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A RESPONSE;

BY A COMMITTEE

OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

IN LEXINGTON, KY.

(TO AN ADDRESS, PUBLISHED BY THOSE OF HER
BODY WHO HAVE SEPARATED FROM HER
UNDER THE NAME OF THE CHURCH
OF CHRIST, ON MILL STREET,
IN LEXINGTON.)

TO THE MODERATOR OF THE

ELKHORN ASSOCIATION.

LEXINGTON, KY.

PRINTED BY A. G. MERIWETHER,

1827.

At a called meeting of the First Baptist Church in Lexington, held on the 26th day of November, 1827, the following members, A. S. Drake, Joel Wallingsford, Wm. T. Smith, Wm. Poindexter and Peter Hedenburg, who had been appointed a committee to prepare a reply to an address purporting to be from "The Church of Christ, on Mill Street, to the Moderator of the Elkhorn Association," reported the following, which was unanimously approved and adopted by the Church, and ordered to be published by the committee in behalf of the Church.

PETER HEDENBURG, *Mod'r.*

Test, WM. POINDEXTER, C. C.

RESPONSE.

The First Baptist Church in Lexington, to the Moderator of the Elkhorn Association.

DEAR BROTHER,

It is with deep and heartfelt regret, that we find ourselves so circumstanced as to be forced into publick view, to vindicate not "the cause of Christ alone," but our own private characters, the character of the Church, and that of the Association also, from the reproach, detraction and slander, that has been so liberally and unchristianly thrown upon them by the author of a recent publication purporting to be "An Address of the Church of Christ on Mill Street, in Lexington, to the Moderator of the Elkhorn Association." Such is the spirit and temper of the address, and such is the nature of the allegations made in it against those communities and individuals who have fallen under the author's displeasure, that we very much fear, it will be difficult to do ourselves justice without appearing to indulge too much in that same kind of temper which has been manifested by its author.

We, however, assure you, Brother Moderator, that it is no pleasure to us to use any severity, even in an attempt to rescue our reputations and the cause of truth from publick censure. So far from it, our only regret is, that the publication of the "Address" has made this response necessary; nor have we any disposition to pursue as an enemy, the unfortunate individual who is principally concerned in that production, but are more disposed to entreat him as a brother.

Our sympathies are truly excited in behalf of those unfortunately misguided members, who have been induced from a momentary excitement, to give their sanction to a composition which we believe, they had no agency in producing one sentence of, and over which, we are persuaded they exercised no controul; but which was solely designed and prosecuted in furtherance of the ambitious views of a single individual, especially as this circumstance compels us to assume a hostile attitude to those whom we love as dear brethren, simply because they have identified themselves with those whose christian character we have so much reason to suspect.

“ O popular applause! what heart of man
Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
The wisest and the best feel urgent need
Of all their caution in thy gentlest gales;
But swelled into a gust—who then, alas!
With all his canvass set, and inexpert,
And therefore heedless, can stand thy power?”

weathercock, turning his face to the breeze let it come from what quarter it might, as if to feel the pulse of public sentiment, with a view to administer his nostrum like a skillful physician, as symptoms might justify; at one time advancing to his point with Spartan courage, and again when the ground appeared to be untenable, retiring with great caution and skill to his former position, until things had assumed an aspect which induced him to think that, without an immediate effort, he would die like other men and be forgotten. His determination was immediately formed, and, as an entering wedge to his plan, he selected the change of the name of the first Baptist Church in Lexington, as the hobby on which to ride to the pinnacle of fame. Oh pity for poor human nature. Dear Saviour, our hearts sicken at the sight of the folly and selfishness, (not to say vice and corruption,) that is sought to be covered under thy most holy name.

We now proceed to give you a succinct detail of the circumstances in the progress of this reformation in the Church, which has resulted in the present most destructive and afflicting condition of things. At the church meeting for September, 1825, the subject was first introduced by Doctor Fishback, to the astonishment and distress of the Church, and which henceforward engaged their attention and anxious concern until their church meeting in November following, when the church appointed a committee of all the male members, to take the subject into consideration, and to report at the ensuing meeting. The report was drawn up by Dr. Fishback, so as to embrace all the objects desired, as referred to in the remark on that subject in pages 25 and 26 of the address. At the meeting in December, the report of the committee was read, and now we give you an instance of the candour and justice of our zealous reformer, who acted as Moderator of the Church. You are to understand that there was a division in the Church upon the question, and that he knew it; that the report favoured the change of name. When he therefore took the vote upon the question, he so shaped it as to secure to himself the vote of every member of the church—thus, *“all you who are in favour of the old name will vote for this report, and you that are in favour of the new name will vote against it.”* This was catching them with guile, but how far this kind of chicanery and cunning comports with the character of a reformer in religion, we leave the world to judge.

After the vote was taken, the Doctor smiled at the success of his plan, and condescendingly remarked, *“this subject has a quietus, and ought not to be brought up again, unless revived by some of those who are opposed to the change”*—and here the thing ended for the present, as a business of the church, but was the theme of both his public and private discourses to such extent, as to tire the patience of his hearers, to lessen their number, and to burthen many of the members of the Church almost beyond the point of forbearance.

In May, 1826, he made a visit to the Eastern States, where he remained until the following September. Previous to his departure,

he had declared his intention, "*never to take the charge of a sectarian Church (as he called the Baptist Churches) again*"

Many of the members were anxious for his resignation, and immediately on his return, he was enquired of to know, whether he intended to continue his pastoral charge or not, to which he replied, "*it is with the brethren,*" thereby intending (as they understood) that he would not unless they agreed to the change of name.

There had been a female received for baptism during the Doctor's absence, and who was anxious to be baptised on his return, and which he declined to do, though urged to it repeatedly. This led some of the brethren to believe, that he intended to retain the office of Pastor without discharging its duties, unless they would agree to the change of name. Under these embarrassing circumstances, the Deacons appointed a meeting for consultation, with a view of determining what course would be best to pursue; the result of which was a determination to call a meeting of the Church, the object of which, was simply to ascertain how the members generally were affected upon the subject of the change of name.

This liberty of the Deacons was resented in a high degree by the Doctor, because he was not consulted on the occasion, and he determined forthwith to resign the care of the Church, and had prepared a written resignation to hand in as soon as the called meeting should occur. This thwarted the object of the meeting. The Doctor, however, was persuaded from his precipitate course, by one of the brethren, who told him that he thought the Church would interpret his conduct to be more the effect of passion than principle, that the better course would be, at some future period, to make an address to the Church in an extempore way, and after conciliating their feelings, to resign the care of the Church.

The meeting was then, at the Doctor's suggestion, changed into a social one, and the time occupied principally by himself, on the subject of the reformation; and in the course of his observations, made a declaration which much astonished many of the members, which was, that "*he never would administer the Ordinances to that nor any other, as a Baptist or sectarian Church again, and in future, when he did do it for them, he would administer them as to the Church of Christ, and that those members who disapproved of his course, were at liberty to leave their seats*." What shall we say to this measure as a principal in the reformation? Is this Church independence?

Such was the state of affairs until the following November, when the Doctor resigned his pastoral care of the Church, and in a speech on the occasion, advised that the "*subject of the change of name should never be revived, unless by some of those who were opposed to it, and declared that, as to himself, he never would*."

At the December meeting, the following brethren were appointed a standing committee to procure occasional supplies for the Pulpit, viz: James Beach, A. S. Drake and Joel Wallingsford. It was the Doctor's advice, that they should not call upon any of the

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peado Baptist ministers in town, nor upon any of the preachers belonging to the Licking Association. This left them the alternative of procuring ministerial aid from the Elkhorn Association, or go without. In this straitened condition, they sought in vain for a preacher, all were engaged or too far off to attend them; their only chance was to prevail on Elder Vardeman to attend them once a fortnight, of evenings, as he returned from his stated appointments, or could otherwise spare the time, to which request he consented, purely, as we believe, from principles of love to the brethren, and a desire to promote the cause of truth, and, poor man, for this act of benevolence, he has received, *at our pious author's hand*, almost every other name but a good one.

From the December meeting on, our zealous reformer was industriously employed electioneering among the members of the Church, upon the all-important subject of the change of name, intreating, persuading, convincing or abusing the members as they were differently affected upon the subject of the reformation, until he had acquainted himself with the feelings and views of most of the members of the Church. He had, moreover, used every means in his power, to prevent the Church's obtaining ministerial aid, under the seeming expectation that they would be wearied out with delay and disappointment, and thereby be compelled to agree to the change of name, which would justify him in resuming the pastoral charge. In this, however, he was disappointed, those opposed to the change of name were inflexible, and he then determined to press the matter. A few days previous to the April meeting, he began to agitate the question, and avowed his intention to bring it before the Church. In vain did the brethren urge upon him his former promise and advice—in vain did they warn him of the fatal consequences of the measure, which they assured him would result in a division of the Church. His purpose was fixed; he had discovered that he could not draw off the whole Church, and therefore, determined to rend it, and make sure of what was in his power.

He had understood that some of the brethren had suggested that, if a split took place, the property belonging to the Church would fall into the hands of his opposers, inasmuch as it was deeded to the first Baptist Church in Lexington. To obviate this difficulty, he had provided himself with a copy of the Act of Assembly, providing for cases of divisions in Churches, by which each party is secured in the property in proportion to their several numbers—*this he knew how to manage, having been a lawyer.*

We are thus particular, brother Moderator, because we mean to detect his sophistry and misstatements upon this subject, (Address, page 37, and elsewhere,) and to show that it was his intention to split the Church, and that he had provided for the event.

And now arrives the long-to-be-remembered third Saturday in April, 1827, a day of the regular meeting of the Church for business, and the time at which our author fixes the whole sin of schism,

and charges it upon the minority, (see Address, page 37,) and which we intend to show, is not according to fact. The Church having convened, the Doctor made his appearance with a digest of the Statè Laws under his arm, and after the usual preparatory exercises of devotion, the business of the Church was entered upon, Brother J Hewett in the chair; and now the portending storm was to burst upon the head of the devoted church. The Doctor arose and made some inflammatory remarks, after which he read a preamble and resolutions which he had prepared for the occasion, (see Address, page 36,) and after a lengthy speech upon the subject, read the Act of Assembly referred to above, (although earnestly entreated by the Brethren to desist,) as a preliminary to the main question. The Brethren earnestly entreated him to withdraw his *preamble and resolutions*, assuring him that it would split the Church, to which he replied, "*I would sooner have my head severed from my neck,*" drawing his finger at the same time across his neck.

His phalanx being formed, the question was submitted, and the votes were counted, Ayes 34, Noes 32. A question then arose upon the constitutionality of the vote; and here, Brother Moderator, we beg leave to direct your attention to the *Lawyer-like* cunning of our author in the 34th page of the Address. He there tells you that he is going to give you the rule of Church Discipline, instead whereof, he gives you his wise construction of it only; O shame, for an honest man and religious reformer, to use such unfairness with a view to deceive the uninformed. That you may be a better judge of the constitutionality of his course in this affair, we refer you to the rule; [a] it is the 6th article of the Rules of Discipline. Upon this article, the whole business seemed to turn; it was contended by the minority, that the question was lost, because the vote was not a constitutional one, as it was an extraordinary business, and not provided for in the constitution, and that the reception of members and the choice of a pastor, were ordinary concerns of the Church, and were only excepted from the mode of deciding on other ordinary business, because of their vital importance to the fellowship of society, and, that inasmuch, as it was not provided for in the constitution, it would require the same vote to pass it, that it would to alter the constitution, and that as there was no provision for altering the constitution, it could not be done but by unanimous vote of the Church; at any rates, that it was an extraordinary thing for a church to alter its name, and that if provided for at all, by the constitution, it could not be considered of that class of business which was to be decided by a bare majority. On the other hand, the Doctor and his friends contended that it was a very ordinary and common thing for a church to alter her name, and that the extraordinary and uncommon business of a Church, was the *reception of members, and the choice of a pastor*, and that the question had been decided constitutionally, by a majority of two. Can any man believe that a D. D. and M. D. understands the use of common language no better than this? O! that it were

his ignorance instead of his crime; but let that be as it may, the mischief was done.

After the vote was taken, the brother Clerk was found to be in the minority, to whom the Doctor said, will you continue to serve as Clerk? the Clerk replied, that he considered himself as acting under the authority of the First Baptist Church in Lexington; then, said the Doctor, you refuse to serve the Church of Christ? said the brother Clerk, I have not said so. The Doctor then suggested the propriety of electing a Clerk for the Church of Christ, and then proposed, or in other words elected himself, (see Address, page 37,) but took no minute on the occasion, while in the house. He then read a compromise paper, (see Address, page 36,) in which he offers certain privileges and immunities to the minority, with expressions of great love and tenderness towards them, and which he wished them to accede to and thereby recognise the division, which they refused to do, and yet he charges them with schism at the April meeting. Immediately after this, the Church adjourned.

It was a custom in this Church, that no act was to be signed by the Moderator, until it was read at a subsequent meeting, and approved. This the Doctor was not ignorant of, because he plead it as his justification before the committee of helps, for having altered this same preamble and resolutions; on this usage, therefore, the minority relied for redress. It will be recollected, therefore, that this day's minutes was not signed by the Moderator, nor never has been since, in consequence of the course pursued by the Doctor at the May meeting.

The news of this innovation soon reached the ears of the members of the Church, the advocates of good order took the alarm, the Church then consisted of 132 members, and at the ensuing May term, more than one half of them met, and after the usual preliminaries, the Moderator arose and remarked, that this is the first time that the Church of Christ had met in this place to do business, and then called upon the Clerk to read the minutes of the preceding meeting. By this time the Doctor had probably prepared a sketch of what had passed the meeting before; he however presented himself as the Clerk: one of the Deacons arose and observed that brother Poindexter was the regular Clerk, and that as he had never given up the books, nor refused to act, he thought he ought not to be superseded without an act of the Church. The Doctor replied, that brother Poindexter had refused to act as Clerk for the Church of Christ, and that he had been appointed in his stead; this however, is only one of the many instances in which our reformer has considered (in his humble way,) his own acts as the acts of the Church. The brother Clerk observed, that he considered himself as acting in the capacity of Clerk for the first Baptist Church in Lexington, and that he was always ready to do the duties of his office. This gave rise to a motion by one of the Deacons, and which was seconded, in which he proposed to take the vote of the Church in order to ascertain who they considered their

Clerk. And, now sir; you shall have a rare specimen of our author's order and good government, about which he has said so much with so little candour, in the 39th page of the Address, and elsewhere.

You understand that there was a regular motion with a second before the Church, when contrary to every thing like good order, the Doctor arose and moved that the Church of Christ adjourn until three o'clock in the afternoon, and leave the SCHISMATICKS IN THE HOUSE. And strange to tell, without a vote or any other act of the Church, or even of his own party, he started out of the house in great rage, followed by his adherants—"for in the word of a King there is power." [6] And this, he calls an orderly adjournment. (Address, p. 39.) O truth! thou emanant of the Divinity, how did the good man dispose of thee when he wrote his book? perhaps thou wast safely folded up in his prunello, and laid aside until a more convenient season.

"Here was the first act of schism and division, and here lies the sin of schism and no where else," after all that our author has said to rid himself of the imputation of it. (Address, p. 37.)

What circumstance, do you suppose, brother Moderator, caused this movement in our reformer? was it a disposition to harmonize with, a manifestation of his great unwillingness to divide the Church of Christ, or did it grow out of a conviction that a majority of the Church was with him in the division, and that he stood upon constitutional grounds? No, Sir, he saw that he was out-counted, and if he suffered the vote to be taken that Poindexter would be recognized as the Clerk, and he rejected, and that when the minutes of the April meeting came to be read, that the whole proceedings would be reversed; for he knew that according to the custom of the Church, they would have a right to reconsider it, and throw it out, and that as the April minority had grown to be the majority by May, that he must lose all or secure what he had; and these facts determined him to pursue the desperate course which he did, and yet, strange as it is, he has laboured to keep up the appearance of regularity in his proceedings, in defiance of all these matters of fact.

After the Doctor and his party had left the house, the Church called brother Smith to the chair, and a motion was made and seconded, for the reconsideration of the vote adopting the preamble and resolutions in April. The vote was unanimous for the reconsideration; forty-nine members being present, four of whom were blacks, two slaves, and two free. Compare what is here stated with what is stated by our author, (see Address, pages 16 and 40,) and ask yourself what the difference is between hiding and smothering the truth with a design to deceive, and in stating what is palpably untrue. But this is not the first time that he has attempted to deceive by this kind of ambiguity. When in the presence of the committee of Helps, while upon this subject, he asked with great emphasis, "but how did they obtain the majority of 49 over the 34?" and then replied, "by letting the Negroes vote," which led

some of the members of the committee to believe that the whole seventeen added to the thirty-two were blacks. The truth is, that there are only eight blacks in the Church, and only four of these were present, as there is a large African Church in town; and indeed, the objection comes with a bad grace at any rates from the Doctor, because he had introduced the custom, and justified himself by saying, that in the Church there was neither male nor female, bond nor free, but that all were one in Christ.

After the vote, as stated above, the Church agreed to continue the reconsideration of the change of name, until the 3rd Saturday in June, and entered into the following resolution, which we transcribe verbatim from the Church book: "On motion, resolved, that brethren Poindexter, Joel Wallingsford, A. S. Drake, W. T. Smith, and James Beach, be a committee to wait on brother Fishback and other brethren and sisters now absent, and inform them that we have agreed by a vote of 49 members, to reconsider the resolution offered by brother Fishback at our last meeting, and request them to meet us with a copy of the preamble and resolutions, at our next meeting, to be held on the 3rd Saturday in June next, at 11 o'clock, A. M. And yet, we are told by our author, that "they never did, in any way or form, ask for it." (see Address, page 40.) At a subsequent called meeting on the 27th of May, the Church passed a resolution to call for Helps, to meet with them at their meeting on the 3rd Saturday in June, and three members from each of the following Churches, were requested; viz: Bryant's Station, David's Fork, Great Crossings, and Providence. Accordingly, on the above stipulated day, the following members of the committee met the Church at their meeting house in Lexington, viz: from Bryant's Station, John Richardson, John Darnaby, and B. A. Hicks; from Great Crossings, John T. Johnson, James Suggett, and Thomas Henderson; from David's Fork, Edward Darnaby, and Heseekiah Ellis; and from Providence, James Marrs, and William T. Bryan; two of whom, the author of the Address has left out of his enumeration, for what reason we know not; he has also left the Church at Bryant's Station out, and ascribed B. A. Hicks to the Church at David's Fork. (See Address, pages 13—14.)

After the meeting was opened by singing and prayer, the report of the committee appointed at the May meeting was called for, and which we here insert verbatim, because the author of the Address has unblushingly asserted that the committee of helps "was called without their knowledge or consent." (See Address, page 11.)

"Whereupon, said committee stated that they had discharged that duty, and were told by Doctor Fishback that the First Baptist Church of Lexington, was no longer in existence; that it had been so determined by an act of the majority of the Church, and of course he could not recognize us as a committee of that body, but if we had any thing to propose as individuals, he would hear us. We laboured to prove to the Doctor, that the rule which states all ordinary business should be decided by a majority, will

not apply in this case, as it is by no means ordinary business, but affects our constitution."

WM. T. SMITH,
JOEL WALLINGSFORD,
WM. POINDEXTER,
A. S. DRAKE,
JAMES BEACH.

The parties all being present, the committee of helps entered into some deliberations with them, upon the mode proper to be proceeded upon in the investigation. Some were of opinion that the committee ought to sit in connexion with the Church as her council. To this the Doctor positively objected, and stated that the committee had been called without their wish or advisement, and that if they recognized one party to the exclusion of the other, that he would have nothing to do with them. We do not say that these are his exact words, but that they are the purport, we do aver.

After further deliberation, the helps determined to sit as an umpire, and to hear impartially, the statements of both parties. By consent of the parties, the following gentlemen were added to the committee, viz: John Payne, John Parker, Peter Higbee, S. M. Noel, Wm. C. Buck, Wm. Gist, Thos. Bullock, and B. S. Chambers

After the committee was organized, they formed a resolution that all statements made to them, should be submitted in writing; and matters being now fairly adjusted, and preliminaries settled, the Doctor arose, and read and spoke alternately, we cannot say how long, precisely, but we are sure an hour and a half is quite under the time; and yet, he has published it in a book to the world, that he submitted nothing to the committee, "appertaining to the interests or privileges" of his party (See Address, pages 12—13.)

Unfortunately for our reformer, he had read a reputed copy of the preamble and resolutions before the helps, and which he left in their possession, and which it was proven he had altered from the original, but which he would have palmed upon them as the original but for this detection, and which he was compelled to confess he had done, as he has intimated in his book. (Address, p. 30.) To prove, however, that the alterations were not important, he went home to send the original, instead whereof, he sent the church book of his party, accompanied by a note to the committee, stating that he could not find the original, and referred them to the book, where he said there was a copy, and yet, after all this, "they submitted nothing to the committee." "Strange, passing strange."

It is true, that after having read a lengthy piece, he pocketed a portion of it in violation of his pledge to, and in contempt of, the committee, but it is not true, that he took off all that he had read, or that the committee knew nothing of the papers left in their possession, as stated in the Address. (Address, p. 14.)

After the committee had heard the statements on both sides, they deliberated on the subject for, perhaps, four hours, and then

gave the following advice, having been in session about eight hours, viz: "The committee state that the change of the covenant and name of the Church was ill advised and improper in the first instance—that the Church should have re-considered the vote adopting the preamble and resolutions, by which the covenant and name of the Church was changed, when 49 of her members asked for a reconsideration, and that the 49 members had a right, at their May meeting, to vote for a reconsideration themselves, when those members friendly to a change, left the meeting house. And the committee of helps, recommend to all the members of the Church, to meet together as a Church, under their old name and covenant, and endeavor by all means, in their power to unite in harmony and brotherly love." The committee then appointed their Moderator and Clerk to report their proceedings to the Church, and adjourned.

In pursuance of this advice, the Church appointed to meet on the ensuing Saturday, to effect if possible, the objects contemplated by the Helps, and accordingly, on the fourth Saturday in June, they met, and after approving and adopting the advice of the committee by unanimous vote, Messrs Hewett, Cassel and Vawter, appeared before them with a paper which they requested permission to read before the Church, and which they declared to be of an amiable and friendly character. The Church told them, that as members of the first Baptist Church, they could read any thing they had to communicate. In this character they were not willing to appear, but were willing to be recognized as citizens, or in any other character. The Church replied, that as citizens; they had no rights in the Church, and indeed, unless they gave themselves some definite character, they did not know how to recognize them at all. Mr Hewett again repeated, that the communication was of a pacific character, and urged for permission to read it. He was told that he could not read under any other circumstance than as a member of the first Baptist Church of Lexington, or as a member of some other Baptist Church of good standing.

About thirty minutes after the Church had been in session, brother W. C. Buck stepped in, and was invited to take a seat; he discovered that the object of Messrs. Hewett, Vawter and Cassel, was to be recognized as members of the Church of Christ on Mill street, in which character the Church was determined not to hear them, and fearing least the object of the meeting, as recommended by the committee, would be lost, which was, if possible, to effect a reconciliation, he rose, and after a few observations, designed to conciliate the feelings of the parties, and with a view to remove, as far as possible, the difficulties in the affair, submitted the following considerations, as a preamble to the reading of the paper, viz:

"We whose names are herein contained, ———— as representatives of that part of the first Baptist Church in Lexington, who voted for the preamble and resolutions to alter the name

and constitution of said Church, beg leave to submit the following communication to the said Baptist Church, in behalf of those members whom we represent."

To this, both parties at first consented, but upon minute examination, it was found that the name of "*Church of Christ on Mill street*" was not written on the paper, and they, for that avowed reason, refused to read the communication, although urged in a persuasive and affectionate address by brother Buck.

This, brother Moderator, is a correct history of this affair, and this is the "interference, influence, and advice of Elder Buck," complained of by our author, and which he has so egregiously misrepresented, in the forty-first and forty-second pages of the address.

On the 29th of the same month, the Church had a call-meeting, when a committee consisting of nine were appointed, to wait on those disaffected brethren, and in the language of the resolution, "affectionately entreat them to return to the embrace of the Church." At a subsequent meeting, on the ninth of July, the committee made their report, when it was ascertained that thirty-six had refused to obey the Church, and four others were in a state of suspense as to the course they should pursue. These facts we give in justification of the course afterwards pursued by the Church in relation to those members. At this meeting, there were five charges preferred against Doctor Fishback, with their specifications. The Clerk was ordered to furnish him with a copy of the charges, and cite him to attend a meeting of the Church on the 13th. Accordingly, the Church met, and when ready for business, (the Doctor being present,) the charges with the specifications were read, and he rose and read as his defence, a fulminating composition, filling half a sheet of letter paper on both sides, and at the close, read a decision of the Church of Christ, in which seven of the members of the Baptist Church were said to be excluded. This was the first intimation they had of this act of inquisitorial severity, and indeed it was only done the day before, so that he might be beforehand with the Church. The Doctor then retired, and the charges and specifications being established, the sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him by an unanimous voice. And on the same day, the Church expelled a thirty-five others for disorderly conduct and contumacy, and at a subsequent meeting, six more were expelled for the same cause.

Thus, brother Moderator, we have given you a succinct and correct narrative of this most painful affair, as far as it was transacted in the Church, and here sir, we can but express our unfeigned astonishment and grief, at the circumstances which we have been under the necessity of laying before you and the publick. We are afflicted that this distressing affair should have originated with a man whom we loved, with whom we have taken sweet council, and walked to the house of God in company, and that so many of our dear brethren and sisters, have been led astray by him. We are astonished to see what subterfuge, guile, and misrepresentation,

can be employed by a man under the awful name of a CHRISTIAN, simply to carry a point. "O tell it not in Gath, tell it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice."

We are aware, sir, that no remark of ours upon this subject, (as it appeared before the Association,) can bring any information to you or to the members of the Association, but as this celebrated reformation has gone forth in the form of a *book*, in which not only the character of the Church in Lexington and its individual members are shamefully misrepresented and traduced, but the character of other individuals and Churches, (Address, p. 19—21,) the character of the whole Association, and that of many pious and worthy ministers of the Gospel. We feel it our duty to lay upon our pages some of those circumstances, because we intend this pamphlet to follow this paper reformation, wherever it has gone, in order that it may reform and correct its baneful influence upon the minds of innocent readers.

And first of all, brother Moderator, let me ask you, why he headed his Church letter to the Association, with the name of the first Baptist Church in Lexington, when he had, in presence of the committee of helps, declared that "*the name Baptist, was a sectarian tag, and a hiding place for the devil?*" Was it not evidently to hide under it the schism which he had produced in the Church, and thereby get admission into the Association? Happy for society, that the Association was aware of the evil which our reformer had hid under that old fashioned name. But did it not make you stare sir, when you saw this good man hiding himself *where he had hid his Satanick majesty*. Dont be alarmed, brother Moderator, he is not the first Priest who has kept such company. But, sir, did he want admission into the Association at all? and if he did, what object had he in view? was it to harmonize and co-mingle with them? or did he consider himself a member of the baptist denomination? If he tells the truth he did not. (Address, page 36.) What then was the object, do you suppose, brother Moderator? We augur it was to throw the mantle of his reforming influence over the whole Association, and to pull them out of *the hiding place of the devil*, as he has attempted to do the Church in Lexington. This is not mere guess work, there are many living witnesses who can testify that they have frequently heard him say, that he intended to reform the Baptists in this country. Vain man!

Again, sir, what are the grounds upon which he has heaped so much censure upon the Association, upon his being rejected before that body? was it because the circumstances of the case were so entirely unknown to the Association, as to disqualify them for forming an opinion upon this subject? or was it because there was such manifest corruption in the Association, as to justify all that abuse which he has so wantonly thrown upon them in his book.

If these charges are laid injustice, the world would have a right to join in the hue and cry against the Association. But, we ask, was the Association ignorant of the facts in relation to this

matter? We say they were not. It is true, our reformer was not permitted to harangue and abuse them as he had done the Church and committee. But there were eighteen men of high respectability, who had sat on the committee, many of whom were members of the Association, together with a number of other respectable individuals who were members of the Association, or could otherwise give evidence in the case, to whom the circumstances were well known, and which were detailed before that body. We know that our author asserts in his book, that the members of the committee were not acquainted with the case, as he had submitted "nothing appertaining to the rights or the interest" of that Church to them.

If that be true, why does he impeach that committee in the manner he has done? (Address, p. 12, 13 and 43, and other places in his book.) Did they refuse to hear him or did they refuse to read what he had submitted to them? or where was the use of their reading what he had submitted, if there was nothing important in it? and if the paper he did submit was important, why did he falsify his word to the clerk of that committee, when he had borrowed those very papers of him, under a most solemn promise to return them, which he never fulfilled? [c] and if these documents were so important, why did he not act the honest man, and give them up to the clerk of the committee, who was also the clerk of the Association? and then their contents would have been before that body. Is a court to be charged with injustice and corruption, because one of the litigants refuses to produce his testimony unless they will permit him to act the *lawyer* and plead his own cause also? Astonishing, that a D. D. should thus contradict and circumvent himself. Was not all the important facts relating to the schism and misrule which he had brought into the Church in Lexington, fairly laid before you? or has he developed one fact in his *book*, over which he has been poring for three months, that the Association were not apprised of? We are persuaded he has not. What, then, is that important thing which you refused to hear, and about which he has made such ado? Is it not manifest, that the whole distress lies in the circumstance of his not being permitted to make a display of his brilliancy before that body, upon the subject of his new tangled theology, and far-famed principles of reformation, as set forth in his book? by which he hoped to carry confusion into the Association, thereby to add a few proselytes to the number of his deluded followers? This conclusion is too palpable and self-evident to be denied, of which his own book is ample proof.

But suppose the Association had have heard all this heterogeneous pile of monstrousness, had that body a right to have prescribed it to the Churches, as the articles of their faith? Is it not strange, that an advocate for church independence, should have conceived of such an idea?

To form, however, a correct idea of his views of church independence, we refer you to an article in the *forty-third page of the Address*. He there tells of a circumstance well calculated to illus-

trate this matter, as well as to give us a correct idea of his uniform consistency, humility and magnanimity of character. He there adverts to an act of the Church of Christ on Mill street, in which they had given the minority (as he calls them) leave to exist as a separate and independent body, and some time afterwards, they pass another act, by which they are not only deprived of their independence and liberty, but of their very existence itself, and simply because they were *too independent* to submit to their dictation. If we were in Spain, this would alarm us, but in this land of freedom, it bears so much the mark of childish imbecility, that it merits more the smile of contemptuous pity, than any thing else. This, however, is the kind of independence he would have the Churches to enjoy, under the auspices of an Association reformed by his influence.

We are sure, sir, that the knowledge of these facts, although they are but a few of the many we could produce, were it not for fear of swelling our pamphlet too much, is competent to remove from the mind of every unprejudiced reader, all that reproach which has been thrown upon the Church, the Association and Committee, by our author. It only remains, therefore, for us to expose the sophistical and contradictory character of his book, to wipe off all the injury which those communities and individuals may have sustained in public estimation, on account of that malevolent production.

Is it a small matter, sir, for the civil and religious reputation of a whole community to be assailed, and to be published to the world as outlaws, (Address, p. 16,) hypocrites and disorganizers, (Address, p. 18 and 19,) and to top the climax of detraction, to tell the world that some of those very men composed the *intellectual* strength of the Elkhorn Association? (Address, p. 14)

Is it true, sir, that none of those Churches from which the helps were called are in *gospel order*? Do not their members keep the Lord's day, nor bring up their children (at least as much as is common) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? have they not given the Lord Jesus Christ the *pre eminence in all things*? or is this inuendo designed to bear exclusively on the character of the helps? It would be doing the public, as well as those brethren who composed the committee, injustice, to attempt a vindication of their character, against the imputations thrown upon them by a single-handed sweep of our author. They are too well known to require our advocacy. The government, as well as religious society and society at large, have recognized in most of them, a weight of character and merit, which places them too far above the vulgar censures of a splenetick individual, to suffer in public estimation on account of any thing said of them in the Address.

There is a hidden something in the charge of a want of gospel order, made upon those Churches as well as that made upon the helps, that the generality of his readers do not perhaps understand, and which is left as an avenue through which to retreat in time of danger. We avail ourselves, however, of this circumstance, to exhibit an-

other proof of his want of candour, as well as to shew that it was not "for the name of Christ alone" that he introduced his preamble and resolutions into the Church.

He charges the Association with "having rejected their letter on account of the name of Christ," (Address, page 7.) and we do not hesitate to say, that the charge was known to be false when it was made, and that the truth was, that his rejection was on account of the innovations which he was making in society, under cover of that most holy name. But strange as it may appear, a similar kind of reasoning forms the ground upon which he makes the above charges against those Churches and the Committee. The truth is, it is because they bear the name of *Baptist*, and on this account, they are reproached as disorderly, and as having refused to "Christ the pre-eminence in all things."

We ask our reformer which is pre-eminent in his esteem? the words *Church of Christ*, or *Mill Street*, in the denominative title given to his followers? If he should say, as we suppose he would, that the *Church of Christ*, had the pre-eminence, we then ask why he did not consent to the proposition so frequently made by the brethren, and renewed by the committee to stile the Church, The First Baptist Church of Christ in Lexington, and thereby have prevented all the distress and misery, which he has otherwise brought into society? Is the word *Baptist* more unscriptural than that of *Mill Street*, or is it more sectarian in its nature? *Mill Street* is not not more local than the City of Rome; the one is the name of a place and so is the other. And why may we not distinguish these people by the name of "Mill Street Christians," as well as those by that of *Roman Catholics*. Either, however, would be as sectarian as that of *Baptist*. The one name is significant of a practice, the other two specifies locality. Why, then, the preference for *Mill Street*? Would the name of Christ have been less sacred, or less pre-eminent, incorporated with the name of the First Baptist Church of Lexington, than it is when affixed to the name of the Church on *Mill Street*? Or was his tender conscience so afflicted with the irreligious character of their Church covenant, as to drive him entirely out of the range of its influence? that cannot be the fact, because he was one of those that approved and adopted it, if he did not draft the instrument itself, which is doubtful. It is too manifest that his object was to rid himself of those members who had opposed his views of reformation, for there were some with whom he had frequently said he could not live; and here is the real source of all the personal feeling which has been in operation in this affair.

Again, brother Moderator, why does our authr continue to misstate the fact in regard to the ultimate vote of the Church? does he not know that a large majority of the Church has continued under her constitutional name, or does he intend to tell the world, that in real good English, the word *minority*, means what we common people have generally understood by the word *majority*? or does he, as a good Theologist, think that there is really so much

more christianity attached to the forty-two who offered themselves to the Association as the Church of Christ on Mill street, than there was belonging to the eighty-nine members of the first Baptist Church in Lexington, as to give them a title to the term *majority*, as commonly understood? or what other reason has he? For it is most certain, that he has, in every church act but one, called the fewer number the majority. (See Address.)

Strange as the above facts may appear, they are not more unaccountable than the extraordinary use he attempts to make of the circular letter of the Synod of Kentucky, for the year 1803. (See Address, page 62.) What will the Synod of Kentucky say to our author, for this liberty? and what purpose has it served him? We think, about as much as the raising of Samuel's Ghost by the witch of Endor, did Saul; which was to hear that he should die. For, after all his efforts to pervert and misapply it, so as to turn it to his service if possible, it still points the finger of reproof to the author of the Address, and says thou art the schismatick.

If Jereboam's sin in dividing the tribes of Israel, was so great as to make his name a proverb in Israel, how can that man escape the censure of the word, or the displeasure of God, who sounds the tocsin of war in Zion, and severs the Church of God assunder? arraying brother against brother, and friend against friend; destroying the fellowship of saints, the peace of society, and the harmony of families.

Brother Moderator, in making this response, we have not pursued our unfortunate author with the spirit of an enemy. It is true we have been compelled to expose his aberrations and temerity, but it has not been to vent any splenetic temper, but simply to vindicate the cause of truth, and the character of those whom he has implicated in his book. Yes, sir, our hearts have deeply felt when we have been compelled to inflict a wound, even on the author of the address, who seems to have had so little regard for the feelings of others, while writing his book. O fatal revery! how must a good man feel under circumstances of this kind? Will our author be offended with us, if we assure him that we are sincere in our prayers to God for him? Will he allow us in the tenderness of brethren to intreat him to turn his eyes to the mischief he has done, and repent before Him who is gracious to forgive, and he shall not find us unfavourable to peace with a penitent brother. O! can we ask in such a way as to melt his heart, how he feels, while the Lord is showering down his love and grace on the Churches around him, and particularly on the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations in Lexington, and reflect, that in consequence of the split produced in the Baptist Church by his means, that each party is left unblest, and are only permitted to look on as weeping spectators, without participating in the heavenly visit. O! Lord, we humbly pray thee, to turn his heart to the wisdom of the just, and to hide him under the cover of thy most gracious wings.

We have not been willing to risqe the statements herein contained upon bare assertion; we have added an appendix with notes

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and certificates, whereby, we have proved all the principal facts,
and whatever may be the course pursued in future, by our authority,
we do not intend to pursue this unpleasant subject any farther.

AB'M. S. DRAKE,
JOEL WALLINGSFORD,
WM. POINDEXTER,
WILLIAM T. SMITH,
PETER HEDENBURG, } COMMITTEES

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APPENDIX.

[a] SIXTH RULE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

6th. All ordinary business shall be decided by a majority of votes. The reception of members, whether by experience and Baptism, or by Letter, and the choice of a Preacher, by unanimity.

[b] CERTIFICATES.

I do hereby certify, that I attended the meeting of the First Baptist Church in Lexington, on the 3d Saturday in May last, and that after the meeting was opened in regular form, a question arose concerning their Clerk. Doctor Fishback contended that he had been appointed to that office at the April meeting; Mr. Poindexter contended that he had been regularly appointed the Clerk of that Church, that he had never resigned, nor refused to act, that he considered himself the proper Clerk of the Church, and was ready to officiate as such. Mr. A. S. Drake proposed that the Church should then decide who was their Clerk, which motion was seconded. The contention continued, and became very warm on both sides; the Moderator called for order, but could not obtain it. Doctor Fishback then moved that the Church of Christ adjourn until three o'clock, in the evening, and leave the schismatics in the house. On his repeating his motion, himself, the Moderator, and a number of other persons, immediately arose and left the house without either putting the question, or voting for an adjournment, that I either saw or heard. Given under my hand, this 16th day of November, 1827.

PETER HIGBEE *

I attended the May meeting of the First Baptist Church in Lexington, and do certify that the above statement is correct.

F. J. BRIDWELL.

I attended the meeting at the time and place above stated, and (not being a member of the Church,) for no other reason, than to witness the transactions, and do certify that the above statement is correct; no vote being taken on the adjournment.

ANN TAYLOR.

I attended the meeting alluded to by Mr. Higbee, at which time a contention arose about the Clerk. After a great deal being said by both parties, Doctor Fishback made a motion that the Church of Christ adjourn until three o'clock; if the motion met with a second, I have no recollection of it, but I feel very certain that the vote was never taken on the motion for adjournment. Doctor Fishback and his party left the house in confusion, at the very instant the motion was made.

LEWIS BARBEE.

*Mr. Higbee was not a member of the Church at that time.