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ART. I.—*Studies in the Gospels: Mark, the Gospel for the Roman.*

SOME of the critics—chiefly of the class equally eminent for profundity and simpleness—would have us believe that the Gospel according to Mark is only a very awkward rehash of that according to Matthew, with the occasional addition, no less awkward, of some statements of Luke. The hasty and sometimes shabby treatment of the Second Gospel by many of the commentators, has done not a little to foster in the minds of common readers a view too closely allied to that of these critics. A careful study of the Gospel itself, with a wise reference to its origin, will reveal the fact that it has a distinct aim and independent unity of its own, and will scarcely fail to convince the candid mind that Matthew is quite as likely to be a rehash of Mark as Mark is of Matthew. Much more accordant with a due reverence for the Four Gospels, as produced by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and forming together one part of a great plan of that God who never really wastes material, is the theory that each one of the Evangelists, in writing what he wrote, was directed to perform an essential and distinct service for the world.

away; legal ordinances and ritualistic ceremonies shall be abrogated, ecclesiastical tyranny abolished, and all the enemies of God shall be consumed." A number of minor slips betray the fact that this volume, though evidently the fruit of much reflection and of an earnest spirit, has led its author into a department with which he is not professionally familiar—as where he unintentionally plays into the hands of modern unbelieving criticism by speaking of the book of Daniel as the work not of the prophet but of a compiler, p. 13, and prepared after the prophet's death, p. 44, or makes our Lord's ministry to have lasted seven years, p. 26, or explains "host," Dan. viii. 13, by the Latin "*hostia*," or substitutes a Septuagint reading for that of the Hebrew, and makes it the basis of his computations, p. 39, or founds an interpretation on expressions in the Septuagint which are wholly out of relation to the original, p. 77ff.

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#### ARTICLE VI.—*The General Assembly.*

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States met in the First Presbyterian Church of Chicago on the 18th day of June, 1871, and was opened with a sermon by Rev. J. Trumbull Backus, D.D., the moderator of the last Assembly. The Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D.D., was chosen Moderator.

#### REDUCTION OF THE RATIO OF REPRESENTATION.

The body was very large, numbering some 500 members, or more. This number was greatly augmented by a very large attendance of others who, in various capacities, and for various reasons, always crowd around such gatherings. The size of the body, which must constantly increase on the present basis of representation, with the growth of our church, has already become too onerous to Christian hospitality to be endured in any but the largest cities, and in them only on special occasions, nor more than once in a generation; and it has become

so large and unwieldy as to be in danger of contracting more the characteristics of a great mass meeting, than of a solemn deliberative and judicial body, such as the supreme judicatory of the Church of Christ should be. This whole subject of maturing a plan for reducing the membership of the body was referred to a large and competent Committee with instructions to report to the next Assembly. We trust they will do their work wisely and well. Every plan yet suggested, whether by presbyterial, synodical, or district representation, has its own peculiar difficulties, which it is unnecessary to repeat here. Be these difficulties greater or less, they must be boldly met and surmounted. We trust no half-way measures will be proposed, which mollify without curing the evil—leaving it soon to become as formidable as ever. We hope they will boldly propose a plan which will shrink the body to less than half its present size, and which will improve its quality more than diminish its quantity; which will make it no longer a crowd appalling to Christian hospitality, or a huge gathering of ministers and elders, largely chosen because they covet such an opportunity of travel and recreation, but a select assembly of the leading and representative minds of the church, and through which its minorities not less than its majorities can make themselves felt.

The session was on the whole harmonious and successful in bringing to a happy issue most subjects with which it had to deal. Chief among these was the re-organization of the Boards so as vastly to raise the standard of Christian giving, of ministerial support, of home and foreign evangelization, and of all else which can contribute to the efficiency of the Church in spreading the Gospel.

#### FINANCE AND BENEVOLENCE.

The Report of the Committee of Twenty-one which has been spread before the Church by the weeklies, and the action taken upon it, were the great features of the meeting. Nearly all else done was in direct or indirect relation with this, as providing for the contemplated advance in Christian liberality and evangelization. The jubilant reception of the report of the Memorial Fund Committee, showing that the contributions

had far exceeded the \$5,000,000 aimed at, and that if all were reckoned in which is fairly due to the momentum of this great effort, whether professedly or intentionally included in it or not, it will closely approximate \$10,000,000, also gave shape and impulse in many minds to some plans of Benevolence and Finance which found much favor in the Assembly. It was very natural that it should be thought that the concentration which had been so successful in swelling the Memorial Fund, would be equally successful with reference to the stated charities and contributions of the Church. A large majority of the Assembly, however, judged that this was straining the analogy too far. For reasons which we will soon give, we believe they were right.

The Report of the Committee of Twenty-one, composed of some of the most sagacious and public-spirited men in the church, had for its salient points several recommendations designed to "simplify, consolidate and unify the various benevolent operations of the Church." Chief among these were a General Commission composed of representatives of the Boards and Synods to superintend all; the reduction of the Boards to four, viz. : the Foreign Board to conduct all Foreign evangelization; the "Board for Home work to discharge the duties now assigned to the present Boards of Home Missions, Education, and Church Erection, and to the Committees on Freedmen and Ministerial Relief." The Board of Publication "to be conducted strictly as a business operation;" and a Board of Benevolence and Finance to be "composed largely of business men of acknowledged skill in the management of financial affairs. With one Treasurer it shall have charge of the funds for the Home and Foreign work of the Church. It shall meet the drafts of each of the Boards so far as funds have been received for it, or as may be directed by the General Commission. It shall also be its duty to promote throughout the church the regular and systematic consecration of property to the Lord. . . . The Boards of Foreign and Home Work, together with that of Benevolence and Finance shall be located in New York, and the Board of Publication shall be located in Philadelphia." The rest of the report recommended the detailed measures, whereby through Synods, Presbyteries,

Sessions, and ministers, these commissions and boards might reach every church in our connection, and bring home to every member the responsibility of contributing or refusing to contribute to the various charities of the Church. The adoption of the report was strenuously urged by Dr. Hall and W. S. Gilman, Esq., the honored Chairman of the Memorial Fund Committee, and opposed with great power by Dr. Musgrave and Judge Allison. After discussion it was plain that the Assembly was not prepared to adopt it. It was therefore referred to a committee in which both sides were represented, who agreed upon the following compromise, which was adopted by the Assembly :

*Resolved*, That in order to the systematizing and developing of the liberality of our people, and fostering the aggressive interests of our Church in accomplishing the work assigned us in the providence of God, there shall be a committee of Benevolence and Finance, which shall consist of fifteen members, composed largely of business men of acknowledged skill in the management of financial affairs, and one member *additional* from each of the Boards. It shall be located in the city of New York, and it shall be its duty to use all proper means to promote throughout the Church, the regular and systematic consecration of property to the Lord: and to superintend the collection of funds for the whole benevolent work of the Church. The contributions to be sent directly to the Treasurers of the several Boards and Committees of the Church.

2. It shall receive regular monthly statements of their receipts from all the Boards of the Church, that the financial condition of these Boards, as well as the actual benevolence of each congregation, may be at all times before the Committee. This Committee shall also receive and report to the General Assembly, to be disbursed by the Assembly, any monies from churches and individuals that may be given without any specific designation.

3. The expenses of said Committee shall be borne *pro rata* by the several Boards.

4. The Assembly enjoin upon all the churches the practice of periodical giving to all causes recommended by the General Assembly, according to the principles commended in the Word of God.

5. In order to carry out this plan, the General Assembly enjoins upon every Presbytery to appoint a Standing Committee on the Benevolent Work of the Church, of which the Stated Clerk shall be Secretary. It shall be the duty of this Committee to use all means in its power to have brought before all the congregations in the Presbytery the plans that may be recommended for securing contributions, and to give each pastor and session information of the wants of the various objects and what is expected of each congregation. Every Presbytery is required to question each pastor, stated supply, and elder present at every stated meeting in the spring and fall, whether the directions and recommendations on this subject have been complied with, recording the answers on the minutes.

6. At least as often as once every six months these Standing Committees shall report to the Committee of Benevolence and Finance, so far as they can, in relation to the different objects for which contributions have been made by the churches within the limits of their respective Presbyteries, with the amount contributed for each, together with such other information of the general benevolent work of their churches and Presbyteries as shall seem necessary, or shall be called for by the Committee.

7. No church, not complying with the directions of the Assembly to make collections for the several Boards, shall receive aid from the funds of the Church."

While we think the Assembly acted wisely in going thus far, it was equally wise in going no further. The one great truth, signalized in the Report of the Committee of Twenty-one, was the necessity of some adequate agency for developing and organizing the benevolence and liberality of the Church; of taking effectual measures for ensuring the annual presentation of the claims of all our boards to every congregation of the Church, and the bringing home to each one the distinct personal responsibility of giving or declining to give to each and every of these causes. For the lack of this our Church suffers, and long has suffered, grievous loss. It is due to this that churches, by the hundred, and even thousand, and church members by the ten or hundred thousand, give nothing, or next to nothing, to the causes of Christian benevolence, and that they fall behind the giving of the New England churches, where the proper organization of benevolence has produced its proper effect; and that so large an amount of all our contributions come from a few churches, and even a few members of these few churches. It is common to say that more liberality supposes more piety, and that if we seek the former we must first ensure the latter. There is a side of truth in this observation. Giving is at once a fruit and a promoter of Christian piety. This piety is the ultimate propulsive power. It needs, however, the guidance of light, the help of system and organization. A locomotive will not, indeed, go without steam; but what will the steam do without an adequate machine, a well-laid track, a competent engineer? Good crops suppose a fertile soil, but what will this avail without systematic tillage? We hold, therefore, that the work assigned to our Board of Benevolence and Finance is indispeusable, and that no higher service can be

rendered to the Church than the adequate discharge of it. But we are of opinion that the further process of centralization recommended, culminating in one treasury for all Church work, and one general commission to control it, would have had quite a contrary and disastrous effect on the beneficence of our Church; and this not merely on the ground that it is too radical and extreme to be safely adopted at once, although desirable in itself if the Church were only good enough to bear it; but that it is intrinsically inferior to the present plan of separate boards for all the great departments of Church work, each with its own independent treasury and independent conduct of its own affairs, subject only to the Church and its Head. For—

1. In order to evoke the largest beneficence of the people, each cause must be presented to them on its own special merits, by those who are specially set in charge of it. It is not enough that appeals be made for all these objects *en masse*, or that the people be called on to give their donations in a lump or indiscriminately for all these objects, to be apportioned to each by some central commission or treasury, at their discretion. Men highly trained in business, and capable of taking a full survey with due information of all objects of beneficence, may give as much under such a system as any other. The Committee of Twenty-one are doubtless gentlemen of this character, and have only been mistaken in supposing that the great mass of givers have reached this elevation. But it is otherwise. We are persuaded that the average human mind, even when sanctified, is not fitted to grasp things and direct its gifts in this calm, complete, and self-possessed way. They are impressed, and they respond most readily, as each department of benevolence is placed before them upon its own absolute merits. Of course there are limits to this distribution of departments of benevolence, just as there are limits to the division of labor. But none the less is it certain that within these limits such division promotes the efficiency of labor. Such distribution of the objects of benevolence increases the contributions of the people to them. Let Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Church Erection, Ministerial Education, Publication, Disabled Ministers, be placed each

upon its own merits before the Church, and we are sure a more generous response will be returned than if all or part of them were mixed together in a promiscuous presentation.

2. The board charged with the conduct of any branch of Church work should be charged with the collection and disposal of the funds requisite to carry it on. All these elements in a cause mutually interwork. They act and react on each other, and are more safely conducted in unison than separately. The manner of conducting missions, foreign or domestic, for example, determines the power with which an appeal can be made to the Church, and the degree of support accorded to them conditions the manner in which they must be conducted. No parties can so effectively represent to the Church the wants, the urgencies, the encouragements in their respective fields as those who superintend them, who know them most thoroughly, and are most profoundly interested to sustain and invigorate them. If they have no responsibility or agency in raising the funds, it will most seriously weaken their responsibility for the successful administration of the whole work, absolutely dependent as it is upon the funds. We have not the slightest doubt of the truth of these considerations. They are urged not merely on *a priori* grounds. They are enforced by a long observation and experience.

3. As God's Spirit divideth to each one severally as He wills, so He gives to different persons different degrees of light in regard to the merits of different causes. Some of the heartiest and largest givers will be more touched and wrought upon by the claims of Foreign, others of Home Missions. Some will be deaf to all pleas for Ministerial Education who will yet be most generous to Ministerial Sustentation. And so of the whole circle of causes, of which some will make this and some that their specialty. The most distinguished layman with whom we have had to do gave as much to Home Missions as to all other causes combined, because his doctrine was that on the christianization of this country depended its temporal and eternal salvation, and with it that of the world. His nearest neighbors, not one whit his inferiors in intelligence and liberality, gave most largely to Foreign Missions, on the

ground that the field is the world, and the wants of Heathendom are more urgent and crying than those of this Christian land. We may criticise this diversity of judgments as much as we please. Still, after all efforts to enlighten the Church, they will unquestionably exist among intelligent, conscientious, and liberal givers. This being so, our methods should be so adapted to this state of things as to utilize it to the utmost. But this cannot be done by making collections for benevolent work in general, instead of specific objects. Those who have these preferences for such objects will not have their beneficence fully drawn forth, unless it is certain that their donations will be appropriated to strengthen the cause which they have most at heart. Nor does it remove this difficulty to agree to appropriate from the Central Treasury any particular donation to the particular department of work for which it is given. For all this amounts to nothing if, in consequence, a like portion of the general fund is withdrawn from the cause in question to serve others; for the object of this class of donors in such cases is to strengthen, not the fund for general Christian benevolence, but the particular cause, to which they make a large donation for the purpose of giving it a support which it would not otherwise receive. Not only so, but such donations are a sacred trust for the particular objects to which they are devoted. They may not, therefore, directly or indirectly, be diverted therefrom without breach of faith.

4. We conclude our remarks on this subject with a simple reference to the concentration of power which the proposed scheme involves, and which undoubtedly contributed somewhat to its defeat. We do not sympathize with small jealousies of power in the hands of good men, and least of all such as the present generation of liberal givers in New York City, of whom the honored Chairman of the Committee of Twenty-one is so noble a type. We believe it impossible in this world to confer upon any men power enough to do any good which will not carry with it the power, by perversion, to do evil. And we shall not shrink from conferring upon the right men all powers absolutely necessary for the best church work, because of the possibility of its perversion, or ultimate drifting into

hands that will pervert it. At the same time, it is a strong and conclusive argument against conferring on any Board, Commission, or Central Treasury, powers not essential to the fullest organization and development of Christian beneficence—such a prodigious power as that of determining where the whole benevolent contributions of the Church shall go, and whom they shall sustain. It is idle to deny that such a body might make itself felt fearfully on one side or another of any great questions of doctrine or polity that may hereafter agitate the Church. And when the occasion arises, we have in time past had abundant experience how great is the temptation to use such a power in support of the views which those who wield it suppose to be right. We think, therefore, the present distribution of these functions to be preferred to the concentration proposed, unless it can be shown to be necessary to evoke the fullest benevolence of the Church. We have shown that, so far from being conducive to such a result, it is the reverse. We think, therefore, that the objection against needless concentration of power holds in its full force, because it is wholly unnecessary. We rejoice in unity, but unity in wholesome variety. The reunion happily accomplished has inspired some with a morbid passion for extreme unification. They would have but one central Board, one quarterly, or even weekly journal in the Church. Should such succeed in realizing their aspirations, we apprehend that some of them would be the first to tire and chafe under the dreary monotony, the centralized irresistible supremacy, of single persons, organs, boards, and agencies.

The great end, however, sought through this one central treasury, we trust will be accomplished through the agency of the Board of Benevolence and Finance as now constituted; and that the day is near, when through Synods, Presbyteries, Sessions, Pastors, and deacons, every member of our Church will annually be informed as to the present necessities and claims of each department of church work, and confronted with the distinct personal responsibility of making or declining contributions to them. We are glad that the Assembly has felt warranted to call for \$500,000 for Foreign Missions; \$300,000 for Home Missions; and an addition of 33½ per cent. to

the allowance to the beneficiaries of the Board of Education. We trust these reasonable calls will be cheerfully and abundantly met, and that after the successful completion of the Memorial Fund, we shall be saved one mortifying experience of the first year of Reunion, in which all our Boards were suffered to fall into unexampled embarrassments, and we were compelled to pare down to the quick the already starveling allowance of our toiling and famishing Missionaries. We hope that the deficiency in the past will be more than balanced by the unstinted liberality of the future.\*

BOARD OF PUBLICATION—SABBATH-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The Assembly adopted a policy with regard to the Board of Publication, quite different from that recommended by the Committee of Twenty-one. They declined to make it a mere publishing house, conducted simply on business principles. On the contrary they enlarged its functions, not only giving increased scope to colportage and its authority to call for contributions from the churches, but charging it with the superintendence of Sabbath-schools; and especially the duty of providing a suitable Sabbath-school literature, together with sound and edifying books for Sabbath-school libraries, made up of their own publications, and judicious selections from all other available sources. After the full discussion of this subject in one of the articles of our present number, we deem it unnecessary to say more, than to express our satisfaction with the general accord of the reports, speeches, and of the fixed policy of the Assembly, with the views therein set forth. We hope this flagrant evil will soon be abated.

PSALMODY.

Another work of great moment devolved upon the Board of Publication, is the issuing a new book of Psalmody, to be prepared under the supervision of an able committee appointed for this purpose. We think the preparation of a fit book for the service of song, and its adoption throughout our whole Church, among the most precious benefits now possible to be conferred upon her. Great evils arise from the medley of Hymn-books now in use in different congregations of our

Church, and we think nothing would be more significant, or promotive of restored unity, than to find all our churches singing the same psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs; thus making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Nothing tends more to make Presbyterians feel at home and as one in any and every church of our communion. And nothing sooner makes one feel as a stranger and alien from any church, than unwonted hymns arranged in unwonted methods, till he is lost in a thicket of "books," and "selections," "to find no end in wandering mazes lost." This would be so, if the psalms and hymns when found, were unexceptionable. It is particularly embarrassing to ministers, to find these strange books in strange pulpits. But many of these hymns themselves are unorthodox, or unpoetical, or undevout, or unclassic. This is especially true of many private collections, and is not wholly untrue of some books enjoying ecclesiastical sanction. We trust we may soon be able to sound forth the high praises of our God with one heart and one voice, and that no longer will every man have each for himself a psalm or a doctrine throughout our wide communion. We hope the Committee will limit themselves to standard hymns and tunes that have been proved and accepted as such by the ample use of the church; that all hymns that have become sacred in the affections, not of a few, but of the great mass of Presbyterians, will be religiously retained; that they will be connected with the tunes that have been sacredly associated with them in the general usage of the church; that no hobby, or private idiosyncrasy will be allowed to shape the work; that the least possible alterations will be made in hymns and tunes endeared to the church; and above all, that no musical composer, however gifted in his own or others' esteem, will be allowed to inflict upon the church his own crude and untried compositions to displace tunes that have long proved their fitness for expressing the devotions of God's people.

#### SUSTENTATION.

A great step taken by this Assembly was the initiating of a sustentation scheme, for carrying into effect the doctrine which has been advocated in this journal almost alone for

thirty years, viz. : that the whole church is bound to ensure a competent support for all its ministers; that each minister has a claim, not alone upon the members of his own church however feeble and poor it may be, but upon the whole church, for at least that minimum support without which he cannot exercise his vocation, with comparative dignity, energy and freedom from worldly cares. We will not burden our pages with the statistics on this subject which the able Committee charged with it has so industriously collected and turned to account; nor with the details of the plan recommended by them, and unanimously adopted by the Assembly without debate. These have been laid before our readers to the full in our Presbyterian weeklies, and in pamphlets sent to all our ministers. They seem to us eminently wise, and well digested for an initial movement in a church so prodigiously extended, and full of ever-multiplying missionary and pioneer weak churches, which must keep pace with our ever-advancing and multiplying new settlements. This involves difficulties for any sustentation scheme, unknown to a compact body of churches in an old country and small territory, like the Presbyterian churches in Scotland and Ireland. The principal features of the plan are: 1. Positively, that it aims to supplement the salaries of all to whom it applies so as to bring them up to a minimum of \$1000, parsonage included at first, but with the hope of ultimately reaching that figure in addition to a parsonage.

2. Negatively, it is inapplicable, of course, to all whose salaries reach this amount independently of it; also to those who are mere stated supplies and not pastors, also to pastors whose congregations do not themselves raise at least \$500 for them, and who do not average for this purpose two cents per day, or \$7 30 annually, for each member in their contributions for the pastor's salary. It further requires that each pastor shall aim to secure from his people an amount equal to at least one-twentieth (and rather one-tenth) of his own salary annually, toward supplementing the salaries under this scheme.

3. "That, in like manner, not only such churches as are aided by this scheme, but every church session, be required by the General Assembly to set on foot forthwith, and to earnestly

prosecute, a plan that shall extend to every member of the congregation an opportunity of contributing to this cause (and to all the Boards of the Church) either by the envelope system or by collectors, reaching each in person; and that the Presbyteries be enjoined to see that this requirement is complied with. Many of our churches give nothing to our great schemes of beneficence. Many, in our best churches, are not reached by the ordinary method. It is the plain duty of the officers to afford to each worshipper the opportunity to contribute; and every church has a right to this means of education and cultivation in the divine life. And then, the mites are mighty. "*The power of the littles,*" as Chalmers pleaded for it, wrought such distinguished success for his church schemes."

In the final recommendation which follows, and was adopted and carried out by the appointment of Dr. Jacobus as Secretary, for which he had shown his high qualifications while acting as Chairman of the Committee, we find a strong confirmation of the views we have already presented against the proposed consolidation of boards and treasuries, as tending to obstruct rather than enlarge the flow of benevolence:

"X. That the Central Committee of *Seven* be annually appointed by the General Assembly to supervise this work, having a secretary to conduct the operations and to keep accounts with the Presbyterial Treasurers of Sustentation, and every way, and by all means, to further the great object in view.

"It may be said that this work falls naturally under the Board of Home Missions, and can as well be done by them, and that no additional object should be presented to the churches. But it is plain, from all our experience as a church that the Board of Home Missions has already in its church-extension work more than it can well accomplish. And your Committee are fully of the opinion that unless this scheme is set on foot, as distinct from the pioneer work of that Board, and unless it shall be presented as something extra and specific, it cannot be successful."

May God prosper this great work to which the Church has now set itself.

#### UNION WITH THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The progress of negotiations for union with the U. P. Church was reported by the committee in charge. No basis of union mutually acceptable has yet been reached. The

committee was continued, with instructions to seek further conference. We notice one article agreed to on both sides, "That in all ordinary cases the sacraments are to be restricted in their administration to those over whom the Church has authority."

Does "church" here mean the particular church in which the communicant is partaking at the time? We presume not. But the known principles of the U. P. Church lead us to contemplate the possibility of such a construction on their part, and in that case it would exclude all but those who do not submit to their discipline, *i. e.*, to their terms of communion. That is to say, who do not in practice conform to their requirements as to Psalmody, and as to subscribing the standards as a condition not only of ministerial and official standing, but of private membership in the Church. We ask the attention of our committee to this point, to see to it that there is nothing ambiguous, and thus capable of being turned against our system in any stipulations made. A union with this excellent body establishing any such terms of communion would cause a much larger secession from, than accession to, us.

#### INTOXICATING DRINKS.

We find the following in the *General Assembly Journal*, reported as the recommendation of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, presented during the last hours of the Assembly, and adopted without discussion, unless the question put by Rev. Mr. Patterson and the answer of Rev. Mr. Moore can be called such :

"LIQUOR-SELLING CHURCH MEMBERS.—The Presbyteries of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia Central send an overture relative to this matter, and the following deliverance is adopted by the Assembly: This General Assembly, believing the manufacture, sale, and use of alcoholic stimulants as a beverage, to be contrary to the spirit of God's word, and wholly inconsistent with the claims of Christian duty, reiterate the testimonies of former Assemblies on this subject. It also affirms its conviction of the reprehensible complicity in the guilt of the aforesaid traffic, of those who knowingly rent their premises for such purpose, or indorse licenses, or legalize it. And further to give emphasis to this action, the Board of Publication is directed to print an abstract of such former testimonies as cover the points referred to in the overtures, and send a copy to each pastor, etc., in the Church, with the direction of the Assembly to read the same publicly from his pulpit. Finally, the general circulation of a temperance paper is recom-

mended, and the Board of Publication is requested to add such other treatises as may be adapted, to its present list.

"On the question to adopt the report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures on the temperance question, the Rev. R. M. Patterson said he heartily concurred in this report. He felt just now a special interest in this question, and was glad that such a decided paper had been reported by the Committee. He wanted it, however, to be so voted upon that it could not be said it had passed among a great number of reports, in the last hours of the session, and without being fully understood. He therefore called the special attention of the Assembly to it, and inquired whether it was distinctly understood that among the deliverances of preceding Assemblies now proposed to be reaffirmed, was included that of the Assembly of 1865 (Old School) which met in Pittsburgh.

"The Rev. W. E. Moore, clerk of the Committee, replied that such was the meaning of the paper."

It nevertheless was "passed among a great number of reports in the last hours of the session," and how could it be "fully understood?" Does not the very next column of the *Assembly Journal* tell us that on a renewed motion to recommit the Report of the Committee of Twenty-one,

"Rev. Mr. Patterson thought it was anything but courteous or parliamentary to take up the matter at this late stage of the proceedings, when a large number of members had gone home with the impression that it was to be allowed to rest, for the time at least. And while he voted the other way yesterday, he felt he must, in justice to these absent members, take an opposite course; and accordingly would move, as a test of the question, that the subject be laid upon the table.

"On a division, the matter was tabled.

"A motion to reconsider the report was lost."

How many in the Assembly knew precisely the Pittsburgh paper of the O. S. Assembly, 1865, running through two closely-printed, elaborately-reasoned, octavo pages, and handling some of the most perplexing and disputed cases of Christian ethics and casuistry? How many knew what were the deliverances of other O. S. Assemblies consistent and inconsistent with it? Who of the former Old School body knows what have been the deliverances of the New School body, and *vice versa*? Who knows whether the collection of deliverances of both Assemblies, which the Board of Publication are charged to publish, will be a confused and contradictory medley, or a consistent whole, in harmony with the Bible, the Confession of Faith, and the truth? Perhaps some may know. We do not; nor do we believe the majority of the Assembly

did. The Board of Publication will of course publish the substance of the whole as they find it. They will not usurp the semi-legislative function of picking and choosing and omitting what suits them. And all pastors are instructed to read all this, be it consistent or inconsistent, to the churches. Suppose it should prove a mass of mutually contradictory utterances, what then? Will it prove for edification? The paper adopted in 1865 at Pittsburgh makes "the manufacturing and vending of intoxicating drinks as a beverage" a bar to communion. If this be so, much more must the drinking of them be so. But we find the following in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* for April, 1871, pp. 244-5. While we have not the minutes at hand with which to verify it, we have no reason to doubt its truth, since it accords with the known attitude of our ministry at that time. "At an Assembly at Indianapolis, a short time before the war, the overweening friends of total abstinence moved the Assembly to make their rule as to alcoholic beverages binding on the consciences of the people. Dr. Thornwell properly met them by arguing that the Assembly had no Scriptural authority to bind the liberty of the people in this thing; that the Bible prohibited excess only, and not the use of strong drinks. The Assembly so enacted." At all events, in 1842, on the question whether the manufacturer, vender, or retailer of intoxicating drinks should be continued in full communion of the Church, it was voted, "That, while the Assembly rejoice in the success of the temperance reformation, and will use all lawful means to promote it, they cannot sanction the adoption of any new terms of communion."

We also find the following in the Minutes of the General Assembly, 1843, p. 189:—"On the question of approving the Records of the Synod of Pittsburgh, it was

"Resolved, That the records be approved, except so far as they seem to establish a general rule in regard to the use and sale of ardent spirits as a beverage, which use and sale are generally to be disapproved; but each case must be decided in view of all the attendant circumstances that go to modify and give character to the same."

We have not been able to find the Minutes of the Synod

so excepted to, but are informed that the item was precisely similar to the action of the Pittsburgh Assembly of 1865.

And the celebrated paper adopted by the O. S. Assembly in 1848, in response to the petitions of certain temperance associations, is in entire harmony with the above action.

We wait for the publication of the collected testimonies ordered, and for more time and space than we can now command, as our last sheet is going to the printer, before giving the subject that thorough discussion, in its relations to the teachings of the word of God; the standard of Christian morality; obligation as related to the use of things indifferent; expediency; Christian liberty; total abstinence; the sacramental use of wine; which we apprehend from various signs is about to be forced upon us. Meanwhile, however, we close by briefly stating without argument a few propositions which we do not think can be successfully impugned.

1. The Word of God is the sole, infallible standard of Christian duty.

2. The "spirit of God's Word" is to be learned solely from the declarations of that word, fairly interpreted, and duly compared with each other.

3. No enterprise of moral reform can succeed in the end, or fail to do more harm than good, that impeaches the morality of the Scriptures, or of any act of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

4. According to the belief of ninety-nine hundredths of the Christian Church, the latest verdict of evangelical scholarship, and the clear internal sense of Scripture itself, the wine of Scripture, whose temperate and sparing use is not, and whose excessive use is, condemned, and which was made by our Saviour at Cana, was fermented, and capable of inebriating, if taken in excess.

5. All intoxicating and intemperate use of wine, or any strong drink, is condemned alike by Scripture and a good conscience as a sin, which in its own nature involves pollution and guilt.

6. Although, according to Scripture, the sparing use of beverages that taken in excess may intoxicate, is of itself indifferent, like the eating of certain meats, so that if we thus pai-

take of them we are not the worse, and if we partake of them not, we are not the better, yet it may often be expedient to abstain from the use of lawful things, when not so to abstain may wound the conscience of weak brethren, or may constitute a snare to tempt ourselves or others to sin, or to form sinful habits. Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we are bound to do all to the glory of God, and to the perfecting of holiness in ourselves and others. In short, we are to use our liberty in things indifferent in a Christian spirit, with Christian love, and for Christian ends. "For, brethren, you are called unto liberty, only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."—Gal. v. 10.

7. But inasmuch as it is a real *liberty* to which we are called in these things, its use is to be determined by each one's own conscience for himself, not by the conscience of others. For "why should my own liberty be judged by another man's conscience?"—1 Cor. x. 29. Here each one is at liberty to act according to his own views of duty, and no man has a right to judge him. Whether he eat meat, or herbs, or drink wine, or abstain from them, "to his own Master he stands or falls;" we must all herein give account to Him, not to man.

8. In the light of these views, and in the circumstances in which we are now placed, we think it a right and Christian use of our liberty in the premises to abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage. We do what we can to persuade others to take the same view and the same course. We hope and pray that all may see their duty in this light, till the drunkenness which desolates the land is done away.

9. But if others judge it right to use their liberty otherwise, and, within the limits of temperance, not to abstain from all that can intoxicate, it is not our province to judge or condemn them for that purely and simply. We may not make it a term of communion, or bar to the Lord's table. To do so would be to usurp the prerogative of Christ, nay, to excommunicate our Lord himself.

10. We believe that nine-tenths of all who habitually abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks do so in conformity to the principles above indicated; and that, should the leaders of Temperance Societies succeed in what some are

attempting, and undermine the faith of men in the scriptural foundations of temperance principles above indicated, they could only do it by undermining faith in God and his Word, which would end in the destruction of temperance and every other virtue. "WHOSOEVER SHALL FALL ON THIS STONE SHALL BE BROKEN; BUT ON WHOMSOEVER IT SHALL FALL, IT SHALL GRIND HIM TO POWDER."—Matt. xxi. 44.

It is quite certain that the late action of Assemblies on Temperance has accomplished little more than to leave the subject in a state of unrest, or rather to start that renewed discussion which is requisite to the safe disposal of the subject. It will doubtless come up again in the next or a future General Assembly. We trust that, meanwhile, it will receive the careful consideration of the ministers, elders, members, and subordinate judicatories of the church; and that any future deliverance of the General Assembly will be made only after the subject has been thoroughly considered in all its bearings by the *whole* church at large; and after such an early introduction of it to the body by the Committee having the subject in charge, as will afford opportunity to discuss it thoroughly, and put it in a form consistent with the word of God, and truly promotive of the cause of temperance.

Finally, the declarations of any General Assembly on points of faith and morals, are simply the expressions of their own opinion at the time, and often, for various reasons, they fail truly to express the deliberate judgment of a majority of its members. They are no part of the law of the church until sanctioned by the Presbyteries upon formal overture. They are entitled simply to the consideration due to the vote of such a body of men in view of the haste or deliberation with which they are passed. But no human enactments, however or by whomsoever passed, can bind the conscience, if contrary to the word of God. That is our supreme law, and the judge that ends the strife. God alone is Lord of the conscience.