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This report was accordingly laid before the Board when met on April 1786. The members were at first very prejudiced, but weighed the matter calmly. They probably delayed giving judgment on the overture till their meeting in Spring, 1787. In the meantime, however, the proposed overture, with Mr. Frear's representation and the Synod's opinion on this subject were by order of council to be printed and sent to all the churches, in order that they might deliberate on the changes contemplated; and it was recommended that brethren should convene together on these questions in a casual and confidential manner. At this meeting it was also agreed, that the two questions in dispute should be put in the following manner till the cause was fully matured and settled:—

Question Second.—"Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, compiled by the Assembly of Divines, that met at Westminster, with commissioners from the Church of Scotland, as said Confession and Catechisms were received and approved by the vote of the General Assembly, 1617 and 1618, to be founded on the Word of God? And do you believe that the power of the civil magistrate, in matters of religion, mentioned in said Confession, should always be understood in a sense consistent with the nature of Christ's Kingdom, which is not of this world? And in this view, Do you receive the said Confession and Catechisms, as the confirmation of your faith? and, Do you promise, through Divine grace, firmly and constantly to adhere to the doctrine contained in said Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and to enjoin, maintain, and defend it to the utmost of your power, against all writers and opinions contrary to it?"

Question Fourth.—Do you own the perpetual obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League, in so far as the matter of them is founded upon, and agreeable to, the Holy Scriptures, without approving of the enforcement of these covenants by civil pains and penalties? And, do you believe that these covenants were a solemn engagement of adherence to the truths and ordinances of Christ, contained in his Word, and that additional guilt will be contracted by the present and future generations, if they shall renounce these Reformation principles? And, Do you believe that public covenanting is a duty, under the New Testament, to be performed when God in his providence calls to it?

The introduction of these questions as an *interim* Formula occasioned considerable agitation in the Synod. Though carried it did not give general satisfaction either among those who were opposed to the changes contemplated, or among those who were desirous of making them. Messrs. Porteous and Willis agreed to have it marked, that they disapproved of any alteration being made on the questions in the Formula. Mr. George Lawson dissented from the Synod's deed, adopting the question respecting the Confession of Faith. Mr. Andrew Lethian dissented from the adoption of the other question. And Messrs. David Greig, James Dawar, John Leitch, and Walter Greig, dissented from adopting either of the questions, because to them they appeared indefinite, and not calculated to answer any valuable purpose.

In regard to this *interim* arrangement, we are of opinion that it would have been better simply to have left the Formula as it was, till they were ready for adopting such changes as were to be final, and to leave Presbyteries to exercise the same discretionary power at the licensing of Preachers, or the Ordination of Ministers as they had been doing.

In regard to the qualification on the Second question,—“Do you believe that the power of the civil magistrate, in matters of religion,

is not intended to avoid Christianity, should always be understood in a sense
consistent with the essential nature of Christ's kingdom, which is not
of this world. There is no doubt, what was felt by members of the
congregation at the time, that no man or society has a right to put any con-
struction on the fulfilment of faith, or any book whatever, except the
one which it was intended to fulfil, and as the confusion does give
power to the imagination, inconsistent with the dignity, freedom, and
generality of the Kingdoms based on, as presented in Scripture, the
misunderstanding of the Christian era and to be explained away by any con-
struction of our own, but are to be altogether repudiated. In regard to
the fourth question, as somewhat modified, we think it contradicts
itself by requiring as much as far as the matter in the covenants is
founded upon and agreeable to Scripture, which seems to imply that
there may be something in them not Scriptural; and afterwards a de-
claration of belief that those covenants were a solemn engagement of
adherence to the truths and ordinances of Christ, contained in his word.
It was right, however, to confirm, the enforcement of those covenants
by pains and penalties; and this, with the condemnation of the un-
scriptural power assigned to the civil magistrate, formed the main sub-
ject of dispute at this period in the Assembly Synod.

The whole Church began now to be interested in this cause, and it commenced a little stir and agitation. The meeting of Synod, in 1797, was anticipated with concern, as likely to be of a stormy character, and many were apprehensive that this matter of disputation might lead to alienation, strife, and division amongst them. But we must restrain for the present the further consideration of this subject.

(To be continued.)

THE LIFE OF THE REV. THOMAS DOSTON. AUTHOR OF
THE "FOUR-FOLD STATE."

(Continued from page 15.)

But by far the most important and deeply interesting part of Boston's life was just about to commence. The Parish of Haverick had been vacant nearly four years. The patron had neglected to present a minister, probably that he might obtain the larger part of the stipend; the people had not called any one to take the spiritual oversight over them; and, consequently, the right of choosing a minister for the vacant parish devolved on the Presbytery. The call was made out for Boston; but, as he recognized the right of the Christian people to choose their own pastor, irrespective of either Presbytery or patron, he could not have accepted the call in its present shape, while, on account of its informality, it could not be sustained by the Church Court. Thus, an over-ruling Providence delayed the whole matter, till the people, having heard Boston preach, gave him a regular gospel-call, which he accepted after much prayerful deliberation. He preached his first sermon in Haverick, on the 28d June, 1797, from Acts 10, 23, "Now, are we here present before God to hear all things commanded thee of God." He enforced the duty, and showed the spirit in which we should attend all the ordinances of Divine appointment, from the consideration that we are before the Lord as our Witness, Judge, Lawgiver, Lord and Master of the family, and as our God. Alluding to his own mental struggles before accepting the call, and to the opposition of an heritor and two elders, who were opposed to his settlement, he said, "It is a commendable thing in a minister of Christ to comply with the call of God and his people, though it should be offensive to some, and not very agreeable to his own inclination. Ministers are to go, not where they will and others would wish them, but where God wills." What a contrast between this extreme conscientiousness and the self-seeking spirit of the present day, when ministers frequently go unbidden and run unmet.

In the Parish of Eborick, Boston had to encounter numerous difficulties. A considerable number of his parishioners were Cameronians, who affirmed, that it is a binding moral obligation on them and their descendants to swear the *Solemn League and Covenant*; and as Charles Second had sworn this covenant, in order to ingratiate himself with the Covenanters, they maintained that the same obligation devolved on all the successive occupants of the British Throne. They asserted, that 'no legal government could tolerate, far less establish Prelacy; and they continually urged the duty of imitating the example of those pious Jewish kings who slew idolaters and destroyed idolatry; for-