

neither one thing nor other shall be adopted, which does not possess the most perfect validity.

The plan which an ingenious member of Synod, last year, so aptly called "first swallowing the carcass entire, and then vomiting the horns," has always seemed to me an absurdity, or worse. The Confession of Faith is already in existence, and if we are to stand by it, there seems no other method than taking exception to the parts of it which we regard as unsound. But, when framing a Basis for ourselves, surely whatever is not to be insisted on, should just be passed over in silence. What can possibly be the meaning of introducing certain propositions, and then, declaring them matters of forbearance? Is it to set forth, that these doctrines are true and important, and ought to be believed and professed; but that weak brethren may be excused who have not yet attained to them? If so, then I submit that the brethren ought, in candour and precision, to be arranged in two classes, the strong and the weak, and that we should all be required to take our place in the one or the other, as conscience may direct. Every one can see that this is absolutely grotesque. Surely then the reasonable method is just to exclude from the document all that is not deemed essential, which would imply that on the omitted points no profession is made, and that consequently, every one is at liberty to avow and maintain his own opinions.

The difficulty between the two Synods, I am told, relates to the extent of the forbearance that is asked. There is a perfect readiness to grant forbearance; but how much is required? It lies with us, it is said, to fix the boundaries; for unlimited forbearance cannot be conceded. Now I cannot suppose that any one imagines that what might be properly called unlimited forbearance is wished by any of us. There are scores of doctrines, and these of supreme importance, about which, I trust, we are all cordially agreed. The forbearance we ask is restricted to the fourth article of the Basis—restricted in fact to the doctrine of Christ's headship over the nations; and even there I think it is far from deserving the epithet unlimited. For we are all at one respecting the reality of his supreme and universal headship. The question between us is confined entirely to the nature, or kind, of that headship. We all go the length of holding that, all power in heaven and in earth has been given to him, that the administration of Divine Providence is wholly in his hands, and that consequently he is head over nations, and over all other institutions and objects throughout the whole of creation. We likewise all believe that his headship is exercised in a manner consistent with the glorious perfection of his nature, and is all rendered subservient to the purposes of his grace. I have intimated in former papers in the Magazine, that this is all the length I go. Some of my brethren probably go further, and I feel no disposition to break fellowship with them on that account; but honesty forbids me to profess concurrence with them in their sentiments. If for one, then, need forbearance respecting the whole of this doctrine, except to the extent specified above. But a general declaration of forbearance, such as is contained in our clause, would satisfy me, and I doubt not those