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No. IV.

ART. I.—*Bacchus and Anti-Bacchus.*

(Concluded from the No. for April, p. 306.)

II. IN the examination of the essays Bacchus and Anti-Bacchus, begun in our No. for April, the second position proposed to be considered had respect to the strength of the wines in Palestine. "It is impossible," says Mr. Parsons, "to obtain strong alcoholic cider from sweet apples, and for the same reason *it is impossible to obtain strong wines from very sweet grapes, but the grapes of Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt, &c. were exceedingly sweet.*" Anti-Bacchus, p. 203. And why is it impossible? Let Mr. Parsons answer. "Thus the sweetness of the fruits and of the juices, together with the high temperature of the climate, must have been fatal to the existence of strong alcoholic wines." p. 204.

It is true, indeed, that the expressed juice of the grape may be so rich in saccharine matter, as to interfere with its undergoing a thorough fermentation; and it is also true that, in this case, the wine will not be so strong as when the juice is less sweet. But before we conclude that a strong wine cannot be produced from "grapes exceedingly sweet," let us inquire whether there is no method of diminishing the sweetness of the must, and of so increasing the fermen-

W. B. Hope

ART. IV.—*The General Assembly of 1841.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, met agreeably to appointment, in the 7th Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, the 20th day of May 1841; and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Wm. M. Engles, D.D., the Moderator of the last Assembly, from Luke xviii. 13, "On the evils resulting to the church of Christ and the world, from a deficient conviction of sin."

The Rev. Robert J. Breckenridge, D.D. was elected Moderator, and the Rev. James C. Barnes, Temporary Clerk.

There were present in all, eighty-eight clerical, and fifty-six lay Commissioners. Two delegates were in attendance from the General Association of Connecticut, one from the General Association of Massachusetts, one from the General Conference of Maine, and one from the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

The following letter was received from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

"Letter of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

"REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN IN THE LORD:—The delay which has occurred, on our part, in answering your letters of the years 1837 and 1838, (both received by us at the same time,) will not appear to you extraordinary; nor will it be accounted a cause of offence; when you consider the circumstance, noticed by yourselves in your latest communciation, that almost simultaneously with the opening of your correspondence with us, we were addressed by another body claiming the same title with you, and seeking to be acknowledged by us, as the Church with which we ought to cultivate alliance and communion, in that part of the world which you are called to occupy. That now, after the lapse of nearly three years, and on a mature consideration of the facts which, during that period, have come to our knowledge, we feel ourselves at liberty to meet, with all cordial and Christian confidence, your brotherly advance; this result, we trust, you will know how to understand and appreciate. And, at all events, we entreat you to be assured, that neither indifference to the great duty and benefit of fellowship between churches however remote, nor any oversight or neglect, which, perhaps, our increasing cares and troubles might have excused,—nor finally, any want of interest in the spiritual prosperity of a people bound to us by many ancient ties; has occasioned our apparent slackness in returning your salutation, as brethren beloved in the Lord.

"With unfeigned sympathy, we congratulate you on the issue of the trial through which you have been led—and we give God thanks on your behalf; we trust that it has proved, and will more and more prove, to have been the trial of your faith, which being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, will be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

"We do not profess to be minutely and intimately acquainted with the merits

of the contest in which you have been engaged, and from which you have been delivered not without a sacrifice which must have been deeply painful to you—involving a schism in a body formerly united as one, in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. At the same time we have no hesitation in expressing our conviction of the substantial truth and soundness of the views on which you have acted. Great as is our desire of unity among Christians, we are persuaded that all attempts to promote that object, by artificial schemes of comprehension, are without warrant of scripture, and must, in the issue, fail. The constitution, as well as the creed of every Church of Christ, ought to be founded on the word of God—and the duty of maintaining entire the government which Christ has instituted in his House, is not less sacred than that of bearing testimony to the whole truth which he has revealed. It is indeed deeply to be deplored that the followers of the Saviour see not, as yet, eye to eye; and earnestly do we long and pray that the stumbling block thus occasioned may be removed; and that the society of the faithful in Christ Jesus may be seen again to resemble rather the seamless coat, than the parted garments of the Lord. But our present duty is to walk according to our light; and our conviction is, that if we so walk, as a branch of the Church universal, in the exercise of faithfulness to Him who calleth us, and charity to those who differ, we do more to promote this union in the end, than if we sought to hasten it, by any plan of human devising—dissembling differences, and combining things practically irreconcilable. Among churches, as among individuals, pressing on toward the same mark, but not all on precisely the same line, the just and safe rule is that of the holy Apostle—enjoining alike, the highest perfection of each apart—and the mutual forbearance of all, together. ‘Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded—and if, in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.’

“We rejoice to learn, from your communications to us, and from the reports of your more recent proceedings which have since reached us, that you are fully alive to the danger of departing from the form of sound words delivered to you, as well as to us by our common fathers, and especially that you strenuously, and without wavering, hold fast the blessed doctrine of the free and sovereign grace of God, in the redemption of the sinner, against all the subtle and dangerous errors by which it has always been assailed. It grieves us much to understand that such errors, tending to dishonour the Creator, and vainly to exalt the creature, prevail too extensively around you, even among not a few, who still make an evangelical profession, and whose zeal we cannot but commend. We bless God who has enabled you to be faithful to the trust committed to you, and we confidently hope that your increasing zeal and faithfulness in every good work, may adorn the doctrine which you profess, and prove that a full recognition of the Divine sovereignty is, to churches, as well as to individuals, the best security, under God, for the preservation of their purity, and the development, in the highest degree of all their practical energies.

“Your account of your Missionary operations, is cheering and animating to us; as well as what you mention respecting the training of your students. We are persuaded that these two objects of care and prayerful solicitude, are intimately connected; and that scarcely any better sign of the real prosperity of a church of Christ can be selected, than the combination of faith, to enter in at every open door with foresight, in the use of means, for preparing the labourers whom, in answer to prayer, the Lord may send forth into his harvest. To undertake extensive obligations, in the work of the Lord, might be rash and hazardous, were it not for his own promise, which the Church may boldly plead. But in pleading this promise, the Church is pledged to do all that in her lies, for calling her best and noblest sons to the service of the Lord, and then, in confidence and patience of hope, to sow beside all waters.

“As regards our own Church, and the interests of religion among us, we will not detain you with many words.

“You are partly acquainted with the very peculiar circumstances in which we are placed, and with the controversy which has been going on for nearly two years respecting the present position of our Church. It would be out of place, in a communication of this nature, to enter upon the merits of that controversy. The struggle in which she is involved, is not new in the annals of the Church of Scotland. From the beginning of her history—from the period of the Reformation from Popery—the very same great question which is now agitated, has been always at intervals, recurring. It would seem, indeed, as if to the humble Presbyterian Church, in this remote Island, had been especially committed, by her great Head, the task of vindicating his double prerogative, as King of nations and as King of saints; and how, in times past, she hath fulfilled this task, you, as well as we, must have learned, from the testimony of that noble army of Martyrs whose memorials and names belong equally to us both.

“Our difficulty arises out of the principles which we hold respecting the relation which should subsist between the Church and the State. We maintain that it is the duty of the Civil Magistrate to recognize, to protect, and to support the Church, to act within his own sphere, with a due regard to the glory of God; and to provide the means of religious worship and instruction for the people under his care. But, in doing so, we contend that as he has no right to have recourse to measures of oppression and persecution against the enemies of the Church, so neither is he entitled to control and govern the Church herself. He is bound to acknowledge her entire freedom and independence, in the exercise of her spiritual jurisdiction, and the enjoyment of her spiritual privileges; and beyond the disposal of all the temporal resources or endowments, which he bestows on the Church, and over which he must always have entire command, the Civil Magistrate is not at liberty to interfere in the internal regulation of the Church's affairs.

“Such are our principles, of which the practical developement has brought us in the mean time, into trouble.

“In consequence of our holding the former principle, we cannot, as an established Church, of our own accord, relinquish our position. The responsibility of dissolving our connexion with the State must lie with the other party, with the State itself; nor can we feel ourselves justified in withdrawing from it, unless compelled to do so, by an express act of the state, or by an unavoidable interference with our conscientious views of our duty, according to the word of God.

“At the same time, in virtue of the latter principle, we cannot, and dare not, consent to compromise our spiritual liberty. Hence, while yielding implicit obedience to the decisions of the civil courts of the country, in all temporal matters, and in particular, in the disposal of the endowments secured by law to our parishes, we have refused and must still refuse, to receive orders and directions from these courts in the performance of our spiritual functions, and especially in the settlement of ministers.

“Thus, we are fixed. We cannot relieve ourselves, either by dissolving our alliance with the state, or by agreeing to submit to the civil courts. Our principles require us to remain in our present attitude, even although the consequence of our refusal to submit, in things spiritual, to the civil courts, should be the suffering of personal sacrifice and hardship, by our ministers, our elders, and our people, through the loss, in some instances, of the public provision made for the support of the ministry, and through the infliction, also, of severe pains and penalties.

“Various processes have been commenced, and are now going on, in the civil courts, tending to bring the matter to a crisis: and in the meantime, we have been earnestly soliciting the interference of the Legislature to put an end

to this unseemly and disastrous collision, by a new legislative enactment. We have, as yet, been unsuccessful in seeking this desirable end; nor is this much to be wondered at, when it is considered that the British Legislature has in it but a small infusion of Scottish and Presbyterian influence. But our efforts continue unabated, to impress upon the minds of statesmen, and of our countrymen generally, the extreme importance of a speedy adjustment of so critical a question.

“We may add, that the embarrassment of our position has been considerably increased, by the insubordination of a few ministers among ourselves, whose conduct has rendered it necessary for the Church to resort to measures of precaution and of discipline, which have not a little contributed to expose us to misrepresentation.

“You will expect that we should say something of the original occasion of this dispute; but, here we need not enter into particulars. You are probably aware of the resolution which the Church adopted, some years ago, for giving full effect to the ancient and fundamental principle of her constitution, that no minister be intruded into any parish, contrary to the will of the congregation. It has been found by the courts of law, that when we act upon that principle and reject a presentee on the ground of the dissent of the people, we act illegally, in violation of the statute of Queen Anne, restoring patronage. Against that statute, the Church, from the first protested; and in acting under it, as she was forced to do, she never surrendered her inherent and inalienable right, to judge of the fitness of every candidate for the ministry, and the propriety of his settlement in any particular parish; and to reject him, if found unqualified, or unacceptable to the people.

“The decision of the civil courts, the Church fully recognizes, in so far as it affects civil matters. These courts must determine every question relating to the emoluments of the benefice, in every parish, in which the Church, acting upon her fundamental principle, rejects an unacceptable presentee. But the Church strenuously denies the right of the civil courts to go farther, and to control and direct the church courts in the discharge of their proper functions, relative to the trial and settlement of ministers.

“Such is a brief, and necessarily imperfect account of our present interesting and critical position. We do not expect you to approve of every particular in our conduct, or even of all the views which we hold. We are aware that your different circumstances may somewhat modify your judgment of what is passing in this land. But we feel assured that you will give us credit for sincerity and faithfulness in occupying a post of no ordinary difficulty, and that you will cordially give us your sympathy and your prayers. We feel that we need the prayers of the churches. We desire to recognize, in all this trial, the hand of our God, and the signs of his just controversy with our Church and our country. Remembering our misimprovement of most unwonted privileges and advantages, and our manifold short-comings and backslidings; we acknowledge the sins of our fathers, and our own sins, and accept the punishment of our iniquity.

“It is a matter of unspeakable thankfulness, that in the midst of our perplexities and troubles, we have still tokens for good. The Lord is not utterly forsaking us. On the contrary, we have reason humbly to hope, that he has been, and is, reviving his work. We recognize his goodness in raising up, of late years, many faithful and devoted pastors, in calling forth a spirit of prayer, and in pouring out his Spirit, remarkably, on many portions of the vineyard; in some, even so remarkably, as to recall the days of Cambuslang and Shotts.

“We have also been enabled to prosecute our Missionary schemes, for the extension of our Church, and of the means of education, at home for the good of our countrymen in the colonies, for the propagation of the Gospel among

the heathen in India, and for the conversion of the Jews, with unabated energy and success; and we hail, in the continued prosperity of these institutions, a proof of the undeserved loving kindness of the Lord, and a pledge of deliverance in his own good time and way, out of all our troubles. We would desire to be patient, and to be chiefly concerned, that when deliverance does come, it may be evidently the Lord's doing, after his work of trial and purification has been effectual.

“For the particulars and details of our Missionary plans and operations, we take the liberty of referring you to the Reports laid on the table of the General Assembly, as well as to the monthly periodical, which is published under the sanction of the Church, all which documents, we hope to send you regularly, for your information, and that we may have your prayers.

“And now, beloved brethren, we bid you heartily farewell. Your recent trials, in some points singularly coincident with those in which we are still involved, may concur with old associations, in knitting us together in the bonds of the Gospel: and our fellowship together, in the Lord, may, by his blessing, be mutually edifying. It will much refresh and rejoice our hearts, to see any of your fathers and brethren, and confer with them face to face; nor are we without hope, that in these days when many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, personal intercourse, even between remote churches, may be steadily cultivated. But at all events, by our letters, we may encourage one another. And as that word of God, to which we have just now referred, reminds us that even now, it may be very near the time of the end, and that the day of the Lord draweth nigh, let us stir up one another to a holy watchfulness and zeal—and let our prayer ever be that the bride may be prepared and made ready for the bridegroom's coming.

“Signed in name, and by appointment of the Commission of the General Assembly of the church of Scotland.

“A. MAKELLAR, *Moderator.*

“*Edinburgh, 14th April, 1841.*”

Letters were also received, accompanied by copies of the minutes of their proceedings, from the General Synod of Ulster, and from the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connexion with the Church of Scotland. The Synod of Ulster, on the next day after the date of their letter, July 9, 1840, entered into union with the Synod of the Seession Church, and formed the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

The subject of correspondence, by interchange of delegates with other ecclesiastical bodies, was referred to a special committee. The report of this committee was adopted by the Assembly, and is as follows:

“The Committee on Correspondence with the several ecclesiastical bodies to which the Assembly, previous to the secession of a part of their body in 1838, sent delegates, report,

“That in the year 1840, and again this year, the General Association of Connecticut sent delegates to the General Assembly. The Committee recommend that agreeably to the original terms of correspondence, this Assembly elect three delegates to attend the next meeting of the General Association of Connecticut; and that the delegates so elected, propose to the General Association of Connecticut, to reduce the number of delegates from each body to the other, to two or one.

“The Committee further report, that on a request from the General Conference of Maine, the correspondence with that body was formally renewed by the General Assembly of 1840, which Assembly appointed a delegate to Maine, and that there is a delegate from that body in this Assembly. The Committee recommend to the Assembly to elect a delegate to the next General Conference of the state of Maine.

“The Committee also report, that they have learned, that the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, at their meeting in June last, appointed delegates to attend this Assembly; and they therefore recommend, that two delegates, a minister and a ruling elder, be elected to attend the next General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

“With respect to the other bodies formerly in correspondence with the General Assembly, inasmuch as they have not, since the year 1838, when a part of the Assembly seceded, and constituted a new body, sent any delegates to the General Assembly, or any communication on the subject of correspondence, the Committee recommend that no delegates be sent to these bodies, and that the Assembly consider the correspondence with them as having *de facto* terminated.”

Subsequently to the adoption of this report, a delegate appeared in the Assembly from the General Association of Massachusetts, and the Assembly resolved to continue their correspondence with this body. It also appeared from a copy of the printed minutes of the General Convention of Vermont, that this body, at their session in August 1839, had voted to “invite a correspondence with the Assembly of which the Rev. Dr. Wilson was last moderator;” and it was accordingly resolved “that agreeably to the above invitation of the General Convention of Vermont, the Assembly will correspond with that body by delegation as formerly.”

Thus the Assembly is in correspondence again with the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, the General Associations of Connecticut and Massachusetts, the General Conference of Maine, and the General Convention of Vermont. We rejoice in this restoration of our friendly intercourse with these bodies. While we engage in cordial communion with these, our fellow Christians, without endangering the points of doctrine and discipline in which we differ from them, the intercourse must be productive of mutual benefit.

The first judicial case which came before the Assembly was the complaint of J. Kirkpatrick and others, against a decision of the Synod of New Jersey. This case had its origin in an application made by certain persons residing in and near the Lower German Valley, to the Presbytery of Raritan, requesting them to organize a new church in their neighbourhood. This application was resisted by the elders and trustees of the adjoining churches of Upper German Valley and Foxhill. The Presbytery of Raritan appointed

a committee to visit the place, and, if the way was clear, to proceed to the organization of the church. An appeal was taken from this decision of the Presbytery to the Synod of New Jersey, and the Synod sustained the appeal, thereby reversing the action of the Presbytery in the premises. It was against this decision of the Synod that a complaint was brought to the Assembly by J. Kirkpatrick and others. This case consumed much time, nearly or quite one-half of which was wasted in determining who were the "original parties," and settling other points connected with the order of procedure. The complainants at the bar of the Assembly, when they were at length heard, rested their case chiefly upon two points, first, that the organization of new churches is the peculiar province of the Presbyteries, and that the Synod had no right to disturb in any way the action of the Presbytery in this matter, except when it has been unconstitutionally done; and, secondly, that the original decision of the Presbytery, not having been the issue of a strictly judicial case, was not properly the ground for an appeal, and was therefore irregularly brought before the Synod. The Assembly refused to sustain the complaint, and thus decided anew, in accordance with the ancient and uniform practice of our church, the constitutional questions which had been raised.

The second judicial case taken up by the Assembly was "the complaint and appeal of the first church of Peoria, against the Synod of Illinois, and the commission of the Synod."

A complaint of Samuel Lowrie, an elder of the first church of Peoria, against a decision of the Synod of Illinois, was before the last Assembly. In disposing of the case, that Assembly directed the Synod to appoint at its next meeting a committee to visit that place, and endeavour to effect a reconciliation between the first and second churches of Peoria, (both of them being small and feeble, and each consisting of less than thirty members.)

In anticipation of the action of the Synod of Illinois on this subject, the Presbytery of Peoria, on the 17th of October last, adopted the following minute :

"On motion, resolved, That in view of the Assembly's minute, expressive of their desire for the pacification of the difficulties in Peoria, and directing the Synod to appoint a committee 'to visit said churches, and use their best endeavours to bring them together in one harmonious body,' &c., Presbytery have unanimously thought it proper hereby to inform the Synod, that should they think best to give discretionary powers to said committee, to dissolve either the first or second church, or to dissolve both the churches, that a new church may be

formed, and its officers elected—they will not only waive any questions which might arise, as to their presbyterial powers in this particular, or as to the right of Synod to confer such power on a committee; but in view of their desire for the good of the Presbyterian interest in Peoria, in view of the smallness of our body, and of the peculiar delicacy, if not difficulty of the subject, we prefer that Synod should directly proceed in the case.”

The Synod adopted the following minute :

“ Whereas the General Assembly have directed the Synod of Illinois to take measures to settle the difficulties in the church in that place (Peoria), Resolved, That a commission of Synod be appointed for that purpose, and in addition to the duties enjoined by the Assembly, said commission be, and they are hereby empowered by the Synod to call for persons and papers, to inquire into the conduct of Mr. Kellar, to hear the statement of the Presbytery of Peoria, and to ascertain the state of the whole case respecting both the Presbyterian churches of Peoria, as to the regularity of their organization, &c., and if in their judgment they deem it best calculated to harmonize the Presbyterian church there, they are invested with power to dissolve either or both the churches of Peoria, and to organize a new Presbyterian church in that place. And they are also directed to publish their proceedings in such a way as they may judge best for the rights and interests of all concerned, and they are directed to make a full report to the next General Assembly and to the Synod, at their next meeting.”

The Synod accordingly appointed a committee (calling it a commission), consisting of five ministers and five ruling elders, seven of whom met in Peoria, October 29, 1840, and proceeded to the object of their appointment.

The Presbytery of Peoria met in the same place at the time of the meeting of the commission, and on the following day, after the commission had proceeded in the business assigned said Presbytery by a vote of four against three, adopted the following resolution :

“ Resolved, That however the former action of Presbytery, in this case, may be viewed by Synod or the commission, Presbytery do hereby revoke the authority given to Synod at its sessions in Rushville, so far as relates to dissolving the churches in Peoria, because Presbytery cannot consent that the first church in Peoria should be dissolved by the commission, or any measures taken by them for the formation of a new church.”

A protest against the above resolution was entered on the minutes of the Presbytery, signed by five members of that body, and another member who subsequently appeared requested leave to add his name to the protest, which was not granted.

The commission proceeded in the business assigned them, and dissolved both the churches in Peoria; and after giving a public notice of the fact, and a general invitation to the members of both, and such others as chose to unite with them, they proceeded to organize a church under the name of the Presbyterian church of Peoria. And an election hav-

ing been held, they ordained three ruling elders and one deacon.

At the close of the proceedings of the commission, "Mr. Samuel Lowrie gave notice that he would, on behalf of the first Presbyterian church, complain to the next General Assembly against the proceedings of the commission in this whole case."

In presenting his case before the Assembly, Mr. Lowrie stated that his complaint was against the Synod for appointing the commission, as well as against the proceedings of the commission itself.

This case was at first styled an appeal and complaint, but upon examination it was taken up and considered as a simple complaint.

In the discussions to which this case gave rise, much was said for and against the constitutionality of the proceeding of the Synod in delegating to a commission plenary powers to act in the premises. But the ultimate decision of the case rested upon grounds which left this question untouched. It was also urged here, as in the last case, that the organization and dissolution of churches belongs exclusively to the Presbytery, and the Synod have no right in such a case to interfere, except it be to correct what has been irregularly done. A motion made to dismiss the case upon this ground was put to the house and lost.

The complaint was finally, after much discussion, dismissed as irregular, on the grounds, that so far as this complaint related to the action of the Synod in appointing a commission with plenary powers, no notice had been given to Synod of an intention to complain, and no opportunity, of course, afforded them to defend the propriety of their course; and that so far as the complaint related to the doings of the commission, it could not be entertained by the Assembly, inasmuch as this commission was not a body known to the Assembly, and could be arraigned or defended only through the court that appointed them, and that the Synod itself could not be called upon to answer for the acts of their commission until they had been reported and sanctioned, nor then without legal notice of intention to complain. We may remark, however, in passing, that the appointment of commissions or committees, to act with the full powers of the body appointing them, has been common in our church from its first organization in this country, and is customary in all other Presbyterian churches. It has the obvious ad-

vantage of saving the time of the appointing body, and often leads to a wiser decision than could otherwise be expected. A commission can go to the theatre of contention, and by the examination of all the parties, often arrive at a much better understanding of the case, than a presbytery or synod sitting at a distance could possibly attain. We are, therefore, glad to see that the synod of Illinois has availed themselves of an usage which is undoubtedly consistent with the strictest principles of presbyterianism, and which may be made so conducive to the ends of good government.

The only other judicial case was a complaint of T. B. Clark and others, members of the Presbytery of Sidney, against the Synod of Cincinnati. The facts of this case are as follows :

“ Upon the division which took place in the Presbyterian church in 1838, Messrs. David Merrill and George G. Poage, members of the Presbytery of Sidney, expressed their willingness to continue members of said Presbytery, but refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of either the Synod of Cincinnati or the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. Besides this they united themselves with a convention of ministers which had declared to the world, that as soon as any of their members should be dealt with by any of the Presbyteries to which they severally belonged, that they would proceed to organize themselves into a Presbytery, and thus protect themselves from what they deemed oppression.

“ As soon as the Presbytery of Sidney had satisfied themselves of these facts, by the personal attendance of one of these brethren, and by evidence entirely satisfactory in regard to the other, they proceeded to order their names to be erased from the list of their members.

“ The Synod of Cincinnati, in reviewing the records of that Presbytery, took exception to their procedure in this particular, and adopted the following resolution :

“ ‘ Resolved, That the action of Sidney Presbytery in the case of these brethren be not sustained, and they are hereby considered as members of Presbytery, and still subject to the discipline of the church as heretofore.’ ”

It was against this decision that the complaint was brought. The complainants alleged,

“ 1. That the Synod disregarded the ground on which the Presbytery based its action, viz. that they had connected themselves with a body unknown to the Presbyterian Church, as a court of appeals, under the name of a convention for mutual advice and protection.

“ 2. That they had renounced all ‘ authority of the Synod and General Assembly,’ with which the Presbytery of Sidney is connected.”

The Assembly, after hearing the parties in the case, decided that the complaint was well founded, and that the decision of the Synod be reversed.

Annual Reports.

Foreign Missions. The Annual Report of the Board of

Foreign Missions was presented on Tuesday, May 25th ; and addresses were delivered by different members of the Assembly on this occasion, and on the reception of the reports of the other Boards for receiving and dispensing the charities of the church. This report was referred to a committee who subsequently brought in the following resolutions, which were adopted by the Assembly :

“ 1. Resolved, That the report be approved, and referred to the Board for publication.

“ 2. The General Assembly recognize it as the duty and the privilege of every professing Christian to pray for the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, and to contribute of his substance for that great object, as God in his providence has prospered him.

“ 3. The General Assembly are deeply grieved to learn from the report of the Board, that, for the last year, not one half of the churches, enjoying the stated means of grace, have contributed any thing in support of this cause ; and they would affectionately call upon those churches and the ministers placed over them, and also the vacant churches, no longer to stand at a distance, but to join the other churches and ministers in sending to the benighted heathen, the knowledge of the Saviour's love and mercy.

“ 4. With the blessing of God, all that is wanted to insure a sufficiency of the necessary funds, is united and systematic action on the part of the whole church ; and when every member is brought to contribute steadily, there will no longer be embarrassment for the want of means.

“ 5. The General Assembly would earnestly and solemnly call upon all their ministers to bring this subject frequently before their people, in the public prayers in the house of God, and in the other stated ministrations in the sanctuary. And especially would they urge upon ministers and people, the deep importance of the monthly concert ; and that collections be then taken up to sustain the brethren in the foreign field, for whose success their prayers have been offered. In this connexion, the General Assembly would again call the attention of the churches to the *Missionary Chronicle*. No head of a family is doing his duty to his children whilst he withholds from them the knowledge of the condition of the perishing heathen, and what the church is doing for their salvation ; and how can a Christian pray with understanding for his brethren among the heathen, while he neglects to inform himself of their trials and their wants ?

“ 6. In the midst of much that calls for deep humility and self-abasement in the sight of God, there is much cause of thanksgiving, and many grounds of encouragement, for continued and enlarged effort on the part of the church. And whilst we mourn over our unfaithfulness, the General Assembly would, with gratitude, acknowledge the many evidences of the presence of the Spirit of God in the midst of our beloved branch of his church.

“ 7. The General Assembly would recognize, with affectionate regard, all their missionaries among the heathen, as labourers with them in the Saviour's vineyard ; and they would exhort these dear brethren to diligence and perseverance in the work of the Lord ; to yield to no discouragements, but by faith and prayer seek for the sustaining influence of the Saviour's presence, and the consolations of the Holy Spirit ; to be instant, in season, out of season, rightly dividing the word of truth, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth ; that they bear one another's burdens, and be careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace among themselves. And whilst we assure these brethren of an interest in our prayers, we ask them to pray for us, that God would revive his work among the churches of their native land.”

In connexion with this subject we notice the interesting fact, that the Assembly organized two new Presbyteries, of *Furrukabad* and of *Allahabad*, in India, and formed them, in conjunction with the existing Presbytery of Lodiana, into the Synod of Northern India, in connexion with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Domestic Missions. The subject of Domestic Missions occupied much of the attention of the Assembly, not only on the presentation of the report of the Board, but in the discussion of a plan proposed by the venerable Dr. Blythe for the supply of destitute regions in the South and West. Interesting addresses were delivered, among others, by two aged ministers, Dr. M'Whir of Georgia, and Dr. Brown of Florida, who are themselves devoting their last years to the service of this cause.

The Assembly adopted the following series of resolutions, presented by the committee to whom the report of the Board had been referred :

“ Resolved, 1. That it becomes this General Assembly to express its gratitude to the Divine Head of the Church, who has so eminently prospered the cause of Domestic Missions, and blessed the efforts of the Board, although it has been inadequately sustained by the great body of the Presbyterian Church.

“ 2. That the magnitude of the work before us, the extent of the field yet to be occupied, and the moral destitutions of our frontier regions, brought to the view of this Assembly, both by the Report of the Board, and by members of our body at the time of its acceptance, are most deeply felt and acknowledged.

“ 3. That this work of Domestic Missions, is worthy the attention, and demands the labours, of the strongest ministers of our Church: and that the presence in this body, of two venerable fathers in Christ, who, now living in the midst of this great moral waste, after more than a half a century already spent in fulfilling their Master's last injunction, still feel impelled to devote the very twilight of life to the arduous work of missionaries, should make an irresistible appeal to ministers, who are in the meridian of vigour and experience, to enter upon this field.

“ 4. That until a sufficient number of suitable men can be found to occupy this field of labour, it is the duty of the churches enjoying regular pastoral labours, and of settled pastors, to take part in the work, by devoting a portion of their time to missionary labours; and it is recommended that every Presbytery take order on the subject, and see that the burden of this work be equally distributed among its churches.

“ 5. That it is the duty of every member of the Presbyterian Church to support her Domestic Missions. That each Synod and Presbytery is enjoined to adopt such plan as seems best suited to secure this contribution of all the members in its own bounds with system and certainty, and to report its action in this matter to the next General Assembly. And, that when this is done from year to year with regularity, the Church will be found abundantly able, in the strength of the Lord to occupy all the field.

“ 6. That the system of itinerating should be a prominent plan of missionary operation. That, while it is proper that the Board, as heretofore, continue to

aid destitute and feeble churches, they are directed to assign a full proportion of their missionaries to the work of itinerating. And that in their next annual report, the Board distinguish between these two classes of labourers.

"7. That the interest of the churches in the work and objects of this Board will be greatly increased, if its operations, successes and wants are periodically communicated: and that as a medium for this purpose, the Foreign Missionary Chronicle be selected, enlarged, and its title altered, to that of the Foreign and Domestic Missionary Chronicle, so as to become the vehicle of information, for all the missionary operations of the Presbyterian Church.

"8. That we approve the recommendation of the Board, to the rich in our churches, to place the books of the Board of Publication in the hands of our Domestic Missionaries, for distribution: and that the Assembly's Board of Missions be authorized to receive donations for this specific object.

"9. That the plans by which Presbyteries and Sessions may become auxiliary to this Board, and the plan for church or congregational associations, as adopted and published by the General Assembly of 1839, be republished in the Report of the present year, and in the Appendix to the Minutes.

"10. That this General Assembly accept the charter of the Board of Missions, as submitted to them; that the trustees named in the charter be continued in office until June, 1842: that thereafter, on the first meeting of the Board in June, in each year, one-third of the number be elected: and that it be left with the Board of Missions to classify the present trustees, so that one third shall vacate their office every year, as the charter provides.

"11. That the Report of the Board of Missions is highly approved, and recommended to the serious attention of our Synods, Presbyteries, churches, and members; and that it be returned to the Board for publication, at their discretion."

Board of Education. The report of this Board disclosed the alarming fact that the number of candidates under its care has diminished, and that there is reason to fear a still further diminution. The Assembly adopted the following report of the committee to whom the report of the Board had been referred:

"As it appears from the report of the Board of Education, that the number of candidates under its care has continued to diminish, and that there is great reason to apprehend a further diminution, from the fact that so few pious young men are seeking a liberal education; And whereas, it is perfectly manifest that the world cannot be saved according to the gospel, without a large increase of the ministers of the word, to bring men to the knowledge of the way of salvation through Jesus Christ:

"The General Assembly, therefore, would distinctly recognize their entire dependence on God for the increase of such ministers as he will employ in the conversion of the world, and that the only effectual means which we can employ is fervent, importunate prayer, without which all our organizations are vain and impotent: therefore,

"Resolved, That, in accordance with the suggestion of the Board of Education, the General Assembly do earnestly recommend to all the churches under their care, that on the first Sabbath in November next, special prayer be offered in all our churches to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth more labourers into his harvest.

"It is also recommended to all our pastors, that on the same day, if convenient—if not, on some other suitable day—a sermon be preached on the subject of '*A call to the Ministry.*'

“The Assembly approve of the charter obtained by the Board, and order that, in accordance with the terms of the charter, it shall hereafter be known by the name of ‘The Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.’”

“The Assembly would also provide, in accordance with the requirements of the aforesaid charter, that at the annual meeting of the Board of Education in the year 1842, on the day when the Board meets to re-organize and elect its officers, they shall proceed to elect, by ballot, three persons in the room of the three first named of the Trustees of the Board of Education, incorporated by the aforesaid charter. On the day of the annual meeting in 1843, they shall proceed in like manner to elect three persons in the room of the second three Trustees named in the charter aforesaid; and on the day of the annual meeting of the Board of Education in 1844, they shall elect, in the same manner, three persons in the room of the three remaining Trustees of the aforesaid Board; and thenceforward annually electing three persons in the room of that class which has served three years; provided always, that the same persons shall be re-eligible.

“The Board of Education may also, at any of its regular meetings, elect persons to fill vacancies occurring by death, resignation, or otherwise.”

Board of Publication. From the report of this Board it appears that they have discharged the duties committed to them with much zeal and faithfulness, having already, though much limited in means, supplied the church with many valuable works. The Assembly adopted the following report of the committee, to whom the report of this Board was referred:

“The Committee on the report of the Board of Publication, beg leave to say:

“In their opinion, the thanks of the Assembly and the Church are due to the Board, for the ability, zeal and diligence with which they have prosecuted the great enterprise committed to their management.

“The Committee have learned with regret, that the funds at the disposal of the Board are not nearly equal to what we had reason to expect, in consequence of many sums having been included in statistical reports to the Assembly, which were *subscribed*, but *are not yet paid*. They deem it important that the pecuniary means of the Board be enlarged as soon as practicable. To effect this,

“Resolved, 1. That each Presbytery be directed to take effectual measures for the circulation of these books among the people.

“2. That it be recommended to the Board, to append to at least one edition of the Psalm and Hymn Book, about to be published, the Confession of Faith, with the scripture references, and the Directory for Worship.

“3. That this Assembly would recommend, that at least one set of the publications of the Board be obtained by every church, as a congregational library, to be under the direction of the church session.

“4. That the report under consideration, be committed to the Board for publication.”

We are glad also to find the following report of a special committee, upon the publication of records in the Minutes of the Assembly. It is to be hoped that such encouragement may be furnished by the sale of the volume already published, as will warrant the Board in publishing the entire records of the Assembly.

“The Committeo to whom was referred the report of the stated clerk on the publication of the records of the Supreme Judiciary of the Presbyterian Church, reported a minute which was adopted as follows, viz.

“This Assembly learns with great pleasure that the Board of Publication have issued a volume containing the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, of the Synod of Philadelphia, of the Synod of New York, and of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia—and which thus forms a documentary history of the Presbyterian Church in these United States, from its origin in 1706, to the formation of the General Assembly in 1788. These records which have never before been published—which were in danger of being lost,—and which were inaccessible to the church at large, are now offered to all in a neat octavo volume of 548 pages, and at a very low price. And as the entire expense of this publication has been incurred by the Board, and the continuance of the work, by the republication of the minutes of the General Assembly from its organization until the present time, depends upon the support given to the present undertaking—this Assembly would enjoin it upon all Synods and Presbyteries to take such order as may be most efficient in securing the sale of the present volume and the complete publication of the documentary annals of our church.”

The Assembly also passed a resolution, directing the Board of Publication to take into consideration the propriety of publishing a new edition of the Assembly's Digest; “having first caused a thorough re-examination of the Minutes of all the years embraced in the present Digest, and also a full examination of all those published since: so that the balance may contain, in a small space, and a cheap form, all the important acts of the Assembly now in force: to which may be added such statistical and other information, in regard to our Church, as may be judged important.”

Two important subjects, which were brought before the attention of the Assembly were referred to committees who are to report to the next General Assembly. The first of these related to the establishment of a directory for the admission of persons to the church on a public profession of their faith, and also on the administration of adult baptism, involving in it the grave question of the terms of communion in our church. This subject was referred to a committee composed of the following members, Rev. Samuel Miller, D.D., Joseph McElroy, D. D., John C. Backus, Henry A. Boardman,—to whom the Assembly added, Rev. Robert J. Breckinridge, D.D.

The other subject was brought up by a memorial or overture, which called upon the Assembly to institute measures for such a change in our Book of Discipline as should limit ordination to such as are called to a pastoral charge, with no exception but in the case of foreign missionaries, and should also provide for the resignation of the ministerial office, without a process of deposition, on the part of those who have

reason to believe that they have mistaken their duty in entering upon it, or are constrained from any cause to lay aside the discharge of its appropriate functions. This subject was referred to a committee, to report to the next General Assembly, of which Rev. Robert J. Breekinridge, D.D., is chairman, by the appointment of the Assembly, and its other members, Rev. Wm. W. Phillips, D.D., John M. Krebs, Cornelius C. Cuyler, D. D., and Alexander Maeklin.

The attention of the Assembly was called to the subject of Popery, by a memorial from the Presbytery of Philadelphia. This memorial was referred to a committee who brought in the following report :

“The committee on the memorial of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, on the subject of Popery, made a report, which was adopted as follows, viz.

“1. Resolved, That a preacher be appointed to deliver a discourse before the next Assembly on some given topic connected with the controversy between Romanists and Protestants.

“2. Resolved, That this Assembly most earnestly recommend to the bishops of the several congregations under our care, both from the pulpit and through the press, boldly though temperately to explain and defend the doctrines and principles of the reformation, and to point out and expose the errors and superstitions of Popery.

“3. Resolved, That as the most effectual antidote not only against papal but all other forms of error, it be solemnly enjoined upon all the bishops and elders of the several churches, as also upon our evangelists in the domestic and foreign fields, diligently and statedly to engage in the instruction of the people, and especially of children and youth, in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of our church.

“4. Resolved, That this Assembly solemnly and affectionately *warn* all our people of the danger and impropriety of supporting, or in any manner directly or indirectly patronizing or encouraging Popish schools and seminaries.

“5. Resolved, That this Assembly recommend to the special attention of all our people the works on the Reformation and Popery, which have been issued by the Board of Publication.

“6. Resolved, That the delegates of the several Presbyteries be called on at the next meeting of the Assembly, to report what has been done in compliance with these resolutions.”

The Rev. Robert J. Breekinridge, D.D., was appointed, in conformity with the first of these resolutions, to preach before the next General Assembly ; the subject of discourse to be, “What is the rule of faith.”

The Committee to whom the accounts of the Treasurer were referred, presented a report, which was adopted by the Assembly, accompanied by statistical tables exhibiting the amount and condition of the funds held by the General Assembly. From this report it appears that the Assembly holds stocks, bonds and notes, to the amount of \$149,810, estimated according to their par value ; that they paid for these

stocks, &c., \$161,609 82: and that if sold at their present market value they would yield only \$123,213 40; thus making a loss of \$38,396 42. The chief investments are in stocks of the southern and south-western banks. The change of financial policy which led to this investment was commenced in 1833, by the trustees acting under the express direction of the General Assembly. After the investment had been made, the Trustees reported the state of the funds to the General Assembly of 1834, who sanctioned what had been done in obedience to the direction of a previous Assembly, and recommended a continuance of the same policy. Whatever of imprudence may now, in the light of subsequent disclosures, be charged upon this policy, and whatever of loss may be incurred from the practice of it, must be laid at the doors, not of the Trustees, but of the General Assembly, which, at every step, advised, directed, and sanctioned their proceedings. It should also be noticed that if the funds of the Assembly had remained in the same form as in 1833, when the change in their mode of investment was commenced, they would now have been worth only \$98,839; less by \$24,374 40 than their present estimated value. The Trustees were directed, by a resolution of the present Assembly, "to invest all the funds in bond and mortgage on real estate as soon as it can be done with convenience and safety."

The Assembly adopted the following report which was presented by a Committee who had been appointed to prepare a minute that should express the sentiments of the house in view of the death of the President of the United States.

"Whereas it has pleased the Sovereign Ruler of nations, in his infinite wisdom and righteousness, to remove by death William Henry Harrison, President of the United States; and whereas, there are circumstances connected with this event, which render the dispensation peculiarly marked, instructive and afflicting; it being the first instance since the adoption of the Federal Constitution, more than fifty years since, that a President has died in office, and his death having occurred suddenly and in one month after his inauguration; the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, convened in the city of Philadelphia, feel themselves called to give a united and public expression of their sentiments in view of this solemn dispensation. Therefore,

"Resolved, 1. That we recognize the Providence of God, as clearly manifested in this event; and we call upon the people connected with our church also to see and acknowledge His hand; and while we desire to bow with submission to His righteous will, we feel the event to be a great national bereavement.

"2. That we feel this bereavement to be the greater, when we consider the repeated acknowledgements made by the illustrious deceased, in his inaugural address, of the Providence of God, and his dependence on the Most High, to en-

able him to discharge the duties of his station; and especially, the explicit and noble declaration he made in that address, of his profound reverence for the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, and his thorough conviction, that sound morals, religious liberty, and a just sense of religious responsibility, are essentially connected with all true and lasting happiness; and also the sacred regard he manifested in his high station for the holy Sabbath, inspiring the hope, that under his administration, so commenced, a salutary influence, in favour of good morals and the institutions of religion, vitally important to the best interests of our country, would be diffused throughout the land.

“3. That we view this dispensation as a solemn rebuke to this nation for their sins; and a solemn call to all, rulers and people, to feel and acknowledge that the Lord reigns, and seriously to inquire, wherefore it is, that He has thus contended with us, and to repent and reform.

“4. That we sympathize with the bereaved widow and family of our deceased President, and pray that the Lord will be to them the widow’s God, and the Father of the fatherless.

“5. That, while we mourn the loss the nation has sustained in the death of our late President, we rejoice and thank the Lord that his successor, John Tyler, placed over this nation, in a very special manner by His providence, has acknowledged this Providence, and was led promptly to recommend a day of *fasting and prayer* throughout the nation; and we rejoice in the general and hearty response with which this recommendation was received; and the solemn manner in which, as far as we have heard, the day was observed. We fondly hope that this is an indication of good to our nation; and we pray that the Lord will overrule the painful bereavement with which we have been visited, for the promotion of the best interests of our beloved country.

“6. That our ministers and people be, and they hereby are, earnestly exhorted particularly and constantly, agreeably to the injunctions of the word of God, to remember our civil rulers in their prayers.

“7. That a copy of this minute, signed by the Moderator and Permanent Clerk, be transmitted to the widow and family of the late President; and also a copy to the present President of the United States.”

On the last day of the Sessions of the Assembly, Wednesday, June 2d, when many members of that body had left, the following minute was adopted:

“The General Assembly has reason to believe that the practice of reading sermons in the pulpit, is greatly on the increase amongst our ministers; and being decidedly of opinion that it is not the best method of preaching the gospel, it hereby recommends the discontinuance of the practice, as far as possible; and earnestly exhorts our younger ministers to adopt a different method as more scriptural and effective.”

We regret that the Assembly should have taken it upon itself to express any opinion on such a matter. It does not seem to us to be a fitting subject for legislation. It is impossible to prescribe any mode of preaching which shall be equally suited to all. There are undoubtedly some men who never ought to read their sermons, and it is equally clear that there are others who ought never to preach without reading. We can find no scriptural warrant that can be pleaded on behalf of preaching without reading, which

would not apply with equal force to forbid the preacher taking any thought beforehand what he should say. Before the scriptural examples can be binding as authority, or applicable as argument, it must be shown that we are authorized to expect the same extraordinary assistance which was vouchsafed to the apostles. And as to the effectiveness of any particular method of preaching, it is preposterous to lay down any general canon.* Every man must be left to select that mode which he finds that he can use with the best effect. And thus every man will do. We have no fear that the resolution of the Assembly will do any harm, because it will shape the practice of none, who would not without its help have fallen into the same mode; and our only reason for regretting it is that the Assembly lessens its influence by thus wasting it upon matters that, from their very nature, are governed and shaped by causes that lie beyond their control.

By Prof. J. Addison Alexander

ART. V.—*Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, and Arabia Petraea. A Journal of Travels in the year 1838, by E. Robinson and E. Smith. Undertaken in reference to Biblical Geography. Drawn up from the Original Diaries, with Historical Illustrations, by Edward Robinson, D.D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the Union Theological Seminary, New York: author of a Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament, etc. With new Maps and Plans in five sheets. 3 vols. Svo. Boston. 1841.*

WE are not aware that any work by an American author has been brought before the public with such an array of European recommendations as the one before us. Geographical societies and individual geographers of the highest eminence have set the seal of their approbation and applause upon it; nor have the necessary pains been spared, during the printing of the work at home, to make the native population duly sensible of what was coming. The means adopted for

* President Davies, one of the most acceptable and useful preachers that our country has produced, was in the habit, and that too in Virginia, of reading his sermons.