

think ye of Christ?" "Whose Son is He?" This also is our test of orthodoxy. The *Herald and Presbyterian* is, therefore, mistaken when it says that I belong to a sect whose only creed is that it is not a sect and has no creed. The New Testament is devoted to an elaboration, illustration and application of the above statement of faith, which may with utmost propriety be denominated the *creed of Christianity*. Whether a people building on this Catholic basis can in truth be denominated a sect, is a question on the discussion of which I do not care at present to enter.

The apparent effort of the *Herald and Presbyterian* to identify Universalists, Unitarians and "the followers of Alexander Campbell" in their attitude towards human authoritative creeds, is unfair. The position of "the followers of Alexander Campbell" on the creed question is altogether different from that occupied by the Unitarians and Universalists. The latter have opposed, and do oppose, human creeds, because human creeds contain doctrines to which they object. Unitarians, for example, have carried on war against human creeds, because those creeds taught Trinitarianism. Universalists have opposed creeds because they taught future and eternal punishment. This is not at all the ground of opposition on the part of the Disciples of Christ. Our opposition to creeds, arose from a conviction that whether the opinions in them were true or false, they were hostile to the Union, Peace, Harmony, Purity and Joy of Christians, and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ. Two objects, from our standpoint, constitute the supreme good. The first is the union, peace, purity, and harmonious co-operation of Christians; the second is the conversion of sinners to God. Now because human authoritative creeds seem to be in the way of union, peace, purity, and harmonious co-operation of Christians, and so in the way of the conversion of sinners, "the followers of Alexander Campbell" have stood, and now stand, solidly in opposition to human authoritative creeds.

In any correct statement of this subject, the word *authoritative* must find a place. "The followers of Alexander Campbell" do not object, nor have they ever objected, to a simple confession or declaration of what they understand the Bible to teach.

Mr. Campbell defines "an authoritative creed" to be "an abstract of human opinions, concerning the supposed cardinal articles of Christian faith, which summary is made a bond of union, or term of communion." An authoritative creed, then, is a statement of doctrines used as a test, and enforced in the interest of absolute doctrinal uniformity. The only test which can lawfully be applied in discovering the fitness of any person for baptism and church membership, is the one already suggested: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "What think ye of Christ?" "Whose Son is he?" "What will you do with Jesus?" "If thou shalt believe in thine heart," is the way it is put in the New Testament.

On some such basis as this, the union of Christians can be brought about. It seems impossible to produce Christian unity on any other basis; nor is this unity to be deemed absolutely impossible. The Church of Christ in the beginning was united. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul. In Christ Jesus "there was neither Jew nor Greek, there was neither bond nor free, there was neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Him." Other foundations can no man lay for the Church of Christ, than that is laid, even Jesus Christ our Lord. The Master said, after Simon Peter's declaration of faith, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "On this rock I will build my Church." It is as clear as the noon-day sun, that the unity of the Apostolic Church was on the creed basis, maintained by "the followers of Alexander Campbell."

A word now as to the expression, "The follow-

ers of Alexander Campbell." I have used it in this communication because it was used by the *Herald and Presbyterian*, and as a quotation from that paper, and not at all because I approve of its use. As a teacher of theology, Alexander Campbell deserves if not a place in the first rank, certainly a respectful consideration. For myself, I do not hesitate to say that in the department of theology, I am a disciple of Alexander Campbell. I do not mean of course by this, to affirm that his teaching is infallible. Mr. Campbell was imperfect in his conception and presentation of the Christian system, as all men have been and are, but his work in this department was in many respects superior to the work of those who preceded him. As a teacher of theology, Alexander Campbell is worthy of a following; but if the intimation is intended that Alexander Campbell is believed in, and followed by anybody as Jesus is believed in and followed, the statement is altogether misleading, and cannot be too emphatically condemned. Alexander Campbell was not crucified for us—we were not baptized in obedience to his requirements, nor into his name. Every person connected with the people known as Disciples of Christ, reserves to himself the right to differ from, and to condemn the teaching of Alexander Campbell at any point. The Disciples are as absolutely free to think for themselves, and to express their thoughts in their own way, as if there had never lived on earth such a man as Alexander Campbell. I do not hesitate to say, when there is a necessity for it, or when it is appropriate, that Mr. Campbell was in error.

It is a fact worthy of note, that Mr. Campbell's name is not connected with any enterprise under the control of the Disciples of Christ. There is, for instance, no Campbell memorial Church. There is no *Campbellian Quarterly Review*. There is no *Campbellite Weekly*. There is no High School, Academy, College, or University bearing his name. There is no single volume in existence which sets forth distinctly, clearly, and systematically, his theological views. A book entitled, "The Christian System," approaches more nearly the nature of a theological treatise setting forth his opinions on the Biblical questions of his time, than any other volume in existence. Alexander Campbell is the author of the book mentioned. The facts here presented are certainly unique. The names of other religious leaders are freely used by those whom they have taught in such connections as are here suggested. The names of Calvin and Wesley are illustrations which will readily occur to any reader of this article. Those who are described by the *Herald and Presbyterian* as "the followers of Alexander Campbell," desire to be known only by the names applied to the children of God in the New Testament. They wish to be called disciples, Christians, brethren, saints, children of God, etc., etc. They repudiate the use of all human names as descriptive of the people of God as being necessarily divisive in character.

The *Herald and Presbyterian* predicts that the Confession of Faith, whether revised or not, will not be abolished. I have only to say in reply, that as an authoritative creed, the Confession of Faith is already abolished. One can enter the Presbyterian Church not only without subscribing to the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, but openly repudiating them. Nor is subscription to the so-called Standards essential to a place in the ministry of the denomination. The current discussion is bringing out, and making prominent the fact, that many of the leading ministers in the Presbyterian Church repudiate openly some of the prominent teachings contained in the Confession of Faith and in the Catechisms. The *Herald and Presbyterian* is, therefore, entirely too late with its prediction.

Whatever may be the outcome of the present agitation, one thing is certain, and that is the tendency of the thought and speech, and practice, of the Church Catholic is toward the primitive creed basis, and the union of believers for which our blessed Lord prayed; and in this tendency I rejoice—yea, I will continue to be glad.

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### "EATING MEAT."

"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world stands." I. Cor. viii. 15.

Paul loved his brethren and was ever ready to make any self-sacrifice rather than offend them or cause them to stumble. He was always seeking their good. He lived for others. And thus, in living to bless others, he was living for Christ, and could therefore say, "For me to live is Christ." There is no life more profitable or more beautiful or ennobling than a life devoted to others. We can afford to make any sacrifice of our own interest, if by so doing we can benefit and bless others. This is the true mission of love. Whatever our faith may be it will profit us nothing unless it leads us to sacrifice self and endure all things for the salvation and elevation of humanity.

The Apostle's resolution, not to eat meat if it causes his brother to sin, shows us that the right or wrong of an action depends upon the relation it sustains towards others or the effect it has upon others and not from any inherent virtue in or of itself. We cannot say we have a right to do as we please, unless it is when we please to do what is for the good of others. We have no right, from the standard of love, to do that which will prove an injury to others, for "love seeks not her own." Here is a safe rule by which we may determine the virtue of our actions, i. e., by the good effects they have on others. The Apostle knew that eating meat was a good thing in itself, when separated from the circumstances which made it a stumbling block to others. He did not make his ideas or his epistle or his desires for meat a standard of right. He was willing to lay these aside for the sake of others. How often we find ourselves violating this, the very best principle in Christianity. We have our own ideas of right and we make this the standard of right, and we think that the other fellow ought to yield his feelings and his ideas to ours, and if not we conclude he is violating Paul's "meat-eating" principle. We forget that we have the same right to please others that others have to please us. There are none who can be exemptive from this law of love. If I sacrifice my meat, when it offends my brother, he ought to sacrifice his fish when it offends me. This is a rule that must be worked both ways. We have seen persons who claimed to be offended by a meat-eating brother, who were themselves eating meat with all their might.

But, says one, "this is a hard thing to settle." Why so? "Because, if I refuse to eat meat for fear of offending one brother I may offend a dozen by not eating." "Is there anything in the law of love that demands of me to displease a dozen for the sake of pleasing one?" No, indeed! But the rule, "the greatest good to the greatest number," will forever settle this difficulty. If my motive is to bless others and do them good, I will seek the good of the greatest number.

This leads us to look very carefully at this rule of the Apostle, to see what he did not say. The reader will notice that he did not say that if eating meat would benefit and bless the cause of Christ, yet he would not eat it if it offended a brother. The rule does not teach us that we must not do what we believe to be of interest to the cause of Christ for fear of offending a brother. In Paul sacrificing his meat he was sacrificing his own interest and not the interest of the church. He would never sacrifice anything that would promote the cause of God. He would go any length in sacrificing his own good. He would "become all things to all men" and count himself as nothing; but never would he sacrifice any interest of the church for the likes or dislikes of any brother. This Scripture is badly strained when we make it mean that we should not do the things we believe would promote the cause of God because it may