

A COLLECTION  
OF THE  
ACTS, DELIVERANCES, AND TESTIMONIES  
OF THE  
Supreme Judicatory  
OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FROM ITS ORIGIN IN AMERICA TO THE PRESENT TIME.

WITH  
NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

EXPLANATORY AND HISTORICAL:

CONSTITUTING A COMPLETE ILLUSTRATION OF HER POLITY, FAITH, AND HISTORY.

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## PART XI.

### THE NEW-SCHOOL SCHISM.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE EARLIER TRANSACTIONS.

###### § 95. *First minute in the New-school controversy.*

[The Synod of Philadelphia had sent forth a Pastoral Letter, of which the following is an extract.\*]

###### *Pastoral Letter of Synod.*

“The Synod assembled in Lancaster at the present time, consists of a greater number of members than have been convened at any meeting for many years; and from their free conversation on the state of religion, it appears that all the Presbyteries are more than commonly alive to the importance of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and of resisting the introduction of Arian, Socinian, Arminian, and Hopkinsian heresies, which are some of the means by which the enemy of souls would, if possible, deceive the very elect.

“The Synod desire to cherish a stronger regard for the truth as it is in Jesus, than they find at present subsisting among themselves, and because they are not ignorant of the disposition of many good men to cry ‘peace,’ where there should be no peace, and ‘there is no danger,’ in cases in which God commands us to avoid the appearance of evil, they would affectionately exhort each Presbytery under their care, to be strict in the examination of candidates for licensure or ordination, upon the subject of those delusions of the present age, which seem to be a combination of most of the innovations made upon Christian doctrine in former times.

“May the time never come in which our ecclesiastical courts shall determine that Hopkinsianism and the doctrines of our Confession of Faith are the same thing, or that men are less exposed now than in the days of the apostles, to the danger of perverting the right ways of the Lord.

“The Synod would exhort particularly all the elders of the Churches to beware of those who have made such pretended discoveries in Christian theology as require an abandonment of the ‘form of sound words,’ contained in our excellent Confession and the Holy Scriptures.

“In some portions of our Synodical bounds, exertions have been made, but with little effect, to propagate the doctrine of universal salvation. We rejoice that the shafts of Satan should fall ineffectual from the shield of Jesus, and we desire all persons under our care to present this shield, by maintaining and diffusing assiduously the sentiments of the word of God, in opposition to every damning error.

“Three or four of our Churches have experienced what is commonly called a revival of religion, and to them accessions of communicants have been numerous; but in many other Congregations, a gradual but almost constant multiplication of the professed friends of Zion reminds us, that if the thunder-storm in summer excites the most attention, it is the continued blessing from the clouds which replenishes the springs, and makes glad the harvest of the husbandman. For the many who are united in a short time, and for the

[\* From the pen of the Rev. E. S. Ely, D. D.]

many who are gradually gathered to Christ, not by the great and strong wind that rends the mountains, nor by the earthquake, but by the still small voice, which cometh not with observation, we would give our Redeemer thanks, and desire the Churches to bless him, no less for the daily dew, than the latter and the early rain."—*Marginal note to Minutes*, 1817, p. 655.

§ 96. *The Assembly condemns this letter.*

"The committee appointed to examine the records of the Synod of Philadelphia, reported; and the book was approved to page 499, excepting certain parts of a pastoral letter, commencing in page 494, and a resolution in page 493, which enjoins on the several Presbyteries belonging to the Synod to call to an account all such Ministers as may be suspected to embrace any of the opinions usually called Hopkinsian. On these parts of the records, the Assembly would remark, that while they commend the zeal of the Synod in endeavouring to promote a strict conformity to our public standards, a conformity which cannot but be viewed as of vital importance to the purity and prosperity of the Church, the Assembly regret that zeal on this subject should be manifested in such a manner as to be offensive to other denominations, and especially to introduce a spirit of jealousy and suspicion against Ministers in good standing, which is calculated to disturb the peace and harmony of our ecclesiastical judicatories. And whereas, a passage in the pastoral letter above referred to, appears capable of being construed as expressing an opinion unfavourable to revivals of religion, the Assembly would only observe, that they cannot believe that that venerable Synod could have intended to express such an opinion.

§ 97. *Protest first.*

"The following protests against this resolution were brought in and read, and it was directed by the Assembly that they be recorded on the Minutes.

"The subscribers feel themselves aggrieved by the resolution of the General Assembly, adopted on the 24th instant, relative to a pastoral letter and resolution entered on the 493d and 494th pages of the records of the Synod of Philadelphia; and therefore claim as a right, that the following protest be entered on the Minutes of the General Assembly.

"1. We protest against the above resolution of the Assembly, because it highly commends, and at the same time expresses regret at the zeal of the Synod for maintaining purity of doctrine within their bounds, which inconsistency of conduct we think derogatory to the honour of the Assembly, and injurious to the cause of the Redeemer.

"2. We protest against the resolution, because it would disparage the zeal of the Synod for the truth, from the circumstance that it is displayed in a manner offensive to other denominations of Christians than our own; which we think an unworthy consideration, unless those other denominations of Christians are sound in the faith, and free from the crime of taking offence from the gospel of Christ.

"3. We protest against the resolution of the Assembly, because it unjustly imputes to the Synodical resolution and letter, a tendency to excite a spirit of jealousy and suspicion against Ministers in good standing; which we deny to be their tendency, unless those Ministers are in good standing whose orthodoxy is publicly called in question.

"4. We protest against the said resolution of the Assembly, because it imputes to the Synodical proceedings a tendency to distract the peace and harmony of our ecclesiastical judicatories; whereas, in fact, the tendency of the same is to prevent the introduction of controversy, contention, and heresy, into any of the Presbyteries under the care of the Synod.