we would have him sent to the South, which is his own wish. Mr. John Fisher, at his own request, is referred for some time to the Philadelphia Presbytery, afterwards to be by them sent to the West and to the South. Mr. John Neil McLeod, a

licentiate of the Northern Presbytery, who received license Aug. 4, 1828, we would recommend to be left under the care of the Northern Presbytery. It is particularly recommended that the western part of the State of New York be often visited and carefully cultivated. Mr. Symmes might, if he wishes to return northward in the course of three or four months, call on his way and spend three or four Sabbaths in the Genessee country, in York, Caledonia and Rochester. We think it proper that some discretionary power should be left with our young men, in the exercise of which, however, they must be careful not to disappoint one part of the Church to cherish another.

To conclude, it is pleasant indeed to find such a concurity of sentiment among our judicatories; such a steady, straight forward disposition to bind up the testimony and seal the law. Young men of great promise are growing up under the charge of nearly all our Presbyteries. God, in His is unfolding plans that are calculated Providence, elicit truth and principle on the great subject of our ecclesiastical organization. Our principles need only candid investigation in the light of God's word to be adopted by all right hearted men. Your Committee recommend to the young men to keep up a correspondence with one another on the great concerns of the growing empire of Christ in this Let the information of every one become the infor-We hope our public documents hereafter mation of all. full and explicit about the condition of our be more It is hoped too that our young men vacancies. strive, wherever they labor, to leave a permanent impression in favor of practical godliness, and that all the popularity they possess shall be carefully turned to account in that way. High things they must not mind, but condescend to men of low estate. If they study to maintain a prudent economy, and the people act upon a principle of increasing liberality, it is hoped that in a short time the principles of our witnessing fathers will make an impression upon the churches and states of our land favorable to the millennial reformation. The Synod adopted this report.

- 4. <u>Resolved</u>, That the thanks of this court be returned to Rev. Gilbert McMaster for his discourse delivered at the opening of Synod, and that a copy thereof be requested for publication; with which request Dr. McMaster promised to comply whenever application should be made for it.
- 5. <u>Resolved</u>, That a Committee be appointed to report at the next meeting of Synod, on the propriety of publishing with all convenient speed the discourses delivered at the opening of this Synod since its first organization. Revs. John Black and Gordon T. Ewing are that Committee.
- 6. Resolved, That hereafter this Synod shall not request from the preacher who opens Synod by a sermon a copy of it, unless with the intention of immediate publication, and at the expense of Synod.
- 7. Resolved, That the Committee on Unfinished Business report tomorrow morning.

Robert Hadden asked and obtained leave of absence for the remainder of the sessions of Synod.

Adjourned to meet tomorrow at 9 o'clock, A.M.

Eodem loco. Aug. 12, 1828.

Pursuant to adjournment Synod met and was constituted. Same members <u>ut</u> <u>antea</u> except Robert Hadden who had leave of absence.

- 1. The former Minutes were read and approved.
- 2. The Committee on Unfinished Business reported that the items of unfinished business before the court were the following: Publication of Minutes; appointing the next meeting of Synod; report of the Committee with the Associate Church; publishing the Book of Discipline; the Theological Seminary; Argumentative Part of the Testimony; and the articles on the Form of a Covenant. This report was accepted.
 - 3. The publication of the Minutes was postponed.
- 4. The Synod appointed their next meeting at Pittsburgh, on the first Wednesday of August, 1830, to be opened with a sermon on "The Extent of Christ's Purchase," by the Moderator, the Rev. James Christie, and in case of his absence, by Rev. Hugh McMillan.

5. The Committee appointed to confer with the Committee of the Associate Synod of North America, presented a draft of a Letter to be sent to said Associate Synod in answer to a communication made by them to this Synod, which was accepted, and the Committee were directed to transmit said Letter to the Committee of the Associate Synod appointed to meet and confer with the Committee of this Synod. The letter is as follows: —

To the Associate Synod of North America.

<u>Dear</u> <u>Brethren</u>: —

We have with pleasure received your official communication of June, 1828, in which a Christian spirit seems to breathe. We trust that in our communications with you the same spirit will prevail. Let it not be considered as a spirit of bitterness should we charge upon some of your avowed principles consequences which to us may appear legitimate, while yet to you they may not appear as necessarily flowing from such principles. We certainly shall not affirm that you admit the consequences which you disavow, while we may be justly allowed to offer reasons why we think you inconsistent if you do not admit them.

You complain that the Reformed Presbyterian Church "have imputed to you tenets without so much as quoting your words which are supposed to express them." And you refuse that anything should be considered as your words except the words of your judicial deeds, etc., excluding "the words that may be found in the controversial writings of individuals." You also complain of the language of our statements of the tenets held by ourselves and by you, etc.

As to quoting your words it was never proposed. We were uniting a historical sketch of your <u>sentiments</u> according to our views and understanding of them. We, however, do not feel ourselves obliged to be confined by such publications as you have designated as <u>judicial</u> <u>deeds</u>, inasmuch as you yourselves have given the sanction of the Synod to other writers besides those to whom you propose to confine us.

Besides as we have not, in our speaking of the sentiments of the Secession, distinguished between the Burghers and the Antiburghers, seeing each claims to be the Secession, we are at full liberty to avail ourselves of the publications of both parties.

We shall now state some of the reasons why we ascribe to Seceders the sentiments of which you complain.

In Disp. of Sec. Test. Vol. I, page 294, in answer to the question, what sort of kings are the people of God then commanded to fear? we find the following declaration: "It is certain that they are commanded to fear only such as are acknowledged by the kingdom they are in; while none else are kings with respect to them. In the next place, it is as certain that they are commanded to fear any whom that kingdom acknowledges as kings and while they do so." on page 296, in illustrating the text Prov. 24:21, they say: "In a word this text doth plainly teach that the Lord's people particularly ought to fear all kings who are acknowledged as such by the kingdom they belong to, as there is no exception made here or elsewhere in Scripture." And in the same page, "For as there never were, nor could be, any kings acknowledged as such by a kingdom but who administered some justice, so all the duty of particular subjects under the worst of their kings is sufficiently comprehended in this command, as it binds them to acknowledge and submit unto their authority in any lawful exercise of it, while the kingdom sustains their government."

They do admit of testifying against corruptions, etc., yet as to the <u>fact</u> they say, pages 303, 304, "Thus, that our Lord enjoined subjection by individuals unto Caesar, etc.; yea, in doing so he proceeds upon no other or better qualification in Caesar than that he was <u>actually and allowedly in power</u> over the Jewish nation." And to the same purpose in Review of the Antigovernment Scheme, pages 34, 35, "The Associate Presbytery have nothing to say in defence of that magistracy which is merely providential; though not a little they have to advance in proof that the office of <u>every</u> magistrate whom a people have chosen, and whom they

acknowledge to be invested with civil authority over them, is founded on the perceptive will of God, and is agreeable to his law in its rise and origin." And further, in Disp. Vol. I, page 310, we are told that "whenever they (viz. the people) voluntarily constitute or consent unto any form of civil government, under the rule of any particular persons, whatever sin be in the circumstances of this their deed, with respect to the government or governors which constitute or consent unto; yet the deed itself or the substance of the deed, is always in consequence of and agreeable to God's law. Wherefore, their governors, as such in the substance of the matter, are ordained of God according to that law." Also, page 319, "All those who are the ordinance of man, or who have a constitution by the covenant of civil society, are to be submitted unto for the Lord's sake, or as having an insti-And further, page 320, "He orders tution from him." them to yield such submission, without further question, to every ordinance of man; every person in civil office, by the will of society." And in the same page, they say, "What the Apostle here said unto the Christians of his day, doth equally agree unto the case of all, with respect to whatever magistrates are sustained by the civil body whereof they are members."

In Disp. Vol. I, page 332, they say, "Though magistrates may differ vastly as to their qualifications, etc., yet the precepts already explained are a rule of duty equally toward any who are, and while they are, acknowledged as magistrates by civil society. Nothing need by added for the clearing of this but an overthrow of a distinction that has been made of those who are acknowledged as magistrates by civil society, into such as are so by the perceptive will of God, and such as are so by his providential will only. Now as by this distinction these magistrates are considered with respect to the origin of that office which they actually bear, so a distinction of them in this respect into perceptive and providential is al-

altogether groundless and absurd. It will not be refused that all such perceptive magistrates are also providential, seeing it is the hand of Providence that brings everything to pass; but, moreover, all providential magistrates are also perceptive, and that <u>equally</u> "in the above respect."

From this it might be expected that those who have been called tyrants, and those who have been considered moral powers should be classed together and made equally the ordinance of God, for they are alike providential; and, at least in this case, to make a difference between perceptive and providential is stated to be "altogether groundless and absurd." And by examining a little the principles of Seceders we will not be disappointed in this result. The sacred records and profane history agree in representing Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar and Nero Caesar as the worst of tyrants, and the wretched condition of the children of Israel under their thraldom as the most abject slavery and High at the head of the catalogue of ignominious bondage. tyrants stands Nero Caesar, proudly eminent, a monster of cruelty as yet unrivalled. Yet, in full consistency with the assumed principle, (happily assumed in this case alone) that there is no difference between perceptive and providential, even the unequalled tyranny of Nero, becomes the ordinance of God, and his government is according to the perceptive will of the Most Dear Brethren, we do not believe for a moment that you are the avowed advocates of slavery and passive obedience. You have disavowed the doctrines and protested against But to us it appears evident that you have done so in opposition to the sentiments natively expressed in the principles you have laid down, some of which we have quoted already; and in addition would observe that the fear, subjection, obedience, etc. claimed by you as due to the worst of tyrants, are the very same, according to your own explanations, which are due to the most indisputable moral rulers. We refer you to Disp. Vol. I. page 293, where explaining Prov. 24:21, "Fear thou the Lord and the king," you say, "This fear cannot be of a slavish sort because it is commanded, and that as subordinate unto the fear of the Lord." Now if we ask.

Comment [NJP1]: [sic]

as you have done, page 294, "What sort of kings are the people of God thus commanded to fear?" the answer is furnished in the same place, "only such as are acknowledged by the kingdom they are in," and these are further declared to be "any whom that kingdom acknowledges as kings and while they do so." This is more plainly urged in pages 305, 306, "The duty here commanded (in Rom. 13:1) comprehends the whole of what men can owe even unto any civil superiors as such ; and <u>not only for wrath</u>, <u>but also for</u> conscience sake; or, not only from the consideration of danger, but also of duty. This is the utmost civil subjection that can be due to any one. And all this is here enjoined upon every soul, particularly upon all the Christians then living in Rome. The objects of this duty are called higher powers, magistrates in the concrete, magistrates ticularly existing the then in the Page 308, "And now that the spirit of God by empire." Paul did here enjoin civil subjection in its full latitude and all its parts upon the Christians there Rome, toward rulers then in the Roman empire, in so certain and manifest that it must be astonishing if any Page 309, "Now this doubts are entertained aneut it." says not, that men who are of a superior place in civil society by bare possession or mere force, are, as such, ordained by God; for these are not powers in a moral sense, and the text speaks only of all that are so."

The conclusion then is irresistible that these bloody tyrants, than whom the page of history was never stained with fouler, were the ordinances of God. And if so, then indeed we may say with you, "Render unto Caesar whatsoever is incumbent upon subjects, and particularly tribute; as unto all this he has a lawful right." — Disp. Vol. I. page 303.

It might, however, be expected that to this, at least seeming contradiction, Christians would demur, especially as in the character of the bloody Caesar and his ruffian ministers, they would look in vain for the reasons on which the sub-

Comment [NJP2]: [sic] Transcription is not certain, but word is definitely not "about"

jection, honor, and obedience required were founded." For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil. Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same. is the minister of God unto thee for good. not the sword in vain. For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. for this cause pay you tribute also, for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing." that none of these reasons were to be found in Caesar and his government, but on the contrary that he was a terror to good works and not to evil; that instead of being the minister of God for good, he was the minister of the devil for evil, bearing the sword in vain by executing his own wrath in murdering Christians with the most shocking atrocity and brutality. Christians, we say, might be reasonably expected to demur in believing the apparent Of this, brethren, you yourselves appear to contradiction. have been aware and endeavor to obviate the difficulty, Disp. Vol. I, page 309, where you say, "If, therefore, there seem any insuperable difficulty applying in unto such magistrates the characters here given of the powers, nothing remains would unto one who deal reverently with the oracles of God, but to believe the evidence that these indeed are the persons meant, and to rest in an humble confession of ignorance as to how they came to be so spoken of." While this reasoning does not convince us, for still the apparent contradiction remains, we nevertheless give the utmost credit to the integrity and purity of the motives which suggested this conscientious way of settling what we must still consider an insuperable difficulty, and what some might think not creditable to the word of God.

It is evident, we think, from the quotations made, that the first three articles of complain against the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are groundless, as all that we asserted in our Testimony appears to be fully substantiated by these quotations.

For such conclusions as the following would appear to us naturally and necessarily to flow from them: —

- 1. That nations favored with the light of divine revelation are not under a positive and indispensable obligation to form their civil government by it as the supreme standard. And further, should these nations act in direct opposition thereto, still their deeds are to be viewed as valid.
- 2. That if the sanction of the consent of the majority be obtained that will legitimate their government, and the substance of their deed must be considered as agreeable to the perceptive will of God, let the conditions otherwise be as sinful as they may.
- 3. That there is no such thing as tyranny in any government on the earth. If the government exists, it is by the providence of God, and therefore his ordinance. Every providential government is perceptive.

The fourth complaint is that we have represented you as maintaining "that Jesus Christ does not, as Mediator, govern the world. His authority is confined to the church."

In order to justify what the Reformed Presbyterian Church has ascribed to you here, there appears to be nothing more necessary than to examine your own quotations from "Precious Truth," page 250: "That our Lord's mediatory government and administration doth extend to all outward things in the world of nature and providence, insofar as these things are supernaturally ordered unto supernatural ends in the spiritual advantage of his church and people, or so far as ordered in the channel of love and favor to them, with a subserviency to the purposes and glory of free grace in their salvation; and that all such orderings of outward things are the proper fruit of Christ's purchase; and that all these outward things as considered in the formality or channel of these gracious orderings do hold of Christ and his kingdom as Mediator. All this is heartily agreed to. Christ, as being the same true God with the Father, is the maker and upholder of all things. He upholds them in their being, not by his mediation, but by the word of his power. But he has also a mediatory kingdom which, as well as his essential kingdom, extends to all persons and things." This quotation allows to Christ's mediatory government the supernatural ordering of outward things

in the world of nature and providence unto <u>supernatural ends</u> in the <u>spiritual</u> advantage of his church and people, and confines it to this, as it qualifies and limits its extension with these words, "In so far as those things are supernaturally ordered, etc."

The church is distinguished from the world. The one is constantly viewed as supernatural, and the other natural. Is then anything admitted by you to belong to the mediatory kingdom of Christ but what is supernatural and for spiritual ends? You refuse the upholding of all things to belong to Christ's mediatory kingdom. And of course that only as God, i.e., God absolutely considered, he upholds and governs the natural world. While to us it appears abundantly evident from Scripture that "Christ, as Mediator, is heaven's great delegate and plenipotentiary, both for the actual and spiritual government of the church, and for the actual, providential, moral government of the world in subserviency to the preservation and good of his body the church." If it were otherwise how could he say that all power in heaven and in earth was given unto him, and that God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be the head over all things to the church?

The same sentiments with you are avowed by the <u>Seceders</u> of the Burgher side of the controversy: "But though Christ as Mediator hath a power, etc., he is not as Mediator the moral governor of men who are <u>without his visible church</u>. The Scriptures never represent him as mediatorial moral governor of heathens, but as king of Zion," etc. — <u>Brown's Compendium, View of Natural and Revealed Religion, page 297.</u> See also <u>Fisher and Erskine's Catechism</u>, on the question, "How doth God execute the office of a king?" <u>Question</u>: "What is his mediatory kingdom?" <u>Answer</u>: "It is that sovereign power and authority in and over the church which is given him as Mediator, Eph. 1:22." And this, in answer to the next question, is declared to be <u>entirely spiritual</u>.

The fifth complaint is that we have said, "That the Associate Church maintains that the Redeemer has not purchased temporal benefits for the saints." "This statement," you say, in a foot note, "is defective." It is true that we have not said all that you have said to explain your sentiments

on the purchase of temporal benefits for the saints. But after all your explanation, to us it appears evident that the amount of the whole is as we have stated. The first sentence of the authority quoted by you, "Act of Associate Synod," etc., we think plainly proves what we say, "We do also reject the opinion of those who teach that Christ, by his death, purchased the benefits of this life which are common to all men, for all the blessings purchased by Christ are of that nature, that the Holy Spirit only can make us partakers of them, and they can be actively received by faith only." Nothing can be more apparent to us than that this statement confines the purchase of Christ to spiritual blessings exclusively. The purchase respects the right to possess and use temporal blessings. This right, we presume, is not common to elect and reprobate. If the purchase respected the bringing into being the matter of these benefits of which both elect and reprobate are partakers, no doubt the case would be otherwise. But it is not so. When our Redeemer is said to purchase his saints, it is apprehended there would be few who would suppose that he purchased either their souls or their bodies from nihility into existence. earthly or material nature of these things as they are common, the subject has nothing to do. The purchase respects the recovery of the right forfeited by the fall. That you refuse that this right to temporal benefits was purchased by Christ for his saints, appears to us manifest from your explaining away everything temporal in them — that is, everything that is in them, and referring all to spiritual blessings.

This too appears to be the judgment of one of your own ministers, published to the world, and not disavowed by you. "We do not deny," says he, "that there are promises in the Scriptures about temporal things, but these are covenant promises only as they respect spiritual things." — Donaldson on Common Mercies, etc., page 29. Temporal things, in as far as they are spiritual: that is, a thing as far as it is not itself, is, we think, utterly incomprehensible.

The last complaint of our having done you injustice is that we have said, "The Associate Church maintains

that the world stands, not on purpose to exhibit the system of grace, but in order to bring into being the children of Adam that they might be punished by the curse of the covenant of works." According to our view the doctrine we have ascribed unto you will be found in Gib's Sacred Contemplations," page 270. "Had all mankind be left to perish in the state of sin and misery, this world must have come to a most horrible end by the powerful and unmixed vengeance of God. But it must have stood through a course of time in such a condition as could serve for the propagation of mankind; till all the children of wrath should be brought forth." This eminent writer, we think, must have understood the doctrines of his Church. certainly supposes the standing of the world on other ground than the requisitions of the covenant of grace and independently of To us it appears that the building of mercy is the ultimate object of Jehovah's purposes, and that all other things are subservient thereto, as scaffolding to the erection of any edifice. We have believed and stated that your avowed principles did not recognize this as the ultimate object of the world's continuance.

Brethren, we have not desire to misrepresent you. Nor will the quotations which you have made prove that we have misrepresented you, since you also admit the quotations which you have made which, in our opinion, contain the sentiments which we have ascribed to you.

Still, Dear Brethren, we arraign not your motives. We charge you not with believing our conclusions. We would rejoice if in the future communications we may be able to see eye to eye in all the matters of controversy between us. We also think that there is a contradiction in your principles; that you deny and publicly disavow certain conclusions which we think necessarily flow from the principles which you admit. We are aware, Dear Brethren, of the difficulty, yea, the impossibility of your writing and speaking consistently on all the subjects involved in the fundamental difference between the two churches.

You have set out, as a church, on the principle of

obedience for conscience sake, to the British government; and consequently have been, in a manner, compelled to the arduous task of attempting to reconcile submission to the thrones of iniquity with allegiance to the throne of God. In endeavoring to show this contradiction, the language we may have used may appear to involved harshness or bitterness. This we never intended, and shall be exceedingly sorry if indeed we are chargeable on this quarter. But it is difficult to manage anything of this nature without seeming harshness.

Admitting as we do, with all our hearts, that you have in many instances witnessed a good confession for the cause of truth; that you have nobly contended for the Crown right and royal prerogatives of Immanuel, as king of saints, in all of which we rejoice. We would also still more rejoice, if with us, you would see it to be your duty to contend for what, in our opinion, are his royal prerogatives likewise as king of nations — Messiah, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Earnestly praying that the work of the Lord may appear unto his servants, and that the beauty of the Lord our God may be upon you and upon us, and that the works of our hands may be established in righteousness, we remain, Dear Brethren, yours in the cause of our common Lord.

(Signed). <u>James Christie, Moderator</u> John Black, Synod Clerk.

- 6. Moved and seconded that the Book of Discipline be published. The consideration of which was referred to the next meeting of Synod.
- 7. <u>Resolved</u>, That the consideration of the Theological Seminary be postponed.
- 8. <u>Resolved</u>, That the Argumentative Part of the Testimony be postponed.
- 9. The Committee on Travelling Expenses reported. They were directed to amend their report, so as to allow the Rev. James Milligan milage for full distance from Philadelphia to Ryegate. The report as amended is as follows: —

The Finance Committee reported to Synod that they

have diligently attended to the duties assigned them, and have the satisfaction to state that through the liberality of the congregations which have forwarded monies for the travelling and contingent expenses, the finances of Synod are unembarrassed. The collections which have been placed in our hands for defraying the travelling expenses amounted to \$260.55. The Committee have endeavored to make a correct distribution of this sum, according to the statue of Synod on the subject. The sums collected, and the distribution proposed are as follows: —

Comment [NJP3]: [sic] Definitely not "statute"

Delegates.	Amount Received	Miles.	Amount to delegates.
James Milligan	\$ 5.00	450	\$23.621/2
James Christie	12.50	241	12.651/4
John McMurray		241	12.651/4
Gilbert McMaster	12.00	262	13.751/2
W. L. Roberts	5.00	441	23.151/2
Alexander McCrea	_	441	23.151/2
M. B. Williams	7.00	260	13.65
J. R. Willson	11.121/2	170	8.921/2
Robert Hadden		170	8.921/2
James Nelson	71.183/4	96	5.04
William Gibson	5.00	96	5.04
John Gibson	35.00	100	5.25
S. W. Crawford	8.00	140	7.35
John Thomson	_	140	7.35
John Black	15.00	300	15.75
William Gormley		300	15.75
G. T. Ewing	5.00	300	15.75
Robert Brown	7.50	268	14.07
Jonathan Gill	7.371/2	286	15.011/2
William Cunningham	10.00	256	13.44
J. R. Johnston	11.00	162	8.501/2
John Anderson		100	5.25
Pine Creek congregation	7.50		_
Philadelphia congregation	25.37		_

The contingent expenses of Synod the Committee find amount to \$72.63. The items are as follows: —

Debt against the fund last year, _ _ \$ 15.63 Salary of Synod's Clerk for last term, _ _ 50.00 Printing Causes of Fasting and Thanksgiving, _ _ 7.00 Making a total of 72.63

The Synod adopted this report.

- 10. The consideration of the article of unfinished business relative to the printing of the Minutes was postponed.
- 11. Rev. Gilbert McMaster resigned his seat as a member of the Committee of Correspondence with the Associate Church, and Rev. J. R. Willson was elected in his place.
- 12. Resolved, That the ministers of this Synod raise money in their respective congregations as soon as possible, and transmit it to the Clerk of Synod for the publication of the Minutes. And that when such a sum shall have been collected as shall justify him to proceed, he shall publish them.
- 13. Revs. John Black and S. B. Wylie are appointed a Committee to select for publication such parts of the Minutes as they may deem for public utility.
- 14. <u>Resolved</u>, That the members of Synod notify the Clerk of the number of copies they will want. And when published, he shall forward them to the respective congregations at their own expense. The following list was further furnished the Clerk specifying how many copies each minister would require and would be accounted for, viz: —

Alexander McLeod, 200; James Christie, 25; J. R. Willson, 50;

Gilbert McMaster, 50; M. B. Williams, 50; S. W. Crawford, 30; T. C. Guthrie, 25; Jonathan Gill, 20; John Black, 50; Western Presbytery, 100; William Gibson, 6; W. L. Roberts, 24; J. R. Johnston, 30; James Milligan, 24; John Gibson, 100; S. B. Wylie, 200; G. T. Ewing, 25; Robert Brown, 50; Hugh McMillan, 50.

Synod adjourned to meet this afternoon at 4 o'clock. The Moderator concluded by prayer.

Eodem die et loco. 4 o'clock, P.M.

Synod met pursuant to adjournment, and called to order by the Moderator. Same members <u>ut supra</u>.

1. Rev. Hugh McMillan introduced the following resolutions, which, on motion, were unanimously adopted by Synod: —

Resolved, That this Synod view with approbation the constitution and plans of the American Colonization Society for restoring free persons of color to the land of their fathers, and justly deserving the zealous support of the Christian and patriot.

Resolved, That this Synod recommend the American Colonization Society to the members of this Church for their conscientious support; and that the emancipation of slaves, as maintained by the Testimony and practice of this church, be accompanied in all cases not contrary to the will of the emancipated, with a removal from the United States to such place or places as the emancipated shall choose.

Resolved, That a copy of the above resolutions be transmitted to the Secretary of the American Colonization Society by the Clerk of this Synod.

- 2. Synod agreed that a Committee be appointed to report at the next meeting of Synod concerning the propriety of making application to the several civil authorities of our common country, respecting the existing relations of this community to the Commonwealth. Revs. J. R. Willson and James Christie are that Committee.
- 3. On motion it was agreed that an interlocutory meeting be held at this place immediately after the adjournment of Synod.

The Moderator concluded by prayer and the singing of the 133d. Psalm.

(Signed.)

<u>James Christie</u>, <u>Moderator</u>. <u>John Black</u>, <u>Synod Clerk</u>.