CIRCULAR No. 2.

"Of your enemies shall men arise, speaking perverse things; * * these resist the truth * * * whose mouths must be stopped."

—Peter.

Self-defence in subservience to divine truth and order was the object of Circular No. 1. This is the method exemplified by prophets and apostles; because every one knows that if the character of a witness can be destroyed, his testimony is thereby rendered worthless. Paul was subject to many and grievous charges, which his accusers could not prove. This is the method commonly pursued by the accuser of the brethren, and by the seed of the serpent, against the seed of the woman. The best things are most counterfeited; such as piety, charity, and patriotism. Who so pious as Ahithophel? He joined sweet counsel and walked to the house of God in company with David. Who more charitable than Judas? He depredated the waste of precious ointment, through professed sympathy with the suffering poor. Who so patriotic as Absalom? He proposed to reform the government when mismanaged by the culpable negligence of his father. The greatest counterfeit the world ever saw, and the best executed, is the Romish superstition. So nearly perfect the simulation that it has gained currency throughout Christendom, as is believed, for more than a thousand years. The mystery of its circulation, though a "mystery of iniquity," may be accounted for thus: we Christians, like the Jews, know not the role of our own prophets, said to be synagogues every Sabbath day. This counterfeit eludes detection except by Christ's "two witnesses." They have found a certain solution of this mystery in the inspired word Antichrist. Many others, knew for certainty that and, in
the word antithesis signifies substitution, not opposition—payment by another, vicarious sacrifice, "ransom." Just so in the word Antichrist a substitutionary, counterfeited Christ, the more successfully to oppose and wax against Christ, in his witnesses. This is the masterpiece of that old serpent called the Devil. Many other counterfeits have been invented whose circulation has been ephemeral in proportion to the ingenuity of their execution. Some are so blurred on their whole face by the unskillfulness of their execution that they may be detected almost at sight; such, for example, as the counterfeit "O. C." Covenanters who answer to their historic name, have been known for centuries, and they continue to be known by a steadfast adherence to their Covenant, National and Solemn League. These documents present a pattern of Magistracy and Ministry shown in the mount of Divine Revelation. The Constitution of the United States is strictly and formally a national covenant, the "only living and true God" being exalted as a party to the compact. The government erected by it is strictly and formally a limited monarchy, its functionaries periodically elective; hereditary royalty and nobility being excluded. In the convention which framed the Constitution, two classes of the aggregate population were not represented—Covenanters and negroes. As a moral consequence and logical sequence, both those classes were disfranchised; the Covenanters for their religion, the negroes for their color; yet both classes were subjected to "taxation without representation." Covenanters, wise, "looking every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others," unitedly and publicly testified against the wrongs inflicted constitutionally upon the negroes. Early in this century one of them published an argument leading to the impregnable conclusion: "Negro Slavery Unjustifiable." Others joined with him in publishing arguments leading to a conclusion equally improbable, that "the Constitution, notwithstanding its numerous excellencies, is inconsistent, oppressive, and impious." Meanwhile leading ministers and statesmen argued against the Covenanters that slavery was of divine origin. Their most plausible argument may be condensed as follows:

- Alaluan, the father of the faithful, and the friend of God, in his domestic economy, has left us the most illustrious exemplification of this "Patriarchal Institution." This argument, supposed to be strengthened by Paul's exhortations to masters and servants, was long thought to be unanswerable. The Mexican war, the Missouri Compromise with its border-statism, the Fugitive Slave Law, the Dred Scott decision, and the retreat of the Lord, at length convinced the nation and demonstrated the impregnability of the Covenanters' conclusion that "negro slavery is unjustifiable." Human rights have been thus far vindicated; but when, or by what means, Divine rights shall be likewise vindicated, none "can tell, God knows."

Covenanters believe the "obligation of the alone infallible rule," and the obligation of their own covenants founded thereon, bind them to civil, as well as to ecclesiastical and domestic duties. This article of their belief distinguishes them in all lands of their nativity and adoption. They lament that the singularity of their position draws them reluctantly into controversy with their fellow-Christians. Hence, they are often exercised in that department of theology called Apologetics, or more sharply, Polemics. They are frequently suspected of disloyalty, and sometimes represented as unhistorical or even bad citizens. Nicknames have been invented and applied to them; such as mountain-men, Covenanters, etc., as being the most pestilent kind of agitators. They have even been accused and denounced as anti-government men. One of the most plausible accusations brought against them is in reference to paying civil tribute. This charge has been preferred in a variety of forms, and in terms more or less sarcastic. In case of the least offensive form it may be stated as follows: "Covenanters pay taxes for the support of what they call immoral civil power; yet inconsistently refuse to perform the other duties of good citizens." In this sentence are contained several assump-
tions, which, not being proved, are in logic called sophisms; and therefore in morals, false accusations. Both assumptions and accusations will be detected and exposed in this paper. It is an
insane task to repeat the arguments of our ancestors which
have never been answered, because they are unanswerable; but
recent occurrences in the St. Presbyterian have disclosed such sur-
pprising and inexplicable ignorance that repetition seems necessary.

Every one knows that taxes go to support the govern-
ment by imposing them, whether in time of peace or of war. Revenue
from taxes in time of peace are soon found inadequate in time of war. Money is called, by a metonymy and in truth
the sine of war—the sine of peace, horses, oxen, and all of the
equipment required for the maintenance of the national
forces by land and sea. Additional forces become necessary, and
all taxes collected in time of peace and of war go to the same ob-
ject, the support of government. The late Civil War having
furnished occasion, the old leaven of error was unawares brought
in among us. It originated in one of the lower courts, in what
was then known as the Session of Miami congregation. (Many
important details in this connection must here be omitted.) The
Civil War continuing, and a draft impending, a member of said
session openly stated that he had paid money to hire substitutes
for military service, and that he would enter the army himself if
he could obtain a captain's commission. His language evidently
meant that he would "enforce" the Constitution and execute the
"law" against the immoralities of which his church had all
along publicly testified. Here was an obvious case in violation
of our Testimony. Did the moderator and fellow-deacons promptly
use the discipline divinely appointed for the recovery of the erring
brother. No. And why neglect or delay the application of the
proper remedy? A member of session feelingly assigned a reason
in these forcible words of complaint: "You might as well place
a log in the chair as our moderator." But the question still
presses, why the neglect and delay? Perhaps the moderator was
waiting for a precedent from some other session, or a special order
from Presbytery. This supposition seems probable, because he
had taught that all our members who had given money in time of
draft were culpable—equally guilty. Apprised of the session's
culpable neglect in the case pending before them, Presbytery im-
mediately directed them to the exercise of discipline, and to
pursue the same course in any similar case that might arise within
their jurisdiction. Moreover, in 1868 a declarative act was passed,
defining and explaining clearly the mind of Presbytery in the reso-
nlation of 1868, because of the unguarded and ambiguous phrase-
ology at that time unwittingly employed, and giving occasion for
different and conflicting interpretations. (See Minutes of Presby-
tery, 1868 and 1869.) The reader has now before him the charge al-
ready noticed in this paper, containing a cluster of assumptions,
sophisms and accusations. It is concealed in all hands that a Cov-
enant may lawfully give money in the same or in a time of peace
to recover the peaceful possession and enjoyment of his remaining
property. May he not, also, in time of war give money for the
security of his person? Government cannot make person or property;
"it can only protect them—person first. By as much as
a man's person or life is more valuable to him than his property,
by so much stronger reason may he give money to secure his
person than his property.

A Covenant might therefore give money to exempt himself
from draft in the time of imminent peril. And more, he not only
might lawfully, but he ought in duty to do so by the requirement
of the sixth commandment. If a Covenant was not so far
advanced in the divine file as to take joyfully the spoiling of his
goods, he might at least the more cheerfully part with a little of
his property while indulging the pleasing hope that it might con-
tribute to the overthrow of the cruel system of slavery against
which he had always protested. By some such concise method as
the foregoing, that old leaven of error recently revived, with all
its assumptions and sophistry, may be easily detected. Possibly
some may require further light on this subject. For their sake
the following remarks are added:

"That is property which the law makes property."—Henry Clay. This is a man-
ifest and pitiable blunder of a great statesman. Slavery had blinded his eyes.
God’s people have always paid taxes imposed by any government, whether called civil or military, wherever their lots were cast. They have also performed other actions of the same kind. Covenanters follow their approved examples in obedience to Christ’s command, “Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock.” Joseph, the husband of Mary, “a just man, went up to Bethlehem to be taxed,” or enrolled as a tax-payer. Did he pay his tax for the support of that “godless” fourth beast of Daniel and first of John, the Papal and Papal Roman empire, that it might be able to employ Herod in “slaying the innocents” to compass the death of Joseph’s reputed son, Mary’s first-born son, “the Prince of Life?” Did Paul, in self-defense plead his Roman citizenship as glorying in his liberty; or did he appeal to Caesar to testify his loyalty to the Roman government? Such questions as these carry in them the strongest form of negative answers. This little leaven of error, if permitted to ferment and spread, would corrupt the church of Christ, bring His disciples under a yoke of bondage, and tend to subvert the moral government of the universe. On this false principle no person could buy a postage stamp without complicity in the sin of the national government in running the mail on the Lord’s Day. Is it not astonishing that any minister, professing to be a Covenanter, should revive and persistently disseminate an error often refuted by his predecessors? Still more astonishing, that he should attempt to transfer his sin to his brethren—neglect of discipline in his own session? Most astonishing of all, that he should have the effrontery to denounce from the pulpit that Presbyterian as “no longer a witnessing body,” which had refused to sanction his error, or to tolerate his consequent and manifest disorders? A root of bitterness springing up, if not timely and orderly removed, may trouble all and defile many.

The substitution of man’s motives for God’s commandments as a rule of duty, has always been a prolific source of right-hand extremes. As Erastian tolerations result in persecutions, so do “right-hand extremes produce left-hand defects,” yet to the multitude the necessary connection in those cases between cause