

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

NO. 25.—JULY, 1893.

I. NATURAL RELIGION AND THE GOSPEL.

ASSUMING that theology is a science, and that it pursues the method of definition adopted by all sciences, that is to say, one derived from the object-matter about which they are concerned, we define it, with others, to be the science of religion. But religion, comprehensively taken, is easily distributable into two kinds: natural religion and evangelical religion, or, briefly, redemption. The latter member of this division is the gospel. These are the only two schemes of religion that God has given to man. The first was communicated to Adam in innocence, the latter to Adam and his race in sin. The gospel, specifically considered, has been developed in great dispensational forms contradistinguished to each other, not as to their essential, but as to their peculiar and distinctive, features; but, generically considered, it is as a scheme of religion contradistinguished to natural religion. It is, therefore, interesting and important to ascertain the relations which subsist between natural religion and the gospel; and we propose to indicate their points of similarity and difference. What are the elements of natural religion? How do they come to be incorporated into the gospel? And what are the peculiar and differentiating elements of the latter scheme?

I. Their points of similarity.

1. Some of their contents are alike. Taking it for granted that the articles which will be enumerated are, in some sense, embodied in the gospel, the question will be whether they were component parts of natural religion.

(1.) The doctrine of God's existence. It cannot be supposed

the New Testament. Mahaffy declares that he has "hunted with anxious care for the smallest trace of any such book, but in vain." And yet, on the ordinary hypothesis, the Pentateuch of that version had been in circulation sixty years at the time of the latest dated fragment! The truth is these documents only furnish us with the *terminus a quo*; later research must determine the *terminus ad quem* and the exact period of composition. The discovery of a coffin made in 130 B. C. would go far towards settling the question of the exact date. Meanwhile, the linguistic phenomena seem to permit, and the internal evidence seems to require, the translation of this venerable version at or about 150 B. C.

In conclusion, the writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to *The Sunday-School Times* and *The Expository Times* for material aid in the composition of this article.

R. B. WOODWORTH.

Duffields, W. Va.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1893.

Macon is a beautiful Southern city. Robed in fresh summer verdure, with broad, well-shaded, albeit dusty streets, ample lawns, and wide expanses of green, noble public buildings, and many elegant private mansions on commanding grassy eminences, lovely views of woodland, crest and river and undulating horizons, Macon presented a most attractive place for the meeting of the Assembly.

Everything that generous and thoughtful consideration could suggest, was done for the comfort and welfare of their guests; every convenience was provided, every wish anticipated. The courteous and accomplished pastor of the First Church, with a corps of efficient assistants, met, on incoming trains, the members of the Assembly, and delightful provision was made for their entertainment. The culture and hospitality of charming homes made each one's stay most enjoyable and memorable. The delicate compliment of high musical culture was paid the Assembly, in the unusual and delightful courtesy extended by the congregation to attend the rendition by the Macon Musical Association of Sir J. Stainer's Oratorio of "The Crucifixion." It was a rare pleasure, and the impression made was solemn and affecting. The ever-melting story of Calvary was told in fitting song, and its inimitable pathos and majesty were most tenderly and vividly illustrated.

The commissioners were generally enrolled, when the opening sermon was preached by the Rev. S. A. King, D. D., of Waco, Texas, the

Moderator of the preceding Assembly. His text was Matthew xxviii. 20: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." His theme was Christ's presence with his church. This implies a continuous church and a perpetual ministry. It means more than omnipresence. He is present as friend, helper, Saviour. Here is explicit statement of his divinity. This is not the promise of the Comforter, but of the real and constant presence of our risen and reigning Lord, which we need to lay hold on by faith. He is present in days of trial and days of toil—as with the church of old, so with our Southern Church, here and now as well as in the past. Then followed interesting reminiscence of the Assembly of 1865 held in this church, and rapid and telling sketching of the progress of the church in the lapse of years. This is Dr. King's thirteenth Assembly, which shows the esteem in which he is deservedly held. I was surprised at two things: that he read his discourse, and that it was so perfect in its diction; its finish being as elegant as the satin surface and soft sheen of a polished pearl.

After the sermon, and the tender prayer that "constituted" the Assembly, and the reading of the roll, came that expectant hush, when the organization would be effected. No one could predict where or whom the lightning would strike. The names of three brethren, well known, honored and beloved in the church, each of whom would have graced the Moderator's chair, and all of whom it would have been a pleasure thus to reward, were placed in nomination. They heard their own praises sounded, whether they recognized the portraiture. Fortunately, the names were not announced till the close of the nominating speeches, and the revelation of their extraordinary fitness came to them doubtless with all the delight of surprise. One of these in withdrawing his name for reasons that seemed good to the Assembly, nominated "one every way worthy—that father of ministers and missionaries, Judge James W. Lapsley," who was chosen on the third ballot. Thus this Assembly signalized its first claim to remembrance, in departing from usage and tradition, and choosing as its presiding officer a ruling elder. He made an admirable "presiding elder," as he was denominated by a city paper. However excellently the other nominees might have filled the Moderator's chair, it was conceded that Moderator Lapsley filled it worthily. He was eminently courteous and considerate, recognizing the most obscure or the most tedious (alas, that some must be so recorded!) with the same readiness and urbanity with which he greeted others better known or more influential.

He repeatedly placed others in the chair and took quite an active part in the deliberations of the Assembly on the report of the Standing Committee of Foreign Missions.

The devotional spirit of the Assembly, a precious heritage I am told from the Assembly of 1891, was a delightful feature. The daily sessions were of course opened and closed with prayer. The morning *sederunt* closed with a half-hour spent in devotional exercises, in which prayers were fervent and brief, and the singing hearty and inspiring. Four evenings, not including Sundays, sermons were preached with messages of salvation, strength, and cheer. One evening was given to that gospel in song, "The Crucifixion." More than once the Assembly laid aside its business to engage in special prayer for specific objects.

It was well that there was thus a spirit of prayer, and of dependence on divine guidance. The eyes of the church were turned anxiously towards this Assembly. It was composed largely of men comparatively unknown. Many were commissioners for the first time, and many more represented their presbyteries for the second time only. Only one was present who had ever been Moderator, Dr. King. Two of the Secretaries of Executive Committees were commissioners. Few were there who would be termed "fathers." They were all "brethren," some younger than others. The crown of glory was not, however, missing. But they were men in whom their Presbyteries had confidence—men of toil, of thought, of convictions, and of earnest consecration—men not afraid to contend earnestly (and to speak repeatedly), nor afraid to keep silence and vote hard.

And then there were grave questions to engage the attention of the body—questions, let us be thankful, not of heresy, but of administration, not divisive and disturbing, but of serious inquiry, and affecting ways of usefulness and progress. The Assembly at one time seemed quite ready for any unexpected action, and there promised to be an upheaval and reëignment of the working forces. But beyond the rumbling of premonition there was no earthquake, and such counsels prevailed and changes were made as will likely obviate recurrence.

The Assembly was generous in extending "the privileges of the floor." Besides the secretaries and the pastor of the church, it was allowed to address the Assembly to Rev. Dr. Kerr, to Rev. Dr. Hoge, and to Rev. T. R. Sampson on matters connected with the business of the body. The courtesy seemed eminently proper, was duly appreciated and in no sense taken advantage of or abused by these honored

brethren. The Assembly heard them not only with pleasure, but with profit, their timely speeches helping the court to reach its own conclusions. And perhaps in no other way could the same light have been thrown on the subjects illuminated by them. But it is to be considered whether or not it may not be a precedent, unsafe and fettering as well as embarrassing.

The Assembly was favored with addresses from others who were not members of the body. Among the earliest of these was Rev. Dr. McLean, one of the secretaries of the American Bible Society, who made a brief and luminous statement as to the work of that noble institution. As the General Assembly has made the Bible Society one of its "causes," and assigned a collection, and a column in the Statistical Reports therefor, it was eminently fitting that such a representation should be made. It happened that Dr. Murkland, of Baltimore, was temporarily occupying the Moderator's chair, and with that charming affluence of thought and illustration and mellifluous felicitousness of expression for which he is so justly and widely known, he responded in a speech so admirable in sentiment and so beautiful in utterance that the Assembly was enchanted. By the way, a remark of Dr. McLean that he believed President Cleveland would close the doors of the Columbian Exposition by force of arms if necessary, evoked applause, which Dr. Murkland, Moderator *pro tempore*, promptly checked. "No force of arms," said an indignant ex-Confederate near the writer, "by force of law, not of arms."

The Seamen's Bethel at New Orleans, rich in sacred associations with the life-work of Dr. Witherspoon, and the cause of the sailor, was presented in a clear and interesting address by the chaplain, Rev. R. E. Steele, of New Orleans.

A very interesting episode was the reception of two representatives of the Reformed Churches among the French. The Assembly was indebted to the thoughtful courtesy of Rev. Dr. Murkland (a member of the Assembly who was always alert, vigilant, and heard with attention) for their presence; and the invitation to them to attend the sessions of our Assembly and to be heard by us was given upon his motion. They were welcomed in fitting speech by Moderator Lapsley, and as they spoke were listened to with evident interest by the Assembly. M. Fred. Neckar represented the Evangelical Society of Geneva, and Rev. E. J. Dupuy, pastor of the Reformed Church in Paris, represented the Reformed Church of France. Our French visitors seemed delighted with their reception, and with Macon.

The representatives who bore to the Assembly tidings from the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance in Toronto, were men honored among us, Judge Cothran and Professor Beattie, and worthy representatives of our own church and of the Alliance as well. They were given an hour on Wednesday morning, both speaking and testifying to the advantages of the Alliance for our own church and for the cause of Christ. If our blood or our banner be bluer, as Judge Cothran argued, so much the greater reason why we should continue with our brethren. As a distinguished minister of our church has well phrased it, "We do not want to belong to a hermit church." The Assembly made adequate provision for meeting in the future our proportion of the expenses of the Alliance.

These matters of courtesy being noted in these chronicles, I will pass on to the various actions of the Assembly, some of them of grave importance, marking, we think, healthful progress.

In the earlier part of the session, when time was not pressing, and every one wanted to speak, two matters were considered at length, being reports of *ad interim* committees. The one was the Hymn Book, and the other the Directory of Worship. The report of the *ad interim* committee on the Hymn Book disclosed the fact that, no provision having been made for their meeting, their consultation had been carried on by correspondence. The result of their conference is expressed in this recommendation:

"The committee, therefore, would recommend that the General Assembly direct the Committee of Publication to accept the proposition of the Rev. R. P. Kerr, D. D., to transfer the publication and entire business of *Hymns of the Ages* to that committee. That he be paid for the stereotype plates and copyrights their actual cost; and also a royalty of ten per cent. on the tune edition; that the name be changed to *Presbyterian Hymn Book*; and that the Committee of Publication be authorized to arrange all the necessary details of the transactions."

Dr. Kerr himself was heard, and made an exceedingly favorable impression by his frank and modest and manly bearing, his generous offer, and his story of the book in question. There was restlessness in the church, and dissatisfaction, as was evidenced by the repeated overtures for hymn book revision, to which the Assembly responded negatively; that with the counsel of others, and at their solicitation, he had prepared the *Hymns of the Ages*, basing it upon our own *Psalms and Hymns*, and following the form of words endeared by long association; he had enriched it with the best hymns and tunes to be found in English collections; he had sought to produce a book that could

become known and loved, brief in compass, attractive as a book, containing all the old precious hymns, the old tested tunes, together with the best later ones, that would be used in Christian praise, and at a cost that would enable all our churches and families to be supplied.

It was argued by those who advocated the report of the committee, that here was a book that suited our church, prepared by one of us, aided by the counsel of brethren, thus constituting as truly a representative committee as any appointed by the Assembly; that it adhered to the traditions of our church and perpetuated the long loved favorites; that practically we were without a hymn book in the multiplicity of all grades used in our churches; that the book itself was admirable as to hymns, tunes, taste, and mechanism; that it was most reasonable in price; and that an *ad interim* committee, representing all the synods, after a year's consideration, recommended its adoption.

On the other hand, it was argued, that the *ad interim* committee had held no meeting and that its conference by correspondence was confessedly unsatisfactory; that the book itself was open to criticism, in the newness and adaptations of some of its hymns and tunes; that a cheap book was not what was wanted, but the best book; that it was an important and vital matter about which it would be wise to go slowly; that we were under business contract with the publishers of Dr. C. S. Robinson's book, *Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs*; that many wanted a larger volume, a repertory to enrich and express their spiritual life; and that the business proposition was not so favorable to the church as it seemed.

The result was that an intermediate course was taken. It was not adopted as the "Presbyterian Hymn Book" or "the authorized Praise Book of the Church" (to use the phrase of Dr. Green's resolution which did not come before the Assembly), but the Assembly expressed "its cordial approval and endorsement" of the book, and "heartily commends it to the favorable consideration of all our churches." And the Committee of Publication was authorized to make arrangements with Dr. Kerr for the sale of the book. It expressed the hope that a word edition would be issued.

In the judgment of the writer this action, while satisfactory to Dr. Kerr, and to the Assembly, for it passed with great unanimity, but complicates the situation. Almost every one thinks he can make a hymn book or edit a newspaper. He is sure he can give good counsel thereanent. So we have another hymn book "approved," even "endorsed." In other days, hymn books were "appointed to be used in the

churches,' or as in Scotch expression "ordained to be used in the churches." Now we "approve" and "commend." We are afraid to "appoint" and "ordain." The consequence is, that each congregation obeys its own sweet will; and individual hymn books of all types and grades, from *Triumphant Songs* for the "toney," to *Laudes Domini* for the "toney," are found in our churches. I, for one, wish to see an authorized praise book for our churches, as other communions have for theirs. I do not undervalue the book of 1867, the precious old *Psalms and Hymns*, but the church at large does not use it. Who knows a Presbyterian Church from the book of praise that is used?

The *Directory of Worship* came before the Assembly by report from an *ad interim* committee. This report was truly a revision, and not a reconstruction, as former proposed revisions have been. It was admirably printed, so that every change suggested by the committee could be at once noted, and a copy was in the hands of every commissioner. Watchful eyes followed the reading of the report by the chairman, Rev. Dr. Green. The new matter introduced was largely such as was called for because of the absence in the present *Directory* of what may *direct* in certain departments of worship (in changed aspects of church life), which have grown into prominence since the adoption of the one now in use notably the Sunday-school and the prayer-meeting. Those who are devoted to our present *Directory*, its fulness and sonorousness, will be pleased with the revision, which has been strictly conservative. Those who criticized former revisions, (which seemed never to have satisfied the presbyteries) because of their baldness and sententiousness, will mark with pleasure the richness and literary finish that characterize this. The changes in the report of the committee were not numerous or radical. Presbyterians want a *Directory* not a *Liturgy*. The *Optional Forms for Marriage and Burial* were directed to be put in an Appendix. The book, thus revised, is sent down to presbyteries for adoption or rejection. Let us hope that at length our *Book of Church Order* is near completion. For so many weary years the church has been engaged in this work of revision that the end is hailed with delight.

Among the earlier acts of the Assembly was the acceptance of the care and oversight of the "Assembly's Home and School" for orphans of ministers' and children of missionaries, at Fredericksburg, Va. All the details had been carefully wrought out, the legal status examined and defined, the proposals were thoroughly and patiently considered by an able committee, of which Dr. Murkland was chairman, and the

Assembly accepted the trust and bestowed its hearty benediction. To the loving heart, untiring zeal, and well-directed and intelligent energy of the Rev. A. Pierce Saunders is so happy a consummation due.

The Assembly plunged into business earnestly. On Thursday the reports of Executive Committees were read and referred. On Friday the reports of *ad interim* committees, of which there were four, were read and appropriately referred, or at once considered and acted on.

After a good-humored contest, the Assembly decided that the next Assembly be held in Nashville. The contest was, according to a local paper, between Greenville, S. C., with strawberries and cream, Norfolk, Va., with oysters and sea-pleasures, and Nashville, Tenn., with race-horses. It is needless to say the horses won the race. Seriously, however, the Assembly has met in the State of Tennessee four times (the next meeting being the fifth), in the State of Virginia two times, and in no other State save Texas and Louisiana has it met less frequently. It has never met in Florida. It has met in the Synod of Nashville three times, and in the Synod of Virginia four. But let it be remembered, the Synod of Nashville numbers 11,831, the Synod of Virginia 34,224. It met west of the Mississippi in 1887 and in 1892. It met in Houston in 1885, and in Vicksburg in 1884. In ten years the extreme West and South has had the Assembly four times, the East once, to-wit, in Baltimore in 1888, for Asheville is nearer the centre than the east, and the centre four times not including Asheville. Let us rally on the centre, brethren, but let us not forget the wings, where the centrifugal force is strongest.

Of the standing committees, the first to make report was the Committee on Publication, Rev. Dr. Hooper, chairman. It was plain sailing. The business had been well managed, the assets had increased, and though sales had not been quite so great, the year had been of average prosperity. Resolutions of approval and the reappointment of officers and committee were in order. To emphasize the beneficent work of this Executive Committee, it was ordered by report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures in response to overtures sent by different presbyteries, that the column assigned in statistical reports to contributions for "publication," be designated "publication and colportage."

True to its historic renown, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, by its Assembly, affirmed the sanctity of the Sabbath, and demanded a stricter observance of the holy day. In many ways it was

emphasized. The very first act after organization was to send a telegraphic dispatch to Chicago, protesting against the opening of the gates of the Columbian Exposition on that day. In half-inch capitals it was published: "Will not go to the Big Fair," because of the resolution introduced by Rev. F. D. Hunt, of Charlotte, N. C., and almost unanimously passed by the Assembly, urging the church members, if the Fair be opened on Sundays, to protest in a practical way by not attending the Exposition at all. The same argument would keep church members from riding on railroads or street cars. By overture from the Presbytery at Memphis, the evils connected with the Sunday newspaper were brought to the attention of the Assembly. The response of the Committee on Bills and Overtures reaffirmed the action of the Assembly of 1886, p. 52. This was not enough for Dr. N. M. Woods, who, at a subsequent *sederunt* introduced a paper, and without reflecting on the Committee of Bills and Overtures, thought they did not go far enough, and that there was need of specification. So the following action was also taken:

"Whereas, Former General Assemblies have in emphatic terms condemned Sunday papers as a great evil in our land, without distinctly singling out the various phases thereof, and

"Whereas, It is unquestionably true that multitudes of our church members take and read and advertise in these papers on the Lord's day, and many of our churches have their services advertised in them, and many of our ministers furnish notices of religious services on the Sabbath which they are aware will be prepared for the press on Sabbath evening for the Monday papers; therefore be it

"*Resolved*, 1. That this Assembly solemnly declares that all of the above-mentioned acts are wholly inconsistent with our position as avowed friends of Sabbath observance, and, if unchecked, will inevitably result in lowering more and more the Christian sentiment of our people on that vital question.

"2. That we do most earnestly and affectionately warn all of our church officers and members against all complicity in the evils referred to, and entreat them to refuse to countenance or patronize Sunday papers as the only consistent course for Christian people who profess to regard the Lord's day as one great bulwark of our holy religion."

A strong paper, too, was presented as the report of the Assembly's Permanent Committee on the Sabbath. The obvious increase of crime, and the financial embarrassment, especially in railroad circles, were attributed to disregard of God's law on the Sabbath. The writer did not hear this paper, and only knows from the report of the special committee to which it was referred that this was its testimony.

With reference to these various acts of the Assembly I am reminded of what is attributed to that eccentric though wise statesman, John Randolph of Roanoke, when a resolution was introduced into Congress. "Mr. Speaker," he cried, with his penetrating voice, "the time for resolution is past. What we need is action." The testimony of our church is already clear, specific, outspoken. Now for action.

Evidence of the aggressive nature of this Assembly is seen in the pronounced action taken with reference to colored evangelization. The standing committee, Rev. Dr. Dodge, reported. I am sorry I have no copy of the report before me. From memory I write that there had not been the progress that was hoped or desired. The present conduct of the Institute at Tuscaloosa was discontinued. Its management was transferred to the Executive Committee of Colored Evangelization, and when it can be done without sacrifice, the Institute itself will be removed to Birmingham. There had been some advance in actual evangelistic work among the colored people; but there was sad lack of funds. Rev. A. L. Phillips made what might be called a "ringing" address. It was also stinging and stirring. Dr. Dodge also punctuated his report and let in light. There has been woeful apathy on the part of the church. It is to be hoped with a reorganization of the work it can be more effectually done. But nothing can be done without the support of the church, the prayers and the gifts of God's people. Most of us must hang our heads and say, "we are verily guilty concerning our brother," and we take a livelier interest in the mission on the Congo than we do in seeking to reach the African race at our doors.

The Standing Committee of Education had as its chairman, Dr. J. A. Wallace, President of King College, a strong and courageous man. The report commended the work and diligence of the committee. It revealed the fact that assistance was given the last year to the largest number of candidates in the history of the committee's work, and that more than \$5,000 in pledges to assisted candidates were still due to them. To meet this deficit, a call for "free-will offerings" was authorized, but no week of self-denial, no special Lent. A call was made too for \$30,000 to carry forward this work. The committee made no nomination for secretary, while recommending other members of the Executive Committee. Rev. Dr. E. M. Richardson was almost unanimously chosen. The name of the committee was changed in response to overtures to "Education for the Ministry."

The two most serious questions that came before the Assembly,

awakening the most earnest discussion and at times grave solicitude, were the subjects of Home Missions and Foreign Missions. They were both considered, not only by the committees to which the reports of the Executive Committees were entrusted, with great care, but the Assembly itself gave ample time and much thought to them both.

The report of the Standing Committee of Home Missions was made by Rev. Dr. Cozby, of South Carolina. To this committee had been referred the report of the *ad interim* committee on coöperation in home missionary work, and it was along the lines of this that the battle raged. On most of the points reported the committee were at one. The work of the Assembly's Executive Committee was approved. The manifold departments of the Home Mission work were noted, the urgent need for increased contributions to each of them was emphasized, and some specifications of adjustment of claims and assignment of service (as among the Mexicans in Texas) were made with unanimity. It was debated whether it were wise to continue the publication of the *Home Missionary* at a pecuniary loss to the cause, and on this both majority and minority reports were made. But the Assembly assumed that the loss was countervailed by the information disseminated, the receipts published, and the quickening of conscience and increase of contributions in its monthly issue. And so it was determined to continue it. At the time of the appointment of the Executive Committee, Rev. Dr. J. N. Craig, who had been for ten years secretary, while willing still to serve the church if called to fill the post to which he had been consecutively elected so many years, gave the Assembly an unembarrassed opportunity to select another to the position, retiring from the house to leave them unfettered. But he was again elected without criticism or opposition. This act of Dr. Craig disarmed antagonism, if any existed, and won him friends.

As to coöperation in Home Mission work, the different views of the Assembly may best be seen in the two reports themselves appended :

"Your committee, having carefully considered the report of the *ad interim* committee on coöperation, the annual report of the Assembly's Executive Committee, and the overture from the Presbytery of Eastern Texas, recommend that the following be adopted as the Assembly's future method of conducting home missionary work, viz.:

"1. The Assembly urges upon all its synods and presbyteries to prosecute the work of home missions within their own bounds to the extent of their ability, and reserves for the use of these courts for their own work the months of February, June, and August.

"2. The General Assembly appoints two annual collections for Assembly's home missions, including the causes now known as Sustenta-

tion, Evangelistic, and Church Erection, to be taken in the months of January and September, and urges upon all its synods and presbyteries to secure these collections from all their churches at these times, or at such other time as may be most convenient.

"3. The Assembly's committee is also instructed, other things being equal, to apply its funds to the development of the work in the weaker portions of the church which lie in the southern, southwestern, and western portions of our territory, including the Indian Territory, and in regions beyond.

"4. Any parts of the present manual in conflict with the above are hereby repealed, and the Assembly's Executive Committee is instructed to prepare a new manual to be submitted to the next Assembly.

"This plan of work shall go into operation on the first of January, 1894, and the Assembly's Executive Committee is instructed to prepare an explanatory letter to the presbyteries and synods, fully explaining the nature and intent of the plan now adopted, that the same may be fully before those bodies at their next regular meetings; and since the Assembly is convinced that the very life of our church in the territory covered by the weaker presbyteries and synods depends upon aid to be given by the stronger presbyteries and synods, the Assembly expresses the hope that there will be entire harmony of action throughout its bounds upon the plan here presented."

MINORITY REPORT.

"Your committee, after carefully considering the report of the *ad interim* committee, and the statements made by representatives of the synod's committees of North Carolina and Memphis, propose to the Assembly the following action: As involving the minimum of change, as harmonizing synodical with Assembly evangelistic work, as protecting the rights of presbyteries, and as providing for the urgent need of frontier work in missionary synods; be it resolved,

"1. That synods and presbyteries be urged, as many as possible, to do the evangelistic work within their own bounds. To this end the month of June is left vacant for a collection for this purpose.

"2. That the presbyteries engaged in the presbyterial or synodical evangelistic work are enjoined to require of all their churches one annual collection during September, this collection to be sent to the central treasury and applied by central committee to the extension of our church outside the bounds of our regularly constituted presbyteries, and in the Indian Territory, Texas, Florida, and Arkansas.

"3. That the two collections for Sustentation, and the one for Church Erection, be continued in the same months as heretofore, and the money sent to the central treasury.

"The presbyteries are directed to have at least 20 per cent. of their contributions at the disposal of the Assembly's committee.

"4. The Invalid collection shall be unchanged.

"Your committee make no recommendation touching the suggestion in the *ad interim* committee's report, looking to the appointment of a special committee to consider and revise paragraph 84."

The minority report was ably advocated by Rev. Dr. Cozby, Rev. G. L. Bitzer, and incidentally by Rev. Dr. King. It was defended as (1), "involving the minimum of change; as (2), harmonizing synodical with Assembly evangelistic work; as (3), protecting the rights of presbyteries; and (4), providing for the urgent need of frontier work in missionary synods." It was argued if the majority report prevailed, that instead of having one church and Assembly, we would have thirteen provincial synods; that the sympathy of the whole with one weak or wounded member would be lessened; that the strong synods and presbyteries could take care of their work, and the weaker ones would suffer; that the church was unprepared for so great, so radical a change as was proposed by the majority report; and special assault was made on the phrase "other things being equal" in paragraph three of that report as allowing the stronger presbyteries to do as now, draw all they send to the Assembly's treasury. On the other hand, attention was called to the fact how many presbyteries and synods under our present system failed to "coöperate" with the Assembly's plan; that already great effort was made by synods, and great work accomplished thereby, thus showing the need of such evangelistic movement; that the Assembly's committee would be better prepared to do true Home Mission work with two unfettered collections, not liable to be drawn out; that it quickened missionary zeal, as in Foreign Missions, when congregations were called on thus to extend the church in desolate and unoccupied regions, besides utilizing the fervor awakened by immediate needs in their own presbyteries and synods; and that it simplified the conception of Home Missions, inasmuch as it was almost impossible to draw the line between Evangelistic work and Sustentation work. The majority report was lucidly and strongly advocated by Dr. Hoge, of North Carolina, who spoke by request, explaining the operation of the plan in the Synod of North Carolina, and by Rev. T. W. Raymond. The Assembly adopted this report.

Allow me to add that much interest was manifested in this discussion as to the best ways of doing the Lord's work. That was the sole inquiry, which is the best. Though earnestly opposed, there was hearty acquiescence in the result. There was ozone in the thought of "foreign, domestic missions," as it was termed, and of planting the blue banner of our Southern church in the regions beyond. I heard of New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and it sent a thrill through the Assembly not unlike the planting of a mission in Korea or the opening of Cuba.

Rev. Dr. Cannon was chairman of the Standing Committee of Foreign Missions. After days of anxiety, prayer, and thought, he presented on behalf of the committee a unanimous report, every word of which was like a stone in a massive edifice, needful, polished, and fitted to its place. There was a sense of relief and thanksgiving, that men so able (for it was a specially able committee), so consecrated, from so widely scattered parts of the church, and with so different views, presented a unanimous report. Dr. Cannon himself with great clearness and cogency explained its meaning, or defended its decisions. The report was amended in some very important particulars. There was manifestly, however, no partisan zeal to carry a point or to sustain the report in its entirety.

After a review of the report of the Executive Committee, and enumerating causes of congratulation in the increase in the force of missionary laborers, the successful and diligent prosecution of the work, the increase in number of contributing churches, societies, and schools, and in the circulation of *The Missionary*, and in the large number of consecrated men and women who now ask to be sent out as missionaries, and naming as a matter of grave regret the decrease in contributions, and of deep sorrow the death of two noble workers, the report submitted the following recommendations:

1. Approving the conclusions reached in conference between representatives of the Northern Board and our committee with reference to harmony and coöperation in mission work.

2. Declining, because the way is not clear at present, to establish a school at Tsing Kiang Pu in response to overture of Greenbrier Presbytery.

3. Declining to yield the title of church property at Volos to the "Free Evangelical Church in Greece and Macedonia."

This action of the committee was opposed by Rev. Dr. Murkland, but on the statements of Rev. T. R. Sampson (who spoke by request) and Rev. A. P. Saunders, explaining the legal status, and the need for the "Free Church" itself that the title should be as now vested, the Assembly sustained the committee.

4. Recommending appropriate and sympathetic action in response to memorial from Chinese mission in New Orleans, touching the Chinese Exclusion Act.

5. Recommending the appointment of an *ad interim* committee to investigate and report to the next Assembly—"first, as to the expediency of such independent action on the part of presbyteries" (refer-

ring to an "observed tendency toward independent action" . . . "in appointing and sustaining missionaries in foreign fields" specified in the preamble to the recommendation); "second, as to whether any modifications or changes are advisable in the present method of administration in this part of the church's work, and what amendments should, in their judgment, be made in the present manual."

This recommendation was stricken out because (presumably) of the implied condemnation of presbyteries in the phrase "observed tendency toward independent action," and the following was substituted:

"Inasmuch as questions have been raised in the church in regard to the expediency of transferring certain functions now exercised by the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions from that committee to the presbyteries and church sessions, and inasmuch as a presbytery connected with the General Assembly has already exercised functions which, according to the manual of Foreign Missions, belong to this Executive Committee, we recommend that this Assembly appoint an *ad interim* committee of five to investigate the entire matter and report to the next General Assembly—first, as to the expediency of transferring any functions from the Executive Committee to the presbyteries or church sessions; second, as to whether any modifications or changes are advisable in the present method of administration in part of the church's work, and what amendments should, in their judgment, be made in the present manual."

6. Calling for increased self-denial and liberality.

On this resolution Dr. Murkland, expressing reluctance in speaking again but feeling impelled so to do by his sense of duty, called attention to the falling off in contributions of \$2,500, but practically of \$20,000, inasmuch as the increase last year was about \$18,000, and the rate of increase and interest in the work warranted a like increase for this year, and then he noted that the expenses of management had increased from \$6,000 a few years ago to nearly \$16,000. Dr. Murkland's intense nature, and his eloquent comment reaching almost the height of indignation, produced a profound impression. Dr. Houston's response was calm and quiet. He showed that there were unusual expenses this year, and that the work had grown greatly in the past few years, but admitted that the expenses were excessive.

7. Recommending a deliverance looking to the ordination of an unordained missionary in a foreign field, without returning to his home presbytery, by a commission of ministers and elders of different presbyteries.

This awakened discussion likewise, but Dr. Cannon's clear state-

ment of its reasonable conformity to the *spirit* of our book convinced the Assembly.

8. In response to the letter of Dr. Houston asking leave to resign, the committee recommended "that the Assembly lay upon him a solemn call to hold the position another year, if he can do so without violence to his own convictions and without any present change in the church's policy."

The interest and the feeling of the Assembly grew more intense. Grave fears were felt that Dr. Houston's retirement would (as the committee expressed it) "seriously endanger" the work. He himself in response to direct inquiry had heard nothing that led him to change his views. There were many who felt that he could not with the same zeal and efficiency carry on the work with the views he now held and published. The recommendation of the committee was substituted by a resolution introduced by Rev. J. G. Snedecor acquiescing in his resignation, expressing deep regret at this step, and rejoicing that he lays down this work to take a higher and nobler one.

9. Urging reduction in expenses, and directing the Executive Committee to consider and report to the next Assembly concerning the desirability of reuniting the office of Assistant Secretary and Treasurer.

On this resolution, Mr. Rankin, the Assistant Secretary, by request, spoke. He deprecated the proposed action of uniting the offices of Secretary and Treasurer, so dissimilar in scope and service and demanding such different order of capabilities. There was full work for every man employed. There had been very great increase in the literary and clerical work connected with the magazine and the dissemination of the literature of the office. As to the expenses: explanation was offered in the salaries of a larger force, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, and clerical service. There had been a refurnishing of the office with what was needful—safe, desk, typewriters, book-cases for missionary files and literature. The Secretary's trip to Brazil, the salary of Mr. Lowry in the Synod of Georgia, the preparation and dissemination of the centennial number of *The Missionary*, these expenses were temporary, had all been unusual, and will not again recur.

The Assembly, however, was now enlisted in a retrenchment movement. The office of Assistant Secretary was abolished after the 1st of September next. A resolution was adopted expressing the high appreciation of the faithful and laborious services of Mr. Rankin as Assistant Secretary.

10. The last recommendation concerned the approval of the Minutes and the appointment of the Executive Committee. In the election of a Secretary, on motion of Dr. Murkland, the Assembly was led in special prayer by Dr. Cannon. With great unanimity Rev. Henry M. Woods was chosen Secretary. It was upon Judge Lapsley's nomination, his conviction (I cannot say information or assurance) that Mr. Woods would accept, and upon the hearty testimony of Dr. Houston, Rev. A. L. Phillips, Rev. J. G. Tanner, Rev. J. N. VanDevanter, and others that he was elected. He is a missionary, of missionary stock, and has had experience during Dr. Houston's absence in Brazil in the office. Mr. J. H. Kline was elected Treasurer *by the Assembly*, let it be noted, and thus the consideration of this great cause in this grave crisis came to a happy conclusion. There was intensity, but no acrimony. There was change, but no condemnation. It is believed the result of this earnest and protracted consideration proves satisfactory, allays criticism, unites dissonant views, and calls for the support of the whole church. This cause lies nearest the heart of the Bride as it does her adorable Lord, and evokes the warmest and tenderest interest.

It was at the heels of the meeting that the animated discussion sprang up concerning Young People's Societies, a subject so present, so living, and so vital, that it was felt that hasty action was not desirable. It was no fault of the committee to whom the *ad interim* report on this subject was entrusted. For the two prolonged discussions occasioned by the Home Mission and the Foreign Mission reports held the right of way, and their gravity could not be questioned. Two reports were presented, amendments added and many accepted, suggestions made, and the papers were referred to an *ad interim* committee to report to the next Assembly. This was neither the refuge of laziness nor of uncertainty. As Dr. White, the chairman, stated: "We are not fighting for victory, but for truth." The speeches awakened by this question, especially by the young men, and all the Assembly aligned itself "there or thereabouts," were bright, and stirring and suggestive.

The two most important committees of the Assembly, at least so regarded, and the chairmanships looked upon as the highest posts of honor next to the Moderator's chair, are the Judicial Committee and the Committee of Bills and Overtures. Both time and space forbid extended comment on their work. There was one judicial case; it was found in order; a commission was duly appointed and organized; action was taken, reported, and after a brief and breezy debate, was sus-

tained as the decision of the Assembly. The case was as follows: Acting under the direction given by the General Assembly of 1892, p. 453, the Presbytery of Ouachita placed under the care of the Home Mission Committee of presbytery a young man, a candidate for the ministry, laboring before licensure. Against this action of presbytery authorizing as it were a candidate to preach before licensure, complaint was duly made to synod by members of the presbytery. The Synod of Arkansas sustained the complaint. Against this action of synod, the Presbytery appealed to the General Assembly, and the General Assembly sustained the appeal. Many of the oldest and some of the wisest and most influential members of the Assembly protested against this decision.

It is said that the Assembly cannot make law, that such a decision reverses the decree of the standards, that to allow such irregularity uncondemned, is to override all constitutional inhibition as well as break down the gap to the ministry still lower. The simple answer is, surely the presbytery may do what the General Assembly allows them to do, especially when that liberty is given in a deliverance on this very subject, and when that liberty is thus carefully guarded.

But that there is need for a careful study and settlement of this question of the preaching of unlicensed men, the General Assembly recognized in the appointment of an *ad interim* committee.

Of the Committee of Bills and Overtures I write briefly and feelingly. It is a hard worked committee. Twenty-nine overtures came before us, for I had the honor to serve on that committee, and they were as earnestly and carefully considered as time allowed. There was the usual *melangè*, additions to the statistical reports, changes in the sessional forms, suggestions as to names of committees, and questions as to interpretation of law. The inevitable queries reappeared about worldliness, dancing, card-playing, and Sabbath-breaking, and deliverances called for, and instructions desired as to proper sessional action. Sad, sad, that there is any need therefor. "Communion wine" bobbed up again, not so serenely either. And other matters were thus brought to the attention of the Assembly. The rest of the acts of this committee, their deeds, and their might and wisdom, are they not written in the chronicles of the honored clerks of the Assembly?

Other matters might be noted, especially the report on Theological Seminaries and on Foreign Correspondence, but I have gone over quite in detail most of the actions of the Assembly. I have not sought

to deliver *ex cathedra* opinions on the wisdom of their doings, but rather to put the reader in my place as an attentive and interested participant in all that was done.

Two things I beg to mention in conclusion. The appointment of committees, one of the Moderator's most difficult and delicate duties, involves a wide knowledge of the men of the Assembly, else well-known names or the title-bearers will be used too frequently, and made to do double duty as a punishment for fame. This may seem like a criticism of the Moderator, which is as far from my heart as from my purpose. It is a general remark I make, not a specific criticism. To illustrate what I mean: Dr. King was chairman of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, a position to which by custom as well as from distinguished service and ability, he was entitled. On the same committee were Rev. Dr. Green, who as chairman of the Committee of Foreign Correspondence, and Rev. Dr. Cozby, who as chairman of Committee of Home Missions, had their time and thoughts fully occupied with their onerous duties on their respective committees. The Committee on Bills and Overtures who therefore largely derived the benefit of the counsel of two of its wisest members. Other committees showed like reduplication. This is, perhaps, one of the afflictions of greatness, or of the esteem and confidence in which honored brethren are held.

The appointment of several *ad interim* committees shows the need of study, thought, and skilful consideration. I do not know whether, or how, such a thing may be feasible. But my limited experience leads me to think one peril of General Assemblies, as evinced by the appointment of such committees, is the newness, inexperience, and lack of acquaintance with fellow-members and the special duties of the body itself. If it were possible to have a half or even a third of the Assembly, as in one of the houses of legislation usually, holding position for two terms, the business would be greatly facilitated. Our presbyteries and synods have a permanent element in the ministry, which is to be found at each meeting, the same elders being less persistently in attendance. But the Assembly is composed of commissioners chosen every year, most of them new to each other, many of them new to the conduct of the business of the Assembly, and though many are men of experience and wide acquaintance, there is a measure of inefficiency because the mass are comparatively without the training of such a provision.

Absenteeism also cripples the usefulness of the Assembly during its

closing days, when its most important measures are adopted. There is need for conscientious attention to the very close. And all ought, if possible, to join in "the syllable and sentiment of the parting hymn."

WILLIAM S. LACY.

Norfolk, Va.