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ART. I.—*The First Miracle of Christ.*

[Continued from page 434.]

IN our July number we brought to a close the exegesis of the evangelical account of the first miracle. We now fulfil our promise, and propose to glance at the explanations that have been given of this miracle, to notice some of the leading objections, and to state the principle on which this miracle, and all the miracles of the New Testament, should be treated by believers in the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the New Testament.

*Lange*, in his Commentary on John, p. 72, has a classified account of the explanations given to this miracle, which, for convenience' sake, we may adopt as the frame-work of ours.

I. NATURAL EXPLANATIONS. *Venturini, Paulus, Langsdorf, Gfrörer, Kern.*

*Paulus* makes the miracle a merry wedding-jest on the part of Jesus, who intended to prepare the company an agreeable surprise by the sudden production of the wine which he had secretly brought along. His solemn words addressed to Mary are to *Paulus* uttered jocosely, and designed to prevent her spoiling his contemplated joke by her over-hastiness. The *δόξα* is "the free humaneness of Jesus," which "inspired con-

ART. V.—*The late National Congregational Council.*

THE effort of Congregationalism to propagate itself throughout the entire country, has necessitated the combination and concentration of the whole body of its adherents in some organized form. It has therefore already called into being two General Assemblies (*sit venia verbo*) of the Congregational churches and ministers. The first of these met at Albany some twelve years ago, and was mainly occupied with providing a fund for church extension, by aiding infant churches in erecting church edifices. The second, and quite the most momentous and memorable, was assembled in Boston in June last, to take such action as was rendered necessary to nationalize Congregationalism, and spread it through the vast fields ever opening at the West, and the still broader ones which the war, in Divine providence, has suddenly opened in the South. To the proceedings of this great National Congregational Council we now invite the attention of our readers. Not only is every branch of the church interested in the doings of every other, but for manifold reasons, Presbyterians and Congregationalists are specially related to each other. Although there is no constitutional authority, nor regulation, for calling such a national council, there being nothing authoritative or organic, on the strict Congregational theory, beside the acts, or beyond the precincts, of particular congregations, yet, where "there is a will there is a way." Whether this obvious necessity for more extended ecclesiastical action than that of single congregations, asserting itself in many permanent State and other organizations, in missionary boards so national as to take the name American, and now in occasional "National Councils," is not at war with Congregational polity, we may discuss more fully, as we come to consider the action of the Council in the premises. Meanwhile, we may say, that, in all ecclesiastical "*usus loquendi*," Council is used to denote those great convocations, catholic and œcumenical, which have been of highest influence and authority in matters of church order, and in pro-

nouncing and formulating the articles of the Christian faith. The obvious mode of calling the Council was through the action of such existing Congregational organizations as were most representative, extended, and authoritative in character. Says Dr. Dutton, in the *New Englander*:

“The mode of calling the Council, which readily occurred, when it was thought best to have one, was by the concurrent action of the General Associations or Conferences of the several States. These bodies appointed committees, who, in a preliminary conference should make suitable preparation (if the churches, with whom is all power in the matter, should decide to hold it), by selecting the place and time of meeting, fixing the ratio of representation, and in some measure arranging its business beforehand, and who should, also, address a letter to the churches, inviting them to consider the question of holding such a Council, and if they should decide favourably, to send delegates. . . . Accordingly it was decided to convene the Council at Boston, on the 14th day of June, 1865. The representation was to be in the ratio of two delegates for every ten churches, and an equal number of pastors and laymen.”

How, on this, or any strictly Congregational platform, theological professors, and other clergymen not pastors, who exerted an influence so potent in the Council, were admitted, we are not advised.

The Council assembled on the day selected in the Old South Church,—built thirty-six years before the Declaration of Independence. Over five hundred delegates appeared, representing more than three thousand churches, from all the free States, from some of the former slave States, and from the most distant parts of the country. All accounts agree that it was composed largely of the most eminent and trusted men of the denomination, including one or more professors from each of its theological seminaries—Andover, Bangor, Chicago, East Windsor, Oberlin, and Yale. It was opened by a sermon from Rev. Dr. Sturtevant, of Illinois, immediately after which the elaborate reports of the preparatory committees on the various topics to be submitted to the Council were heard. These topics were “a Declaration of Faith, Ecclesiastical Polity, or the order and government of the churches, Evangelization of

the South and West, on Parochial Evangelization, on Church Building, on Systematized Benevolent Contributions, on Foreign Missions as related to the Congregational churches, on Ministerial Education and Ministerial Support.

All these are important subjects, many of them of common interest to Presbyterians and Congregationalists, in regard to which we value whatever light they can give us. We should be glad to bring before our readers and discuss what they have to say touching Ministerial Education and Support, Parochial Evangelization, &c. These are matters of deep concern to us and to all Christian bodies. But the distinctive character of the Council, that by which it is now, and by posterity will be, known and estimated, is its action on the first three topics, Doctrine, Polity, and the Evangelization of the West and South. Upon these the Council spent their time and strength. To this all other subjects were incidental and subordinate. To these, therefore, we shall now confine our attention. And for convenience' sake, we will briefly speak first of the action of the Council on the evangelization of the country.

To meet the new demands for missionary service among the freedmen and destitute whites of the South, and in the ever-expanding West, particularly the distant mining states, the Council called upon the churches, in addition to all the customary contributions, to raise the munificent sum of \$750,000. Of this sum \$300,000 was appropriated to the Home Missionary Society, and \$200,000 to the Society for Church Erection. This great addition to the ordinary outlays for the support of home missions and in aid of church erection, was judged necessary, in view not only of the increased number of missionaries, but of the great cost of sustaining them at some chief points which require to be occupied, such as the cities of the South, and leading centres in the far West, the mining states, and on the Pacific. Hence the extra sum allotted to the Home Missionary Society is nearly twice its receipts during the last year. The \$200,000 beyond the ordinary contribution in aid of church building, was deemed requisite "in order to establish the right sort of churches in central and controlling places of the South, such churches as loyal people there desire, and such as the civil and spiritual welfare of those com-

munities requires—in such places as Baltimore, Washington, Nashville, Memphis, New Orleans.” Hence this special fund is to be raised “to aid in purchasing or building sanctuaries in such places.” If our church does not show proportionate enterprise and liberality in this great field, who can tell how many Presbyterian sanctuaries, deserted by their former wealthy, but now diminished and impoverished, if not disloyal, occupants, may pass into the hands of Congregationalists, or other denominations?

The Council further recommended a special contribution of \$250,000 to the American Missionary Association,—an organization which has long been devoted to the improvement of the coloured race,—for “the evangelization and education of the freedmen.” This is more than twice its usual receipts for all its operations in our own and foreign lands. Will our church emulate this liberality, in support of the agency it has recently inaugurated, to prosecute the education and evangelization of freedmen? Or shall we fail to come up to the exigency, and be outstripped by the zeal, enterprise, and liberality of others, who, in comparison with us, are strangers to the field?

We think the wisdom and liberality displayed in these munificent arrangements are worthy of all praise and imitation. They show an earnestness in diffusing and nationalizing Congregationalism, which can hardly fail of important results. We deem this action worthy of the profound attention of Presbyterians. Our domestic missions and church extension must be prosecuted on a scale of vastly increased liberality, if we would not be recreant to our trust, and fail to thrust in the sickle when the fields are white for the harvest, so leaving that harvest to perish. We hope that, so far forth, we shall profit by the noble example set before us, and be provoked by our brethren to love and good works, in a degree commensurate with the exigency.

But if the field is immense, the funds ample, where are the men? Truly “the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few.” “Ten times as many as can be afforded by the usual means of theological education are needed at once. What then can be done? We must make ministers of laymen, or of those who have not been theologically trained. This was the united

and strong testimony, especially of the western members. The Council, therefore, after full discussion, and much hesitation on the part of many, recommended the proper ecclesiastical bodies to consider the expediency of approving for labour, in their spheres and vicinities, *Christian laymen*, divinely endowed with gifts and grace; while, at the same time, it earnestly exhorted the churches and ministers not to abate at all their zeal and liberality in behalf of thorough and accomplished education in our theological seminaries."

This subject is environed with difficulties. On the one hand, it is important to enlist and organize the services of laymen gifted for the work, in teaching, proclaiming, and enforcing the gospel. On the other, it is essential not to degrade the standard of ministerial education. How shall we secure each without detriment to the other? This is a problem which still wants solution.

But supposing the men and means in ample supply to go in and possess the land, what shall they carry there? What faith? What polity? One principal object of convening the Council was, to settle these questions, which could not well be longer evaded or adjourned. The current traditions and maxims on these subjects, repudiating all creeds and formularies, and all ecclesiastical organization and agency beyond those found in single churches, may be endured for a season, in obedience to the behests of a favourite theory, among a body of churches so close, so well and so long known to each other, so much moulded by a common inheritance of doctrines and usages as those of New England, especially if compacted together in an area scarcely equal to one of our single great empire states. But when they spread to the extremes of this great Republic, they cannot possibly preserve either their unity or purity, or standing among men, without some recognized and avowed faith and polity, which are the bond of union between themselves, and badge of distinction from others.

The differential features of Congregational polity, as maintained by its most conspicuous advocates and propagandists hitherto have been;

1. The complete autocracy of each congregation of believers.
2. The exercise of discipline and rule, with all the judicial

proceedings they involve, by the congregation, and not by ruling elders or select representatives chosen therefor.

3. The denial of all church-courts, or permanent organizations vested with any authority or power, beyond or over single congregations.

4. As a logical consequence, the Cambridge Platform and other authorities have placed the sole power of ordination to the ministry in single churches, and this, of course, confined to the inducting of men into office as pastors over themselves. Therefore the strict Congregational theory makes no recognition of any ministry but pastors, or of any ordaining power but their own churches in putting them into the sacred office. If any ecclesiastical council be present, and officiate in the case, it is only by invitation of the church, and for the purpose of assisting it. The real authority of their action in the premises, is solely that of the church. Or rather their act is the act of the church, and done with the aid of the council. What more can it be, if the only organization having ecclesiastical authority be the single congregation of believers?

Now, how have these principles of church-polity borne the test of experience? Can the Congregationalists or any other body of Christians live and grow, without virtually or avowedly counterworking and overbearing them? In a great communion of Christians, indeed, in any great and permanent union of many people, or communities, which must have the paramount authority?—the whole over the parts, even minute fragments, or shall the parts, yea, a single part, even the smallest, overrule the whole? What does the great Congregational Council declare on this subject, as the lesson of two centuries of experience? Or, whether making formal declaration or not, what do its acts, proceedings, and debates imply? Let us see after what norm, or idea, the inevitable development of the body has gone forward, in spite of the obstructive force of counter doctrines. For, in every organism, however repressed or warped by artificial and unnatural hindrances, there is still a *nîsus* or struggling towards its normal state and form of organic working. What light on this subject can we gather from the doings of the Council? And what, especially, on the main point, presented in different aspects under the first and

third heads just specified, viz., the paramount authority of single congregations, and the absence of any power in the whole body, to correct irregularities in particular parts, and to form ecclesiastical organizations to do church work in which all have a joint interest? Of course, the autonomy of individual churches and the absence of all "ecclesiastical government, exterior or superior" to them, were formally and abundantly asserted. But other things were done and said too—how far consistent with this dogma, our readers will judge.

Dr. Sturtevant, of Illinois, second to none as a representative man among western Congregationalists, enumerating the causes of the feeble development of Congregationalism in the South and West, in his opening sermon, specifies the want of *organization* as among the most prominent. His third reason for ill success in Congregational propagandism he states to be, "undue reliance on temporary, superficial, and inorganic efforts for home-evangelization." He says, "we must never abandon that grand conception of a symmetrical and ubiquitous religious organization for the moral and spiritual care and culture of the whole people." This is clearly undeniable, notwithstanding all the protests and denunciations against "centralized government" which illogically follow these statements. It is due to the want of any sufficiently "permanent" "ubiquitous," "organic" union of the churches of New England that they have not done a far greater and better work in their own native seats and throughout the country. Never had any Protestant church polity such an opportunity to prove its power for good—a people entirely homogeneous in their nationality and religion, most of whom had immigrated there, in order to enjoy their religion without molestation. We believe that, had they been organized under the Presbyterian form of government, they would have preserved their original faith more intact, kept a far larger proportion of the people both in their connection and the unity of that faith, and propagated it far more widely through the land. Union and organization are strength—the want of them weakness. So far as Congregationalists have succeeded in extirpating heresy, or propagating themselves, it is because they have found some mode of united organic action. What else are their Home Missionary

and other societies for propagating the gospel? What else are the General Associations which bar out Unitarians and Universalists from membership? And what else is this very National Congregational Council but an organization of the whole body, *pro re nata*, to act upon every part?

Dr. Bacon, of New Haven, Chairman of the Committee on Church Polity, introduced a report, the reading of which occupied several hours, and which had cost him great labour in its preparation. It was designed to be a Manual of Congregationalism, setting forth its principles and usages as now recognized, and bearing the *imprimatur* of the great Congregational Council. It was obviously impossible for so large a body to dispose of such document in a session of a few days. It was accordingly referred to a large committee to prepare it for publication, with the understanding that, while the Council approved of its general principles and form, the committee would so modify details as to ensure for it a general acceptance. We have, however, a synopsis of the Report as given in the Congregational journals. Dr. Bacon, who, in view of all this, must be taken for a representative expounder of Congregationalism in the Council, and in the denomination, used the following language, in support of his Manual, as we find it reported in the *Boston Recorder*.

“Now we are not to seek a model of Congregationalism for Old England. We are not Brownists. The Puritans were waiting for government to reform religion. Brown has the same relation to the Congregationalists that the discoverer of the West Indies has to that of America. Of the continent of Congregationalism he knew nothing. The autonomy of the individual church is one thing, the fellowship of the churches is another. Brown, the English Independents and the minority report, hold to the former only. *I will have nothing to do with any branch of Congregationalism that does not acknowledge the responsibility of each church to the whole body.* The church may say it will do what it pleases; we say very well, only you don't ride in our coach. A man was expelled by a church in Brooklyn, for being troublesome. They moved that he be expelled, and that he have ten minutes to speak to that motion. They expelled him, and he asked a council and was

refused. He had an *ex parte* council. A church that will admit no appeal does not belong to our denomination.

“Again there is a ministry. Of old they recognized ‘lay prophesying,’ but they had no idea of a minister that was not an officer of some church. We have outgrown that; we were obliged to. Still our ministry can never become a hierarchy. Dr. Anderson here has no power save as a member of a church.”

On this last point we propose soon to let Dr. Anderson speak for himself. But when Dr. Bacon insists on the “responsibility of each church to the whole body,” and repudiates every kind of Congregationalism that denies it, and every church that sets up “to do as it pleases,” against the will of the entire communion, we submit that this brings an end of the controversy between Congregationalism and Presbyterianism, so far as the great principle in issue is concerned, viz., whether in a communion of churches the paramount authority is vested in single churches or in the “whole body.” In discarding Independency, he discards all such autonomy of particular churches, as conflicts with their paramount responsibility to the entire body. This is a great matter. The fundamental principle being once settled, all other questions are subordinate, and relate to its application, and the best manner of carrying it out. And when the issue is reduced to this, it will in due time take care of itself. The case in Brooklyn adduced by Dr. Bacon to prove the need of some appellate tribunal beyond the verdict of a single church, is surely flagrant enough. But we have personal knowledge of one in that same city still more flagrant, in which a church, after refusing a mutual council to a member suspended for some alleged financial miscarriages, also refused to appear before, or present any of its records to an *ex parte* council of the most unexceptionable character, which he called as a last refuge from oppression. This *ex parte* council advised that the church reconsider and rescind its sentence of suspension. It utterly refused to do so, or to take any notice of the action of the council. Shortly after, the pastor who had urged the church to this course, read off the name of the appellant, in company with that of another person convicted of an infamous

crime, as "excommunicated for immorality!" What is the remedy for such monstrous and despotic injustice? Leading Congregationalists to whom we have put the case, say, such a church ought to be "disfellowshipped!" But who does not know that this answer is verbal, not real, giving the word of promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope? When was such a remedy ever applied in a case of this kind? What known processes are available to an injured ordinary church member, without means or influence, for bringing the congregational body to excommunicate, or discipline such a church, that has already trampled down all known modes of redress with equal scorn and impunity? And is the offer of such a remedy to a complainant any real relief?

It being settled that individual churches must hear the voice of the whole body, or be disowned, which amounts to being excommunicated by it, the next question is, how shall the mind of the whole be brought to bear effectively and decisively on a particular erring church? Presbyterians answer this very simply. They see not what could tempt any other answer, unless the effort to maintain consistency with some one-sided theory. They say that it should be through courts constituted by representatives of the portions of the body co-extensive with their jurisdiction, until, in cases requiring it, we reach a court of last resort composed of representatives of the entire body.

Permanent organizations of this sort (however their members may change), with their known constitution, records, precedents, already provided to issue cases of appeal, and to act on matters of common interest, must possess better qualifications for their office, than councils picked by the parties, improvised for the occasion, and expiring with it. Now let us see, in the Platform presented to this Council by Dr. Bacon, what Congregationalism offers to us as a more excellent way. We quote the whole under the head of

*"The Communion of the Churches.*

"I. Although churches are distinct and equal, yet they ought to preserve fellowship one with another, being all united to Christ their head.

“II. When a company of believers propose to unite in a distinct church, it is requisite that they ask the advice and help of neighbouring churches; particularly that those churches, being satisfied with their faith and order, may extend to them the hand of fellowship.

“III. Communion is to be exercised by recognizing each other's rights, by due regard to each other's welfare, and by consultation before acts of common concern.

“IV. Councils are the ordinary and orderly way of consultation among churches, and are proper in all cases where the communion of the churches is involved. .

“1. In councils the churches meet for consultation, usually by messengers (pastor and delegate) chosen for the special occasion.

“2. Councils are properly called of churches in the near vicinity, except when matters which excite strong local sympathies render the advice of distant churches necessary.

“3. Councils are called only by a church, or an authorized party in case of disagreement, when the church unreasonably refuses to join; that is by a church desiring light or help; by a church and pastor (or other member or members) in case of differences, when it is styled a Mutual Council; or by either of these parties when the other unreasonably refuses to unite, when it is styled an *Ex parte* Council; which *ex parte* council, when properly convened has the same standing as if it had been mutual.

“4. Councils consist solely of the churches invited by the letters-missive, to which no member can be added and from which none removed.

“5. Councils are convened when a church desires recognition; when a church asks for advice or help; when differences are to be composed; when men whose call of God is recognized by the church are to be separated to the ministry; when pastors are to be inducted into office or removed; when a brother claims to be aggrieved by church censure; when letters of dismissal are unreasonably refused; when a church or minister is liable to just censure; and when matters of common moment to the churches are to be considered.

“6. The decision of a council is only advisory. Yet

when orderly given, it is to be received as the voice of the churches and an ordinance of God appointed in his word, with reverence and submission, unless inconsistent with the word of God. But councils cannot overrule the acts of churches, so far as they are within the church, nor exercise government over them.

“7. When, in any case of difference, a council properly convened, whether mutual or *ex parte*, has given its judgment, neither party can demand that another council be called, whether to re-examine the substance of the questions referred to the first, or to judge of its advice. An *ex parte* council in such case is manifestly disorderly, and without warrant.

“V. Fellowship should be withdrawn from any church which is untrue to sound doctrine,—either by renouncing the faith or continuing to hear a teacher declared by council to be heretical; or which gives public scandal to the cause of Christ; or which wilfully persists in acts which break fellowship. When one church finds such acts in another, it should admonish, and, if that fail, invite a council to examine the alleged offence.

“VI. Conferences of churches are allowable and profitable; but they hear no appeals, give no advice, and decide no question of church or ministerial standing.”

Now, in all simplicity, we ask what sort of church government is this? Of what avail are councils selected by churches or parties interested in adjusting matters, in which those who select them are at variance with “the whole body”? Will they not be sure to pick and choose their friends and sympathizers, if they can find them? Has not experience, as well as human nature shown this? But, in their best estate, the findings of such councils are only “advisory” upon the particular church, however virtually conclusive upon all others. And really, is it pretended that a particular congregation of necessity possesses such judicial insight, candour, and firmness, as to be safely vested with supremacy over its members, and independence of all appellate tribunals? Is any man’s character safe in such an organization? What help does such a system give in cases like that in Brooklyn?

And then, as to withdrawing fellowship from any church

“untrue to sound doctrine,” &c. (Art. V.) how is it to be done? “When one church finds such acts in another, it should admonish, and if that fail, invite a council to examine the alleged offence.” What more awkward and impracticable method could be devised? How rarely can a church be found that can, or will, or knows how to take the requisite steps to fasten such charges on an erring church, or to press the matter to trial, in the manner here prescribed? How seldom has this, if ever, been done? And when done, what other churches are bound by the decisions of such a council? How has any practical exclusion from the communion of churches been secured, by such a process? We rejoice that Congregationalists have come to recognize that essential requisite to the unity, purity, and communion of the churches, viz., the “responsibility” of each particular church to “the whole body.” We are sorry that the methods proposed for realizing it are so inadequate. They may answer, when all is pure and peaceable. But in those emergencies which require the exercise of real ecclesiastical power, they will be found wanting. All these clumsy and impotent devices for bringing the power of the whole body to bear upon distempers in particular parts are substituted for the true and natural system, in order to save intact the absolute autocracy of individual churches,—a principle which, carried out rigidly, destroys all other power ecclesiastical. The evils of such a system are so obvious and intolerable as to call forth such denunciations from Congregationalists, as we have seen, against churches which disown responsibility to the whole body. The Saybrook Platform was the result of an effort to remedy the semi-anarchical state of the churches, arising from resort to picked and *ex parte* councils, with merely advisory powers. This instrument makes *con*-sociations, like presbyteries, permanent ecclesiastical bodies composed of the pastors and lay-delegates of the churches of given districts, to act in all cases ecclesiastical occurring within said churches, to which they singly are inadequate. (Art. II.) It also ordains that their decisions shall be “final.” (Art. V.) Unless they choose to refer cases of extreme difficulty to a larger body composed of two conterminous Consociations. (Art. VII.) Herein the framers of this instrument say, they had “respect to

the divine principles of fraternal union, and that principle universally acknowledged. *Quod tangit omnes debet tractari ab omnibus.*" Yet this nearest approximation among Congregationalists to an organization of the church at large for transacting matters of common concern, and securing the "responsibility" of individual churches, is the object of incessant and relentless assault by the present leaders of Congregational propagandism, in the great National Council and elsewhere. The only voice raised in opposition to them, so far as we know, was the following, the like of which has been heard a thousand times, without yet eliciting a respectable answer :

"Dr. Eldridge of Norfolk, Connecticut, said that the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Gulliver, can see clearly objects that are not too large. He attacks our system in the last *Independent* as tending to despotism. Can this be so? I have never seen it. Suppose some twenty neighbouring churches meet and form the principle of comity into a system that invests a permanent body with all the powers of a council. The body is permanent, responsible, has its records and a principle of consistency. I have attended more than two hundred meetings of Consociation and have seen no despotism."

Dr. Dwight took still stronger ground. He advocated, if we are not mistaken, State Consociations, quite analogous to our Synods, not only to consult for the general welfare, but as courts of appeals from the district or county Consociations. He further deplored the loss of the office of ruling elder enjoyed in the early churches of New England, and authorized in the Cambridge and Saybrook Platforms. These elements involve everything of the essence of Presbyterianism but the name. And the testimony of President Edwards, which has found an echo in the hearts of many leading ministers in New England, is still more pointed and emphatic. "I have long been perfectly out of conceit of our unsettled, independent, confused way of church government in this land, (New England); and the Presbyterian way has ever appeared to me most agreeable to the word of God, and the reason and nature of things." \*

And this "nature will out," whatever fetters and obstructions cramp and distort its development. *Expellas furca sed*

\* Edwards's Works, New York edition, vol. i. p. 412.

*usque redibit.* No communion of Christians can live, without some bond of union, some permanent organizations, which take oversight of its common interests, concentrate its energies in missionary work, at the same time superintending that work, while they represent the entire body, guard the character of its ministers, and become sponsors for them to other bodies, and the world. No such communion can live and grow, without a ministry beyond pastors of churches, for the work of the whole church; a ministry, therefore, not constituted such by any particular church, or, *in their ministerial character* amenable to such church. To meet such necessities, Associations of ministers, district and state, the latter composed of delegates from the former, have sprung up. But these bodies are purely clerical. If they have any power whatever, they are the most objectionable kind of ecclesiastical bodies—because, having no lay representatives, they become purely hierarchical. Yet power they must have. Ministers without charges, too, must and do have power. What it is in theory, and what in fact, let us see. Dr. Bacon's Platform, reported to the Council, works out the theory thus:

*“Of the Ministry.*

“I. The ministry includes all men called of God to that work, and orderly set apart by ordination.

“II. When ordination of a pastor is to be performed, the church in which he is to bear office invites a council to examine as to faith, grace and ability, that, if he be approved, they may extend the hand of fellowship. If the ordination be in view of any other sphere of labour, the request for a council ought to come from the church of which he is a member.

“III. A pastor dismissed does not cease to be a minister; but he cannot exercise any official act over a church until orderly replaced in office, except when particularly invited by a church.

“IV. In case a pastor offend in such way that he should no longer be recognized as a minister, the church should request a council to examine the charges, and, if it find cause, to withdraw all fellowship from him, so that his ministerial standing shall cease to be recognized. If a minister who is not a

pastor be the offender, the church to which he belongs, or the church nearest his residence, should take the same course.

<sup>Book</sup><sub>177.</sub> V. "Associations of ministers are useful for mutual sympathy and improvement. They can exercise no sort of authority over churches or persons, save to prescribe the rights and duties of their own membership. But common consent has recognized that their examination of candidates for introduction to the churches is a wise safeguard."

These associations can exercise no authority over churches or ministers then, save to prescribe the rights and duties of their own members, and license candidates for the ministry. But these are great powers. They are powers which virtually and ordinarily open and shut the doors of the pulpit to all candidates for the ministry. They are powers to control and determine the standing of every minister, pastors as well as others. For what is any minister's reputation worth who is disowned by his association? They are powers of rule and judgment. What are the licensure of candidates, and the admission and exclusion of members, but judicial acts? Why should not these bodies admit representatives of the churches, when exercising functions of such vast moment to the churches? As to the modes of bringing recreant pastors, and especially ministers *sine titulo*, to trial, which these articles prescribe, in nine cases out of ten, it is utterly futile. Pastors that need discipline for heresy or scandal are quite likely to carry their churches with them. As to other ministers, how often will any church call a council to try them for malfeasance? Is not a clerical offender much more likely to be brought to trial, if his peers can immediately arraign him, without the intervention of any church?

But in regard to ministers without pastoral charge, in the service of the church at large, how do they come into being, become ordained, acquire any ministerial commission or authority, if there be no lawful government in the church beyond that of particular congregations? The venerable Dr. Rufus Anderson, in a communication in the *Independent* of August 3d, says:

"While the writings on Congregationalism by the fathers of the 17th century correctly declare pastors and deacons to

be the only officers within the churches, they appear to have lost sight of what is certainly the prominent object of the Christian ministry, as set forth by our Lord in the great commission. The view they took of the object and duty of the churches and ministry is altogether too limited. In their anxiety for the orderly development of the churches, they seem almost to have forgotten the unevangelized world. This was not strange, considering their circumstances. But such an oversight is impossible with us, since the entire world, now become accessible, appeals loudly to our Christian sensibilities. And it is now admitted by our denomination, at least practically, that ordained ministers of the gospel ought to become missionaries, as well as pastors. Experience has shown, too, that foreign missionaries (*as in ancient times*) ought very seldom to become pastors of the churches they gather from among the unevangelized, but should ordain pastors for them from among the native converts. Nor is it found to be possible to carry forward the work of Christ's kingdom at home and abroad, on an extended scale, without also setting apart clergymen to educate the ministry, to correspond with the missionaries, and to perform the other needful agencies, which none but clergymen can perform so well. Though missionaries, presidents, professors, secretaries, and clerical editors are not *officers* in *local individual churches*, they belong as really to the ministry of the denomination as if they were, and are as really office-bearers in the *denomination* as are pastors and deacons. Whatever to the contrary on this subject may be drawn from standard writers of the seventeenth century, there can be no other conclusion deduced from the inspired record in the New Testament.

“Thus we have a ministry of the word, meeting all the exigencies of the case, all on an ecclesiastical parity, under the great commission, but existing for different ministerial services—as missionaries, pastors, etc., etc.—members of one and the same body, the head of which is Christ, and alike claiming his promised presence.

“In this view of the subject, the *evangelists* of the New Testament, however gifted they may have been, were only missionaries. The *apostles* were also missionaries, but with an

extraordinary inspiration and authority peculiar to themselves. The *Ἐπίσκοποι*, *overseers, superintendents, bishops*, contemporaries with the apostles, were the same as presbyters, elders, pastors. The *ruling*, spoken of in the New Testament, is a thing understood in the mission churches of our day (though perhaps not exactly in the ancient form), where pastoral authority is just as needful in the infancy of those churches as parental authority is in the early years of a family. Among the churches on the Hawaiian Islands, for instance, the missionaries felt it necessary to exercise authority in the native churches for a course of years, and what of authority remained in the year 1863, and was deemed to be still necessary, was then transferred to the associations and presbyteries—the former intending to relinquish it to the local churches as soon as the native pastorate had made advances to render it a safe deposit. The ecclesiastical organization previously existing on those islands had, for the most part, been called Congregationalism, but really it had not advanced to that point, nor was it Presbyterianism in the full sense of that term. But the tendency, in the progress of light and experience, has been and is toward a republican form of church government.

“What was needed from the late National Council was a re-statement of the case as regards our ministry adapted to the present times. We needed a broader statement of the relations of the ministry to the great commission, of its object, its magnificent proportions, and its beneficent uses. We needed to have our denomination rescued from its one-sided position as regards the objects of the church of God; to have it distinctly recognized and proclaimed as existing, not only for itself, and for our own country, and for Christendom, but also for the world. And this, the writer is most happy to say, was done in the admirable ‘Statement of Congregational Polity,’ presented by Messrs. Bacon and Quint, and referred by the Council to a large committee for revision and publication.”

Inexorable facts are very apt to run one-sided theories into the ground, and out of sight. This is exemplified in the present case. Dire necessity has not only legitimated a ministry at large, but it has invested them with high ecclesiastical powers; such as, with all deference to Dr. Anderson’s judgment,

seem to us hardly provided for, if they are not expressly denied, in the Manual alluded to by him, if we have a fair outline of its principles; for does not the venerable secretary tell us, not only that we must have ministers in various spheres other than the pastoral, involving appropriate agencies for their ordination, but that those of them who are missionaries must ordain native pastors, and for a long time rule the native churches, until they outgrow their infancy; and even then that they must transfer this power, not in the first instance to the churches, but to associations or presbyteries, until its lodgment in the churches becomes a "safe deposit." Do they not then "exercise a sort of authority over churches and persons?" Is not this government, not only by ministers and pastors, but by them alone, without any lay-element, such an advance towards hierarchy as Presbyterianism never endures? As much is said about republicanism in church polity, we ask which system is the more republican of the two? We do, however, none the less rejoice that our Congregational brethren see that their theory, as expounded in the past, is wholly inadequate to the exigencies of the church in the conduct of missions, even though they fail to give any exposition of it which harmonizes with these facts. But they cannot perform impossibilities. These facts are fatal to the theory, as may easily be shown in syllogistic form. A system of church polity unsuited to the work of missions must be false. That system which vests all government in single churches, and denies ecclesiastical authority and position to ministers not pastors, is unsuited to the work of missions. Therefore it must be false.

A word now as to the government and judicial investigations in a congregation being by the whole congregation, or by their representatives, their wisest and best men, chosen from among them for this purpose, whether called elders or not. We know what is the course taken in all well-ordered civil governments. The people rule not in person, but by their chosen representatives, legislative, executive, and judicial. Any other method would be clearly intolerable. And is any other method long practicable, for substance, in the church? It is attempted by none but Congregationalists and Independents in church government. And, for substance, they are constrained practically to resort to a more excellent way.

Says Rev. Mr. Gulliver, a prominent member of the Council, not prone to excess of conservatism, in the *Independent* of June 22, assigning reasons for a new platform of church polity:

“So the provisions of the Cambridge Platform concerning ‘ruling elders,’ who, with the pastor and the teacher, seem to have shared in the ministerial office, constituting, in fact, a board of ordained ministers in each church, have now become obsolete in consequence of the concentration of the functions of the ministerial office in the person of the pastor. But while the idea of the *ministerial* character of the ruling elder has been abandoned, and the name itself dropped, the functions of that officer, as they are given in the New Testament, and as they are defined in the Cambridge Platform, seem to have been substantially retained in our *church committees*, which are almost uniformly clothed with the power assigned in the platform to ruling elders, excluding those only which properly inhere in the ministerial office. These changes in form demand a corresponding change in statement. It is also a fair question whether these church *committees* should not be termed boards of *elders*, according to the ancient Congregational as well as New Testament usage.”

This needs no comment.

He further says, “large bodies of churches in the West have now adopted the plan of settling their ministers without installation or the introduction of councils.” Will these churches be allowed thus to set at nought the principles of church communion, and still retain their standing in the denomination? If not, how will it be prevented? Or, if they persist, what steps will be taken to terminate either this practice or their good standing in the Congregational body? On the whole, in respect to church polity, the Congregational mind, as represented in the Council, has reached principles incompatible with pure Congregationalism, in the very effort to retain and propagate that system. It remains to be determined which of these counter-principles, (the autocracy and responsibility of single congregations), now antagonizing among them, will ultimately outwork and overmaster the other. We pass now briefly to consider the doctrinal attitude of the Council,—a subject, we need not say, of the last importance.

On this subject, the preliminary committee had reported to

the Council a Declaration, which avowed adherence to the Westminster and Savoy Confessions adopted by the Puritan fathers, but with so many qualifying explanations and limitations as to leave the test of orthodoxy or good doctrinal standing among them attenuated to an undefined "substance of doctrine." It is impossible, therefore, to judge from this way of accepting those venerable formulas, how much or how little of them the Committee regarded as the present faith of the Congregational ministry. But a more specific and articulate declaration recommended by them to the Council for adoption, for which we have not room, probably indicates how much they judged that the Council and the denomination could be persuaded to accept with any fair degree of unanimity.

This report appears not to have been acceptable to two classes. First: those who objected to the old Confessions as being no fair nor adequate expression of the doctrines now in vogue with many if not most of the denomination. Dr. Sturtevant voiced the sentiments of this class in the following terms:

"I want a declaration of doctrine that goes the whole length of stating, in original living words of our own, in this year of grace, 1865, what our view of that (the evangelical) system is: . . . such a document as will actually express the faith of these churches here and now, with no reference whatever to any past formula,—a document that shall be the sentiment of the Congregational churches in the year 1865, in words of their own choosing.

"One word more, I am sorry for those references to the old standards. I do not know how many will agree with me there. I will tell you why I am sorry. There is language in every one of those old standards which not a man upon this floor believes:

A member.—"Substance of doctrine."

Dr. Sturtevant.—"I wish to be excused from that phrase, when I make a Confession of Faith. I want a Confession of Faith to express what I mean . . . with no expression to be a stumbling-block to every professor of theology, and to every man in this house."

All must respect the honesty, consistency, and manliness, if not the orthodoxy of this utterance. Another class wanted a declaration of faith which still more exalted the theology of the old Confessions. Dr. Barstow, of Keene, New Hampshire,

“hoped that we would all affirm the Westminster Catechism and the Savoy Confession.”

The report was recommitted to the original Committee, reinforced by professors of theology from each of the theological seminaries. They reported a new Declaration, which being the hurried product of several minds, Professor Porter of Yale College said, was “not what would suit any one of us, but such as would suit the whole Council, and couched in words which the whole Council could accept.”

On an amendment offered for the purpose of striking out the word Calvinism from this Declaration, Professor Park gave utterance to a new form of hyper-Calvinism, which has, we think, given just umbrage to some of our Methodist and Episcopal brethren.

“He said that we are Calvinists, and that any man who had passed through three years of theological study, and had read the Scriptures in the original tongue, and was not a Calvinist, was not a respectable man. He would be heartily ashamed if this amendment should pass, and be so published in the newspapers, and this Council thus made a hissing and a by-word.”

We will not undertake to explain this exaggeration.

Dr. Bacon, of New Haven, had a “fear that some of our Western brethren had an idea that Congregationalism consisted in believing in *nothing in particular*. I believe that any true Christian has a right to church membership, but I do not believe that any lax creed is sufficient for the belief of a church, or of a candidate for the ministry. It is the right of any such body as this to stand up and say what we believe. We unanimously believe the same great body of truth, though we would not perhaps express it in the same form. We must have one that shall disarm the cavils that are thrown out against us. There is a wide difference between a profession made, and a confession imposed. The last is an idol which Presbyterians have set up contrary to the second commandment. It is demoralizing. We do not swallow the whole Westminster Catechism, every angle of it, but the substance of it; and so of other declarations of our fathers.”

We wonder at the ingenuity which crowded so many truths and errors into so short a space. Herein, as so often before, he shows himself a master of sentences. The truths enounced

are, 1. That such Congregationalism as consists in "believing in nothing in particular" is to be disowned. 2. All true Christians are to be admitted to church-membership. 3. No lax creed is sufficient for a church or candidate for the ministry. 4. It is the right of all Christian bodies to say, what they believe.

The errors are, 1. That it is wrong to impose confessions of faith. How is it possible to keep sceptics, heretics, rationalists, infidels, out of the ministry, if we may not impose upon, or exact from them, a confession of the contrary faith? To say that a "lax creed" will not suffice, and yet that we may not "impose" a creed upon candidates for the ministry, is sheer contradiction. 2. That to impose a confession or creed is to set up an idol, and that Presbyterians have done this, contrary to the second commandment. Have the First Congregational Church in New Haven, and their pastor, Rev. Dr. Bacon, "set up an idol" in imposing the creed of that church on every adult candidate for baptism and the Lord's supper? If not, much less are they guilty of it, who impose their creeds upon ministers and office-bearers in the church. Again, Dr. Bacon says that no lax creed will answer for churches, and that every Christian has a right to church-membership. But according to the Congregational system, the only organized church is the single congregation of believers, and no person can be admitted to such church without accepting *its* confession of faith. None therefore can be admitted to church-membership who are not well enough instructed in Christian doctrine to "swallow" something more than a "lax creed." How do these things consist? The ablest supporters of a false theory cannot help saying and unsaying, doing and undoing. They talk creed and no-creed. Now they condense their doctrines into a creed to be professed—and anon, in the attempt to "impose" it, as a guard of purity and bond of unity, it evaporates into thin air, alike intangible, invisible, inappreciable. Now we have Independency repudiating all responsibility of individual churches to the whole body—and now the communion of churches over-bearing Independency. Those who expect to do more than unsettle the minds of men, and mean to make converts, must utter some certain and not inconsistent sound. This it will be hard to do, so long as the attempt to confine all ecclesiastical power to particular congregations is combined

with the attempt to maintain their responsibility to the whole body, in the interest of denominational unity and purity.

But what now, returning from this discussion, became of the Declaration of Faith? It appears that an excursion to Plymouth Rock had been arranged. The consideration of the second Declaration reported was postponed, to be finally considered and acted upon at that hallowed spot. It was supposed that it would, of course, after some slight verbal amendments, be adopted by acclamation. Meanwhile, the Rev. A. H. Quint, Chairman of the Business Committee of the Council, and, of late, rapidly growing prominent among the Congregational ministry, withal reputed a representative of those who love most, and fear least, the *ipsissima verba* of the old confessions, prepared a substitute for both the previous Declarations, which, on being read to the assembled Council at Plymouth, worked its own way to the mind and heart of the assembly, and swept it as with an instantaneous electric impulse. It was carried by acclamation. Its great importance justifies us in giving it entire, and making it a matter of permanent historic record on our pages.

“Standing by the Rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshipped God, and among the graves of the early generations, we elders and messengers of the Congregational churches of the United States, in National Council assembled—like them acknowledging no rule of faith but the word of God—do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches, held by our fathers, and substantially embodied in the confessions and platforms which our synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or re-affirmed. We declare that the experience of the nearly two-and-a-half centuries which have elapsed since the memorable day when our sires founded here a Christian commonwealth, with all the development of new forms of error since their times, has only deepened our confidence in the faith and polity of those fathers. We bless God for the inheritance of these doctrines. We invoke the help of the Divine Redeemer, that, through the presence of the promised Comforter, he will enable us to transmit them in purity to our children.

“In the times that are before us as a nation, times at once of duty and of danger, we rest all our hope in the gospel of

the Son of God. It was the grand peculiarity of our Puritanic fathers that they held this gospel, not merely as the ground of their personal salvation, but as declaring the worth of man by the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God; and therefore applied its principles to elevate society, to regulate education, to civilize humanity, to purify law, to reform the church and the state, to assert and defend liberty; in short, to mould and redeem, by its all-transforming energy, everything that belongs to man in his individual and social relations.

“It was the faith of our fathers that gave us this free land in which we dwell. It is by this faith only that we can transmit to our children a free and happy, because a Christian, commonwealth.

“We hold it to be a distinctive excellence of our Congregational system that it exalts that which is more above that which is less important, and, by the simplicity of its organization, facilitates, in communities where the population is limited, the union of all true believers in one Christian church; and that the division of such communities into several weak and jealous societies, holding the same common faith, is a sin against the unity of the body of Christ, and at once the shame and scandal of Christendom.

“We rejoice that, through the influence of our free system of apostolic order, we can hold fellowship with all who acknowledge Christ, and act efficiently in the work of restoring unity to the divided church, and of bringing back harmony and peace among all ‘who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.’

“Thus recognizing the unity of the church of Christ in all the world, and knowing that we are but one branch of Christ’s people, while adhering to our peculiar faith and order, we extend to all believers the hand of Christian fellowship upon the basis of those great fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree. With them, we confess our faith in God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the only living and true God; in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, who is exalted to be our Redeemer and King; and in the Holy Comforter, who is present in the church to regenerate and sanctify the soul.

“With the whole church, we confess the common sinfulness and ruin of our race, and acknowledge that it is only through

the work accomplished by the life and expiatory death of Christ that we are justified before God and receive the remission of sins; and through the presence and grace of the Holy Comforter are delivered from the power of sin and perfected in holiness.

“ We believe also in an organized and visible church, in the ministry of the word, in the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, in the resurrection of the body, and in the final judgment, the issues of which are eternal life and everlasting punishment.

“ We receive these truths on the testimony of God, given through prophets and apostles, and in the life, the miracles, the death, the resurrection of his son, our Divine Redeemer—a testimony preserved for the church in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which were composed by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

“ Affirming now our belief that those who thus hold ‘one faith, one Lord, one baptism,’ together constitute the one catholic church, the several households of which, though called by different names, are the one body of Christ; and that these members of his body are sacredly bound to keep ‘the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;’ we declare that we will cooperate with all who hold these truths, with those we will carry the gospel into every part of this land, and with them we will go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

“ May he to whom ‘all power is given in heaven and earth’ fulfil the promise which is all our hope: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.’ Amen.”

This is much more terse, pointed, high-toned in its doctrinal animus, than the papers it supplanted. Says Rev. Mr. Gulliver, “But when the reading commenced, the ringing periods and terse phrases revealed a new document altogether! The statements remained nearly unchanged, but the beginning and the ending were abridged and sharpened to a point, and the whole paper had a new resonance in it. It was an audacious proceeding, which no one but a soldier, a democrat, and an old school man—all in one—could possibly have attained to. The chairman of the business committee had evidently had the impudence to do the right thing in the right time. Everybody liked it, as it was read.”

In regard to the significance of the act, he says: "Now five hundred men, the representatives of three thousand churches, the representatives of ideas which have triumphed gloriously and finally over the land, the representatives of *Puritanism*, pure and simple, unchanged, unabashed, bold and intense, as in the days of the commonwealth, stood on the soil made firm by the heroic tread of those despised men, and exultingly declared, 'This faith is our faith. These ideas have saved our country, and are going forth, conquering and to conquer, over the world. After a trial of two centuries and a half, we re-affirm them! They are the truths which are emancipating this nation! They are the truths which are saving a sin-stricken world! They are the eternal truths of God!' This was the significance of that act! This was the verdict of eight generations, sent forth from Burial Hill."

To the same effect Dr. Budington of Brooklyn, New York, in an article to the *Independent* of June 27, entitled, "Points of Significance in the National Congregational Council," says: "The declaration of faith, however, awakened the greatest interest, and ought, at least, to settle some questions mooted, if not among us, in communions around us. It has been proven, by actual trial, that the faith of our Congregational churches remains intact after the moral and material revolutions of two centuries and a half."

It will not be claimed that these testimonies as to its significance are from men having any undue old-school bias. They have not been known as friends of East Windsor, or antagonists of the theology taught at Andover or New Haven. Their associations and sympathies are understood to be quite otherwise. How much then does this action of the Council mean? We are disposed to take the most favourable view of it, and to judge that, individual exceptions aside, the Council mean what they say—subject to certain explanations.

1. Whatever else may be intended, the effect of this action must be, at least, to render the theology of the Westminster and Savoy Confessions reputable and standard among Congregationalists. Whatever other views may come into discredit, no stigma can now attach to maintaining this Reformed, or, as, we know not why, so many are pleased to term it,

*Princeton* theology. We think, therefore, that the hands of the supporters and defenders of this theology in New England are greatly strengthened by this action. Indeed, the fact that, after so much sapping and mining of the ancient theology, all are constrained to re-affirm these ancient symbols as the best expression of their faith, is a strong proof of their inherent, essential and impregnable truth, and of the inherent weakness, when put to the test, of all systems arrayed against them.

2. Nothing is to be inferred from this declaration as to the laxness or strictness of doctrine *tolerated* among the Congregational ministry; what doctrines, if professed, ensure, if denied, forfeit good standing and fellowship with them. What doctrinal standard is the test of orthodoxy among them now, it is hard to say. Probably it varies among different sections and classes, from those who, according to Dr. Bacon, think Congregationalism consists in "believing nothing in particular," to those Councils that have disowned Charles Beecher for heresy, and have refused to ordain Mr. Walton of Portland, for heretical teachings. Says Dr. Dutton, "these formulæ are regarded by those who receive them, with much latitude and liberty of interpretation, as expressing 'the system of doctrine,' or the 'substance of doctrine' contained in the Bible, not its exact truth in all respects." Whether the creeds are received as to their own system and substance of doctrine, or as expressing those of the Bible, the material question is, how much may be rejected without attenuating the "substance" to a shadow, the "system" to a mere atom of itself? We think it is quite time to be understood, that, if words are to have meaning, then the phrases "substance" and "system" of doctrine in a creed mean something; and that neither Arminianism nor Pelagianism is the "substance" or "system" of doctrine of a Calvinistic creed.

3. "The distinctive excellence" ascribed to Congregationalism in the Declaration, is not *distinctive* of that scheme. But while it is not exclusively theirs, we rejoice in the catholic attitude they assume towards the whole body of believers of every communion. We cordially reciprocate it, and confront it with the late vote of our Assembly in behalf of a closer unity and more efficient coöperation between the different members of the body of Christ, in defence of a common cause against a com-

mon enemy. Our motto is the old catholic watchword: *In necessariis unitas; in non necessariis libertas; in omnibus caritas.* On the whole, we think the Council and its proceedings indicate an advance in the Congregational body in the line of truth, purity, and unity, and, so far forth, against Independency, or absolute irresponsible, unqualified Congregationalism.

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ART. VI.—*The Princeton Review on the State of the Country and of the Church.*

THE last four years have been a period of unexampled excitement in the public mind. The conflict in which the country has been engaged has called forth the discussion of the most important questions concerning the nature of our government, the duties of the citizen, and the prerogatives of the church. In these discussions men of all classes have been forced to take part. The principles involved touched the conscience, and were therefore elevated above the sphere of mere politics. Hence not only secular journals and conventions, but religious papers and ecclesiastical bodies have freely and earnestly expressed their conviction on all the topics in controversy. Even the special advocates of the spirituality of the church, who professed to have washed their hands of all secular concerns, have been the most pronounced in their opinions, and the most vehement and pertinacious in advocating them. It was neither to be expected nor desired that a quarterly journal, like the *Princeton Review*, whose province it is to discuss all questions of general interest, although specially devoted to theological and ecclesiastical subjects, should remain silent in the midst of this universal agitation. It has not shrunk from the responsibility of taking its part in these grave discussions. Its record is a matter of history. There it stands open to the inspection of all who take any interest in its character and course. The *Review* has as freely as any other journal, and with the same right, neither more nor less, said what it felt bound to say, on Secession, on the Rebellion, on the duty of