

the principles that are received and believed, and the means by which her object is to be accomplished ; in Scripture she is called a kingdom, and this view of her character evidently implies that she has a constitution. But it may be said, is not the Bible sufficient for this purpose ? The Bible is God's testimony to the world, and it is the supreme rule of faith and duty ; but since there is such a diversity of opinion respecting what is taught in that book, it becomes necessary, that every association professing to adhere to it, and to carry out its principles, should define its views and lay down the constitution of the association ; hence the diversity of views respecting what is taught in the Bible, gives rise to different associations or churches claiming to themselves the name of Christian ; those who approve of the principles laid down by a particular church or association, will naturally connect themselves with it ; and hence agreement or identity of view respecting what is taught in the Bible, becomes the bond of union to the association.

Again ; experience teaches the church, that such formulas of doctrine are useful and cannot be dispensed with ; they are necessary, not only as a bond of union, but as a standard of admission into the church. Persons holding views opposite to those contained in the constitution of the church are inadmissible ; to admit them, is to introduce into the association, elements that will work its ruin. Admission into the church is not the act of *one* office-bearer but of more, and their choice or pleasure is not the rule of admission ; but the principles received and believed by the church : a profession of approval of these, and of adherence to them,—moral character being unexceptionable,—entitles the applicant to be received into the association, and to participate in its privileges.

Again ; These formularies of doctrine may be viewed as exhibitions of the truth before the world ; the publication of these, is one of the ways, in which the church causes her light to shine upon the world. The different associations formed in one country, or in different countries, claiming to themselves the name of Christian, have a duty to perform to the world, and to one another ; viz., to declare their own character and constitution, that they may be known ; and the only way they can do this, is to issue their creed and Confession of Faith.

Again ; These formularies of doctrine may be received as excellent guides to the study of the Scriptures, preventing the members of the church, particularly the young, from falling into the errors, which are so speciously spread abroad.

Again ; The church often finds them useful for trying unsound and suspected doctrines ; her creed and confession of faith become the standard according to which her decision is given. He, who teaches contrary to the doctrines received and believed by the church, has violated her Constitution, and ought to be cut off from membership.

But does not the use of such formularies, imply a reflection on the clearness and sufficiency of the Bible as a rule of doctrine and of duty ?