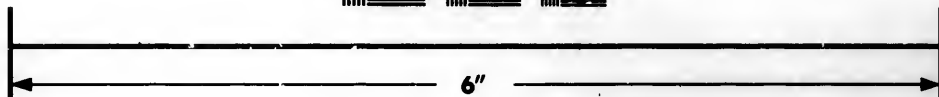
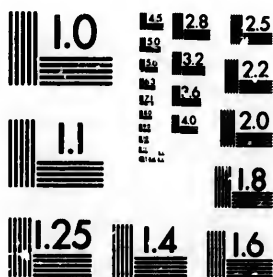


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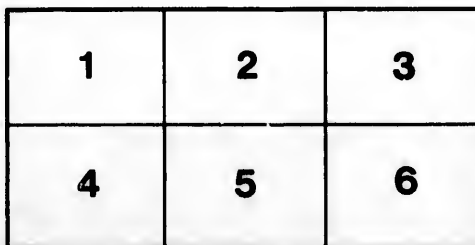
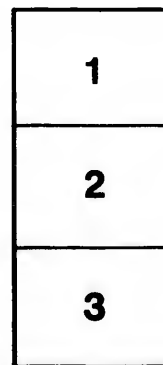
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SPURIOUS REVIVALS

IN THE

COUNTY OF LUNENBURG

EXPOSED.

A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE.

Public Archives of Nova Scotia
HALIFAX, N. S.

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SPURIOUS REVIVALS EXPOSED.

IN the autumn of 1872, the Presbytery of "Lunenburg and Yarmouth," in connection with the then "Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces," agreed to hold a series of evangelistic services in the several congregations within their bounds. The first of these was held in Clyde River congregation in the month of October. In due course the Presbytery met at LaHave on Feb. 14th, 1873, for visitation of the congregation, and on the evening of the same day the Presbytery again met for evangelistic service.

The meeting was presided over by the pastor. The theme discussed was, "What is a true Revival of Religion?" The first address was on "The Nature of a true Revival"; the second on the "Need," and the third on the "Means." In the first address, by the Rev. M. G. Henry, of Clyde, the characteristics of spurious man-made revivals were pointed out in contradistinction to those of a genuine work of grace. And in the last address, by Rev. P. M. Morrison, of Bridgewater, the means resorted to by some so-called revivalists to produce the excitement described by Rev. Mr. Henry, were pointed out, and objected to as being opposed to the means sanctioned by the Word of God.

A short time subsequent to this meeting, the following note was received by the Presbyterian

minister at LaHave from the incumbent of the
Methodist Circuit :

LUNENBURG, Feb. 22, 1873.

REV. MR. McMILLAN,
Manse,
LaHave.

Dear Sir,—

Having heard of your opinions concerning the work of God in connexion with the Methodist Church at Ritcey's Cove, and of Revivals in general, and feeling assured that such opinions as those promulgated by yourself and colleagues summoned to your assistance, cannot stand the test of reason or revelation, and are calculated to keep the ungodly asleep in their sins, I beg of you to give me the opportunity of meeting you in your church or mine, after due notice has been given to the public, to test your opinions by the Word of God, which must be your rule and mine.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

JOSEPH GAETZ.

To this the following reply was immediately returned :

MANSE, LAHAVE, Feb. 28th, 1873.

REV. JOSEPH GAETZ.

Dear Sir,—

Your note of date Feb. 22d is received. Contents noted. Your challenge is accepted. Either Rev. Mr. Morrison or myself will meet you at the appointed time and place to defend our views of Revivals, which you "feel assured can-

not stand the test of reason or revelation and are calculated to keep the ungodly asleep in their sins." I have only further to say, that I shall wait on you this afternoon with a friend in order to make the necessary arrangements.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Yours truly,

D. McMILLAN.

To REV. JOSEPH GAETZ,
Lunenburg.

Full arrangements were accordingly made for the discussion. And on the 2d day of March, at 2 o'clock, P. M., a large assembly met at the Methodist Meeting-house at Ritcey's Cove. The chair having been taken by Rev. Mr. Baxendale, Methodist, and Dr. McGregor, Presbyterian, and prayer offered up by Rev. W. W. Bowers, the controversy commenced.

As challenger of course Mr. Gaetz opened the debate. His speech was a jewel too precious to be hidden from the public eye. The opening paragraph was as follows: "This is a novel meeting. Little did I think that in the middle of the nineteenth century, with all the light of civilization and all the blessings of religion, I would be called upon to defend Revivals. But since it is so—(addressing himself to the respondent)—I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused by the *Jews*. Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

After this brilliant introduction, he devoted a

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full half hour, in tones that might be adapted to deaf ears in the open air (certainly more sound than sense), to exhibiting the future glory of the Church. Some of the passages were very fine, their diction and matter unexceptional—for every one knows that Punshon has written and published very fine passages.

Mr. Morrison replied. We need scarcely say that Mr. Morrison accepted the onus of debate, because the remarks made by him at the evangelistic service already referred to were those that chiefly awoke the challenger's ire, and that to him especially was the gauntlet thrown down. Mr. Morrison read the challenge, and pointed out the grave charges therein made against the members of L. and Y. Presbytery. He showed that there was no name either of persons or denominations mentioned in the addresses to which allusion was made, but that certain practices of certain revivalists were sketched, and that if Mr. Gaetz and his people saw their own image in the picture drawn, and like the "Dog" in the fable plunged into the water to grapple with a shadow, they only were responsible, and must take the consequences. He directed attention to the statement in the challenge, that the test of Scripture was to be applied to the views of Presbyterians on revivals, but that the only instance in which Mr. Gaetz quoted Scripture in his address, was one in which it was glaringly misapplied, though the speaker chuckled over it as a very smart thrust. Mr. Gaetz, the accuser, here appropriated the words of Paul, and addressed them, not to the judge, but to the accused. No ordinary Sabbath School scholar would make such an absurd blun-

der. He then showed that whilst the idea in the address was a true one, no person pretending to deny it, and that it was better set forth in the very addresses the speaker was attempting to criticise—still the address never *once* touched the point at issue in the challenge, which was the unreasonableness, unscripturalness, and destructive character of Presbyterian views of revivals. What are these views Mr. Gaetz did not know, but he (Mr. M.) would tell him. He then gave *resume* of addresses delivered on the evening in question, appealing to those present on that occasion and this, as to the correctness of his report. He closed by describing once more the objectionable practices indulged in by so-called revivalists, which he regarded as dishonoring to God and dangerous to the souls of men, and called upon Mr. Gaetz, if such practices were indulged in and countenanced by him, to show his scriptural warrant for so doing.

Mr. Gaetz flew to his feet, and devoted another half hour, not to the repeating of fine passages, but to some purely original vulgarities and personalities, of which he showed himself to be a finished master. Take this as a specimen: "Look at the Presbyterian Church in Lunenburg town, 100 years old, and to-day there are only three persons that can pray, and one of the three has of late been so busy, that he has given up praying. Look at the Presbyterian Church over here (Cross Roads Church.) It stands 35 years, and it has to-day only six or seven persons that can pray—and these are indebted to *spurious* Methodist revivals." We need scarcely add that in this

scurrilous address, the point at issue was kept at even a further distance than in the first.

Mr. Morrison replied. He showed that this was not a war with Methodism or Methodists, but a vindication of Presbyterianism and of the Presbytery from the false charges made against them, and an exposure of the dangerous methods adopted by certain parties to produce a revival. It was shown that, in connection with no Church, could true revival work be pointed out more fully than with the Presbyterians. It was conclusively proven that, while all the speakers at the evangelistic meeting insisted on the importance and necessity of revivals, that what many designate by that name are only mere temporary excitements over something which they call religion, which soon subside into a deadness the very opposite of religion, from which it is difficult to arouse their victims, and that the means employed to produce such excitements are wrong, because anti-scriptural, and invariably productive of evil fruits.

The challenge was accepted, because it was felt that the truth needed to be vindicated—that if it was not accepted, error would be permitted to triumph, to the great injury of immortal souls. We leave it to the public, on reading the “challenge,” to decide whether the course pursued by us was in accordance with wisdom: and to the audience who listened to the discussion, to say on which side the truth was, and was proved to be found. Thus we have given a necessarily brief notice of that day’s discussion. And in leaving this part of our subject we may add, that Mr.

Gaetz never had the honesty or manliness to withdraw his false charges or apologise for his rash and unwarrantable conduct.

On several occasions after this, the writer and other members of Presbytery were compelled, owing to the persistent efforts made in different parts of the County by certain parties to prejudice the minds of the people against Presbyterianism, and to proselytize to their own ranks by means of excitements of falsely-called revivals, to denounce the whole system of cunningly-devised religious quackery, and to exhibit to the people the true means of grace that God has appointed and the fruits which when effectual they invariably bring forth—in other words, to set out by Scripture tests the wide difference between genuine and spurious revivals—the true coin with its clear, sharp ring, and the base counterfeit that drops flat and dead from the hand of the forger. Most carefully, however, did we guard against personal attacks, and spurned the very thought of reprisals by the adoption of our calumniator's practice of seeking to drag parties from other denominational connexions to our own. We are not of those who act as if salvation was confined to the profession of our *ism*, and make identification with it the one thing needful. We have charity enough to believe that wherever the gospel is preached, there souls may be saved. And whilst we must ever feel ourselves bound to present the whole truth in opposition to all falsehood, yet we ask none to join our ranks except on the grounds of earnest conviction. But this very charity causes us to look for similar treatment from the hands of

others, and, when that is refused, to adopt honorable methods to secure the attachment and loyalty of our people.

In the winter of 1874 special efforts were exerted in different parts of this County to misrepresent our views, and draw away our people. In justice to ourselves and the cause which we represent in this County, we advertised a meeting to be held at Middle LaHave (where one of these "got-up revivals" was at the time in full blast), for the purpose of setting forth true views on the subject of revivals in opposition to the false methods and spurious results seen there. The meeting was held in the month of February, in the Union Church, which was crowded to overflowing by a deeply-interested audience. Rev. William Duff presided. After devotional exercises, and a few remarks from the chair,

REV. D. McMILLAN

delivered the first address, of which the following is an outline. After a few introductory remarks touching the circumstances which led to the calling of the present meeting, he began his address thus:

"If you wish to discover the various windings of a crooked path, all you have to do is to draw a straight line by its side, and every deviation is at once plain. On the same principle we propose to deal with the subject on hand to-night. We shall endeavor to show you that there is such a thing as a real, genuine revival of religion, and we shall also show you that there is such a

thing as a false, man-made, or spurious revival of religion—the one of God, the other of man—the one from above, the other from below.

“What is popularly called in our day ‘a revival’ has come to be looked upon with peculiar distrust. It is a mournful fact that from the excesses attendant and evil results consequent upon those spurious revivals which fanatics of a certain class ‘get up,’ many persons have been led to conclude that every revival is an evil, or at least that there is no genuine work of grace thereby accomplished. Now this is an evil as great as the other extreme. It is wicked—may we not say blasphemous—to call these ‘sons of thunder’ revival ministers, and to summon some of them to a particular Church for the express purpose of ‘getting up—as they say—’ a revival.”

“But while we condemn such fanatical zeal, at the same time we must not run into the folly of denying the genuineness of any revival. Such a course would be to run in the face of Scripture as well as Church history.

“In the history of the Jewish Church, the rise and progress of many revivals which were owned and acknowledged of God, are handed down to us for our instruction. I have only to refer to the revivals in the time of the Judges—in the time of such Kings as David, Josiah, and Hezekiah—and in the time of Nehemiah and Ezra, as instances of Bible revivals.

“The very word ‘revival’ is a Bible term. It is frequently used in the Psalms, sometimes where

David prays for a revival of the work of God in his own soul, and in other places where he prays that the heritage of the Lord may be revived. And in the prophecies of Habakkuk it is used where the prophet, looking at the sins and backslidings of Israel, and conscious of the necessity of a work of grace, prays that the Lord would revive his work even in the midst of such evil days.

“Coming down to New Testament times, we read of several remarkable revivals having taken place. Take as an instance the great revival on the day of Pentecost. And perhaps we cannot better discover the nature of a true revival of religion than by looking at that Revival in its beginning, its development, and its results.” — Acts, ii. 1—4.

After dwelling on this feature of the subject at some length, he remarked that the means employed in producing these mighty changes recorded in the New Testament scriptures, were just the means which the promoters of spurious revivals held most in contempt. A preached gospel is the means which God has especially appointed for turning sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. This is the ordinance of Christ for saving men. There is no genuine revival where this is wanting. Where the Word of God in its public and private ministrations is set aside or undervalued—as is the case in the “spurious revivals” of this County—whatever else is substituted in its place, no matter how good in itself—where the Word of God does

not hold the supremacy, the barrenness of nature will remain and leanness will enter the soul. It is written, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *Word of God*, which liveth and abideth forever." — 1 Peter, i. 23.

He then gave an historical summary of the remarkable revivals that took place in the Christian Church from apostolic times down to the remarkable work of grace now going on in England and Scotland under the sanctified labors of Moody and Sankey—by which he showed clearly that it is by revivals of religion, or rapid ingathering of many souls, God has heretofore seen fit to elevate his Church to its season of greatest prosperity.

Holding such views on the subject of revivals, he showed how utterly false and preposterous were the charge preferred against him, of being the avowed enemy of revivals.

He then passed on to speak of "spurious revivals;" pointed out the danger of such revivals; denounced the "penitent-bench" system as a delusion and a snare; exposed the jesuitical tricks practised by the advocates of this system, to make converts to their own ranks—converts to error and deception; showed the lengths to which they sometimes went in their blind zeal to obtain converts, by stating that some of these revivalist ministers had actually gone into the pews and literally *dragged* men and women to the edge of their holy ground, the "altar," or the "bench." He warned all present that if they would presume

to set aside the means sanctioned by the Word of God for the salvation of souls, to make room for schemes of their own devising, they would bring upon themselves a curse and not a blessing.

He concluded by reading the following extract from an article on "Revivals," in the March No. (1874) of "SWORD AND TROWEL," written by the editor, the celebrated Mr. Spurgeon:

"We deprecate most solemnly the excesses of certain revivalists. We lament the foolish rant, and false doctrine, which have poisoned former movements in certain quarters. It is undoubtedly most mischievous to endeavor to promote religion by external means, forsaking the use of 'human words from human hearts,' spoken in calm earnestness; it is unutterably evil to supplant the preacher by the priest, to play upon the fears of superstition, instead of appealing to the motives of the understanding. None can too strongly denounce these things, and we are right glad that all reasonable men should speak against them; whether they see the beauty of spiritual truth or no, we are glad that they can discern and detest the loathsome features of priestcraft. It is also true that it will never do to rely upon special efforts, and to relax the regular laborious endeavor of constant perseverance. To prefer an occasional fever to the healthy warmth of abiding health is most absurd. No ten days or fortnight of revival services can make up for the lack of continuous mission and the earnestness of all the year round. The tendency to look for occasions

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great gains instead of expecting daily increase, must not be suffered to grow or it will soon impoverish the church."

THE REV. J. H. HUNTON,

Lutheran Minister, of Bridgewater, next addressed the meeting, and spoke in substance as follows:

"I have been requested, by one of the pastors laboring here, to be present, and to participate in this discussion. Several reasons influenced me to accept this invitation. Had I declined to come, it might have been thought by some that I feared to commit myself on the subject to be discussed; while yet others might have thought that I, and the church of which I am an humble representative, had no settled views or practices upon the subject.

"I also felt that I owed it to our Lutheran people in the vicinity to meet them here to-night, and with them to meet our Presbyterian brethren, who conjointly with us own and occupy this place of worship, and with whom our relations have been most intimate and pleasant. As a denomination we are as deeply interested in the subject before us, as our Presbyterian brethren can be; we are exposed to the same disturbing and meddlesome influences, and are assailed by 'penitent bench' advocates in the same covert and unkind way.

"I have therefore felt it to be my duty to instruct our people on this subject, and to warn them against this modern device, frequently used

to entrap them, and to alienate them from the church of their fathers.

“I have no desire to conceal my sentiments on this subject; they have not been hastily formed, but are the result of conviction, observation and experience: these have led me to reject the “penitent bench,” or “mourner’s bench,” or “anxious bench” system, as they are employed in modern, so-called revivals.

“I fully concur in the remark made by Rev. Mr. McMillan: ‘It is not revivals that we oppose, but spurious revivals.’ I may add that a revival that is produced by the use of Scriptural means, is something which we all pray and labor for, and in which we would all rejoice; but when it is brought about by the use of human inventions and questionable appliances, we can but look upon it with suspicion and distrust.

“While we shall aim to speak plainly and pointedly to-night, we yet disclaim all desire to indulge in offensive personalities; we wish you to remember, my friends, that it is not individuals, but a system that we denounce as ‘a delusion and a snare,’—a system which persistently presses itself upon the attention of those who dissent from it, and strives continually to win them to its support. Penitent-bench revivals are extolled; its converts are commended, and they are encouraged to commend themselves. Many of them, although ignorant, claim superior light and boast of a high degree of sanctity. Much of this lofty and pharisaical spirit is but the logical and natural product of this hasty, fault-

and unscriptural system. It is a system, too, that claims a large share of charity; but this it has more in theory than in practice,—for it is most intolerant toward everything that will retard its work of proselytizing. To say aught against it, or to question the conversions said to have been effected in its use, is, in the judgement of its advocates, to oppose revivals, and to be an enemy of spiritual religion. Indeed, it is more than insinuated that those who have not passed through its ordeal are ‘without the witness of the Spirit,’ and at best are but partially converted. In proof of this, we need but to witness the efforts made to induce those who have been reared under a different system to come to the ‘bench,’ which is generally but the first step to renouncing and denouncing the churches to which they have previously belonged, and to which they are indebted for all the Christian knowledge they possess.

“The penitent bench system is, we think, very inconsistent—in fact, is consistent only in being inconsistent. Its friends enter into the Evangelical Alliance, and other associations, in which they recognize those not using or approving the ‘bench method’ as brethren sufficiently orthodox to be fellowshipped, and by resolutions declare their confidence in them; yet they will go into the charges of these same brethren, and seek to impress their people with the idea that to follow the teachings of such pastors, or to conform to such practices as they approve, is dangerous, will jeopardize their souls, and exclude them from heaven. Is such conduct consistent? Is it truthful? Is it honest?”

“The penitent bench, as a means of proselyting, has proven a success; it has been a most potent means of disturbing peaceful and prosperous churches, and of increasing divisions in the Church of Christ. But as a means of extending the religion of Jesus to the regions beyond, we can but regard it as a failure. It is not the system that reaches the heathen, or enlightens the ill-informed Romanist. Here, excitement and the machinery of so-called revivals, must give place to the faithful teaching and expounding of the Word of God. If this system is scriptural, and so potent for good, why modify it in dealing with the cool and calculating unbelief of the classes named?”

“My acquaintance with the working of this system in this Province is brief and therefore limited; but I have seen much of its evil fruits in Canada and the United States. The more I have studied it, the more have I been impressed with its evil tendency. Although the Lutheran Church has no place in it for such a system; yet there was a time, when a number of our pastors in the United States were carried away by it. One of this number remarked to me, that he believed it to be ‘the lever of Archimedes by which the cold and formal Lutheran Church is to be lifted into a new sphere.’ That man, many years since, relinquished that idea as a ‘delusion and a snare,’ and now deeply regrets the many years he spent in perverting our Lutheran people. He told me recently, that it was the saddest mistake of his life, and he greatly feared he should not live long enough to repair the injury he had done.

"The long evenings of winter were found to be the best time for 'getting up' these revivals. So long as the excitement and attendant pressure lasted the converts were kept well in line; but when these ceased, and the opening Spring called them into other associations, they soon fell away: 'like the sow that was washed they returned to their wallowing in the mire.' The next winter the same machinery was brought into play, and the same scenes were re-enacted.

"It is evident that this state of things could not long continue without bad results. Every time these persons 'fell from grace,' as they called it, they became more and more hardened, and were either driven into infidelity, or had to adopt false and deceptive views of Christianity. Thus it happened that many of our congregations, that had, in some instances, been well-nigh frozen by coldness and indifference, were by this system so completely *burnt out* as to leave nothing but the charred and blackened remains. I have seen more than one of these 'burnt districts.'

"We object to the system, because its fruits show more of the work of man than of the grace of God. One of our pastors, once the friend and supporter of its machinery, relates the following anecdote, which serves to illustrate this point. After having participated in a great 'bench' revival meeting, during the Winter, he had occasion, the following Spring, to travel through the same neighborhood. Passing along he met a man, who was under the influence of ardent spirits. The minister did not know him,

but he knew the minister, and expressed astonishment at his not knowing him. 'Why, Sir,' said he, 'you are the man who converted me at the great revival at T—— last winter.' The pastor replied, 'Well, I suppose I did it: God did not do it, or you would not be drunk as you are.'

"I understand that in this County those spurious revivals are of yearly occurrence in some places, and in other places they occur once in three years. And I have it on the most reliable authority, that just in proportion to their frequency has a loose standard of morals prevailed; or, in other words, those who have been oftenest before the 'wooden god,' or oftenest 'drunk' by such wild deluges of feeling, have by their after walk and conversation given the greatest cause to doubt whether they possessed any religion at all. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' There may be some who receive such remarks as these with scepticism, and others who may pretend to be shocked at my impiety. But let them not be too hasty. I believe in revivals. I daily pray and labor for a true revival of religion. But that I know must come from God.

"It is the earnest, faithful preaching of the gospel, accompanied with earnest, persevering prayer, that can alone be depended upon for a true revival of religion. Let us, my friends, adhere to the Word, the preaching of the gospel, and prayer, and leave it to others to defend and use questionable means."

It is with no small regret that we cannot find

room for the whole of Mr. Hunton's admirable address, of which the above is a synopsis. Mr. Hunton, from observation and experience, knew whereof he affirmed, and handled his subject with intelligence, eloquence, and a most telling effect. The meeting was next addressed by

REV. P. M. MORRISON,

who spoke in substance as follows:—

"We are here to-night, not to engender ill-feeling among professing Christians of different denominations, but to exhibit what we hold to be the truth on the all-important subject of revivals of religion; and to show the evils of a system, operated widely in this County, with the ostensible object of promoting the interests of the gospel. I allude to the 'penitent-bench' method of 'getting up' miscalled revivals. It is scarcely necessary for me to describe this system to such an audience as the present; its whole machinery is only too familiar to your eyes; so that to give a detailed account of it would be to insult your powers of observation. Let me simply say that not any one particular feature or part of this system, but the whole system in its entirety, with its aim and results, is what I now contend against.

"If any object against this meeting, that it is an unwarrantable interference with the practice of neighboring Christian denominations, I reply by asking, Who is to blame? The unfortunate truth is, that the interference originated, as will hereafter be shown, with those who now beg for quarter. There are people in the world exceedingly

brotherly in *profession*, so long as you let them have all their own way—which way is to regard all property, no matter to whom it pertains, not surrounded by their own fence, as common hunting-ground, to be scoured and ravaged by them at their pleasure. But if you happen to suggest that other people have private rights, that all good neighbors ought to respect, immediately there is sounded the cry of persecution, and there is claimed the honor of martyrdom. Some of our neighbors, unfortunately, happen to be of this stamp; and since we cannot tamely acquiesce in their policy, we prefer being falsely called persecutors to being really cowards, and false to 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' Our policy is not retaliation, but self-defence, and defence of the truth.

“ I object to the whole machinery of the ‘ penitent-bench ’ on several grounds, some of which I will now briefly state :—

“ 1. Because it is a human invention. We find nothing resembling it in the practice of inspired preachers and teachers. The weapons of their warfare were the divinely-appointed means of grace, praise, prayer, the Word and sacraments. They had perfect faith in the power of the ‘ gospel of Christ, ’ and were, therefore, never tempted to abandon it for the weak instruments of human device. If warrant can be pleaded for the penitent-bench system from the sacred page, we beg to be supplied with the reference. We have more than once challenged our opponents to this issue, but they have never had the temerity to join it. What is the unavoidable inference?

Surely that they themselves do not believe that the Word of God gives it any countenance. The final arbiter of all religious controversy is the Word of God. By its decision, systems of worship and doctrine must perish or abide. The penitent-bench can find no footing here, and must tumble to its fall—an inglorious heap of ruins.

“ 2. I object to this system, because it presents an utterly false idea of conversion. It directs attention, not to the Cross and the consequent turning from sin to holiness, but to the mere fact of coming forward, and kneeling at the bench. I do not say that this is the desire and aim of all who practice it — perish the thought! — but I do say that this, in the very nature of the case, is the actual tendency. The mere fact that they have come forward to the bench is made by multitudes a ground of security. Coming to the bench is looked upon as accepting Christ; it is made the test of their regeneration; they are new creatures because they have been induced to leave the pews and kneel at the bench. In this way carnal security, that most deadly bane of true religion, is fostered, and immortal souls are rocked asleep in the cradle of a false assurance, beneath the soothing lullaby of a deceived imagination. It will not do for our opponents to say that this is a misrepresentation; for their own practice confirms it. In counting up the results of what they are pleased to call ‘a revival,’ produced by this method, they invariably reckon every one as converted, who has been at the bench, but no others. Is not this effectually saying that all who come forward are spiritually safe? And is it really

any wonder that the uninstructed people look upon it as a ground of security?

“3. I object to this system, because it addresses itself to the feelings only, and its action is entirely on the sensibilities; and consequently, as experience proves, its converts are not genuine, but wanting in the fruits of holiness. Whoever has taken the pains to observe, must have been impressed with the fact that during the preaching of the Word,—which generally precedes the operations of this special device, and which is sometimes well done, though oftener, from dearth of Bible truth, very ill,—no results that the bench-patrons regard as satisfactory are ever witnessed. All goes on ‘decently and in order.’ It is not until the bench machinery is set in motion that the excitement begins. But then, in proportion to the ability of the operators to excite the fears of the audience, and to show that coming to the bench is the sure and only way of life, there is a scene of confusion that often baffles description. The entire controlling power is the emotional nature. The converts are drunk with excitement, and can suddenly pray or discourse on religion with considerable fluency—we cannot add coherency. To this result its advocates confidently point, as an evidence of true conversion; and many are silenced by the argument: they cannot understand or account for it otherwise. But there is no difficulty in explaining it on other grounds. It is well known that the same effect is often produced by some alcoholic stimulant. I have had persons apply to me for church privileges under its influence, and they could *talk* religion inter-

minably. I know of a woman in the city of F—, who frequently stole away from her husband's side by night, and, becoming at some low groggery 'unco fu', was sure to fall into raptures—very much resembling those of penitent-bench converts—over the heavenly visions she was favored with. Men drunk with excitement are, sometimes, in some respects, like men drunk with wine. Saul was among the prophets: Pharisees made long prayers. Our point is, that speaking on religion, and praying in public, are not infallible tests of conversion; and we submit that it is fully and fairly made out.

“ That these results do not flow from the truth taking possession of the heart, is seen from the fact that the Adventists—a class of religious adventurers, or perverters of the gospel,—produce the like results by the same system. You have already heard to-night how, a few years ago, they broke up several congregations in the County of Shelburne, making Adventists, but not, alas! Christians of their adherents, by this very method.

“ Again, the test of time and fruit-bearing finds the system and its results to be utterly wanting. Love, the first in the catalogue of the fruits of the Spirit, given in Paul's epistle to the Galatians, is markedly absent from penitent-bench converts. When these come—as we will soon see they are often brought—from other denominations, instead of returning to their old fold, to work for the conversion of their brethren, their former church-connection is eschewed and vilified, and

their pastor particularly denounced in the most unsparing terms.

“But what becomes of these converts a few weeks after the excitement is over? You have already heard. And you have seen it too often in this community. They have gone back to the world; but, alas! all the more steeled against the sword of the Spirit, because, as they suppose, they were once converted. All kinds of shams are injurious, but sham in religion is deadly, and any system that fosters it is pernicious and its results spurious.

“I do not assert that there are never any persons genuinely renewed at these meetings. I am glad to believe that some are. But I hold that they are converted, not as the result of the system, but in spite of it. They are born of the incorruptible seed of the Word, which is sometimes scattered. But this in no wise redeems the system. It is false, and, as far as it bears fruit at all, bears fruit of an evil kind.

“4. I object to this system, because it overlooks the sovereignty of God. This I hold to be one of the most prominent and also one of the most precious doctrines of the Word of God; and any system that can ignore it is utterly unscriptural. Now there is no difficulty in showing that this system does. The time and place for a revival, by this means, are fixed beforehand. The employers of it determine to ‘get up’ a revival, at such a time, and in such a church; and there and then, according to this theory, the Spirit of God must come. It is even announced beforehand, sometimes, how many shall be converted! And

then, it is not even every part of the building, in which the saving work may be done, but only at the sacred altar-rail. Does a revival under these circumstances ever fail? Never. It is always 'got up' just as the projectors planned. Its character is thus exhibited; for true revivals are brought down, like every other good and perfect gift, from the Father of lights. True revivals are not 'got up.' They are from above. They are brought down by the diligent use of the means of grace,—the Word and prayer,—for faith cometh by hearing the Word of God, and the blessings of salvation are granted in answer to believing prayer, according to the Divine warrant: 'For these things will I be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.' God is the hearer of prayer; but, as He teaches us in the parable of the unjust judge, He uses his own sovereign pleasure as to the time when He will bestow the answer. It is ours to pray constantly in faith, expecting to be heard; but not ours to predict a time when we shall begin to pray, and limit the Spirit of God to that time and place for the answer.

"5. I object to this system, because it introduces confusion into the worship of God, contrary to the order in 1 Cor. xiv. 26. When this system is in operation there are some persons down among the audience inducing them to come up to the bench—sometimes even dragging them up; others are engaged in speaking in a half-audible voice to the kneeling penitents; others are praying aloud; and still others are sometimes singing. We testify what we have seen. Now let any one compare this procedure with the instructions given in the

passage to which we have referred, and then candidly answer the question, Is it scriptural? Let me not be misunderstood, as if I taught that personal dealing with the conscience is not required. I know that it is, and the more we have of that, following the preaching of the Word, the better. But I hold that this system does not meet that desideratum,—is neither calculated nor intended to meet it. There are scriptural methods of meeting it: this method is antisciptural.

“ 6. I object to this system, because it is a proselyting system. Its history is notoriously one of proselytism in this County. Through it one denomination has been built up, by drawing from the ranks of others. That body cannot point to one who has ‘come over to them’ on the grounds of conviction alone. They have all been secured through the channel of the penitent-bench. And one of the special objects of the employers of the system, in this County, is to induce the people of other denominations to attend their meetings when it is employed, and persuade them, on the plea of becoming Christians, to come forward to the bench and enrol themselves in their communion. It is a common practice, in some parts, to visit the houses of other bodies, and to endeavor to prejudice the minds of their inmates against the tenets of their own creed. Their own pastors are represented as men who care nothing about their souls, whilst they are willing to endure anything for their well-being,—a protestation sadly falsified when people have the common sense to let them know that their guise is too transparent, and that they have quite as little faith

in *their 'ism'* as in any other. Now what shall we say of a system, one of whose main pillars is this proselyting spirit? What would be thought of the army where the officers of one company sought to recruit it from the ranks of another? Is it more honorable in the Christian army, for one denomination to seek to steal from another? Is this the spirit of the great Apostle who would not build on another man's foundation? Is it the commission received from the Master — to break into the ranks of fellow-Christians, instead of advancing steadily and bravely against the thick forces of the world? Surely when the field is the world, and hundreds of millions of its population require yet to be evangelized, it is all but beneath contempt for any denomination to make an aggressive war on its neighbor. And we may add that but for this unholy zeal to gain converts from other churches, this iniquitous penitent bench system would have had no local habitation nor name in this fair County of Lunenburg.

Such are some of our objections to the penitent-bench machinery; we might enumerate others, but we cannot further trespass on your time and patience. But—ere we close—shall we be denounced as an enemy of revivals because we decline to subscribe to the bench method of getting them up? So our opponents have been pleased to deal with us, and they have spared no pains to misrepresent our views. But we point to our past record as an emphatic denial of their charges. Whoever knows the history of Presbyterianism will be satisfied with the proof. Whoever knows anything of the preaching and the

labors of the humble representatives of Presbyterianism in this County, will understand how baseless is the slander circulated against us. We believe in, we labor for a genuine, not a spurious revival of God's work in this County. But we do it, to the best of our ability, according to the means which God himself has been pleased to appoint for that purpose. We do it without attempting to interfere with the ecclesiastical relationship of our neighbors. We abhor *sheep-stealing*, and not less do we detest religious pilfering. We insist on the faithful and pointed exhibition of the truth, accompanied by fervent and believing prayer, as the means of reviving saints and quickening sinners; for we believe that 'it has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.' These means we shall continue to employ, strong in the faith of their divine virtue, while we protest against all additions or deviations of men. We trust the time is near, when the word of God shall have free course and be glorified, in this County and the world. Its preaching has not been in vain in the past, but the present condition of the Church and the world loudly calls for a genuine revival. Mr. Morrison closed, with an appeal to his hearers to accept at once the offers of salvation, and to go forth, at the bidding of the Master, and labor and pray for the conversion of sinners, and the upbuilding of the Church of God.

We cannot but regret that our limits will not allow us to publish Mr. Morrison's able address *in extenso*. Mr. M. is always happy in his public addresses, but on this occasion he excelled

himself. There was no ranting, no declamation. All was cool, close, pungent reasoning. While dealing with the evils of a dangerous system of religious quackery, he, at the same time, presented the truth in a plain, earnest and forcible manner; and the large audience manifested their interest and appreciation by the breathless attention with which they listened throughout his whole address.

The proceedings were closed by a short, but telling address, from

REV. WM. DUFF.

He said that he, too, a tale could unfold of the foolish rant and dishonorable conduct of penitence-bench advocates, which have so often proved causes of shame and sorrow. He could tell of the peace of families, of churches, and of whole communities having been broken by such religious quackery; in some cases by men whose antecedents were not of a character to reflect credit on either themselves or the church which employed them.

He then proceeded to show that without prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit, there could be no depth or reality in our spiritual exercises.

There may be abundance of stir and excitement and activity about the things of God—there may be tongue-confessions, lip-conversions—the melting of the eye—where there is no contrition of the heart; apart from the Holy

Spirit, there could be no real conversion, no genuine revival.

He concluded by saying that he fully endorsed the sentiments advanced in all the addresses of the evening, and hoped that the interests of truth and godliness in our midst would be promoted by the interesting and instructive discussion of that night.

We have thus given a pretty full and accurate report of the addresses delivered at one of the most interesting and important meetings ever held in the County—a meeting which, we may add, produced a powerful impression on the community in which it was held, and which resulted in successfully confirming the minds of some, opening the eyes of others, and setting all athinking.

As a commentary on a part of the system we have thus endeavored to expose, as well as for the vindication of the truth, we publish the following correspondence, which originated in a conversation which took place in May last past, between the Presbyterian minister at LaHave and the present incumbent of the Methodist Circuit of Lunenburg. The correspondence speaks

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for itself. We may state in explanation, that on a Sabbath previous to the conversation referred to, Mr. Smith, in his pulpit at Ritcey's Cove, treated his audience to an attempted *expose* of the soul-destroying doctrines of Presbyterianism—several of the Presbyterian ministers in this County being by name maligned. On this occasion he pretended to read *verbatim* from Confession of Faith, Chap. III, and stated that it was therein contained, that God from all eternity determined to make a certain portion of the human family reprobate, and also that He foreordained to damn them irrespective of moral character to the praise of His glorious justice.

The conversation turned upon these statements: Mr. Smith asserting that they were there as he publicly stated—Mr. McMillan firmly denying that these statements were found in the Chapter in question. This led to the correspondence, which we now present to the public to decide on which side *truth* and *honesty* were proved to be found:

LUNENBURG, April 29, 1875.

Rev. Sir,—On referring to your "confession of Faith" &c., &c., I find both statements I made—and that *Rev. Mr. McMillan contradicted*, therein contained and taught.

Hoping this correction may suggest caution.

I am, *Rev. Sir, &c., &c.,*

RICHD. SMITH,

REV. D. McMILLAN, LaHave.

MANSE, LAHAVE, May 5, 1875.

Rev. Sir,—

Your note to me of the 29th inst. is to hand, in which you say—"on referring to your 'Confession of Faith' &c., &c., I find both statements I made and that Rev. Mr. McMillan contradicted, therein contained and taught."

Not to waste words in extolling the elegance of the above sentence, permit me to say that your syntax and Theology both stand on the same elevated level.

I. You say, "I find both statements I made in the Confession of Faith, &c."

You had better borrow again and turn up "Confession of Faith," Chap. iii., and you will find that the word "reprobate" does not once occur in the Chap. from beginning to end. That the word *is* there you well know was the first "statement" you made, and "that Rev. Mr. McMillan contradicted."

II. The second statement which you made and "that Rev. Mr. McMillan" also "contradicted" — was that our Confession of Faith contained the following passage, viz.: "God from all eternity damned a certain number of the human family *irrespective of moral character* to the praise of his glorious justice."

Please refer again, Rev. Mr. Smith, to Chap. iii, Sec. 7, of said Confession of Faith, and you will find the statement to be that the non-elect God "ordained to dishonor and wrath *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice."

These are the statements *you* made, and that *I* contradicted.

Now, Sir, permit me to say that when you still maintain the correctness of said statements after professing to have referred to the Chap. in question, I am forced to the conclusion: that you must either be incapable of understanding the construction of language that a child might comprehend, or that you lack the "essential element."

"Hoping this correction may suggest" not only "caution" but also honesty in dealing with documents,

I am, Rev. Sir, &c. &c.,

D. McMILLAN.

N. B. — Although the word "reprobate" does not occur in our "Symbols," at the same time by no means understand me as denying the doctrine of Reprobation as set forth in the word of God.

D. McM.

LUNENBURG, 17th May, 1875.

REV. D. McMILLAN.

Dear Sir, — Your note dated "April 5th 1875" acknowledging the receipt of one from me on the "29th ult" came to hand late on Saturday night, 15th inst. (May.) I must say your Dates, Denials and Decrees have all to my mind a very striking likeness.

Your note, Sir, does you no more credit than your conversation did you at the time of our last interview. To Rid yourself of the difficulty involved in your denial that the term "Reprobate" was in the Confession of Faith you substitute

Chap. III. for "Confession of Faith" and say, "The word reprobate does not once occur in the Chapter from beginning to end." Now Sir, this "Wriggle" is *simply contemptible*. I said the term was in your "Confesn. of Fth." You denied it &c., challenged me to find it, it was found only too soon for your Credit. You are therefore *as a man* to say nothing of higher obligations bound to confess your Error and apologize for your denial.

In trying to clear up the second thing you denied, viz., That the Decree was made irrespective of moral character you have recourse to what I conceive to be *Foul misrepresentation*—attempting to make me say that the "Confession of faith" taught, "That God from all eternity *damned* a certain number of the human family irrespective of moral character to the praise of his glorious Justice. The above quotation never once passed my lips. I did say that your acknowledged standards taught, That a part of the human family was eternally Decreed and foreordained to be saved, and the rest of them to be lost, irrespective of moral character and that the numbers were so definite that they could be neither *increased* nor *diminished*. Here Mr. McMillan you *forge, coin, or interpolate* the word "*Damned*" for "*decreed and foreordained*."

I said the Decree was made, as taught by your standards and acknowledged authorities *irrespective* of moral character. I say so still, and do most honestly believe this view is taught in the book known as "The Confession of Faith" or "The Church Standards" See Chap. iii Sec 1,

2, and elsewhere in said vols. as may hereafter be publicly set forth as occasion may serve.

And now Brother McMillan with a man so willingly forgetful (to use the softest terms) of the Teachings of his own acknowledged standards—with a man so ready to misrepresent with *garbled statement* or *quotation*—with a man so *disingenuous* as appears the occupant of the Presbyterian Manse of LaHave, I purpose to have nothing more to say or do personally. But with principles that dishonor the Divine Being, and destroy souls for whom Christ died, I shall deal as the Lord may give sight and grace putting the Presbyterian system of Decrees, Election, Reprobation, Foreordination and irresponsibility in one scale, and the Methodist system of Christ crucified for the world, Repentance toward God and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, Psalms, Hymns, Spiritual Songs, and Prayers for all men, with man's personal accountability to God, in the other scale; and let the people judge from time to time which system is the more likely to glorify God—benefit mankind—and result in the general Revival of the work of God in County.

Wishing you well for time and eternity

I am, Rev. Sir, &c. &c.

RICHD. SMITH.

The Revd. D. McMillan, &c. &c.

MANSE, LAHAVE, May 30, 1875.

REV. RICHARD SMITH.

Dear Sir,—Yours of the 17th inst. is before me, to which I must now briefly reply. You will allow me to say, at the outset, that upon a perusal of your communication I cannot congratulate you on any improvement either in your syntax or theology.

To any person desirous of showing up the blunders into which conceited ignorance is apt to fall, your letter presents a very inviting subject. But here I forbear.

I. You characterize my definite indication of Chapter iii. of Confession of Faith as not containing the word "reprobate," as a "wriggle simply contemptible." Let us see. You professed to be dealing with, and quoting from Confession of Faith, Chap. iii., therefore, 1st, I confined my attention to it. But 2ndly, the compilers of the Confession of Faith, unlike the Rev. Richard Smith, understood the principles of logic, and consequently made each division of their subject exhaustive and complete.

In Chap. iii. they treat of "God's eternal Decree," and then express fully their statements in reference to predestination and foreordination. To this Chap. therefore, even a child that has advanced so far as to know that books are divided *into chapters* for the special treatment of certain subjects, would turn for the word in dispute.

The Rev. Richard Smith, the great representative of Methodism in this County, it seems has not made so much progress in book knowledge.

Can it be possible that you are now living beneath the very shades of the County Academy? But, Sir, I not only stated that the word is not to be found in Chap. iii, but also in a note at the close, declared that it does not occur in our Symbols in the sense in which you used it; yet you say it was found only too soon "for your credit." My credit, Sir, has nothing to fear the lapse of time, if it lasts only until the word "reprobate" is found in the Confession of Faith in connection with the doctrine of God's Decree, I demand from you the Chapter and Section of the "Confession" where the word occurs as you quoted it. Upon your producing these, I will pay \$600 cash towards the support of Missionary No. 1 that the Methodists of the Lower Provinces send to the heathen! On your profession, how can you obtain a \$600 subscription so easily?

Now, Sir, where is the "contemptible wriggle"? In the serpentine form that coils alarmingly near the Rev. Richard's mind. "Therefore as a man," you add, "to say nothing of higher obligations, you are bound to confess your error and apologise for your denial." What higher obligations do you refer to? Does Wesleyan Theology teach that a man can have a higher obligation than as a man? Do you need to "daub your untempered mortar" with Darwinian evolutionism? As to confession and apology, would it not become the man that can repeatedly assert that a certain word is found in a document, when the evidence of his own eyes testifies the contrary, to take the advice to himself? Do you know the proverb, "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones."

Mr. Smith, your covering is equally transparent and brittle.

II. A very few words will dispose of the second point. Even if it were true, which I deny, that your method of expressing the teaching of our standard was changed, as you claim, by the "forging, coining or interpolating" of a word in my last note, still your meaning would not thereby be altered; for, 1st, any man capable of judging will pronounce my sentence that you disclaim; and the one you substitute for it, the very same in sense and meaning; and, 2ndly, the point is not whether the parties spoken of are "damned" or "lost," (although in the broad Bible sense of these words I can see no difference,) but whether the Confession of Faith teaches that they are foreordained to be lost "irrespective of moral character." This is what you assert you honestly believe it teaches. This is just exactly the point that I know it does not teach, for the express statement of the Confession is, that they are passed by "for their sin." The belief that these words teach that men's moral character is not taken into the account must be based on ignorance of the force and meaning of words, if honest; otherwise it is utterly dishonest: choose which horn of the dilemma you like. For my own part, I believe the latter is the one by which you are transfixed.

You threaten to set forth the Presbyterian and Methodist systems of doctrine, &c., to the disadvantage of the former. Well, Presbyterian doctrine is a *system*, full, harmonious, beautiful, like the system of the sun, and if you can and will set

it forth publicly, as it is, I assure you it will be the best service in which you ever engaged, and will prove the most profitable to the people. But, Sir, call not that jumble which you catalogue by the name of the Presbyterian system. If that be your idea of Presbyterianism, then I say "hands off." Don't be guilty of the meanness, the sin of misrepresenting and caricaturing the truth, in order to hold it up to public scorn.

I always charitably allowed that there was some show of system about Methodist theology, but if it be really as you describe it, then, certainly primeval chaos never was such confusion.

The spleen you vent on our old true blue banner reminds me of the infidel who to show his hatred and malice of the Bible sewed it up in the skin of a wild animal and then set the dogs on it. In a similar manner you disfigure our doctrines with a false garb, and then hope to destroy them by yelping and biting at the unseemly skin. As for the slang you fling at myself personally, I have only to say it is utterly beneath contempt.

I am,

Yours, &c.

D. McMILLAN.

LUNENBURG, June 7th, 1875.

REV. D. McMILLAN.

Dear Sir,—

Your note dated May 30th, lies unread before me except the date and signature. It may be a very kind letter—nay more a very pious one, but

you will please excuse its unread return for the following reasons : viz.—

1st. Those assigned in my former.

2nd. Your statement in the last conversation we had ; viz. " That Revival Services did more harm—than any of the crying sins of the day " now Mr. McMillan if you can place Preaching The Gospel of Christ, Singing, Psalms, Hymns, & Spiritual songs offering up Humble Fervent and Believing prayer & praise in the Adorable Name of the Lord Jesus—on the same level—and in the same category with *Drunkenness, Adultery and Murder*— " Crying sins of the day " I am forced to believe that you are unhappily, an utter stranger to the Converting Grace of God and to the Doctrines of Divine Revelation ; and that all correspondence between us is *worse than useless*.

I pray Rev. Sir, That God may Forgive *That Rash, if not Blasphemous utterance*—That God in His Rich Grace may change your heart—and bring us both to Heaven.

Your well wisher,

RICHD. SMITH.

MANSE, LAHAVE, July 20, 1875.

REV. RICHD. SMITH.

Dear Sir :

Yours of the 7th ult. I received, opened and read. Mine returned in it I believed read. the same treatment from you.

I have already proved you guilty of falsehood. You declared in the most positive manner, the

word "reprobate" was found in the Confession of Faith. It never was, and never can be found there*. You are now guilty of "foul misrepresentation." You declare that I said in our last conversation—"that revival services did more harm than any of the crying sins of the day." A more slanderous misrepresentation would be impossible. I did say in answer to your charge that I am an enemy to revivals, "That *Spurious* revivals, such as are witnessed in this county, did more harm to the cause of Christ than any of the crying sins of the county." I say so, still, and am prepared to prove it at any time or place—but that is a very different thing, as every intelligent person can see, from saying that revival services do harm. I am as firm a believer as any man in the use and blessing of proper revival services, viz., the preaching of the word, prayer and praise, &c., as God has appointed—not men's inventions, such as the "Penitent Bench" and the whole machinery connected with it. Can it be you are so lost to all fear of the 9th commandment that you could bear such "false witness" against your neighbor?

Now, in the face of such deliberate falsehood and misrepresentation in black and white, can you wonder that I doubt the truth of your saying that you did not read my letter. And what becomes of all *your cant* about believing me a stranger to converting grace, and praying for my forgiveness? As rogues prate most about the dishonesty of others, so some that bear the Christian name ease

* That is, of course, in the sense before explained.

their consciences by transferring their own sins on other men's shoulders and weeping bitterly for their doom. Christ said to such—"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye—and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matt. vii. 5.

No doubt you regard you pretended refusal to read my letter as a smart way of escaping the net set by your own malice, dishonesty and ignorance in which you were caught—but, Sir, a more cowardly or wicked attempt the history of bebate cannot furnish. It is one moreover that avails you nothing—the meshes are thick and strong around you.

Yours, &c.

D. McMILLAN.

MANSE, LAHAVE, Nov. 20, 1875.

REV. RICHD. SMITH.

Dear Sir,

On the 20th of July last I addressed to you a note in reply to yours of June 7th—proving you to be guilty of *falsehood* and *misrepresentation*. To that communication I have as yet received no reply. I therefore call upon you to retract the false statements which you made respecting our "Confession of Faith," and also to apologize for your misrepresentation of my views regarding the subject of revivals. Now if you do not accede to this my request within 10 days I shall in the in-

terests of truth and in simple justice to myself expose you to the public by publishing the whole correspondence.

I am,

Yours, &c.

D. McMILLAN.

To REV. RICHD. SMITH, Lunenburg.

As the demand in this last note was not acceded to, the whole correspondence is now published. The unprovoked and unjust attack made on the doctrines of our Church, more than warrants any strong expressions used in the exposure of this system of wholesale ecclesiastical sheep-stealing, whose zealous promoters seek to justify their course by dishonest means.

As to the word "reprobate," it but very seldom occurs in our standards at all. In the very few instances in which it does occur, it is never used in connection with any statement of God's decree, and certainly never in such a sense as to leave doubtful the moral character of those thus designated.

Finally, our sole aim in the publication of this pamphlet is the defence of truth and of the legitimate rights and privileges of Christian denominations in this County.

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Page 4, last sentence in Mr. Gaetz's letter omitted, which is as follows: "I shall be happy to meet any of your colleagues with yourself."

Page 7, line 9, point of interrogation after "these views."

Page 7, line 11, insert "a" before "*resume*."

Page 10, line 4, "1874" should be "1875."

Page 29, line 20, for "nor" read "or."

Page 30, 9th line from bottom, insert quotation mark after the word "revival."

Page 37, line 19, for "*then* express fully their statements," read "*there* express fully their statements."

