

# THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XII.—No. III.

---

OCTOBER, MDCCCLIX.

---

ARTICLE I.

## REVISED BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

The Revised Book of Discipline, by having been reported to the last General Assembly, has become, in some sort, the property of the Church; and as its fate will, in all likelihood, be settled by the next Assembly, it is a matter of grave importance that the principles it embodies should be rightly understood, and the grounds and tendencies of the changes introduced in it set in their true light. It has already been subjected to a severe criticism—a criticism extremely kind in its spirit and temper to the authors of the book, but without the slightest mercy or favor to the peculiarities of the book itself. The contrast between the courtesy with which the members of the Committee, personally considered, have been treated, and the freedom with which their production has been handled, may be taken as an apt illustration of the genius of Presbyterianism, which teaches charity to the man without concessions to his errors, and which, while it repudiates all human authority, endeavors to observe the maxim: Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. We thank our brethren for the good opinion they have expressed of us. Indeed our modesty might have been shocked at the laudatory terms which they have

ARTICLE VII.

*Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America. With an Appendix.*  
Vol. 15, 1859. Presbyterian Board of Publication.

The General Assembly, which met on Thursday the 19th of May, 1859, in the city of Indianapolis, was, beyond precedent, the largest that has ever convened. Three hundred and thirty-eight members answered to the roll call, of whom one hundred and fifty-six were ruling elders. If the size of the body is any index of the steady and accelerated growth of the church, this large infusion of the lay element is not less significant of the healthiness of that growth, and of the distinct outworking of great constitutional principles. Government in the hands of a single class, whether that class be large or small, has always been repudiated by Presbyterians as essentially *hierarchical*. The tendency to spiritual despotism will perhaps be as intense, if the supreme power be lodged in the whole body of the clergy, as in the hands of Prelates and of Popes. Hence the constitution of the Presbyterian Church provides that all her courts, from the lowest to the highest, shall be composed not only of Ministers of the Word, sustaining wider relations to the Church as a whole, but also of ruling elders, who are more immediately the representatives of the people, expressing their views and breathing their sympathies. In this connexion it may not be unprofitable to reproduce what was written and published, eleven years ago, in this Review :

“Accordingly, the freest modern States have adopted the principle of *two chambers*, composed of different persons, belonging to different classes, or elected for different terms of service. This gives to the representative system the fairest scope for its legitimate exercise, and provides the strongest security which the wit of man can devise against the violence of party, the predominance of passion, selfishness or local interests, and the tyranny of unscrupulous majorities.” \* \* \* \* ‘The very principles which the progress of modern society has developed, and which constitute the glory of modern politics, were found imbedded in the Presbyterian system ages before a representative republic, in the

true sense of the term, existed upon earth.' \* \* \* \* 'In the government of the church, as the Assemblies which exercise jurisdiction and authority, are judicial as well as deliberative, are courts as well as councils, and therefore very frequently required to act as a unit, it would be a cumbersome arrangement to have two houses; but the end is accomplished in two classes of representation, and the relations to each other of the bodies which they constitute. The ministers are a check upon the elders, and the elders are a check upon the ministers, and the higher are checks upon the lower courts.' \* \* \* \* 'A government exclusively in the hands of the clergy, is fraught with dangers to them and to the people, against which all ecclesiastical history is a solemn warning, and although as long as the Ministers were truly chosen, their Assemblies would be enough to give the church the form of a commonwealth, the spirit of liberty would soon depart. The possession of power would produce its natural effects, the clergy would aspire to be a privileged class, and the people would soon lose the significance and importance which the legitimate operation of our system attaches to them. On the other hand, a government too exclusively in the hands of the elders, would lean too much to popular will. Mingling habitually with the people, and identified with them in their relations and interests, their habits and associations, the elders might be disposed to regard themselves as mere deputies, and to aim at local and sectional advantages rather than the good of the whole church. Ministers, on the other hand, trained to habits of retirement and study, accustomed to meditate upon abstract principles and general truths, while they furnish precisely the sort of check which the inconveniences of a government of elders seem to demand, create a danger against which, in turn, elders are the only adequate security. But with our double representation, ecclesiastical despotism and popular passion are equally discouraged. Local and sectional interests are not disregarded—the voice of the people is heard—but the checks and balances of the system are so nicely adjusted, that the strongest probability is furnished which any conceivable arrangement, dependent for its execution upon fallible men can give, that the voice of Christ shall be supreme in all our courts. We cannot therefore attach too much importance to the offices of ruling elder; in its relation to our church courts. Upon it the security of our liberties mainly depends; it is the principal means, under God, of making the Church not only a commonwealth, but a *free* commonwealth, 'the noblest, manliest, justest, equallest' government on earth.'" \*

Profoundly impressed with the truth of the principles so clearly announced in this valuable extract—principles which can never be unseasonably reiterated—it is with heartfelt

---

\* *Southern Presbyterian Review*, vol. 2d. pp. 19–23.

gratitude to God we note the fact, that in this highest of our ecclesiastical courts, and the largest which has ever met on this Continent, one half its members, within a fraction, should be these immediate representatives of the people; whose presence is earnestly solicited, just in proportion as the Church of God is enlightened by her great head to understand her own principles, and his grace given to her to work them out in her actual history. No one present at the Assembly—and the observation will hold equally true of all the courts of the church—but must have noticed the deference with which the suggestions of this portion of the body were universally received. The practical wisdom which they bring into our judicatories, from their contact with life upon every side of it, is felt to be an important restraint, qualifying and checking the tendency to abstract and undue generalizations among the clergy: itself a sufficient proof how deeply seated in the mind of the Church is the conviction, that the safety and harmony of her deliberations depend upon this admixture of clerical and lay influence.

But the size and constitution of the body was not the only sign of the rapid and healthful growth of the church. The announcement by the Stated Clerk, while organizing the court, of the addition of ten new Presbyteries during the year, the greatest number ever reported at one session of the Assembly, and the further statement that one of these, the Presbytery of Siam, was formed in the foreign missionary field, sent a thrill through the hearts of all the delegates. It was accepted as the voice of God saying to the Church, as aforetime He said to Moses: "Certainly I will be with thee, and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee." At this rate of progress, allowing only an arithmetical increase through the expansion of the church, the practical question will be forced upon us, beyond the possibility of postponement, of re-adjusting the scale of Presbyterian representation, so as to bring the Assembly within manageable limits. And should the spirit, so manifest in the last Assembly, of exclusive and hearty devotion to her great calling, pervade alike all parts of the Church, few buildings will be found in the land capable of containing the body: and the Assembly will be heard everywhere exclaiming,

as it did so earnestly at Indianapolis, "the place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell." It was, indeed, an imposing sight, reconciling us to great evils so long as they are tolerable, to see a respectable building nearly filled by a delegated ecclesiastical council, with an eager and expectant Christian public, struggling for a footing upon the slender margin beyond the deputies; to see such a body drawn from all parts of the country, mostly strangers to each other, yet sitting for days together, and exhibiting in the midst of great individual diversity and personal independence, wonderful harmony of views and unity of feeling; and, above all, to estimate the immense moral power which their well-considered judgments must carry—all this may seem to be well worth the inconveniences at which so sublime a spectacle is purchased. On the other hand, the draft upon the funds of the church which so large a Convention annually occasions, the withdrawal of so many ministers from their fields of labor for successive Sabbaths—and, more than all, the difficulties which bodies of such bulk experience in the discharge of deliberative and judicial functions: these evils are increasing upon us with the extension of the church over such a territory as that given us to occupy, and will soon make imperative the reduction of the Assembly. But how to deviate from usages to which the church has become habituated, if the representation should be transferred from Presbyteries to Synods—how in that case to disturb, as little as possible, the custom of rotation by which, at present, the entire ministry is to a greater or less extent brought successively into the Assembly, and which brings with it many advantages; and how to obviate, in these larger constituencies, the necessity for instructing the delegates so thoroughly repugnant to the notion of a deliberative body as pre-judging the very matters about which the delegates are assembled to deliberate; or, if Presbyterian representation should be adhered to, how to adjust the scale so as not to disturb the relations of the stronger to the weaker Presbyteries—not on the one hand to cut off the latter, and on the other hand not to give them a greater relative strength than they should have: all these questions of detail call for a wise forethought on the

part of those whose tastes lead them into the politics of the church, or whose practical wisdom has been so far proved as to make the church confide in their suggestions. Certainly the necessity for this reduction can now be so distinctly foreseen, that there will be no excuse if, in the day of decision, the church should be precipitated upon a course not adequately considered.

## THE OPENING SERMON.

Considerable disappointment was felt in consequence of the absence of the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Scott, of California, whose arrival was anxiously and vainly expected up to the moment when the sessions were opened. Many desired to greet once more in the flesh a brother now removed from them by so wide an interval. Others who were strangers to his person would have welcomed one doing a good work upon a distant frontier, and would have gladly listened to his voice in setting forth the wants and spiritual prospects of the Pacific coast. Although this work was well performed by Rev. Mr. Spear, at a later stage of the Assembly's session, it was to be regretted that California could not have been advocated by one presently engaged in the evangelization of that distant but interesting field. In his absence, the duty of opening the Assembly was devolved upon the Rev. Dr. N. L. Rice, of Chicago, than whom no worthier substitute could be found. It was the first time the writer enjoyed the pleasure of seeing and of hearing this distinguished Polemic and Divine, for which reason he was heard with deeper attention and interest. Dr. Rice's manner in the pulpit is singularly calm and self-contained, with sufficient earnestness to hold his audience, without warming into the impetuous passion which sweeps them away. With a style clear as crystal, yet simple and colloquial, he fascinates the hearer by the ease with which his thoughts are apprehended, at the same time that he informs the understanding by the truths communicated. This colloquial address is often employed with great effect by men of the highest order of eloquence, as Edmund Burke, who, in its occasional use, swoops often like a falcon to his quarry. But, as a con-

stant and uniform method, it is fatal to all fine declamation, and utterly prevents from rising into the higher regions of eloquence. It has, however, undeniably the advantage of individualizing the hearer, and of setting him apart as though in personal and private conference with the speaker. Hence the power which its occasional use gives the rhetorician, when, for more immediate and temporary effect, he wishes to isolate the hearer, to overcome the reserve which is felt in the presence of others, and to gain that full assent which is only conceded in confidential intercourse. In listening to Dr. Rice, a perfect master of this method, we could not but feel "there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit." Not wishing to dispense with it in him, we should deplore its becoming the fashion in the divinity school over which he has recently been placed. With common minds, which cannot afford Dr. Rice's richness of matter, we should expect this colloquial address to flatten down into small talk. Perhaps there is less danger of this in a country like ours, where all men are born orators, and where the tendency is almost universal to a flatulent and ambitious declamation.

Modestly alluding to the exigency which had brought him, upon short notice, before the Assembly, Dr. Rice took for his text, 2d Cor., 5: 7, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." After a brief introduction, showing the Scriptural import of the term "to walk," and deducing the meaning that to walk by faith is to live and act under the influence of Christian principles and motives, *really believed*, the way was open, 1, for inquiring what is faith? and 2, for showing its power as the controlling principle of the Christian life. The strength of the discourse was expended upon the former of these topics. In general, faith was defined as reliance upon testimony, which was shown to be one of the three sources of our knowledge, consciousness, and our senses being the other two. As it is impossible to distrust the two last, so it is unnatural to doubt the first. Faith, in a religious sense, is belief of the testimony of God; so that, of course, we can believe only so far as God actually has testified. This testimony may be explicit as to certain ultimate facts, and yet be withheld as to

their *mode*. Thus, the fact of the Trinity is revealed, but not the way in which God is *one* in one sense and *three* in another; the *fact* of two natures in Christ is asserted, but not the *manner* in which they are united; the *fact* is stated that man is mortal and immortal, but not *how* he is both, and so the *fact* that "God worketh in us both to will and to do," but not *how* he does this without interfering with our freedom. When men become perplexed upon these points, it is because they attempt to know beyond what is revealed, and to believe beyond what is testified; and these various difficulties are not to us matters of faith, because they are not matters of testimony. If any complain that this limits the exercise of human reason, the same may be affirmed of every department of knowledge. As we believe ten thousand facts which we cannot explain, there is an entire equality, in this regard, between nature and revelation.

This faith, in its active exercise, includes three elements, intellectual conviction of the truth—heart-approbation of it and trust—personal reliance upon God. The first pre-requisite is perception of the truth, which can only be had by weighing evidence on the one side and on the other, and so reaching a conclusion. We must believe that God *has* spoken, and then ask *what* He has said, and then we know what we *ought* to believe. We learn from the Bible that God made man, and what He made him, and what man has made himself by rebellion—then what provision God has made for man's salvation—what Christ is, God and man—what He has done and is doing for us. This is our *creed*, and when convinced of its truth, we have *intellectual* belief. But in this there is nothing either right or wrong—nothing that can save the soul. Men, at last, are controlled by the state of the heart, and through the affections and passions. Thus we reach the *second* element of faith, which is heart-approval of what God teaches. This is the grand distinction between the devil's faith and the Christian's; between the believing of man regenerate and man unconverted. Both believe intellectually, but the heart of the one recoils from the things believed, whilst the "heart of the other delights in them." Thus devils, Christians and angels,

go one step together, they all believe intellectually; angels go a second step with the Christian, since both believe and love, but the last step is taken by the Christian alone, which brings us to the *third* element of faith—*trust*. The angel is not lost, and does not *need*, and does not personally trust, in a redeeming Savior as *his* redeemer. The Christian looks upon himself as lost, and upon Christ as a Saviour—and, in addition, *trusts*.

With this exposition of the nature of faith, the preacher proceeded to show its controlling power over the saint, illustrated in the victory he gains over the world—his conquest of death, and his triumph over the grave—in the wisdom it imparts—in the motives to duty which it presents—in the strength it affords, and in the comforts which it breathes. The sermon was then concluded with a few remarks upon the connexion subsisting between faith and works, and the importance of unadulterated truth, and with a special application of the whole subject to the Christian ministry. Since the truth is their only weapon, faith in it is indispensable to its proper use, and faith in the promise is their only support and consolation.

We have made the foregoing abstract of this discourse, refreshing our memory from the full synopsis of it in the *Presbyterian* of May 28, that we may, with all possible delicacy, intimate to Dr. Rice that his sermon is likely to make an impression in relation to one point which, we are sure, he would regret as deeply as ourselves, and that is the nature of the intellectual assent involved in saving faith. The general tenor of his argument seems to us to convey the idea, that this assent is precisely the same in the case of the renewed and the unrenewed—in the case even of devils and saints. The Christian differs from the reprobate, not by a different kind of cognition, but in super-adding to his cognition what the other wants, a corresponding condition of heart. In other words, true faith, intellectually considered, is specifically the same as speculative assent. This is precisely the papal doctrine, against which the Reformers so earnestly protested, of a formed and an unformed faith. The Scriptures, on the other hand, explicitly teach, and all evangelical confessions have steadily maintained, that the *assent* which characterizes true faith is specifically different

from the assent of the ungodly—it is a totally different kind of cognition—a cognition in which the affection of the heart enters as an essential element, and is not super-added as something separable and distinct. It is with the *heart*, and with the heart alone, that man believeth unto righteousness. The very form of the knowledge is love. It is a higher energy than bare speculation—it blends into indissoluble unity, intelligence and emotion; knows by loving and loves by knowing. The immediate ground of the cognition is the supernatural illumination of the Spirit. The thing manifested by this Divine light is not merely the reality of the truth, but its beauty and glory. The mind so sees as to make it feel. The perceptions are analogous to those of the right and the beautiful, in which feeling exactly expresses the intellectual energy. *Uno verbo*, says Calvin, *statuimus, eos inepte loqui, quum fidem formari dicunt accessione piæ affectionis ad assensum facta: quum assensus quoque piæ affectione constet, qualis saltem in Scripturis demonstratur.\**

Against this whole theory, we desire to place the exposition of another distinguished living Presbyterian divine, like Dr. Rice, the ornament of his church and the age:

“Faith is frequently spoken of as mere belief on testimony—an act of the mind not different, in itself, when applied to spiritual and divine things, from similar acts of the mind when applied to other things, the difference being exclusively in the nature of the things believed, and in the nature of the testimony on which they are believed. The term *saving* added to faith is, according to this mode of viewing the subject, merely intended to signify that the particular faith thus designated, has the word of God for the testimony on which it rests, and those things which immediately concern salvation as its object. If this is the whole account of the matter, it is not easy to see how faith can be truly called a grace of the spirit; nor how the state of mind, out of which it proceeds, is in the least degree different from its natural and ordinary state; nor how any quality or condition of the soul, beyond such as all men naturally possess, can be necessary to the exercise of saving faith. If, on the other hand, this account of faith is intended to apply exclusively to acts of the renewed mind, and to belief of the testimony of God concerning spiritual things; then, in the *first* place, the whole object of this method of explaining the matter is defeated,

---

\* Inst. Lib. 3, ch. 2, § 8.

as soon as any one demands an explanation of that supernatural renewal of the mind, which enabled it to believe thus; and, in the *second* place, even on the supposition of the renewal of the mind, the explanation is neither true nor sufficient, since the gracious acts of faith of the renewed mind are essentially different from its natural acts of belief. The gracious act of saving faith, by which the new creature rests on the Divine Redeemer crucified for him, and whereby he receives peace and grows in holiness, is not identical with, nor even similar to, the natural act of belief by which the same person, in his unrenewed state, gave credit to the story of Christ, on the Divine testimony of its truth, and thereby merely increased in knowledge."\*

In this criticism we are far from impugning Dr. Rice's general soundness in the faith. We cannot for a moment suppose that he even doubts, much less that he denies, the work of the spirit in enlightening the sinner's mind, which indeed, in a casual way, he distinctly allowed. But we state as a grievous defect, in a sermon delivered before an Assembly of divines, and intended to be a precise and scientific exposition of true faith, the omission to put forth clearly and strongly the most material influence under which the believer is persuaded of the truth as it is in Jesus.

The Assembly was fully organized by the election of Rev. Dr. W. L. Breckinridge, of Louisville, Ky., as Moderator, and of Rev. Joseph R. Mann, of New York, as Temporary Clerk. Dr. Breckinridge was chosen by acclamation, all other nominations having been withdrawn; and, by the courtesy as well as by the honest impartiality with which he presided over the body, fully justified the unanimity with which he was chosen. The modesty with which he uniformly bore himself through the discharge of his difficult and responsible duties, united with his frank and gentlemanly deportment to all the members, won for him the affections of the whole Assembly, and a place in their memory, both as a man and a Christian. The first business of importance taken from the docket, was

#### THE DEMISSION QUESTION.

The Assembly of 1858, it will be remembered, sent down to the Presbyteries an Overture, proposing to add to the 15th

---

\* Dr. Breckinridge's Knowledge of God, subjectively considered, pp. 254, 255.

chapter of the Form of Government the three following sections, to-wit:

XVI. The office of a Minister of the Gospel is perpetual, and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of it but by deposition. Yet, from various causes, a minister may become incapable of performing the duties of the office; or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character. In such case he may cease to be an acting minister.

XVII. Wherever a minister, from any cause not inferring heresy, crime or scandal, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the Presbytery shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on their record. And when any person has thus ceased to be an acting minister, he shall not be a member of any Presbytery or Synod, but shall be subject to discipline as other ministers; provided, always, that nothing of this kind shall be done without the consent of the individual in question, except by advice of the Synod; and provided, also, that no case shall be finally decided except at a stated meeting of the Presbytery.

XVIII. Any minister having demitted the exercise of his office in the manner herein provided, may, if the Presbytery which acted on his demission think proper, be restored to the exercise thereof, and to all the rights incident thereto, provided that the consent of the Synod be obtained, in case his demission was ordered by the Synod in the manner above recited.

A spirited, running discussion was had upon the manner in which the replies of the Presbyteries should be authenticated; whether to require the signature of the Stated Clerk certifying the record, or to receive simply the report of a commissioner. It was decided to remit to the Committee of Bills and Overtures, to whom all these replies were referred, the decision upon the constitutional evidence of these answers respectively. This decision we regretted, and should have preferred Dr. Anderson's motion to carry, requiring, in all cases, the Minute of the Presbytery, attested by the Stated Clerk. This is the plain requisition of our book, (Form of Government, ch. 12, sec. 6,) and we see no reason why it should not be enforced. In a matter so important as the change of the constitution, the value even of forms cannot be overstated, particularly in times of strife and confusion, to which the church is, unfortunately, too liable to be exposed. If, as alleged, the action of past Assemblies has been loose and slovenly in receiving the replies of Presbyteries, there was no better occasion than the present for

initiating a safer precedent. The committee subsequently reported, that of 108 answers returned to the Overture, twenty-four were rendered in the affirmative, and eighty-four in the negative. Whether this decision indicates the unwillingness of the church to entertain any proposals of change as to its constitutional rules, simply from a wholesome fear of innovation, and without regard to the merits of the change, it is, perhaps, impossible to say. There is reason, however, to believe that, in this particular case, the opposition was largely due to the form of the Overture, as well as to the principle involved. It comes within our personal knowledge, that some who favor the right of demission, in certain provided cases, opposed this Overture, as not sufficiently discriminating the parties for whom relief was proposed; and as putting it too much in the power of an unscrupulous majority to make way, summarily, with an obnoxious Presbyter, without resorting to forms of process. Fearing that it might, in troublesome times, be converted into an instrument of spiritual tyranny, or, at least, disturb the repose of the Church, by occasioning vexatious proceedings, the Overture was rejected by some who would have voted for demission *simpliciter*. To us it has long been clear, that one of the necessary elements in a call to the ministry being the conviction wrought by the Holy Ghost upon the conscience of the individual, there is no power in the Church to compel service where this conviction is wanting. As no Presbytery would license or ordain, where this personal conviction is lacking, so, after a term of years, if a man conscientiously states his belief that God had never called him to this work, and that his previous impressions were now fully dispelled, it must still appear that the seal of his commission from the Head of the Church is absent, and his call is made void. How the church can hold him to that work, against the clear persuasions of his own conscience, under pains and penalties to be judicially inflicted, without an assumption of power never delegated to her by Christ, her Lord, we have never been able to see. It was for the relief of just such cases that this Overture undertook to provide. And if its defeat was due to the unskillfulness with which it was drawn—or, if the

above view of what is most essential in a call to the Ministry be true—then this question only sleeps for the present, and will certainly be raised again whenever the church shall be prepared to entertain it.

## CHURCH EXTENSION.

The following abstract of the operations of this Committee during the ecclesiastical year was presented:

The committee have labored under great embarrassments, arising from the heavy liabilities with which they began the year, and the unprecedented influx of applications. In 1857-8, only one hundred applications, calling for \$45,000, were received, while in 1858-9, there were one hundred and forty-one, calling for about \$62,000. During the year the applications of thirty-two churches, amounting to \$13,370, were stricken from the file for want of the necessary information. There remained on file, April 1, 1859, ninety-one applications, calling for at least \$41,000, including sixty applications brought forward from the previous year; two hundred and one applications, calling for \$87,000, were before the committee during the year ending April 1, 1859. Only five applications were declined during the year. Every appropriation was paid as soon as it became due, without borrowing a dollar. Appropriations amounting to \$20,504.90 were paid to seventy-six churches—eleven more than during the preceding year. The average appropriation to each church was \$239.90. The receipts were \$29,342.34—\$4,600 more than the previous year. The expenditures were \$23,538.68. The liabilities incurred, but not fully matured, exceeded the means on hand, April 1, 1859, \$1,234.41. The average cost of the two hundred and fifty-five churches aided, is \$2,097; average number of members, 34.

The condition of two thousand two hundred and sixty-seven churches, about two-thirds of the whole number of churches in connection with the General Assembly, is reported. Of these churches, five hundred and fifty-three, or nearly one in four, have no house of worship. Twenty-six churches worship in union houses; one hundred and sixty-eight report their houses

of worship insufficient; one hundred and ninety-one are in debt. Add these together, and you have nine hundred and thirty-seven churches, or within two hundred of the *half* of the whole number reported, who are crippled by the lack of a church, the *insufficiency* of their houses, or by *indebtedness*.

Rev. Mr. Coe, the Secretary, in an effective address, presented other facts showing, by comparison with former years, how this cause had gained upon the confidence of the church, and summing up the total of contributions to it since the appointment of the committee; from which he concluded that when the churches shall more generally co-operate with the committee, the object entrusted to this arm of the church's operations can be fully answered. He would state:

1. The amount raised in the last four years is about \$87,000—indeed, in less than four years. This has come from *individuals*, and from about *one-sixth* part of the churches in our connection.

2. The contributions have steadily increased every year, showing a growing interest in the cause, and an enlargement of the committee's operations. The first year the committee received less than \$10,000; the second year, over \$23,000; the third year, a little less than \$25,000, and the fourth year, \$30,000. The total receipts of the fourth year, including a legacy of land not included in the report, are fully \$5,000 in advance of the preceding year. And the receipts from *churches*, the most reliable source of income, are fully \$9,000 in advance of receipts from the same source last year. The number of contributing churches reported the first year was 167; the second year, 502; the third, 518; the fourth year, 565.

3. The inauguration and efforts of this committee have taken place at a time of peculiar pressure in the money affairs of the country.

4. The mode of distribution adopted by your committee produces incidental benefits, which reach beyond the actual amounts contributed. It is one which we think any set of wise men would adopt. It *equalizes* the gifts of the benevolent, scatters them widely over the whole church, stimulates and encourages feeble churches to *self-exertion*, and guards them

against that incubus of church enterprise, a *church debt*. The mode of distribution adopted may be safely said to make \$20,000 go as far as \$40,000 given at random.

5. The committee have, since July, 1855, declined to make appropriations to *only five* churches of the two hundred and eighty that have applied and furnished the necessary information. And *four* of these five asked for sums entirely beyond the ability of the committee, and the other one was a Union Church.

6. The tendencies of the day to extravagance in church building, led the committee to apprehend difficulty; but in this they have been agreeably disappointed; and it is believed that the influence of the committee, and the principles it has adopted and disseminated, has had the happiest effect in repressing the tendency to imprudent undertakings and unnecessary expenditure. Certainly the charge of extravagance cannot be brought against the churches aided by this committee, as is evidenced by the fact, that the average cost of these 255 churches has been \$2,097 each. Very few of the applications give evidence of any desire to pamper pride or gratify vanity. Very rarely was there proof that the applicants for aid had overstepped the limits of a wise economy.

The committee, to whom this report had been referred, reported through its Chairman, the Rev. H. J. Van Dyke, the following resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

1. That the Assembly commend the Church Extension Committee for the fidelity with which they have hitherto watched over the interest committed to them, and note with special satisfaction their efforts to elicit information in regard to the wants of the church in their department of labor.

2. That we regret the tardiness of the churches to obey the repeated requests of the General Assembly to take collections for this important cause; and hereby solemnly enjoin it upon all the Presbyteries to take some action whereby our directions may be more generally and faithfully executed.

3. We desire and exhort all churches under our care, which are still in debt for their house of worship, to make strenuous efforts for removing this stumbling block, in order that their liberality towards new and feeble churches be not hindered.

4. That hereafter a sermon upon the subject of Church Ex-

tension be preached before each General Assembly, as in the case of the Boards.

5. Recommends certain persons to fill vacancies.

A long and animated debate arose upon the two following supplementary resolutions offered by Mr. Van Dyke, not as Chairman of the Committee, but submitted as an amendment individually by him:

1. The Assembly, whilst they would not discourage any judicious effort for the erection of church edifices, enjoin it upon all churches under its care, whether in the new or the old States and Territories, to sit down and count the cost before they begin to build, that the name of God and His holy religion be not dishonored.

2. We earnestly recommend all churches which make contributions for the building of edifices out of their own bounds, to make such contributions through the Church Extension Committee, which is the regularly appointed channel. All churches desiring aid are likewise recommended to apply to the Church Extension Committee. And we are the more earnest in the recommendation in view of the gratifying fact, that out of so many applications made to the committee since its organization, only five have been rejected.

In support of these resolutions, he alleged the necessity of shielding ministers from the painful and odious work of begging, the great expense as well as inequality of private solicitations, and its interference with the regular operation of all our church schemes. He argued further, that special applications were not necessary; that the same money might be raised with far less time and trouble, if the committee were properly sustained; and expressed his amazement that only one-third of our churches contributed their collections to this cause, which he ascribed to the interference of these voluntary applications. Dr. S. M. Wilson, of Cincinnati, espoused the same view, urging that these repeated private solicitations placed pastors often in painful and equivocal positions, as withholding their sympathies when it was impossible to befriend the applicant—and that churches would be more apt to keep clear of debt if they were cut off from the resource of special supplications for relief, and would then build according to their means.

On the other side, these restrictive resolutions were opposed, with telling effect, by Judge Bliss, of Alabama, who thought it necessary to *stand us round* so as to let us have each other's *experience* in exchanged positions, before we can understand and feel aright. He knew there was a necessity for private applications; they came from feeble churches, and were the yearnings of a hungry child crying for bread, which he was not willing to repress. Those who gave to private appeals were the parties who most liberally supported this committee; and he suspected that the complaint against this special call for aid came from men who never gave till they had a law suit with the Lord, nor even then until the last appeal had been issued.

Dr. J. C. Lowrie thought this movement ought not to be attributed to men of contracted views willing to protect themselves. But many churches were seriously embarrassed by the number of these applications—that often not the most meritorious, but the most adroit, succeeded best, and that the parties entreated had not the means of distinguishing between them; and the *few* were helped at the expense of the *many*. He thought, however, that special cases did exist that should be provided for in a special way; but they should be guarded by the recommendations of Presbyteries, or in some other adequate way.

Rev. Mr. Richeldaffer followed in the same general strain, insisting, from his own knowledge of frontier life, upon the necessity of special applications for aid, and urging the whole matter to be left free.

Dr. B. M. Smith, taking up the suggestion of Dr. Lowrie, offered a substitute for the resolutions pending before the house, restricting private applications to such cases as are recommended by an act of Presbytery.

Dr. Edwards doubted the competency of the Assembly to impose any such restrictions to prevent the outflow of benevolence on the part of our people in any way they think best. He thought there was danger of over legislation; and that it was wrong to discriminate in our legislation between the different arms of our public service. If these resolutions were passed in favor of this committee, what was to hinder the

Board of Education from asking for a similar act restraining private gifts to Theological Seminaries. The proper course was to foster the committee, and for it to push forward its claims until, as with the other Boards, the necessity for these individual benefactions should be superseded.

Dr. Anderson merely wished it understood that this proposition did not emanate from the committee in any form. The evils of spontaneous, unguided benevolence, had been so sorely felt, that this organization had been created. The Assembly having originated this scheme, ought simply to see that it was carried out without interference and embarrassment. But that the committee were so far from desiring to restrict special and local sympathies, they had sought uniformly to recognize and develop them.

Other members of the Assembly participated in this discussion, which was brisk and lively to the close; but the above abstract condenses the arguments employed on either side. These supplementary resolutions of Mr. Van Dyke were laid upon the table, and the whole subject was thus disposed of. In this result we heartily concur. Plainly, the church has the right to institute measures for systematizing and enlarging its charities; and to create agencies by which to equalize, as far as possible, the distribution of the same. The Assembly, in the exercise of its pastoral care, may exhort all its churches to greater liberality, and may rebuke with long suffering and patience their short-comings in this great Christian duty. But it has no authority for throwing a fence around its churches, infringing their individual discretion, and decreeing that their gifts shall flow only in the channels prescribed by itself. This general principle should determine the question under discussion, without pressing behind it to discover whether, under existing circumstances, private benefactions can or cannot be dispensed with. Yet, if this latter point be raised, there is one fact conclusive as to it; which is, that in our larger towns and cities, where the work of church extension needs to be specially and vigorously pushed, the aid furnished by the committee is totally inadequate. From their report it will be seen that the average cost of the churches it has aided is \$2,097 cash; and

the appropriation made to these averages \$239, a little more than one-tenth of the whole. But the cost of erection is necessarily so much greater in our cities and large towns, that this average appropriation would be but a drop in the bucket; and these, if built at all, must be built through individual enterprise, and by local assistance. From the nature of the case, the Extension Committee, as the almoner of the church's general bounty, must distribute sparingly in order to distribute widely. These city structures would very easily absorb the whole treasury of the committee, if allowed to draw upon it even at the rate of one-tenth of their prime cost; and thus a margin must be left in all the general arrangements of the church for the outflow of private benevolence and zeal. It is very desirable, however, that these local charities should in some manner be represented to the committee, so as to be embraced in their general report. The fact is, with all our efforts to secure accurate statistics of the church's benevolence, through inattention all is very far from being reported that is actually done. As an example of this, one church, which on the floor of the Assembly was singled out and reproached as a defaulter to this cause, we find in the Appendix to the Minutes to have contributed over \$6,000—but being contributed for a local enterprise, it did not pass through the hands of this committee, and could not be presented in their report.

On the whole, the Extension Committee has reason to rejoice over this discussion. The facts of its progress were thus more distinctly impressed upon the mind of the church, and the conviction deepened, of its great importance. All these general operations must pass through a period of infancy—and this cause has clearly gained upon the confidence of the whole church. It is a great advance to be able to report one-third of the churches as contributors to it through this channel, since the organization of this committee. It, however, needs the sympathy of the Assembly, as the youngest of all its agencies, and as carrying a weight through the prejudice generally felt, that every community should erect its own buildings, and should be content with such as it can afford. Let it be borne in mind, too, that the \$23,538 disbursed by this committee, actually

represents a sum ten times as large contributed by congregations to secure the appropriation made from the general treasury; in which light the operations of this agency proceed upon a much larger figure than is generally supposed. The stimulus which is thus afforded to feeble churches to arise and build—and the refusal of the committee to contribute where a debt is allowed to be entailed—both operate, not the less powerfully, because their influence is unseen. The aid furnished by this agency is, moreover, the voice of the whole church, uttering its sympathies to the far distant colonies which are springing, like the seeds of things, over the new and rapidly filling portions of our country; far more valuable in its moral effect than even the pecuniary assistance which is extended. The indispensable necessity of this arm of our public service is shown by the astounding fact, that almost one-fourth of all our organized churches through the land are destitute of places of worship. Surely the ark of the Lord should not dwell in tents. In giving a habitation to the newly gathered flock; in securing enlargement to the congregation; in facilitating the support of the minister; in giving stability when every thing without it would fluctuate, this committee is the direct auxiliary of the Board of Missions, and an important instrument in the evangelization of the country.

#### FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The published report of this Board is chiefly occupied with a detailed account of the various stations under its care. The receipts are represented as somewhat larger than in preceding years, amounting to \$230,030 57, of which \$113,918 52 were received from the churches; \$45,040 23 from miscellaneous sources; \$18,112 57, an unexpended balance for India losses, a special fund; \$37,550 from the government, appropriated for the benefit of the different Indian tribes of this country; and the remainder, special donations from the American Bible and Tract Societies, and proceeds of various sales. It is certainly encouraging to set this large amount over the \$10,000 controlled by this Board twenty-six years ago. Is it too much to expect, that a quarter of a century hence, its receipts will

swell beyond half a million? The addresses called forth by this Report on the Assembly's floor, were deeply interesting; and certainly not less so from the fact, that most of the speakers were returned missionaries, who have given their lives to this blessed work.

Dr. Lowrie, one of the Secretaries, expressed the hope that the objects engaging the more immediate attention of the Assembly might not overshadow this, the especial and great work of the church. He would call attention to the causes for thanksgiving in view of the success afforded us. In India, which was in such a deplorable condition at the last meeting of this body, there is now peace, and a loud call for laborers. Yet it was to be lamented that, from the return of missionaries on account of ill-health, the number is sixteen less than it was a year since. From China, the latest intelligence detailed the conversion of twelve natives at Ningpo. The opening, too, of Japan, so long sealed against foreign intrusion, was a most significant event. It was, moreover, a peculiar token for good that a larger number of young men were offering themselves than ever before; which would put to the test this year the faith and liberality of the churches; and the only special discouragement felt by the Board was, in looking over the Appendix to their Report, and finding many large churches, with their ministers, doing little or nothing for this great cause. He hoped that however brief the consideration the subject might receive from the Assembly under its pressure of business, it might not be dismissed from the hearts of the brethren.

Rev. Mr. Speer, late missionary to China, had been twice called back from his field of labor by such ill-health as he had thought before this would have taken him to the Assembly above. Yet he had lived to see great changes in the whole missionary field. He well remembered his first sight of anguish in Canton, when the cry was, "kill him, kill him!" But the gospel had now a wide and effectual door opened for its entrance in that land. He combatted the impression that the Chinese were a nation of savages, and produced documentary evidence of the intelligence exhibited by many of them,

and closed by asking what response the church was prepared to give to the appeals of Providence made in the signs of the times.

Interesting remarks were further made by Rev. Mr. Gardner and Mr. C. A. Spring, Elder from Chicago, when the Assembly was addressed by Rev. Mr. Wilson, missionary from Africa. He read resolutions from the Presbytery of Western Africa, expressing deep interest in the advancement of Christ's kingdom, giving thanks for the revival in America, and calling for laborers to come over and help them. This is Africa's appeal for the 200,000 souls within the boundary of Liberia, and for the many millions lying beyond it. Yet we have only nine missionaries in all that vast region, which ratio, if extended to this country, would give but three Old School ministers in the whole United States. We have but 73 missionaries, all told, in all the Pagan nations, which would give ten millions of souls to each. We are bound to Africa as we are bound to no other heathen country; and there is an imperative need of white laborers to take charge of the education of colored missionaries on the spot.

Rev. Mr. Mattoon, from the Siam mission, thought this work was no longer to be kept up by mere sympathy with the sufferings of missionaries, nor by reports of progress; the duty of the church must rest upon the revealed will of God. He would place the Assembly in a city of 300,000 inhabitants, in the midst of a population of 4,000,000, with no Christian land bordering on it, with no Christian churches, no Bibles, no Christian publications, no people of God. Even then the picture is incomplete, unless we see the two hundred and fifty heathen temples, with their ten thousand priests, and their thousands upon thousands of images. Yet among this whole people of Siam, we have but two missionaries. It is no wonder that these few laborers cannot at once come back with victory perched upon their banners. Still we believe in the promises and purposes of God; and as this work of evangelizing the world is to be done instrumentally by the church, the brethren afar off upon a distant soil look with eager eyes to see what is done in this Assembly to cheer and help them forward.

After a morning spent thus in "speaking of the things of the kingdom," the Assembly was led in prayer by Rev. Dr. Thornwell, and the subject closed by the adoption of the following resolutions reported by the committee:

1. *Resolved*, That it becomes us as a church, humbly, yet with our whole heart, gratefully to acknowledge the goodness and grace of God in giving so signal an answer during the past year to the prayers of his people, in restraining the wrath of the heathen—taking obstacles out of the way of his servants—preserving their lives, and setting his approving seal to their labors, by accompanying them with the marked and effectual influences of his Holy Spirit.

2. *Resolved*, That the providence of God calls upon the churches in tones that can not but be heard, and ought to be heeded by all her ministers and members, to the exercise of increased liberality in contributing of their substance to the service of Christ in this particular department of that service, but especially that they should accompany the exercise of this grace with that of prayer to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest; that he would abundantly shed upon them the Spirit of promise, that they may be endued with power for their work, and then pour out the same Spirit in copious effusions upon the nations, that their hearts may be opened to receive the truth in the love of it, and that they may be saved.

3. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly highly approve of the efforts made by the Board to enlist the interest of the children of the Church in the work of Foreign Missions; and they would urge upon all pastors and ruling elders throughout the church, to instruct the baptized members of our congregations in regard to these obligations.

4. *Resolved*, That the Report of the Board be approved and referred to the Executive Committee for publication.

#### DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

Rev. Dr. Musgrave, Corresponding Secretary, stated that the receipts of this Board the past year were \$11,000 above the average of the previous five years. At its close there was a balance on hand of \$26,000, being an excess of \$8,000 over the previous year. The appropriations were more uniformly greater than during the five years previous, so that during this period of time the average salaries of the missionaries had been increased forty-three per cent. The number of contributing churches had increased fifty a year for the four years preceeding the past two, in which the check was due to failure of crops and financial embarrassment. He went into a statement of the grounds upon which the report had not favored the pro-

ject of appointing a branch committee in the South-west, urging that the Board was not in want of machinery, but of men and of means to enlarge their operations. The demand for Home Missionaries was greater than the supply, and the Board, in its difficult work, needed the sympathy and co-operation of the pastors of the churches.

Rev. Dr. Humphrey, Chairman of Committee to whom the Annual Report had been referred, offered their report, inviting the attention of the Assembly to the following points:

#### I.—THE PROGRESS OF THE WORK.

This has been gradual, but steady. During the last six years, the number of missionaries has risen from 515 to 600, and the annual receipts at the treasury have increased from \$81,000 to within a fraction of \$100,000. Within this period the Board, in conformity with the prevailing doctrine of the church, touching the divine ordinance of alms-giving, has dispensed with the agency system, and placed its reliance for funds wholly upon what is known among us as the plan of systematic benevolence. Nothing in the history of the Board is more satisfactory than the successful conduct of its affairs through this transition period.

#### II.—THE LIMITATION OF ITS PROGRESS.

It must be continually borne in mind, that one of the most serious limitations imposed upon the progress of the work is the want of laborers. It becomes us humbly and reverently to acknowledge our absolute dependence upon the Lord of the harvest, and then to give thanks to his blessed name for the recent effusion of his Holy Spirit on our congregations and schools of learning, whereby we have good hope that the Master is about to multiply laborers for his vineyard.

#### III.—THE OVERTURE FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

An overture from the Synods of Texas and Mississippi, respecting the missions in that region, laid before the last Assembly, and referred to the consideration of the Board, is on the table of the Assembly, and this Committee submits herewith a resolution on the subject.

IV.—INVESTIGATION PROPOSED.

It is now thirty-one years since the Board received its present organization. In the meantime changes, every way remarkable, have occurred, in the state both of the country and the church. The territorial limits of the Republic have been enlarged, so as to include Texas and the Pacific coast, and the intermediate region. Many new States have been admitted into the Confederation; vast regions which, in 1828, were almost unknown to our geography, have become inhabited by our people; the population of the country has more than doubled. The church also has been multiplied two-fold in all its outward elements—to wit, in the number of its Presbyteries, Synods, ministers, congregations and communicants. The facilities for the spread of the gospel, moreover, were never before so numerous, nor the fields so broad and inviting. And more than all, the repeated effusions of the Holy Spirit have imparted vigor and purity to the inward life of the church, and are so preparing it for its work.

In the judgment of the committee, the time has now come when the General Assembly should examine thoroughly and carefully the Constitution of the Board of Domestic Missions, unto the end that it may, if possible, be more closely adjusted to the present posture of our affairs, and be inaugurated and equipped for the immense work now before the church in the home field.

The committee, therefore, submit to the consideration of the Assembly the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, 1. The General Assembly gratefully recognizes the blessings of the head of the church upon its domestic missions, and upon the labors of the Board unto which the care of these missions has been entrusted.

*Resolved*, 2. The Assembly finds in the history of the Board every reason to cherish the settled conviction of the church respecting the ordinance of alms-giving, and its proper administration by the office-bearers; and it exhorts all the congregations under its care to maintain this ordinance as a part of religious worship.

*Resolved*, 3. The Board is instructed to establish in the city of New Orleans an Advisory Committee, with a District

Secretary, whose duty it shall be to set forward the work of missions in the South-west—the details to be arranged by conference between the Board and said Committee.

*Resolved*, 4. The Board is also empowered to make a similar arrangement at the North-west, if, after consultation with the brethren in that region, such a measure shall appear to be advisable.

*Resolved*, 5. The attention of the Board is particularly called to the Pacific coast as a field of missions.

*Resolved*, 6. A committee of —— members shall be appointed by this Assembly, with instructions to confer with the Board, and report to the next Assembly, what changes in the organization and methods of the Board are necessary in order to its greater efficiency and wider usefulness. This committee is particularly charged to report on the expediency of the following measures:

1. The reduction of the number of members of the Board, and its organization, somewhat after the form of the Committee on "Church Extension."

2. The removal of the Board to some place nearer the centre of the Western missionary fields,

3. The establishment of several Executive Committees and Corresponding Secretaries in different parts of the church, these officers to be invested with co-ordinate powers; or,

4. The establishment of a single Central Executive Committee, with Advisory Committees and District Secretaries, as provided herein for the South-west.

5. The committee will consider the question as to how many officers will be needed in the Central Board, and the division of labor among them.

6. The committee will also report upon any other matters which they may find within the range of this inquiry.

Although the propositions of this report were considered and finally adopted *seriatim*, the discussion was miscellaneous and discursive. A clearer view will be had if we condense and arrange it under the two heads into which it gradually divided itself. 1. A special attack upon the policy of the Board's administration; and 2. The suggestion of methods for increasing the efficiency of the Board by the addition of a local agency for a given district.

It is, perhaps, impossible to subject the proceedings of this Board annually to a critical review, without eliciting complaints from parties who think sufficient liberality has not been

shown to the missionary, nor sufficient attention given to the necessities of destitute regions. It was so in the present instance. Brethren from the extreme North-west came to the Assembly, having their hearts burdened with the privations of their missionaries, and with the crying destitutions of that great frontier; and were, perhaps, predisposed to a severe inquisition of the Report which should be presented. "It had been asked," said one speaker, "why we want more money when we have not the men?" To which he would answer, that more might be given to the missionaries, increasing their efficiency by freeing their minds from anxiety as to their daily bread. The statement of the Secretary that the Board had appointed all who had been recommended, was distinctly impugned. Said one speaker, Rev. Mr. Richeldaffer, "I have myself, within a year, turned aside six good men who wished to come to Minnesota, because I was led to believe the Board had not the means of supporting them there." Rev. Mr. Heckman, from Wisconsin, followed in a similar strain of criticism. He knew of a number of applications from his region which had been refused. Again, he knew instances in which the salaries of existing missionaries had been reduced; so that if the average allowance had been increased, some had been benefitted at the expense of others. He charged the Board with want of aggressiveness, and implied that the large balance reported on hand had been accumulated by declining to increase the number of missionaries, and by cutting down the salaries of those already in the field.

But the most pointed censure of the Board came from the East. Rev. Mr. Van Dyke read certain resolutions from the Presbytery of Nassau, as the text from which he would discourse. He thought the Board, with its present organization and forms, wholly inadequate to its great work; and alluded, as proof of this, to the concurrent voices from the North-west, the South-west, and from California, coming up together without consultation to this Assembly, and perfectly consonant with the resolutions he had just read. He thought the Board's policy tended to repel both men and money. He knew several young men ready to go to California, who could not be sent

for want of funds in the treasury; yet a large balance of \$25,000 is boastfully paraded in the report before the House. He knew of special applications in behalf of starving missionaries, and was obliged to state that the Board was in possession of a balance out at 4 per cent. interest. The increase of contributing churches had only been forty-eight during the four years past; at which rate one hundred and seventy years would be required to bring up all the churches to the aid of this Board. The incongruity was glaring between the statements, on the one hand of payments punctually made, and of a large unexpended balance; and the fact, upon the other hand, that the Board had refused, for want of means, to send out men who were anxious to go.

To all these charges, general and specific, the Secretary was allowed, by courtesy of the Assembly, to reply; and it would be uncandid not to add, that he bore himself calmly and gallantly, and in the main successfully, through the storm. Taking up his critics in detail, he showed that for Minnesota the Board had done all that in the circumstances, and with their means, it was possible to do; and that in the particular case referred to by the first speaker, three times the usual allowance had been granted until the church became self-sustaining. In relation to Wisconsin, he urged that complaints from that quarter were specially ungracious, since a larger proportion of men and money had been expended there than in any other part of the general field. In the particular case of the Synodical missionary, it was maintained that the Board had not only kept its faith in the compact made, but exceeded its terms; only that the Board did not think proper to renew appointments under terms that were disadvantageous and unequal. Passing from these specific charges to the more general complaint, urged by Mr. Van Dyke, of a large balance tied up at the end of the year for the sake of a mere fiscal showing, he denied that it was accumulated, either by cutting down existing salaries, or by refusing to increase the missionary force. On the contrary, the books would show this balance not to be a gradual accumulation of funds in the treasury throughout the year; but that it was created by large returns during the last two months of the

fiscal year, and mainly during the last. During the first two months of the year, the receipts fell off between \$6,000 and \$7,000; and during the first ten months, up to January, they had fallen off \$14,000. The extraordinary collections at the close of the year had alone brought up the deficiency, and enabled the Board to report a balance. Upon the other branch of the general charge, to-wit: that with this large balance the Board had refused to commission men to California, it was new to the Secretary that any number of applications had been made. One theological student had applied, while yet in the midst of his course of studies, and at a time when the Board was straitened through the deficiency in its receipts. The case was simply postponed, as there was no call for immediate action. At a later stage, on account of things personally affecting this applicant, he was advised to avail himself of an opportunity which presented itself, of settling on the Eastern coast. This was all the material out of which so grave an impeachment had been framed.

As to the suggestion that the recommendation of every Presbytery should be final and authoritative, Dr. Musgrave urged the indispensable necessity of leaving some discretion with the Board, since upon the frontier there were Presbyteries almost exclusively composed of missionaries, who would thus have the power of voting their own salaries. The proposition, too, which would compel the Board to commission for the California field every applicant who was duly recommended, was dangerous, inasmuch as so large a portion of the funds might suddenly be diverted into that channel as seriously to cripple the general missionary operations of the church—unless, indeed, there should be a corresponding increase in the contributions made. Dr. Musgrave argued that it was unfair, from the fluctuations in the Board's receipts, and from the fact that all the churches did not come forward with their collections, to infer the Board's unpopularity, since the same things were true of all the Boards in common, as seen from their reports, making it unjust to discriminate against any one of them in drawing out so sweeping an inference. The fact was, that these fluctuations were due to a great variety of causes; and

the plan of systematic benevolence, inaugurated four years ago by the Assembly, would require time before its principle would be universally acknowledged and felt throughout the churches. He concluded an effective speech of some length, by saying that all these complaints had their origin, doubtless, in the earnest desire of brethren that more should be done for a cause which they loved; and yet, perhaps, something might have been said by them of what *had* been done, which would have encouraged all hearts—but that even in the form which the discussion had taken, it must eventually accomplish good.

The defence of the Board was continued by Mr. Macalister, Elder from Philadelphia, who said it was the first time in the history of the Assembly it had been made a matter of reproach that a Board should have promptly met every engagement, and yet reported a large balance to begin a new fiscal year. If the contrary course had been pursued, then the Board would have been justly liable to censure. It must be borne in mind that this policy of the Board had been invariably approved by former Assemblies, and might thus be considered as antecedently endorsed. The balance of \$28,422, so much complained of, had against it liabilities to the amount of \$12,699, for which checks were drawn at the first meeting thereafter; leaving a true balance of only \$15,723, which, with expenses at \$2,000 per week, would very soon be absorbed. The reservation of this sum was a dictate of prudence, providing for the months in which the receipts would be small. As to the fluctuations in the contributions to the Board, it had been equally true of all previous administrations, and afforded no sure index of the popularity of the Board at any given time. He deprecated in strong terms this disposition to assail the Board without understanding minutely the facts of the case.

Rev. Mr. Cummins, upon the proposition to appoint a committee of investigation, thought this step demanded by the facts brought out in the course of this discussion. As touching the complaints from the North-west, he thought the brethren of that region could not have looked at the figures, remembering that the Board had been strictly enjoined by the

Assembly of 1852 to equalize the distribution of the church's funds, as far as possible, over the whole field. Now, the statistics would show that the Synod of Tennessee had paid in \$2,900, and had received \$1,175; while Illinois paid in \$2,000, and received \$10,000; Kentucky paid in \$6,303, and received \$3,010; while Indiana paid in \$1,485, and received \$4,340. Taking the three South-western States of Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana, they received \$5,725 from \$6,537 which they contributed; while the three North-western States of Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin, were beneficiaries to the amount of \$20,735 against \$3,677, which they put into the common fund. It was strange that the complaints should thus come from the parts of the missionary field most highly favored.

We will not burden the pages of this Review further, as the above is a pretty fair resumé of the discussion upon the Board's general policy. It seems to us perfectly obvious if the church establishes such an agency, it must be allowed a wide discretion. The nature of the work assigned to it demands that it should be trusted; which, to a certain extent, debars the minute and special criticism so freely indulged upon the floor of the Assembly. Undoubtedly the Boards are but servants of the church, charged with certain duties, and entrusted with certain powers. In fulfilling the one and in exercising the other, they are, of course, directly responsible to the Assembly, whose supervision must be real, and not nominal. Undoubtedly, too, the right inheres in every member of that body to challenge their proceedings; and from such investigation no Board can for an instant flinch, under peril of losing that hold upon the confidence of the church in which all its power lies. Yet the right to challenge an agent whom we have ourselves invested with a large discretion, is a right to be exercised with tenderness and caution. While on the one hand no man can be restrained in its technical exercise, yet on the other he will be held responsible before the world for the spirit and prudence with which this is done. Since the very end is defeated for which a discretionary agent is appointed, so soon as confidence is destroyed in his wisdom, it is necessary to sift his

proceedings in such manner as not needlessly to impugn his credit. If the suspicions that are raised should be successfully silenced, they rebound with terrible effect upon the party first suggesting them; just as in discipline, the prosecutor is held responsible for the charges which he is unable to substantiate—upon the broad principle, that in preferring the charges, he has inflicted an injury beyond his power to repair. This feeling, we are satisfied, gained strength in the Assembly to the very close of this discussion; and with it, the general conviction that the Board stood fairly vindicated upon those special points in which it had been sharply criticised. Great doubt certainly existed in the minds of many members of the Assembly whether the Board of Domestic Missions is actually accomplishing all that is possible, to meet the growing necessities of the country; and it was this feeling of dissatisfaction, if so strong a term may properly be employed, which gave point to the entire discussion. There is no cause which lies nearer the hearts of our people than this. With the appalling destitutions of the land under every eye—with our affections and sympathies traveling forth with friends and kindred who emigrate to new territories—there is no call to which the church should so freely respond as to this. The doubt extensively exists, whether the progress of this Board is at all commensurate with the rapid expansion of the country, or even with the advance by the other Boards in their respective departments of labor. This was exhibited in the willingness of the Assembly to listen to any suggestions for promoting the efficiency of this arm of the public service; and was more emphatically expressed in the appointment of a Committee of Investigation, who should report upon these identical points. It was this feeling which led the body more freely to listen to all who had criticisms or censures to offer. But it is one thing to doubt the fidelity and wisdom of the existing administration, carrying out a recognized and approved policy; and altogether a different thing to inquire whether the Board, with its present arrangements, is fully equipped for her great work, and in the best way adapted to the circumstances of the country so changed within a quarter of a century. The church will await the deliberations of this

committee with deep anxiety. There is no question before her of greater moment than that which will be involved in their decision.

The second branch of the discussion on this Board turned upon the Overture presented to the Assembly of 1858 by the Synods of Mississippi and Texas, praying for the establishment of a branch-committee for the South-west, to be located at New Orleans. In the third of the resolutions presented by Rev. Dr. Humphrey, this measure was recommended. It was advocated by that gentleman on the ground that the South-west was prepared for the step by previous agitation of the question, which was not true of other portions of the church; and that this vast region was, as compared with others, the most needy and the least cultivated. For example, in Louisiana, there were six missionaries; in Texas, thirteen; in Mississippi, ten; in Alabama, ten; while Iowa has sixty-two; Illinois, seventy-two; Indiana, thirty-four, and so on. He thought the Assembly was prepared to grant this petition as a tentative measure; and the arrangement could, in future, be extended to other parts of the country, as it might be demanded.

The proposition was resisted, on the other hand, by Rev. Dr. McLaren, Rev. W. W. McNair, and others, for the following reasons: It rested upon a false assumption, to-wit—that the Board was insufficient to accomplish its work, and needed some auxiliary organization; that the missionary operations of the church depended not upon a central Board, nor yet upon a local Board, but upon the Presbyteries; who could act through a common central agency as well as through agencies nearer at hand; and, finally, that these local committees tended to sectionalism, and to distract the councils and operations of the church; the final effect being to break the great scheme of united effort to evangelize the country, to set off each section by itself, and no longer to place the weak in connexion with the strong.

Against these positions, Dr. Palmer averred that this movement did not originate in any sectional design, but was intended merely to lengthen the arm of the Board, so that it might reach over the distant South-west. The moneys raised would

all be acknowledged in the receipts of the Board, and be under their control ; though necessarily, for a considerable time, they must be disbursed upon that field. Special reasons might be urged for this arrangement at the South-west, as the difficulties in the way of evangelizing that region were somewhat peculiar. The country itself was very remote from the centre of the church's operations, and could only be reached after a week's travel. The facilities for communicating with the interior were few, so that its exploration would be a work of toil and time. The population was exceedingly heterogeneous, with a singular admixture of strange and foreign habits. Over a large portion of this region a false and foreign religion still held the dominant sway. In some of these States there were no laws to enforce the observance of the Sabbath; and a Christian public sentiment must, to a large extent, be created. The people of God were few in number; and the wealth of the country, lying chiefly outside of the church, could only be drawn out by persons known to the givers, and could not be reached by general appeals from Philadelphia. More than all, it was the door opening into a vast outlying territory, extending to the Isthmus in one direction, and to the Pacific ocean in the other; a territory which, whether it shall be hereafter incorporated into this Union or not, must be overtaken by the Gospel, and that, too, through our instrumentality, in connexion with other branches of the Christian church. It was of little use for the general Secretary to run down and touch here and there a few points upon the border of this great and destitute missionary region. A district Secretary was needed, who should go patiently to work, explore the whole territory, ascertain its wants, and where missionaries could advantageously be located, raise funds for their support, visit our Theological schools, and awaken an interest in the hearts of our candidates for the ministry. By such considerations, showing that the only purpose had in view was to aid the Board of Domestic Missions in that distant and difficult region, and not to impair the unity of the church, the measure was carried in the Assembly by an overwhelming vote.

Rev. Mr. Speer followed in a stirring speech, pleading for

the destitutions of the Pacific coast. He showed that with a population increasing with unprecedented rapidity on that soil, and with incredible wealth existing in its mines, as well as in property transferred thither, thousands of Presbyterians were thrown out of the church of their love from the want of an efficient missionary agency there. The Methodist, Baptist, Episcopal and New School Presbyterian Churches, are each of them outstripping us in that field, owing to their greater efficiency, and their greater sympathy with the colonies they had sent forth upon that coast. He would raise the finger of warning. California, Washington and Oregon, are all slipping from our grasp, illustrated in the fact, that in Oregon there are now only 700 Presbyterians to 6,000 Methodists. Such statistics are alarming, and should arouse the church to deliberation and to action.

The writer of this article had no small share in pressing this measure of a South-western Committee upon the two last Assemblies, and is, perhaps, as much responsible as any other man before the church for the same. He may, therefore, be pardoned in drawing the reader's attention to the following table, showing how unequally, under existing arrangements, the bounty of the church is distributed, and justifying the effort which has been made to remedy, in some way, these deficiencies. In the preparation of this table, the last report of the Board of Domestic Missions, and the last general census of the country, have furnished the materials. It institutes a comparison between the group of four North-western States, and four South-western; also, between one Western and one Southern State.

FOUR SOUTH-WESTERN STATES.

	Sq'r. Miles.	Population.	No. of Mis- sionaries.	Moneys ap- propriated.	Moneys con- tributed.
Alabama, - - -	50,722	771,623	10	\$1,870	\$1,547 65
Mississippi, - - -	47,156	606,526	10	1,850	1,905 15
Louisiana, - - -	41,255	517,762	6	2,300	1,707 11
Texas, - - - - -	237,504	212,592	13	2,235	280 59
<b>Total, - - - -</b>	<b>376,637</b>	<b>2,108,503</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$8,255</b>	<b>\$5,390 50</b>

## FOUR NORTH-WESTERN STATES.

	Sq'r. Miles.	Population.	No. of Mis- sionaries.	Moneys ap- propriated.	Moneys con- tributed.
Illinois, - - - -	54,405	851,470	72	\$10,732	\$1,281 95
Indiana, - - - -	33,809	988,419	34	4,340	895 35
Iowa, - - - - -	50,914	192,214	62	11,725	441 26
Wisconsin, - - -	53,924	305,391	30	6,395	193 59
<b>Total, - - - -</b>	<b>193,052</b>	<b>2,387,491</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>33,192</b>	<b>\$2,812 15</b>
Ohio, - - - - -	39,964	1,980,329	54	\$6,185	\$1,198 38
Georgia, - - - -	58,000	906,185	1	200	1,077 69

From this table it will be seen that the four South-western States, with twice the area, and nearly the same population, have only one-fifth the number of missionaries laboring in the four North-western States; and that while contributing nearly twice the amount of money, they draw only one-fourth as much from the common treasury. Ohio, three-fourths the size of Georgia, and twice its population, contributing about the same to the general fund, draws out thirty times as much and employs fifty times as many missionaries. The comparison is instituted by us in no captious or fault-finding spirit; far less with envious repining against the portions of the church more favored than our own. With our whole heart do we rejoice in the number and success of the missionaries laboring in the North-west; and having had an opportunity to look upon the broad fields that remain to be possessed, we can fervently pray that the laborers there may be multiplied a hundred fold. It would be disingenuous in us not to acknowledge that this excessive disproportion is due largely to natural causes, which are beyond human control. The West and North-west are covered with a network of railroads, by which they are easily traversed, bringing their wants under the public eye; while the remoteness and inaccessibility of our territory screen its destitutions alike from observation and from Christian sympathy. The poverty of our young ministers, together with the uncertainty of an immediate settlement, operates as a bar to their coming to so distant a region, and leads them to prefer

a field lying nearer at hand. The debilitating nature of our climate, added to the perils of acclimation, so prodigiously exaggerated abroad, is an ever present argument against these tropical regions. Inasmuch, too, as the great body of our candidates for the ministry come from the Northern and Middle States, it is, perhaps, natural they should prefer to labor in those parts of the country where all the institutions and usages of society are familiar and congenial. They are also attracted by the promise of larger congregations afforded where the population is more dense; and can, with difficulty, be impressed with the representative character of our smaller assemblages at the South. It is, moreover, undeniable, and for a lamentation let it be written, that the purely missionary aspect of this field, as embracing a very large number of untutored blacks, is so much overlooked. In seeking a settlement, our young men too generally prefer a field affording more mental stimulus, and turn away from these "poor who are ever with us," in their ardor after greater intellectual improvement. All these causes, without dwelling upon others more strictly personal and private, combine to cut off the South-west from that measure of supply to which it would seem fairly entitled. Upon a candid review of them, we can fully exonerate the officers of the Board, not only from censure, but even from the suspicion of partiality. We are willing to believe the sincerity and depth of their sympathy, while they behold our destitutions, which they have not the power to overtake; and we as distinctly foresee that all these difficulties will embarrass any new and local agency that shall go into operation. But were they ten-fold greater than they are, it is not possible that those, whose lot Providence has cast within this region, shall sit down and succumb beneath them. We should be recreant to the church, and to our Divine Lord and Master, if, under these circumstances, the question were not raised, what shall we do? Under the pressure of this great necessity, the proposition of a District Committee, with its own Secretary, has been submitted to the Assembly; and should nothing more be achieved by their future labors than to arouse the churches of the South-west to a more anxious and prayerful contemplation

of their duty, and to draw the attention of our rising ministry more largely to this neglected territory, even these results will justify the action of the Assembly in their appointment.

It is very possible that in the further working out of this experiment, it may be deemed expedient to abolish the Committee, and to retain the Secretary, as tending to simplify the machinery and prevent undue friction. Especially is this result possible should the Assembly, at a future time, see fit to modify the present organization of the Board of Missions by a general scheme of districting the country, which the Board shall cultivate by means of officers specially delegated to supervise the interests and develop the resources of each. The writer is himself satisfied, that some modification of the existing organization of the Board is required, in order to adapt it to the circumstances of the country, and its immensely rapid growth. If the appointment of District Committees is feared as tending to separate into sections a church whose prodigious power is now felt from its unity, they may be dropped as not absolutely essential to the plan now inaugurated at the South-west. The main feature of this plan is the appointment of a local officer, who shall explore the field, and seek supplies for its destitutions. The committee was suggested under the impression that this officer would be greatly aided by a body of responsible counsellors, who should share with him the anxieties and difficulties of the work; and who, being distributed over the whole region, would be largely instrumental in securing the sympathy and co-operation of the churches. By this plan, or by some wiser method yet to be devised, let the church arise in the name of God, and go forward. Let the cry of agony from Zion in her travail, ascend to the Lord of the Harvest, that He would send forth laborers into the harvest. Let the appeal sound forth from all the courts of the church into every sanctuary and home, until the gold and the silver shall be poured into the treasury of the Lord by which these laborers are to be supported. By some method or other let the church be roused to superhuman efforts to evangelize this great land which the Lord has given us for an heritage; until "in the wilderness shall waters break

out, and streams in the desert." Appalling as may be the difficulties in the way, the Christian's logic does not permit him to infer an impossibility where God has commanded and promised. Any one can do the things that can be done; but the men who make history are the men who do the things that cannot be done; and can the church, in the faith of her Divine Master, ever be less than heroic?

BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

From the report of this Board laid before the Assembly, we extract the following items:

Sales of volumes at the depository, - - - -	224,400
Sales of volumes by Colporteurs, - - - -	92,068
Given by Colporteurs, - - - -	11,184
Granted by the Executive Committee, - - - -	5,345

---

Total of volume distribution, - - - - 332,997  
Being a decrease, owing to the smaller number of Colporteurs employed, of 4,549 volumes on the circulation of the preceding year.

The circulation of tracts has been as follows:

Sales at the Depository, - - - -	1,490,650 pages.
Distributed by Colporteurs, - - - -	1,217,573 "
Granted by the Executive Committee, - - - -	347,138 "

---

Total of tracts distributed, - - - 3,055,351 pages.  
Being an increase of 546,524 pages in the total distribution of tracts over that of last year.

In the Department of Sustentation, the aggregate of receipts from all sources presented this year in the Treasurer's Report, is \$129,698.31, being an increase of \$2,738.03 over the receipts of the year before.

The total of expenditures of all kinds has been \$107,561.02, an increase of \$759.34 over those of the year before.

The balance in the Treasurer's hands on the first day of March, 1859, was \$22,137.29. A large number of works are now in course of publication, which will demand the expendi-

ture very soon of much the larger portion of the balance above reported.

The amount received from sales of books, tracts, and *Sabbath School Visitor*, has been \$76,714.35, or \$4,128.51 less than the year before. Had as large a number of Colporteurs been in commission, there is every reason to believe the receipts from sales would have been largely in advance of the preceding year.

The Colportage Fund is created wholly by the annual collections of the churches, and the contributions of pious individuals; unlike the publishing department which is sustained by a capital created years ago for this express purpose. The entire amount received for Colportage during the past year, was \$28,417, an increase of \$3,448 over the receipts of the year previous. Of this amount the sum of \$22,952 was received from the churches; being an increase in the receipts from this source, of \$5,801; while the receipts from legacies and miscellaneous sources have been proportionally less—only \$1,864 against \$4,218, for the year before. The balance standing against the Colportage Fund, on March 1, 1858, was \$8,758. On the 1st March, 1859, it was diminished to \$3,300, a reduction of \$5,458 having been effected during the year.

Rev. Dr. Chapman, Chairman of the Committee on the Board of Publication, presented the following report, which was accepted:

1. The Assembly desire to record with gratitude the favor extended to this enterprise by the Great Head of the Church. They would reiterate their sense of the high value of this Board in counteracting the effects of a useless, vicious, and infidel literature, by disseminating far and wide the seeds of a true theology and vital piety. In these respects the Board of Publication is a valuable arm to the church, and has proved itself to be an efficient and honored instrumentality in the hands of God's servants.

2. The great object of the Board's organization and efforts, is the widest possible circulation of the free and undisguised complete truths of God's word. It would use the press as a mighty agency in sending abroad, on moral wastes, its pure and refreshing streams of light, knowledge and salvation. It

aims to furnish the church and the world a literature, through whose pages shall gleam the great and precious doctrines of our Confession of Faith and Catechisms—doctrines which have cheered the church in the past, and which constitute the hope of the world in future. Its publications, while cultivating charity, liberality, and the largest measure of love to all who bear the Master's image, still display a cordial, affectionate and tenacious adherence to the distinctive principles which have ever marked us as a church.

3. It gives the Assembly great pleasure to mark and record the increased evidence which God is rolling on the world, of his favor towards the Colportage effort. These humble self-denying men are doing God's work. They deserve, and should receive, the aid and sympathy of God's people. With the books of the Board in their hands, and with the love of Christ and of souls warming their hearts, they often, as pioneers, go before the missionary and the minister, preparing the way of the Lord. Thus greatly do they aid in diffusing, amid regions of moral darkness, Christian light and knowledge.

The Assembly would, therefore, urge on the churches under their care the importance of this arm of the enterprise, exhorting them to increased liberality in their contributions, that the operations of Colportage may be enlarged, and that the publications of the Board may, through its instrumentality, be more widely diffused.

4. The General Assembly notice, with great pleasure, among the publications of the Board, "The Letters of John Calvin." They doubt not that this rich and varied correspondence will throw new light and increased brilliancy upon the labors and character of that distinguished servant of God, and his illustrious compeers, and that it will be a fruitful source of delight and information to all who are interested in the history of the great reformation.

5. The Assembly rejoices in the opportunity of expressing its approbation of the efforts made by the Board to meet the wants of the youth of our land, as regards Sabbath School Libraries. These have too often and long been carelessly, sometimes ignorantly, chosen.

The imprint of the Board is a guarantee of their merit and character. The publications of this kind are judicious, attractive and sound. The Assembly recommend that, in the purchase of libraries, either for gift or for feeble churches, or for use at home, that these books of the Board should have the preference.

6. Inasmuch as the last General Assembly, by resolution,

directed the Board of Publication to substitute for the hymn bearing the number 336, it being the same as hymn 454, which direction is uncomplied with, for reasons which the committee deem satisfactory; and, whereas, hymns 469 and 500 are one, and, whereas, the Board of Publication have asked leave to insert in the Hymn Book additional doxologies in those metres not heretofore represented in the doxologies of our Psalmody; therefore, resolved, that the Board of Publication be directed to make alterations and additions in the spirit of the said resolution passed by the last General Assembly. The Assembly would specially commend the *Home and Foreign Record* to a more general patronage throughout the Church, trusting that in its diligent perusal members of our communion may catch more and more of the spirit of missions, and of Christian benevolence, so richly pervading its columns. They also recommend the *Visitor* as a most excellent publication, to be circulated through our Sabbath Schools, and among the children of our charge.

The Committee recommend the approval of the Annual Report of the Board of Publication, and that a copy of it, with these resolutions, be handed to the Executive Committee for publication. The Committee nominate the Rev. S. B. Wilson as the preacher in behalf of the Board before the General Assembly in 1860, and that the Rev. H. J. Van Dyke be his alternate.

Rev. Mr. Schenck, the Secretary, in enforcing the report of the Board, stated that probably 4,000,000 souls are reached annually by the truth from the pages of this Board. During the brief period of its existence, it has circulated publications enough to give the Gospel to every person in this country—and the truth taught is the sound, substantial system which, as a church, we believe. He concluded by an appeal to the churches, through the Assembly, to co-operate efficiently with the Board by sending contributions, seeking out colporteurs, purchasing and recommending the books, and by sincere and fervent prayer. Since the divine blessing is indispensable to the efficacy of truth printed, as well as preached, it was strange that prayer was not offered more frequently for the press.

Dr. B. M. Smith would present three considerations why the Assembly should prosecute this work with increased energy. The first was, that our experimental Christianity is

in accordance with our soundest Calvinistic theology. The second was, that by this Board we make provision against a calamity that may overtake us. Though now rejoicing in our unity, this blessing could not be perpetuated without caring for the interests of the children, which this Board had now much at heart. The third was, that it was an agency perfectly under our control; which was not true of private publishing houses, however excellent in their character.

Rev. Dr. Anderson followed in a similar strain, remarking how thoroughly the church was now equipped for her work. We have the wood upon the altar, and only need the fire from Heaven to light it up. The printed truth, like the seed in the mummy's hand, grows and brings forth fruit after many days. If the day of doctrinal defection should come, these issues may stand up as a testimony, and again restore the forgotten truth.

It was not the fortune of this Board, however, to sail upon a smooth and open sea in the discussions before the Assembly. After these commendatory and hortatory remarks, a sharp onset was made upon its proceedings, similar in some respects, though far more minute and detailed in the points raised, to that which we have already reported upon the Board of Domestic Missions.

Rev. Dr. Edwards complained of a want of fulness in the Board's report. He would like to have known the number of contributing churches as compared with the whole number of churches. He would like also to have known the fiscal concerns of this Board in more detail than is presented. But he would take such facts as he could find. Here is a Board receiving from \$20,000 to \$25,000, and spends \$12,000, or about sixty per cent., in disbursing it. Could any private publishing house stand this? The Secretary receives \$1,000 for general services, and also \$1,500 for supervising Colportage; and that, too, while another gentleman receives \$1,500 as the superintendent of Colportage. Could not these two offices of Secretary and Superintendent be merged into one? Here, too, is a Treasurer, at a salary of \$1,000, to do a service requiring but three-fourths of an hour daily, and which was formerly per-

formed gratuitously. He complained also of the limited circulation (only 18,000) of the *Home and Foreign Record*—and that this Journal and the *Sabbath School Visitor*, were unworthy of the church. Could not both be united under one editorial charge, and rendered what they should be? He alleged further, an assumption of power by the Board in undertaking to *edit* the Hymn Book, altering the arrangement of the doxologies, and refusing to make alterations directed by the last Assembly. Still again, in the distributing department this Board concentrates its whole force upon the book-store at Philadelphia, instead of employing the trade, and using depositories, as done by similar institutions, in pushing their publications into all parts of the country. He would sum up all he had to say under the following specifications:—1. This Board is the *costliest* of our Boards in proportion to the work done, and the money received and disbursed; at the same time, it least fulfils its mission as an aggressive institution of the church. 2. The system of colportage should be extended and made more efficient; instead of which, with increased resources that important department has really been contracted. 3. A full exhibit of the accounts should be annually presented to the Assembly in a balance sheet, showing receipts and expenditures. 4. The Board of Domestic Missions had been blamed for having a working balance to meet current exigencies; and yet this Board, with no prospective demands, had a balance of \$22,000 in its treasury.

These criticisms of Dr. Edwards were sustained by Mr. Macalister who, without adding anything material to the discussion, thought the report unsatisfactory, and regarded the whole system as needlessly expensive; with the means at the Board's command, it should do a far heavier business.

The defence of the Board was opened by Rev. Dr. Smith, who alleged that it was antecedently improbable that a Board composed, as this was, of three bank Presidents, two eminent jurists, besides several eminent clergymen, could proceed in the reckless manner which had been charged against it by the preceding speakers. This Assembly, moreover, was not the body to decide upon questions of business, in which are

involved all the details and intricacies of the book-making trade, paper, binding, printing, selling and all; matters which must be remitted to the wisdom of the agents entrusted with them. He defended the newspapers which had been so decried, and would prefer to have them filled with even dry detail of facts, than with the tissues of vapid fiction, which form the staple of papers that had been so highly eulogized. It had been complained that Synodical action was hampered by the Board's want of accommodation, in refusing to sell books to committees of synods. Yet any responsible person can obtain the book in his own name, and any other policy would distribute the books over the land at great waste and loss. Touching the charge of insubordination in the Board's delay in altering the Hymn Book as directed by the last Assembly, this was nothing more than the prudent act of a discretionary agent, suspending the execution of a given order till all the difficulties in the way could be fairly and fully represented. In the matter of doxologies, the head and front of their offending was simply to put them together instead of disjoining them at the end of the Psalms, and at the end of the hymns, as heretofore. It was probable that in a few years the Assembly might order an entire revision of the Psalmody, until which time it was better to delay all the proposed changes, and not to tinker at it every year.

Dr. Smith spoke also of the commercial affairs of the Board, urging that it needed a working balance, as it was constantly engaged in getting out new books, and bills were daily brought in for paper; printing, binding, labor, colporteurs' salaries, and current expenses. It was, moreover, an error to suppose that a balance sheet had not been presented. All the data had been laid before the committee to which the report had been referred, and could be presented before the House if the Assembly had the time and disposition to examine them. The allegation of extravagance in the employment of a salaried treasurer, is met by the consideration that this officer was put under bonds to the amount of \$10,000 for his fidelity in the handling of \$100,000, which could not be expected of any man without compensation. Whether much or little time should

be consumed in the discharge of the duties of this office, the church must expect to pay for judgment and confidence, no less than for labor.

Dr. J. B. Mitchell, Elder from Philadelphia, offered further explanations in reference to the colportage department, to show that the business was economically conducted. During the years past, \$117,000 have been contributed to this fund, of which \$16,000 have been spent for services in its outlay, only twelve and a half per cent., instead of sixty per cent., as alleged by Dr. Edwards. The complaints as to the expenses of this Board have been confined almost to the printing, which is unjust, since the bill for printing is by no means so large as for binding and paper—that is to say, only \$8,000 per year, while these latter are \$20,000 and \$15,000, respectively. It was, moreover, unreasonable to except against the costliness of the “Brown Stone Store,” inasmuch as that had been paid for by persons who gave expressly for that object, and was not built out of general funds in the treasury. It might, however, satisfy the scruples of some to know, that the Board is now thinking of selling that property, which has greatly appreciated in value, and purchasing elsewhere. In a word, a committee had been appointed by the Board three years ago to inquire minutely into this whole subject of the expense of its operations, and the result was entirely satisfactory. Since that period there had been no increase of expense, save in the matter of the treasurer’s salary, which has already been explained. At the time of the defalcation in the American Sunday School Union, warned by their misfortune, the Board thought it prudent to require security of an officer to whom such large amounts were entrusted, which could not be asked of any one rendering gratuitous services.

We have no observations of our own to submit upon this debate, having anticipated upon the report of the discussion of the Board of Domestic Missions what could be urged with even additional emphasis here. It is plain the Assembly was satisfied with the vindication set up by the Board’s defenders, since it passed, with a vote approximating unanimity, the commendatory resolutions of the committee, and adopted a

special resolution, approving the action of the Board relative to the re-duplicated hymn, one of the points most severely censured by some of the speakers upon the floor. The only accusation against this Board likely to abide in the memory of the church, is the general charge of inefficiency in not pushing its sales through the country in a degree commensurate with the facilities at its command. We have not ourselves looked into its operations with sufficient care to form an opinion upon this point, and are disposed, until the contrary is shown, to repose the fullest confidence in the activity and zeal of the agents to whom this business is entrusted. But the accusation having once been tabled, the Board may lay its account to being closely scrutinized in this particular. In this day of desperate exertion for the conquest of the world, sluggishness in any department of our public service is an offence which the church cannot tolerate.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

We cannot better present the affairs of this Board than by condensing, as far as possible, the interesting remarks made by the respected Secretary, Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer, who said:—The whole number of candidates for the ministry is three hundred and ninety-one, which is *six* more than last year. The number of *new* candidates is one hundred and forty-one, which is *thirty-eight* more than last year, or an increase of *one-fourth*, and is the largest number since the division of the church. This latter increase is the true exponent of the success of the church's work in this department, since with it the aggregate of operations must necessarily expand. He would say :

1. This large increase of new candidates, amounting this year to more than a quarter above that of last year, is owing to the *grace of God*, in the outpouring of His Spirit upon our youth.

2. This increase of candidates is, instrumentally owing, in a good degree, under God, to *parental dedication and training*. There is power in the family covenant and family work

which God sanctifies, has sanctified, and will sanctify, from one generation to another.

3. God has so largely increased the annual supply of new candidates, in answer to the *prayers* of the churches. Many supplications have ascended to the Lord of the harvest. The churches have remembered this cause in their religious devotions, and have asked God in public and in private, with more than usual importunity, and he has heard their cry.

In regard to the state of the Treasury, the total amount received in the Candidates' Fund is \$52,077.92, which is \$4,974.85 more than were received last year, whilst last year was \$3,730.76 in advance of the year before, making an increase in *two* years of nearly *nine thousand* dollars. And this increase has been attained during the two severest years of financial distress known to the country; and it is also worthy of remark that, during the last year, no special appeal whatever was made to the churches.

Mr. Moderator, have you never observed on a river that, when four or five vessels are sailing along, one of them sometimes catches the wind, whilst the others are almost becalmed? The difference is not owing to the pilot's skill, but to what some would call chance, but which we call Providence. In like manner, the superior financial condition of this Board, above that of the other Boards, this year, is owing to Providence. And as we are always at liberty to interpret Providence with reverence, and with an acknowledgement of our own ignorance, and a reliance upon Divine light, so I, Mr. Moderator, will venture to suggest some interpretations of this Providence to this Assembly.

1. In the first place, it is an *encouragement* to the churches to continue their co-operation in the work of ministerial education. See how good it is for them to send in their donations, however small; for everything contributes to the prosperity of a good cause; and its very prosperity reflects back happiness upon those who have promoted it. If God has made so much out of the church's gifts this year, and enriched the churches with all the good done, is it not an encouragement to persevere

another year, and to the end of time, in helping young men in the great work of their education?

2. In the second place, God seems to be wiping away the reproach of "unpopularity," which the Board of Education has had to contend with. He has condescended to set us in a high place. Whilst some of the other Boards, who sometimes insist upon their superior popularity, have mysteriously declined in their receipts this year, the Board of Education has made a large advance. I respectfully suggest, Mr. Moderator, whether this does not look as though the churches were taking a higher interest in assisting young men into the ministry? Are not the objects of the Board of Education gaining favor among the churches? I do not wish to press the interpretation too far; but I respectfully submit whether it has not the appearance of substantial truth.

3. In the third place, our financial prosperity is an encouragement to *the hearts of candidates*, in showing them the care of the churches in their behalf. If the funds come in slowly, and doubtfully, how many painful anxieties would be stirred up among those who have already an abundance of pecuniary solicitude. But the church, during the year, has anticipated every want; and by a cheerful and liberal and *quiet* response, (for our candidates do not like the noise of too many special appeals,) has verified to them all her promises of temporal aid.

4. In the fourth place, the financial prosperity of the Board, as seen not only in the increase of funds but of candidates, shows that the addition of the department of schools, academies and colleges, to the work of the Board of Education, does not interfere with its old work of assisting candidates. This was an objection in some minds; but Providence does not seem to sustain it. Whilst the Board continue to make the candidates' department their chief work, their interest in institutions of learning is secondary only so far as that it must not be at the expense of their old work. It sometimes happens that an increase of labor only stimulates a workman to do better what he has already undertaken. In fact, my own personal plans for the candidates' department, during the coming year, mark out a greater amount of correspondence and of visitation than in

any year since my connection with the office. The Board of Education do not pretend to say that they have conducted either department with the efficiency that might have been put forth. But the Secretaries have done the best they could, or as nearly so as human depravity will allow; and it is their conviction that all their efforts for schools, academies and colleges, so far from interfering with the increase of candidates and the means of sustaining them, have precisely the opposite effect. The two departments are harmonious, co-relative, and mutually contributory to each other's prosperity. At least, the operations for candidates have continued to flourish more and more. In regard to the other department, and the best way of raising funds for it, I shall say a few words when I come to that subject.

PROPOSED REPORT TO THE PRESBYTERIES.

It will be seen, Mr. Moderator, that the Board suggest the wisdom, on the part of the Presbyteries, of requiring, from the teachers and professors of institutions of learning, a report to the Presbyteries, at least annually, on the attainments and general standing of all the candidates under their care. Such a report is designed to include *all* candidates, whether aided by the Board or not. The benefits of this proposed arrangement are threefold. 1. A report to the Presbyteries will bring the candidates into more intimate relation with the Presbyteries, and thus give them the opportunity of a more parental and faithful supervision. 2. In the second place, it will call into stronger exercise the responsibilities of the instructors of candidates for the ministry, and render their knowledge of their character and qualifications more available to the church. 3. And, in the third place, it will promote a healthful sense of responsibility on the part of the young men to their Presbyteries. It will also contribute to remove among candidates for the ministry the distinction between those who are aided by the Board and those who are not aided—a distinction which is sometimes unduly magnified. The Board do not propose to the Assembly to *enjoin* upon the Presbyteries the adoption of this new regulation about reports, but simply to recommend

the subject to the consideration of the Presbyteries, and leave each to act as may be judged best.

HINTS ON CHOOSING A PROFESSION.

At a time when so many young men are brought to the knowledge of Christ, and the world is so active with influences to claim their services, the Board have ventured to present some considerations to the youth of the church, in regard to the principles which should guide the determination of their course in life. I will barely mention the principles brought to view.

1. A leading principle in the choice of a profession, is to follow the one best suited to a young man's gifts and endowments. 2. Another principle is, that that profession is to be chosen which God seems the most to approve. 3. Consider the claims of that profession which offers the widest field of usefulness. 4. Another principle worthy of consideration in the choice of a profession, is to notice the direction in which Providence points. 5. A preference may be wisely given, other things being equal, to a profession that admits and nurtures personal improvement, and does not give a prominence to sordid temptations. 6. A young man should keep in sight the rewards of eternity.

DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTIONS.

The Board of Education have been enabled to do much good, in sustaining feeble institutions of learning. The number of *parochial schools* is not large—probably about 100; but they are a great blessing to the children attending them; and their influence upon other schools is important; and they assist in keeping before the community the great principles of Presbyterian education. A revival occurred in one of these schools, in which eight of the older youth were hopefully converted.

The number of *Presbyterial Academies* is sixty-one, and these higher institutions, scattered all over the land, are accomplishing important results for Christian education. Their number ought to be largely augmented, and every opportunity embraced for establishing them which Providence may offer.

A number of conversions have taken place during the year in our academies. The greatest religious awakening of the year occurred in the Academy at Waveland, Ind., under the care of the Presbytery of Crawfordsville. In this revival twenty-three of the students united with the church.

*Colleges* are great instrumentalities, Mr. Moderator, in advancing the kingdom of Christ. The church should not establish them too fast, but fast enough; not ahead of Providence, nor too far behind Providence; but according to the providence. In some sections of our church there are too many colleges—in others too few; in others, the number is just right. The report of the Board contains various suggestions about the collegiate policy of our church, entitled "Plain Words on Colleges." The discussion is on the following points: The number of colleges; their location; the right time for establishing them; buildings; endowment; debt; trustees and professors; standard of scholarship; discipline; religious instruction; care in conducting revivals; and the relation of each college to the character of the whole church. Hints on these topics may be of some use, perhaps, to thoughtful educators. Revivals of religion occurred during the year in three of our colleges, viz: Davidson College, N. C., Westminster College, Mo., and Centre College, Va. The number of students converted is from thirty to fifty. To God be the praise for these and other glorious results.

#### FUNDS FOR THIS DEPARTMENT.

A few words more, Mr. Moderator, about sustaining our operations among these institutions of learning. Many of them need help for a period, and they ought to have it. The Board of Education could advantageously spend fifteen or twenty thousand dollars a year in establishing, maintaining and invigorating, institutions of learning. But how shall we get funds? The Assembly has, as yet, taken no definite measures to secure collections. Hitherto these important operations have been chiefly sustained by the benevolence of two of the ruling elders of the church. One of them set the department in motion by a donation of three thousand dollars,

and has kept it in motion with an annual munificence transcending all just claims upon his liberality. The other elder maintained all the needy parochial schools for four or five years, by similar gifts, but has latterly felt constrained to withdraw, or at least suspend, his donations. This position of things, Mr. Moderator, is unworthy our church. If this department ought to be sustained at all, it ought to be sustained on some general, systematic, efficient plan, in which the great body of our churches can co-operate. The plan which the Board respectfully submit to the General Assembly, is that of taking up collections on the last Thursday of February, and of uniting on that day *alms with our prayers*. This plan is Scriptural, simple, economical, practicable and efficient. As to its efficiency, the Board have great hopes, and are willing, with God's blessing, to assume the responsibility of its working. We think that we have a right, Mr. Moderator, to ask the Assembly to give the Board a plan for the raising of funds.

Mr. Moderator, the Board wish to make progress in their efforts to sustain institutions. They cannot do so without some plan. They would rather resign this branch of their work to the General Assembly than remain stationary, and unable to meet the urgent demands upon their help. They would rather ask you, sir, to choose some other agency to do this work, or if not agency, agents, than to have it falter under their care. This is not the age to lag behind. It is not the period of the world to take steps backward. "Forward," as in the days of Israel, is the true Presbyterian motto. Our standard should know no retreat. Carry it onward, carry it on! Place it in the thickest of the fight! Rally around it, men and brethren, in the name of Christ's crown and covenant; and the old banner of blue will win its victories, as in ages that are past, so now, and in ages that are to come.

Rev. Dr. Lyon, Chairman of the Committee to which this report was referred, offered the following resolutions, which were adopted:

*Resolved*, 1. That the General Assembly learns with gratitude of the general success that has attended the operations of

the Board of Education during the past year, as evinced both by the increase of candidates and funds.

*Resolved, 2.* That the best hopes of continued and enlarged success in the church's operations in this department, as well as in every other, is, under God, in prayer—and the Assembly cordially recommend to all ministers to give increased attention to this subject in the devotions of the sanctuary.

*Resolved, 3.* That one of the means of success in the education of candidates for the Gospel ministry, consists in the faithful and interested supervision of the Presbyteries; and as such supervision implies the possession, on their part, of definite knowledge of the progress of all candidates in their studies, and of their general qualifications for the sacred office—it be recommended to the Presbyteries to consider the propriety of obtaining, at least once a year, from the teachers and professors where the candidates are pursuing their studies, a report on such points, and in such form as such Presbytery may deem best.

*Resolved, 4.* That the Assembly are gratified to learn of the establishment of so many academies under the care of Presbyteries, in addition to many others under the management of Presbyterians, and urge continued attention to the training of the youth of the church and the country in the principles of the Bible. And this Assembly further testify their continued interest in the "Ashman Institute," under the care of the Presbytery of New Castle, and rejoice that the first fruits of that Seminary consist in the education of three missionaries for Africa, who are now on the deep, crossing over with the Gospel message to their brethren in that benighted continent.

*Resolved, 5.* That the Assembly cherish, with increased affection and regard, the system of collegiate education which, from time immemorial, has engaged the energies and prayers of Presbyterians; and whilst they believe that new colleges should be established to meet the educational demands of Providence, they think that very great care and prudence are requisite in locating and in founding those institutions; and particularly do the Assembly recommend to the friends of the colleges already in existence, to endow them fully; in the meantime, to avoid debt; to raise the standard of scholarship; and to pay due regard to the amount of religious influence and instruction; and generally to endeavor to make every college within the bounds of the church worthy of the ancient form of Presbyterianism; suited to co-operate with theological seminaries in increasing the power of ministerial education, and able to meet the wants of the country and the world.

6. That this Assembly renew their recommendation to parents, in consecrating their children to God, and training them to become worthy members of the church, to dedicate such as in their judgment possess the requisite qualifications to the holy office of the ministry.

7. That this Assembly appoint the last Thursday of February as a day of special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the rising generation, and especially the baptized youth of the church, the officers and students of colleges, academies, and all institutions of learning in our own and in foreign lands, and earnestly recommend that it be faithfully observed throughout our Zion; and they furthermore recommend to the churches to unite alms with their prayers, and to take up collections on that day for the object specified in the preamble of this report.

8. That all the pastors and ministers of the church be requested to preach once, at discretion, during the year, on a call to the Gospel ministry, setting forth the doings of both the church and the pulpit—that is, to portray the crying destitutions of our land, and at the same time to hold up for consideration such things as will recommend the Gospel ministry as a calling, in order that parents and youth may give its claims a respectful hearing.

9. That we earnestly urge Presbyteries and “*Committees ad interim*,” to guard with a becoming caution, and a firm vigilance, the door to the holy office of the ministry, so as not to admit to that sacred calling men wanting in mental and moral qualifications for its high and holy functions.

#### THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

Dr. Palmer, from the Committee to which were referred the reports of Princeton, Allegheny, Danville and Union Theological Seminaries, reported upon the continued prosperity of these Institutions, and the tokens of the divine favor manifested in the increase of students, and in the deeper tone of piety prevailing in them all. The revival of religion which has so recently refreshed the church at large, has been equally enjoyed within the walls of these seminaries; as shown in a constant attendance upon meetings for conference and prayer, in active labors for the conversion of sinners, and especially in increasing devotion to the cause of missions. In nearly all these schools, several young men have already consecrated themselves to this blessed work, and others are seriously pondering their

duty in the same direction. It is highly gratifying to note in this connexion, that the reports are this year unusually explicit, in commending the diligence of professors and students in their immediate duties, as illustrating the truth of Luther's famous motto, "*bene orasse est bene studnisse.*"

The financial condition of these important schools is reported to be sound; each having funds securely invested sufficient to pay current expenses, and each showing a balance in hand at the end of the fiscal year. At Allegheny, the endowment of the fourth professorship is progressing, and not yet completed; and buildings for the accommodation of students are in process of erection. Through the munificent liberality of one lady at Princeton, preliminary steps have been taken by the trustees and directors, to provide for the increasing number of their students. At Danville, while the general fund has been increased over \$8,000.00, and is sufficient for the support of a full Faculty, there is yet a loud and a just call for means with which to erect buildings, to enlarge the Library, and to endow scholarships. In relation to this whole matter of furnishing all these institutions with all the appurtenances necessary for the comfort of professors and students, the committee recommend that the Assembly urge upon the churches to respond to the efforts made by the directors of each of these seminaries, by liberal contributions, for the immediate supply of these great and pressing wants.

Three new scholarships have been founded at Princeton, and one at Allegheny.

The report was concluded by a recommendation to sanction a re-adjustment of the titles and departments of instruction at Princeton, in conformity with the wishes of the Faculty, and to allow the session at Allegheny to close on the Wednesday preceding the fourth Tuesday in April.

The chair of Church Government and Pastoral Theology in Danville Seminary being reported as still vacant, the Rev. Dr. W. L. Breckinridge was unanimously elected to fill the same, which appointment, we regret to learn, he has since declined, leaving that important institution for another year with an incomplete corps of instructors.

No one sign of the times appears to us so impressive as the zeal awakened throughout the church in behalf of Theological education. Within ten years past, all the older seminaries have greatly increased their endowments and enlarged their faculties. Two new institutions have sprung into being, in the main fully equipped for effective service. What do these things foretoken, if not that the Lord is preparing His church for stirring times not far before us in the future? It will be found, through the entire history of the visible church, that upon the threshold of great events she is impelled, unconsciously, by a hidden, yet irresistible influence, to gird herself and pass through the antecedent training which is afterwards seen to be indispensable for the work she is enabled to achieve. What, then, is implied in this note of preparation, when all our Theological Seminaries are not only suddenly endowed with means, but equipped with teachers the most learned and able which the age can afford—men whom the church delights to honor and trust; when, as seen in the report of the Board of Education, the candidates for the ministry are increased one-fourth; when the spirit of God works with His almighty power over the whole land; and when, in these sacred institutions themselves, the wail of the heathen world is heard, and the response is given by one and another, “here am I, send me?” Surely this is “the sound of the going in the tops of the mulberry trees, when the church must hasten herself; for the Lord goeth out before her to smite the hosts of the Philistines!”

#### NORTH-WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The reception of this institution, and its full establishment by the Assembly, occasioned, perhaps, more discussion than any other single subject; certainly it caused greater anxiety, as, more than any other, it threatened to disturb the harmony of the body. From Baird's Digest we extract the antecedent history of this institution, which, in this connection, may be of interest to our readers. In the year 1830, the Synod of Indiana commenced at South Hanover, an institution called the “Indiana Theological Seminary,” which received such tokens

of the Divine favor as led to the projection of a seminary upon a broader basis. At a convention held at Louisville, in 1838, composed of delegates from the Synods of Indiana, Cincinnati and Kentucky, and from seven Presbyteries, the institution was transferred from South Hanover to New Albany, and was opened at the latter place in 1840, under the control of the Synods of Indiana and Cincinnati. Five other Synods subsequently resolved to co-operate, viz: Missouri, in 1841; Illinois, in 1842; Northern Indiana, in 1844; Kentucky and Tennessee, in 1846. In the year 1853, a majority of these Synods united in offering the institution to the General Assembly, who fixed the location at Danville, Ky. Some dissatisfaction being created by this decision, the New Albany Seminary was continued in operation, and at length transferred to Chicago. Discord, however, prevailing in the counsels of those concerned in its management, it was determined to transfer it to the care of the Assembly, leaving that body to fix its location and appoint its officers.

The papers relating to this transfer being handed by the President of the Board to the Moderator, were referred to the Committee on Seminaries, which reported upon the same as follows:

The Committee on Theological Seminaries, to which were referred certain papers touching the proposed transfer to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the North-west, beg leave to report, that upon examination of the papers they are found to be,

1. An overture from the Board of Directors of said Seminary, proposing a transfer of the same from the several Synods united in its control, to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States.

2. Papers detailing the action of eight Synods, viz:—the Synods of Cincinnati, of Northern Indiana, Indiana, Illinois, Chicago, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Southern Iowa, authorizing the above mentioned transfer, and instructing the Board of Directors to present the overture touching this matter to this General Assembly.

3. Two printed documents being the Constitution of the Northwestern Theological Seminary, and the Act of Incorporation by the General Assembly of the State of Illinois.

4. Certain papers stating the opinions and wishes of twenty-nine Presbyteries in connection with the eight Synods.

5. A statement of the assets of the New Albany Theological Seminary, now in possession of the Board of Directors of that Institution.

6. Papers containing proposals for the endowment of the seminary upon condition of its being accepted by the Assembly, and located at Chicago, or at Indianapolis, respectively.

7. A statement of the present indebtedness of the seminary of the North-West.

These papers have been carefully considered by the committee, and their contents may be briefly stated to the Assembly. Of the eight confederate Synods:—Five, viz: the Synods of Cincinnati, Chicago, Indiana, Northern Indiana, and Illinois, urge the transfer *simpliciter*, without any opinion or direction expressed on any matter connected with it. Two Synods, viz: the Synod of Wisconsin and Southern Iowa connect with the transfer a request, that Professors be elected only when the endowment shall be sufficient to warrant it: And one Synod, viz: that of Iowa, in a paper from its abridgement, not perfectly clear to the Committee, seems to desire that the Assembly shall exercise only a negative control over the appointments in said Seminary.

It is clear, however, that all these Synods, except perhaps the last, desire this Assembly during its present sessions to accept the direction of the seminary, to hold and to exercise all the powers at present vested in themselves as to the financial condition of the institution, now offered to this Assembly. It claims the assets of the New Albany Theological Seminary, amounting to \$39,430, which the trustees of that Institution seem authorized to transfer. Of this amount, however, the sum of \$25,000 is not at the disposal of these trustees, but is acknowledged to be at the control of the General Assembly, and which it is hoped the Assembly will put to the service of this Institution, it having been originally contributed for Theological education in the West. In the judgment of the Committee, the wishes of the donor, who is still living, may easily be ascertained, and should be decisive upon this point. Against the remaining \$14,430 must be placed a debt incurred by the

seminary of the North-west, of \$5,241, which the Board has ordered to be paid out of the assets of the New Albany Institution, in the hands of its trustees. Should the Assembly agree to accept the direction and control of this seminary, in accordance with the overture of these eight Synods, two distinct proposals are made, looking to its endowment. On the one hand, if Chicago shall be selected as the seat of the new institution, Mr. C. H. McCormick gives his written obligation to pay to the directors who shall be appointed, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, payable in four annual instalments, and drawing 6 per cent. interest from the opening of the seminary—that is to say, \$25,000 for each Professor whom this Assembly shall appoint in the same. In addition to this promise of Mr. McCormick, and upon the condition that, within the period of two years, buildings costing not less than \$50,000 shall be erected upon a designated site, certain persons make a grant of 45 acres of land, definitely located, the market value of which is not stated. On the other hand, if Indianapolis shall be selected for a location, certain persons of the Synod of Indiana, Northern Indiana, and a part of the Synod of Illinois, pledge the sum of \$25,000 towards the endowments, drawing six per cent. from the opening of the Institution; also, \$25,000 more are subscribed by citizens of Indianapolis for the erection of suitable buildings on the site given by Rev. W. A. Holliday, which is itself valued at \$10,000. In addition to these two amounts, there appears to be a reliable subscription of \$6,000 in another place, making a total in money subscribed, and grants of land, of about \$66,000. Upon a deliberate survey of all the facts thus comprehensively stated, in view of the promise given of an early endowment of the institution: Especially, in view of the unanimity and earnestness with which so large a portion of the church as that represented by eight distinct Synods express their conviction of the need of a Theological Seminary of high order in the North-west, your committee unanimously concur in recommending the two following resolutions to the General Assembly:

*Resolved*, That in accordance with the overture emanating from the above named eight Synods, this Assembly does now

accept the direction and control of the seminary known by the corporate name and style of the "Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the North-west."

*Resolved*, That the Assembly, during its present sessions, will decide by a majority of the votes of its members what place within the limits of these eight Synods shall be selected as the seat of said seminary. The matters of detail as to the organization and equipment of the Seminary, the committee are of the opinion cannot well be considered until these preliminary points shall be decided, and therefore make no report upon the same.

The two resolutions of this report were adopted without debate, by which the Assembly took the institution under its care, and the way was open for the discussion upon its location. The cities of Indianapolis and of Chicago were put in nomination. We will endeavor to present a condensed summary of the arguments in favor of each.

The claims of Indianapolis were advocated by Mr. Sheets, Ruling Elder, and Rev. Messrs. Wilson, Stevenson, Cunningham, Crozier and Lowrie, in a running debate that extended through several sessions, upon substantially these grounds: 1. That it was central to a large Presbyterian population, while Chicago was upon the border of the whole territory which this Seminary was expected to cover. In this location it would be sure of sympathy and Christian support. Mr. Crozier presented statistics to show that of the ninety candidates for the ministry in the North-west, sixty-one or two-thirds came from the Synods of Indiana and Cincinnati, in the neighborhood of Indianapolis. Mr. Lowrie enlarged upon the general fact, that seminaries had been more successful when planted near the Eastern boundary of the field from which their patronage is drawn, and that naturally students from the less thickly settled portions gather around the more densely populated.

Dr. Wilson represented that Indianapolis was the centre of a population of from three to four millions. It was between as to North, South, East and West. He warned the Assembly that when Allegheny was settled with but a single voice against it, a seminary was soon after planted near Cincinnati, now lost to us; and that the location at Danville had created

the necessity for the institution about which we are now debating. Is Chicago the centre of these Synods? If Cincinnati and St. Louis are in the field, Chicago is at the apex of the triangle, and Indianapolis is in the centre. 2. It was argued that the Assembly must contemplate the establishment of other seminaries in the future, as the country and the church should expand, and that consequently the location of this institution should be fixed with that ulterior reference. Mr. Sheets pronounced the North-west to be itself an empire, and Dr. Wilson defined its boundaries from the Scioto to the West, and from the Ohio to the British possessions, and could this vast region, with its future teeming population, be supplied by one institution? It seemed to be conceded that if but one seminary was contemplated, Indianapolis was not the place for it, and that if it should be selected, the exigencies of the country would shortly require another seminary at another point. 3. The expensiveness of living at Chicago, a consideration that was pressed in connection with the fact that candidates for the ministry were usually poor, and required to be educated from the treasury of the church. 4. That the endowment offered at Chicago came from a single man, in consequence of which the affections of God's people would not be so strongly drawn forth as if it were composed of the smaller contributions of a great many.

On the other hand, it was urged in favor of Chicago chiefly by Dr. Rice and Mr. Spring, 1. That this Assembly was called upon to locate one seminary, not two; none of the parties concerned had asked for more than one, and that the conviction was growing stronger and deeper in the mind of the church against the multiplication of theological seminaries. The Assembly being restricted in its deliberations to the location of the *one* seminary now wanted, the concessions of the opposing speakers yielded the argument in favor of Chicago. 2. That the location of this seminary at Indianapolis would tend to cripple both Allegheny and Danville, from its proximity to these two places, and that the Assembly was bound in good faith, in planning new enterprises, not to interfere with the prosperity of the old, which had been inaugurated under its

auspices. 3. Chicago had been once selected by the directors of New Albany as the place to which that institution should be translated; which was pleaded as the unbiassed judgment of the very parties now pleading for Indianapolis. 4. At Chicago a sufficient endowment was offered to equip the seminary at once, and put it in vigorous operation. Whereas, at Indianapolis, besides the site and a given amount for the erection of buildings, not more than one-fourth of a sufficient endowment had been obtained. If the offer at Chicago came chiefly from a single source, this left the general resources of the church to be drawn upon for the remaining wants of the new seminary. 5. Finally, it was urged that in a growing city like Chicago, many advantages were afforded which could not be enjoyed in a smaller; such as opportunities for self support, for the study of man, for the exercise of gifts in the informal efforts to do good.

Much of the special pleading in this rambling debate might well have been spared; for the decision of the Assembly by a vote of 242 in favor of Chicago, against 64 for Indianapolis, turned mainly upon two points; that in the former place a competent endowment was already secured, lifting the institution at once upon its feet, and that both parties were agreed; that for the one seminary, which alone the Assembly was called to locate, Chicago was the proper seat. But for the satisfaction of those who wished to talk the whole thing through, the Assembly was about as well prepared to vote upon the reading of the papers as after the debate.

The next step in the proceedings was to organize the seminary by the adoption of a constitution, and the appointment of officers. The Committee on Seminaries reported, through its chairman, resolutions accepting this generous offer of Mr. McCormick, and returning the thanks of the Assembly for his munificent donation of \$100,000. They also submitted the draft of a constitution, based upon that of New Albany, with only such changes as were necessitated by the transfer of the institution to the Assembly. They recommended that the Board of Directors hereafter to be chosen under this constitution, be instructed to accept or not, at their discretion, the

offer of certain lands at Chicago clogged with restrictions; and that they take measures for the legal transfer and safe investment of all the property accruing to the seminary, and to procure such legislation from the State of Illinois as may be necessary to effect this object. The Committee further submitted a schedule of instruction in the seminary, providing for four chairs, viz: 1, The chair of Exegetic and Didactic Theology; 2, the chair of Polemic and Pastoral Theology; 3, the chair of Church History and Government; 4, the chair of Oriental and Biblical Literature.

This distribution, though not unprecedented, is at once perceived to be unusual; and was undoubtedly suggested with a design. It was notorious that the North-west had been divided into parties, ranging under two leaders; and this schism had defeated all preceding efforts at Synodical control, and the Assembly was invoked to settle the dispute by its own sovereign and free action. Both these gentlemen were upon the floor of the Assembly; could they be brought to co-operate as colleagues in the same institution, it is plain that the whole region previously so distracted, would be harmonized, and thus hearty support would be given to the seminary. The Committee doubtless thought it their duty in submitting their scheme, to leave the way perfectly clear for such an adjustment of past difficulties, if it could be effected. Whether the Assembly failed to penetrate this design, which, of course, was not disclosed, or whether it was satisfied from all that had occurred, that such reconciliation and co-operation were impracticable, it refused to sanction the proposed distribution, and re-modeled it in conformity with the prevailing method. At a later stage, by large and commanding votes, Dr. N. L. Rice was chosen to fill the chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology; Dr. Willis Lord to fill the chair of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History; Dr. L. J. Halsey to fill the chair of Historical and Pastoral Theology and Church Government; and Dr. W. M. Scott to fill the chair of Biblical Literature and Exegesis.

Upon the threshold of this election, the proceedings were arrested by a motion from Dr. E. D. McMaster, to refer the

subject of the North-western Seminary to the next General Assembly. At this stage of the game, Dr. McMaster could not seriously have expected that the Assembly would stay its action, and refuse to do what, with great deliberation and after protracted debate, it had solemnly declared itself ready to accomplish. The motion in question was evidently nothing more than a peg upon which to hang a speech, which for nearly three mortal hours he had the inhumanity to inflict upon the Assembly. It is not our design to present an abstract of this remarkable speech, nor of the reply made to it by Dr. Rice, because of the utter irrelevancy of both to the issue before the house. Never, in a deliberative assembly, has it been our fortune to listen to a speech so entirely purposeless as that of Dr. McMaster; unless, indeed, it was a sufficient object to justify the Assembly before the world in the action which put him safely and quietly on the shelf, to achieve martyrdom by a *felo-de-se*. The greater part of it was a mere detail of his personal grievances, and the wrongs which he had suffered from hosts of persecuting enemies, through years of patient forbearance on his part. Even according to his own view of the case, it was a pitiable spectacle to see a man of considerable eminence resign his manhood, and thus wipe his eyes upon the public. Here and there, indeed, gleamed passages of loftier tone, as though, with the spirit of the old Reformers, he alone had the courage to lift up truth as she is fallen in the streets. We cannot but respect a man who, with sublime confidence in the vitality and power of truth, records his single protest against the defections of his age, calmly assured that God will grant it a resurrection in the day of His own power. But there is always in such utterances a serene majesty, a tone of lofty and commanding import, singularly contrasting with the splenetic denunciations which were heard upon the Assembly's floor. With an intense and morbid egotism, Dr. McMaster sought to represent himself as

“The seraph Abdiel, faithful found,  
Among the faithless, faithful only he.”

The persecutions he had so long endured, and which were now to culminate in his final proscription, all sprung from that hate-

ful slave power which could only put its heel upon the church after it had first crushed him. After a strain of denunciation, which had all the bitterness of invective without its scorpion sting, his long discursive speech concluded with feeble threats and gasconade, sufficient only to excite the mirthful ridicule of his opponent, and the commiseration of others who were too little annoyed to be angry, and were too good natured to burlesque. The patience of the house was, however, inexhaustible. He was heard to the conclusion of the whole matter, when his motion was quietly tabled, and the Assembly went forward to elect Professors, appoint Directors, and completely equip the new seminary, just as though this long parenthesis in its proceedings had not occurred. Thus ended this long debate upon the North-western Seminary, which, for months before, had been casting its shadow upon the Assembly; awaking the anxious fears of some, and the sanguine forebodings of others. A debate, in which both parties passed nearly through the seven degrees, from the "retort courteous," through the "quip modest," and the "reply churlish," to the "reproof valiant," ending at last in Dr. Mr. McMaster's speech, in the "counter-check quarrelsome;" who might well describe the whole with Touchstone in the play, "I durst go no farther than the *lie circumstantial*, nor he durst give me the *lie direct*, and so we measured swords and parted."

## REVISED BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

Rev. Dr. Thornwell, Chairman of the Revision Committee, in taking the platform, was for a moment embarrassed by the impatience of some members, who, from their interest in some suspended business before the House, wished to postpone the order of the day till that might be dispatched. The effect of this movement was, however, not unhappy. In his effort to economize the time of the Assembly, Dr. Thornwell's speech became all the more terse and strong. Brief as it was, it was one of those clear, lucid and powerful expositions of essential principles, in which the analytic mind of the speaker enables him so uniformly to excel. The following synopsis is taken bodily from the *Presbyterian*; whose report, by the way, of the

proceedings of the Assembly, surpasses by many degrees that of any other journal we have seen:

Rev. Dr. Thornwell, Chairman of the committee appointed for the purpose, presented as their report a revision of the Book of Discipline. Dr. Thornwell said he would not go over the report in detail. That report has been printed, and is in the hands of the members. He intended at present only to state a few general principles. Some of the changes proposed are important; he would say radical. The committee have endeavored to improve the old Book by striking out redundancies; by carrying out principles already implied or acted upon, and by, as far as possible, harmonizing the whole upon the three great principles which he would now state.

1. All our courts are regarded simply as courts, and not as parties at the bar. They are judges called upon in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they are not counsel, or pleaders, or parties. According to the old Book the lower court is a party, and as such is invariably ruled out when it comes to the higher court. This he regarded as implying what is false in fact. The mere fact that a lower court has tried a case is no evidence of prejudice. It moreover contradicts the great principles of our government. Ours is a representative government. Such are our courts, and in these courts you ascend from a representative body covering a smaller space, to a representative body covering a larger space, until in this Assembly you meet the parliament of the whole church. The lower court often has important information, which is due to the larger one to which the case is carried. According to the old Book, you are not appealing from a smaller portion of the church to a larger part of it, but from one part of it to another part. The true principle is from a part to a larger part, or to the whole. In regarding your lower courts as parties, you actually do all you can to make them parties. Knowing they are regarded as such, they will naturally so consider themselves, and naturally act accordingly. But by right they should be placed in no such category. They come here as your equals; you exchange counsels with them, and thus mutually reach a just decision.

It has been objected that, by this means, you give too much influence to the court below. You certainly do give an influence, but still not an unrighteous one. By the present mode you really bar a portion of the church from arriving at a just conclusion. For instance, in the Pittsburgh Assembly of 1836, in an important trial for heresy, the Synod of Philadelphia was excluded, and a decision secured which was not the true sense of the church, because the large Synod of Philadelphia was out of the house. And at the same Assembly a case of the sort came up, which was decided just the other way, because the Synod of Cincinnati, a smaller body, was out, and the large Synod of Philadelphia was in the house. But it is also said, that sometimes one Presbytery in a Synod is so large as to make them a majority of the Synod. The very fact that they are so numerous is a presumption that they are right.

This proposed change simply goes upon the principle that each court, whether Session, Presbytery or Synod, is always a court, and that superior courts to be complete must include their entire membership.

As to the influence of prejudice, said to be thus introduced, you really have more prejudice by excluding the lower court than by admitting it; for it is still on the ground. Indeed, we all know that every Assembly is composed of two classes of members, those *in* the House, and those *out* of it—lobby members—the latter often more influential than the former. You must, after all, trust your judges, and take it for granted that they will be faithful, and do their duty.

He came now to a point clear as the noonday sun, though one in which the committee has been severely criticised—he means the relation of baptized children to the church. He admits that it is a radical principle—the principle is, that the indispensable condition on which a man becomes subject to discipline, is the profession of his faith. It is objected that the committee are wanting in logic in contending for the membership of baptized children, and yet not discipline them. These brethren take the ground that church membership necessarily involves subjection to discipline. You might, with equal propriety, say it is inconsistent to admit that they are

members, and yet *not* admit them to all the privileges and offices of the church—to the Lord's table, the eldership, &c. You debar them simply because *they do not believe professedly in Christ*. Carry out the remorseless logic of these brethren, and you seat at the Lord's table all baptized worldlings and hypocrites. Sir, you have two classes of church members—professing and non-professing; and herein is the reason for a difference of treatment. Want of faith incapacitates the non-professing from the sacrament of the supper. The same thing incapacitates for subjection to judicial process. It is important that we understand the true idea of discipline. Discipline is not penal; the purpose of it is not to indicate the magnitude of the offence, or as a vindication of justice; it is rather to produce repentance. These provisions are all penitential; it is to bring back and restore an erring brother. It is a healing remedy. And these censures are, of course, as utterly absurd in regard to a man who has never heard the voice of the Lord in his soul, as for him to sit at the Lord's Supper. In order to receive any benefit from discipline, it is absolutely necessary that he recognize the claims of the Lord upon him. You see, therefore, that this view necessitates the distinction between professing and non-professing members. He would say, therefore, that in the whole word of God you cannot find a single case where discipline does not depend on brotherhood in the faith. There is another aspect of the subject of great moment. What is the *ground* of the membership of baptized members? Shall we take the ground that they are members by profession? Why, sir, this would be the doctrine of sponsors. Our doctrine is, that they are members through their parents. We take them in organically by families. Do you not see, then, that the first step in discipline is through the parents? You act on this principle when you require parents to train them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The parents, then, are the tie between the children with the church. The church governs them through their parents. Here is the discipline. What, then, is the precise position into which baptism brings a child? It makes him a child of the covenant. Baptism makes the broad separation as to the cove-

nant of grace between the church and the world. It brings the child into such a relation that it can plead that covenant, and plead it with a power and a pathos that unbaptized children cannot. It gives the peculiar right of inheritance in these promises, and puts the baptized child in a near and blessed relation to God. It, at the same time, places the child under new and heavier responsibilities than rest on the world. And the parents' duty is to train up the children, pressing these obligations and privileges upon them.

But, suppose they grow up and do not come to the Lord's table, what are you to do with them? Excommunicate them, as some suggest? No! Do as the Master would. If they turn their back upon their birthright, still do not cast them out; but follow them with remonstrance, exhortation and prayers. Bear with them. They bring no reproach. They are not professors. They are simply children who do not know their birthright, and we are continually persuading them to come up to their privileges.

But, suppose you take the other course, and discipline them. What then? Why you are using your spiritual remedies on men who have no adaptation to receive them, or you fill your communion tables with worldings and hypocrites. It is this which has filled the Church of Scotland with moderatism, and other churches with formalists. The system proposed in the revision is really that on which our church has always acted.

Our church may be compared to the Temple. We see there, first, the *sanctum sanctorum*, all really spiritual persons; then secondly, the *sanctum*, separating all professedly spiritual persons from all without; then thirdly, the outer court, equally separate from the second. He recognizes in the church—  
1. True followers of the Redeemer. 2. Professors without true piety. 3. That vast congregation whom God has brought into the Church by baptism, who are there to be trained, that they may be led at last into the *sanctum sanctorum*.

But why do not brethren carry out their principles? They go for confining discipline to baptized persons. What, then, will they do with that part of your book which gives all children of believing parents a right to church membership?

Will they not be required to discipline the children of believers, whether baptized or not? Certainly, if consistent.

3. The other point which has been objected to, is allowing deceived church members to withdraw from the church, or, as it has been called, opening the back door. For himself, so that we could get thieves and robbers out of our houses, provided they carry nothing with them, he was glad to have any door opened, whether it be a back door or a front door. It has been said that it assumes the right of members of the church to withdraw at pleasure, and that it thus renders the church a voluntary society. But what is a voluntary society? A mere thing of human invention and contrivance. But surely brethren will not say that we have made these truths on which the church is built. But, in another sense, the church is a voluntary organization. We claim that all who come into the church from the world must come voluntarily. To those whose hearts are not with us, we say withdraw. But how shall we get them out? These brethren say if a man gets into your house who ought not to be there, you cannot let him out in any other way than by kicking him out. But, after all, though the revision proposes to open a mode of retirement for a church member under certain circumstances, we still say the seal of baptism is on him, and never can be removed. We only pronounce him unfit for the communion of the *sanctum*, according to his own confession. We open the door and put them back in their own outer court, where, by their own statements, their proper place is. We do not arraign young men and young women before the session, and prosecute them for not being converted.

The revised book of the committee has been pronounced a failure. It may possibly not meet the concurrence of this Assembly, but he believes before God it embodies the true principles of a spiritual church. What we are aiming at, and what we want, is a pure body. Our baptized children, our non-professing members, occupy a curious position. In heart they belong to the world; in covenant relation they belong to God. Because of the latter the church operates first upon these. Hence God comes with His blessing to you first, then

to your children, and lastly to as many as are afar off, whom the Lord shall call.

Dr. Thornwell was followed in reply by Dr. Humphrey, who said he wished to refer to the history of our present Book of Discipline, in order to convince the Assembly that we should do the work of revision, if at all, only cautiously and carefully. It appears that when it was determined, in the old Synod of Philadelphia and New York, to form a General Assembly, a committee was appointed to prepare a Book of Discipline. That was composed of such men as John Rogers, Robert Smith, Allison, Woodhull, Latta, Duffield—all well-known names. Two years afterwards we find that this committee reported “A Plan of Government and Discipline.” The Synod of New York and Philadelphia, composed of only one hundred members against three hundred in this House, were not then ready to adopt it. On the contrary, after thirteen sessions, extending through eight days, their discussions only resulted in printing it and sending it down to the Presbyteries. The next year these Presbyteries reported; and then again, not until after six sessions, extending through four days, was it referred to the Presbyteries for adoption;—so careful were our fathers in adopting this Book. Now, shall we change in a few hours what they have so carefully done, and make changes, too, which our brethren themselves avow to be “radical.” Dr. Humphrey would here express his regret that he is compelled to differ from a committee of names so honored as the present one, but duty constrains him.

Well, this Book of Discipline, prepared with so much care, went into effect, and was used till 1816, when another revision was called for. Then Drs. Romeyn, Alexander and Miller, (names he delights to speak,) were appointed to examine it, and report next year. The next year the committee asked that Dr. Nott should be added to their number, and in 1818 they reported that they had “made some progress in the business.” And at last, in 1819, after three years, the proposed revision was reported, and one thousand copies were sent to the Presbyteries for “examination and suggestions.” He wished special notice to be taken of the extreme caution of these movements;

and their changes, too, were not "radical" as at present. In 1820 this committee reported that the number and contrariety of opinions had greatly perplexed them, but that they had endeavored to harmonize them so as to make a proper and acceptable Book of Discipline. The Assembly, after six sessions, extending through four days, adopted it. Thus, after all this caution and care, had this Book been adopted, which now, after forty years, we propose to alter in a few hours.

In the committee's revision, we are asked to say, that baptized children are not to be subject to discipline. Let us be cautious how we agree to this. In the year 1789 it was decided that baptized children are subjects of discipline. In 1821 see how the language is changed, so that instead of saying "Inasmuch as all baptized children are members of the church," they say simply, "all baptized *persons* are members of the church, and are subject to its forms and discipline." Now he believes that words are things. Some of the greatest heresies have turned on little words; and the words now proposed would, in his view, be replete with danger.

Let us take warning, too, from the obvious tendencies in this matter. In the year 1811, according to the statistics, there were 198 infant baptisms to 1,000 communicants; but according to these same statistical tables, the proportion has been running down till you now have but 51 to 1,000, and this has been a constant and gradual diminution. Now, he would ask, is this a time to give up your principles, and take down the bars? No, sir, no! He was aware that it has been objected that these statistics are inaccurate, but you will perceive that the current has all the time been running in the same direction, which is surely significant. If we go on in this way, the next proposition will be, by 1889, to resolve that baptized children are not members of the church at all. A French philosopher has explained the method by which dogmas die out—the kernel is gradually extracted, and then any passer-by with his foot can crush the shell. Take care how you touch these rights which are so important. An article appeared, some two years since, in the *Princeton Review*, presenting

startling statistics as to the decline of infant baptism, which it might be well just now to ponder. He differed from the brother (Dr. Thornwell) as to the ground of administering baptism. It is not descent from parents, but the covenant, and just in proportion as you lose your hold on the covenant, you will drift away until you become an anti-pedo-Baptist Church.

Rev. Dr. Thornwell said he concurred in the motion of Dr. Humphrey, and hoped that as part of the Theological Seminaries had been represented in the committee, the others should also have a representation. He wished also to explain that by radical changes he by no means meant to apply that term to the essential principles of our system, but only to certain usages which he deemed contradictory and illogical. He also placed the ground of infant membership, through their connection with the parents, most certainly on the covenant. He must say, too, that Dr. Humphrey's argument shows conclusively that a revision is imperatively demanded. For some years past we have had these stringent notions about infant baptism, and hence the decline. Let these notions continue to prevail, and in ten years we should have, perhaps, no baptisms at all.

Rev. Dr. Lowrie moved that the revision be referred to the next Assembly. Let it be discussed, in the meantime, in our periodicals and newspapers. As to withdrawing from the church, the Assembly decided adverse to such withdrawal. And in the Assembly at Baltimore, under a judicial case, the same decision was come to, on the ground that the covenant of the church member is made, not with the church, but with his God; that you have no right to release him, but that you must.

As to the lower courts being parties, brethren forget that our present system is indispensable to the very idea of our government. In a session you do not allow the members of it to be challenged, because of prejudice. No, that is not your remedy. You allow the members of the court to sit, and if he feels injustice is done, you allow him to carry it up; and, to secure him the more fully, you do not allow those who have

been liable to prejudice to interfere with an unbiased and important decision; thus you have the pure court our brother so much desires.

Sir, let us steer clear of these radical changes. This book has served us for forty years; it may probably do for forty more; and then let the Assembly appoint a new committee—perhaps consisting chiefly of pastors, with some legal gentlemen.

Rev. Mr. Platt said he thought this was the time and the place to discuss this report in detail. This should be done before sending it to the Presbyteries or to the next Assembly. We need light on these important subjects. We do not want merely anonymous publications. We wish to know who the men are that address the public, whose views are presented to us.

The above is a pretty full account of the discussion had upon the floor of the Assembly; after which, the revised discipline was re-committed to the same committee, with instructions to report to the next Assembly. This disposition of the report was evidently a mere expedient to gain time, the church not feeling herself prepared to take final action in the premises. The attitude of the church in reference to this revision is a little singular. She is evidently not satisfied with the existing discipline, and yet shrinks at the critical moment from the very changes she has herself initiated. The same conservatism which we have remarked, disinclining the church to alter her modes of action in conducting her practical operations, will be far more jealous of propositions to change her constitutional rules. However desirable in themselves these changes may be, some time will be required to overcome the *vis inertiae* of so large a mass as the body represented in the Old School General Assembly. Again, there is undoubtedly an antecedent prejudice against some of the alterations proposed by the Revision Committee, and some difference of opinion upon the principles involved in the same. Considerable discussion of these cardinal principles must be had before the church, as a whole, can be brought to that intelligent conviction requisite to a safe decision. That the church will

ultimately accept, substantially, the changes proposed by the committee touching the whole subject of judicial process, we do not for a moment doubt. No one who has ever listened to a trial in one of our higher courts, but has observed with pain the inextricable confusion into which the body is thrown in settling the preliminaries. The general principle laid down by Dr. Thornwell, that the judicatory from which the appeal is taken is a true court, and of this character should not be dispossessed and construed into a party, seems to us conclusive of the whole matter; and the illustration which he presented of the practical operation of our present system in the opposite decisions rendered in the Assembly of 1836, should be equally conclusive. Singularly enough, upon the very heels of the discussion upon this Revised Book of Discipline, the very first judicial case before the present Assembly disclosed all the defects and contradictions of our existing book, and demonstrated the necessity for a re-construction and simplification of our present forms of judicial proceedings.

Upon another of the changes proposed by the committee, providing that deceived church members may, in a prescribed and regular way, be dismissed from the communion of the church, the writer's mind is also perfectly clear. The plea urged against it, viz: that the covenant in such cases being made between the individual and God, the church has no power to discharge him from its obligations, is based upon a mistake both of principle and of fact. Admission to the table of the Lord depends upon the profession of true repentance towards God, and of saving faith in Jesus Christ. Without such profession the party would not be received; and as his admission is founded upon this, and this alone, does it not follow, when it is afterwards ascertained that neither faith nor repentance existed, that the privilege suspended upon them falls to the ground? With what propriety can the church urge such a person, under pains and penalties, to seal again and again at the Lord's table, a covenant which in his conscience he knows does not exist, and to continue in the hypocritical profession of exercises which he certainly does not feel? Such a course would be consistent enough in those churches who

regard the sacraments not in the light of sealing ordinances, but as instruments of conversion, or channels of regenerating grace. The final effect of such a practice, if long persisted in, must be either to fill the church with hypocritical professors of religion, or to reduce ecclesiastical censures to mere *brutum fulmen*—totally disregarded because no response is given by the consciences of the parties disciplined. It is difficult to say which of these two results would be most disastrous to the interests of the church. Again, it is not true in fact, that the exclusion of an unconverted church member from the communion of the faithful touches, or is intended to touch, his original obligations before God, to repent of sin and to believe on Christ. He is, by the judgment of the church, based on his own acknowledgment, simply remitted to the place which he before occupied; and there rests under precisely the same obligations which pressed upon him anterior to his supposed conversion. Nothing more has been done than simply to declare what his relations to God actually are; that his previous experience being found to be delusive, he is now declared to be without that wedding garment, in which alone it is fitting he should enter into the king's marriage feast.

The second proposition of the committee, touching the relations of baptized members to the church, is perhaps the most embarrassed with difficulties, and is the change upon which the church most anxiously seeks light and guidance. The stringent doctrine advocated by some, that baptized youth, upon arriving at years of discretion, are to be constrained, upon penalty of excommunication, to consummate their union with the church, we dare to affirm, never can prevail in the Presbyterian Church of this country, simply because the true idea of the church, as a spiritual body, is more distinctly apprehended here than elsewhere. With all the deference we are accustomed to pay to the mother church of Scotland and Ireland, in this particular it cannot be denied that the American church is immeasurably in the advance. She cannot, therefore, stand by the side of a baptized youth and say, with or without the spiritual qualifications you must, under pain of excommunication, seal your connexion with the church by

approaching the Lord's table. Nor can she, recognizing the sovereignty of Divine grace both as to the time and manner of its bestowal, undertake to limit the probation of such an one; and say, at any one moment, *now* this matter of your conversion is to be taken into your own hands, and *now* the exhausted patience of the church refuses any longer to indulge your procrastination. She may, with tears of affection, press upon his conscience the exhortations of God's word, and urge the promises of Jehovah's covenant; but she has no authority from her Divine Head to urge him, without the necessary qualifications, to pass into the inner sanctuary; nor yet, if he should refuse to hear, to thrust him out into the court of the Gentiles. From her prevailing practice in this particular, we have no idea that the American Presbyterian Church, with her conception of a spiritual religion, will ever be induced to swerve.

On the other hand, there is floating in the mind of the church the impression that our baptized youth are, in such a sense, amenable to the discipline of the church, that her authority may and should, in some way, be brought to bear upon their lives. How far this discipline should be carried, and in what form it should be administered, are precisely the points which the church has never settled to her own satisfaction, and it is probably this want of precision and definiteness which has led to almost the universal neglect of all discipline. There is, however, lying in many minds, a painful apprehension that in this neglect the church is criminal, and multitudes are anxiously seeking their way through the difficulties which environ this whole subject. We are persuaded that the shyness of the church in taking up the Revised Book of Discipline is, to some extent, explained by the embarrassment we have just indicated. On the one hand, not prepared to adopt the rigid discipline based by some upon a strict construction of the phraseology of the present book; on the other hand, not prepared to relax her hold entirely upon her baptized members, the church considerably pauses to see if there be no *via media* between these extremes. Now, the proposition of the committee, which we understand to be a medium between these conflicting views,

seems to us very nearly to meet this difficulty, and we venture modestly to suggest that if the committee, in its further deliberations, will render their middle ground a little more definite and clear, it will go far to harmonize the church, and prepare the way for a final deliverance upon this subject. We understand their position to be, that while baptized persons are members of the church, and are under its care and government, they are not proper subjects of *judicial process*; that is to say, discipline may be taken in a wide or in a narrow sense, so that they shall be under it in the one sense and not in the other. Now, if the committee shall be able to define in what form discipline shall be administered without judicial process—how the church in the exercise of authority may take cognizance of flagrant immoralities in her baptized members, so as to distinguish between them and communicating members, they will succeed in untying the Gordian knot, and the church will probably come without hesitation to her decision. The difficulty is a real one, to which side soever we choose to turn. The conscience of the church is sorely tried on the one hand by the discordance between her present neglect of all discipline and the rigid requirements of the existing book; on the other hand, the nature and degree of the government and discipline recognized by the Revised Book, are so undefined as to afford no working rule by which the discretion of the church can be guided. We greatly fear that the committee may yield to a re-action of feeling, and may expunge all this portion of their revised code. This we would deplore, and respectfully submit, that to remand the church to the provisions of the old book will not, in the least degree, help the matter, since the difficulty in the recognition and practice of these is fully as great as with the suggestions they have ventured in their revision.

The reader will perceive that we have attempted no discussion of the principles involved in these proposed changes—being content with the simple enunciation of our own views. Such discussion we have foreborne, inasmuch as a full exposition of the Revised Book of Discipline has been promised by the respected chairman of the committee. This will doubtless open the way for a general discussion of all the topics involved,

by others who may dissent from his conclusions. There is no one subject whose full discussion is more needed than the relation which baptized persons sustain to the Church of God, and there is no time more fitting than the present, while the Book of Discipline is under examination, to discuss it *in thesi*, unmixed with any personal and private issues. We echo the desire expressed by Mr. Platt on the floor of the Assembly, that those brethren who have given these matters a mature consideration, may give the church the benefit of their investigations, and thus assist many in forming their conclusions who are still in perplexity and doubt. Before the next General Assembly shall convene, we trust there may be in all our journals a thorough discussion of all these points.

#### RESOLUTION UPON COLONIZATION.

The only subject of public interest remaining for us to report in the proceedings of the Assembly, was a brief but spirited discussion, occasioned by a paper offered by Dr. R. R. Read, Ruling Elder, commending the African colonization enterprise. The interest of this debate turned simply upon the views brought out as to the true nature of the Church of Christ, and the real province assigned her in which to work. Dr. Read evidently presented his resolution as a matter of routine, little anticipating that it would be opposed, and still less prepared for the grounds upon which that opposition was based. An abortive attempt having been made to lay the paper on the table, Rev. Dr. Thornwell rose to state the reasons which led him to resist its passage through the House. We have often heard Dr. Thornwell in the conduct of an argument far more elaborate than the present, but have rarely heard him in a more brilliant and rhetorically effective speech than this. It was evidently unpremeditated, as the paper which called it forth was suddenly, and without notice sprung upon the Assembly. Its great merit consisted in the clear and distinct enunciation of a great principle, under the right application of which the church would be delivered from at least three-fourths of the troubles and conflicts into which she is so frequently plunged. Couched in that rich and flowing diction of which

the speaker is so complete a master, and delivered with that fervid eloquence for which he is equally distinguished, the speech fell upon the Assembly with telling effect, eliciting its involuntary applause, which the moderator was compelled to restrain. By a singular coincidence, too, it was delivered on the evening of the afternoon on which Dr. McMaster had pronounced his divisive and inflammatory harangue; with the narrowness and bitterness of which, the catholic and patriotic and genial utterances of Dr. Thornwell stood in such vivid contrast, as greatly to heighten its impression upon the audience.

Rev. Dr. Thornwell said that the ground upon which he voted to lay these resolutions on the table, was the conservation of a great principle upon which he had long acted, and which he deemed of immense importance to the Church of Christ. The Church of God, said he, is exclusively a *spiritual* organization, and possesses none but *spiritual power*. It was her mission to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men from the curse of the law. She had nothing to do with the voluntary associations of men for various civil and social purposes, that were outside of her pale. Ever since he had been a member of the church he had believed this, and contended for this, and had steadily resisted associating this church with outside organizations. The Lord Jesus Christ had never given his church a commission to be identified with them. It was the church's great aim to deliver men from sin, and death, and hell. She had no mission to care for the things, and to become entangled with the kingdoms and the policy of this world. The question of colonization is a question of worldly policy. It is a question upon the merits of which he wished not to speak. But no man will say that Jesus Christ has given to his ministry a commission to attend to the colonization of races, or to attend to the arrest of the slave trade, or to the mere physical comforts of man. It is not the business of *the church* to build asylums for the insane and the blind. The church deals with men *as men*, as fallen sinners standing in *need of salvation*; not as citizens of the commonwealth, or philanthropists, or members of society. Her mission is to bring

men to the cross, to reconcile them to God through the blood of the Lamb, to imbue them with the spirit of the Divine Master, and thence send them forth to perform their social duties, to manage society, and perform the functions that pertain to their social and civil relations. The church has no right—no authority to league herself with any of the institutions of the State, or such as have for their object mere secular enterprises. “Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and to God the things that are God’s;” but let the Church of God lend her energies directly to the accomplishment of her own high and glorious mission. She deals, sir, with the great interests of immortality! The blessings she sheds upon the earth, and upon the temporal interests of men, are incidental, and although incalculable, are subsidiary to the higher aims of the church. He was willing that church members should co-operate with this Colonization Society, and other societies for philanthropic objects, if they see proper to do so. He was willing that they should try to do good through any agencies that their consciences may approve. But he wished the church, as such, to keep herself to her specific work. As a Church of Christ, he desired her to know neither rich nor poor, high nor low, bond nor free—to know neither East nor West, North nor South. “Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me,” was the mandate of her Lord to his church; and the very moment you undertake to implicate this church with any of the powers of the earth, you endanger her efficiency. At this very General Assembly we have declined identifying ourselves even with the American Presbyterian Historical Society. We had voted it out; we had voted out the temperance societies, and he would have the Assembly vote out all the societies of this world, and keep to her proper sphere, and let the societies keep to theirs, and do good in their own way, without asking the church’s co-operation. It is this principle that he deemed absolutely indispensable to the church’s purity and success in her peculiar mission.

To this view this church has been steadily coming up; and, in consequence, what a spectacle does she this hour present to the country and to the world! She stands, pre-eminently, the

great conservative power of this land; the great bond of union and witness for the truth; directly interfering with no temporal interests, but blessing and protecting all, whilst she aims only at the glory of her God in the salvation of the souls of the people. And why does our beloved Zion stand thus "the beauty of the land?" It is, sir, because the only voice she utters is the word of God; because no voice is heard in her councils but His; and because her only guide is the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. He gloried in the position of this church. He was once attended by a young gentleman, a native of Great Britain, through the Tower of London; and we passed through the long apartments and corridors, in which were deposited the trophies which England's prowess had won in her many wars. As my companion pointed me with becoming patriotic pride to these trophies that attested his country's triumphs, said Dr. Thornwell, I raised myself to the fullest height my stature would permit, and replied:—Your country has carried on two wars with mine, but I see no trophies here won from American valour. (Applause, which was checked by the Moderator.) Let our church, continued Dr. Thornwell, lend herself in the name of her Lord, and in his strength, and in her own proper sphere, to her own mission, and her enemies will never rejoice over trophies won from her. Sir, the salt that is to save this country is the Church of Christ—a church that does not mix up with any political party, or any issues aside from her direct mission.

The paper of Dr. Read being referred to the Committee of Bills and Overtures, the following report was afterwards submitted by the same:

1. The committee report that the church is a spiritual body, not appointed to bear testimony in relation to institutions purely secular.
2. Nevertheless, the action of the Assembly in the years 1848 and 1853 has all the weight which present action, if taken, would have.

Rev. Dr. A. S. McMaster said he felt disposed to meet this question on its merits, and could not let this overture pass in its present shape without comment. If the Colonization

Society was a good thing, or if it be a bad thing, let us say the one or the other. He considered the plea that had been so eloquently made, that the church should never commend anything good because it was not strictly spiritual or ecclesiastical, as both preposterous and restrictive of the church's legitimate duties. He referred to the fact that for four score years the Presbyterian Church had always borne testimony in favor of good enterprises, even when not strictly spiritual. He alluded to the part borne by our church in the revolutionary struggle of our country, and to her frequent testimonies in favor of the liberties and independence of our country. He cited cases to prove that it had been the uniform practice of this church to commend philanthropic enterprises; and contended that one so strictly missionary as this was peculiarly entitled to her sympathy and encouragement.

Rev. Dr. McGill offered as an amendment, "that it is sufficient to refer to the past action of the General Assembly, in her frequent recommendations of the Colonization Society."

Rev. Dr. Thornwell said all he wished to do was to set his opinions in a true light. He thought it would hardly be denied that—1st. The church is a kingdom not of this world. 2d. That her authority is only ministerial and declarative. 3d. That the power which is given to the church is to be exercised for spiritual ends only. If the church will keep within her own bounds, she will be an agency that will purify and bless the world; but if she goes beyond her proper sphere, she will not only fail to accomplish her mission, but will do mischief. Like the ocean, she purifies even by her agitation, whilst acting within her bounds and banks; but like the ocean, too, if she break beyond them, nothing can be more destructive or desolating. Let the church work on at the very foundations of moral and spiritual influences, which are the foundations of society; let her do her appropriate and appointed work, and she will sanctify the world. But let her go out of her sphere, and affect interference with the temporalities of men, and she will fail. Whenever she forgets that her mission is to bring men to the cross, and to salvation, she comes down from her high vantage ground. Whenever the church speaks at all,

she must speak in the name of the Lord; and she must speak what the Lord bids her. Show me, said he, that the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the church to engage in the business of transferring men from one place to another, and I will yield and unite in the effort. But until you convince me that this is the business that the Head of the Church has committed to her, I must earnestly resist any proposal to identify her with such business. Dr. Thornwell concluded by moving to lay the report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures on the table, to take up a paper which he read. The motion of Dr. Thornwell prevailed by a count of 64 to 54.

Dr. B. M. Smith moved to lay Dr. Thornwell's paper on the table, which was done.

It is much to be regretted that this important discussion was terminated in so abrupt and unsatisfactory a way. The hour of the final adjournment being almost at hand, no other disposal could be made of the subject than by laying it upon the table. It would, therefore, be unfair to construe the votes taken as a final decision by the church upon the principles involved in a discussion confessedly partial and unfinished. It was something, however, to have had these principles so clearly enunciated in the hearing of the whole church; and we may rest assured the end is not yet. Attention being so publicly called to the question, what is the true nature and province of the Church of Christ, it must continue to be agitated until a final and satisfactory response is given in some formal and authoritative utterance, so soon as the church shall be prepared to render it. As an evidence, however, that the church is gradually feeling her way to a clear conviction of the purely spiritual nature of her functions, and how strongly she is prepared to assert this truth where no antecedent professions occur to warp her judgment, we may cite the following answer returned to the Presbyterian Historical Society, when asking for a collection to be taken up in its behalf, to-wit:—The Church of Jesus Christ as a spiritual body, commissioned only to execute the revealed will of God, can entertain no direct relation to any voluntary associations, however praiseworthy in their aims, formed for the purpose of pro-

moting the interests of art, literature, or a secular morality. When such overtures involve no wrong principles, it is a matter of Christian liberty to join them or not join them, to encourage them or otherwise, and therefore the church should leave men where Christ has left them, to the sound discretion of his people.

Why this sentiment should pass through the Assembly, *nemine contradicente*, and be challenged so soon as it was applied to the African Colonization Society, the reader may exercise his wits in divining.

The argument from precedent urged against the adoption of this principle, appears to us singularly inconclusive. No fact admits of more profuse illustration than that great principles obtain footing in the world, and exercise an influence more or less extended, long before their full import is perceived and their complete significance is felt. The discipline of years—sometimes of centuries—is required to leaven a whole community with a great truth, especially when an antagonist error must first be eradicated. According as this truth is at times more or less clearly apprehended, will the assertion of it be more or less articulate; while in the long pending struggle for the ascendancy, a thousand prejudices and interests will intervene to render the application of it in particular cases irregular and even inconsistent. The history of the church forms no exception to this universal law which regulates the inculcation and growth of truth among masses of men. From the period of Constantine to the Reformation in the 16th century, the church was united with the State—the two jurisdictions being continually blended, and the church being accustomed to consider a thousand questions that did not lie within her proper province. At the time of the Reformation, the truth, least of all comprehended by the Reformers themselves, was the independence and purely spiritual nature of the Church of Christ. No one can thoughtfully peruse the history of that eventful epoch without perceiving how suddenly and completely the Reformation was arrested by the unnecessary complication of the church with the political organizations of the day. It was a sad mistake when the Re-

formers, instead of throwing themselves more entirely upon the word of God and the sympathies of the people, sought shelter for their doctrines, and for their flocks, beneath the wing of Princes and Electors. To this very hour the churches of Europe are fettered by entangling alliances with the civil power; and have yet to pass through a severe, perhaps protracted discipline, before they shall achieve the independence, or attain the purity which should belong to them. In this country, where it has pleased God to break this yoke in which, contrary to His commandment, the ox and the ass are made to plow together, how slow is the church in throwing off the traditional teachings of fifteen centuries! After the lapse of nearly a century since the union of Church and State was dissolved at the Revolution, we find 3,000 divines in the halls of our National Congress, attempting to arrest the legislation of the country upon matters which concern them not a whit more than any other 3,000 equally respectable men in the nation. One of the sorest evils of the times is the disposition manifested in some portions of this Confederacy, by preachers and Councils, to put their busy hands to any sort of work but the one great work to which they have been solemnly set apart. The Gospel of our salvation is suppressed, and prayer becomes a profane attempt to inveigle the Deity into complicity with the schemes of wild and fanatical agitators. Considering the tenacity with which men cling to fallacies consecrated by time—seeing how the secret principle of error often survives the destruction of its embodied form—it is not strange that even in this country, and in the bosom of the Presbyterian Church, the question needs to be raised, “what is the true nature and province of the church of God.”

For this reason we have said that the argument drawn from the past action of the church is of little weight, when we are determining the principles upon which the church is bound to proceed. These principles are not always perceived with equal clearness; and her practice will be found a very inconstant exposition of the same. This question is one purely abstract, and should be settled by a direct and single appeal to the Word of God—to the charter under which she holds all the

privileges granted her by her great Master and King. When, however, we analyze the precedents which have been pleaded, the most of them disappear, and are not contravened by the principle so articulately expounded by Dr. Thornwell in this discussion. For example—if the Church of Scotland remonstrated against the imposition upon her of Popery or Prelacy; if the church in this country protested against the persecutions of God's people, either at home or abroad, what is this but the church standing upon the border of her own territory, and contending for the Crown rights of the Redeemer? It was no invasion of the State, no overture for alliance with any foreign power, but only the solemn assertion, within her own sphere, of principles pertaining to her freedom, if not to her very being, the maintenance of which was committed to her as a trust by her Lord and Head. But, if the church—in her organic unity, assembled in ecclesiastical council to transact the business of that kingdom which is not of this world—steps forth to take sides in a civil revolution, the case, if it ever occurred, is different. How much soever we may venerate the men who performed the act, or may admire the patriotism which prompted it, it was none the less a departure from her principles, and as impolitic as it was unwarranted. It was moreover an act committed amidst the confusion and heat of intense excitement, and at a period when the church, not disentangled from the State, had scarcely opened her eyes to trace the boundary between the two. It was an error; but an error far more easily forgiven than the error of those who in moments of calm reflection plead it as a precedent, and thereby sanction a principle which, in other times may convert the courts of the church into a congeries of Jacobin clubs, the most powerful of all agencies for overthrowing the liberties of this great land.

So, too, if a minister in the pulpit, or an ecclesiastical council in its pastoral addresses, shall choose to expound the relative duties of husband and wife, parent and child, master and servant, as these duties lie in the word of God, and are enforced upon the conscience by the Divine law, they are not only at liberty so to do, but it is the precise work which is given them

to do. What is there in this so called "new and startling doctrine on the church," propounded by Dr. Thornwell, contravening their liberty? Is it not the very object of this doctrine to hold the church to their functions—to expound Scripture and deal with the hearts and consciences of men, and to restrain her from the exercise of prerogatives not granted in her charter? The Christian pastor and the assembled church may and must, in the interpretation of the sacred oracles, explain the nature of temperance as a fruit of the spirit, and an important Christian virtue; but surely it is a wide inference which would compel her from this to form a league offensive and defensive, with the voluntary societies which have been formed over the land for promoting temperance by purely human methods. The very design of Dr. Thornwell's remarks is to enjoin the one as an imperative duty of the church, and to inhibit the other as forbidden by her very constitution and the spiritual nature of her functions. Since this has been openly denounced as a "new and startling doctrine," the reader would do well to refresh his memory by reading the clear and elaborate paper adopted by the Assembly of 1848, in reply to a preamble and resolution submitted by the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union. In this able paper, to be found in Baird's Digest, pp. 797-8, (1st edition,) the whole ground covered in Dr. Thornwell's speech is taken by the Assembly, and its essential principle solemnly and explicitly avowed.\* Singularly enough, too, this principle is

---

\* "A preamble and resolution submitted by the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union to the General Assembly for its adoption, to which may be added an address of the New York City Temperance Society, organized on Christian principles, transmitted to the Assembly by a committee of the Society.

"Your committee would recommend, in reference to this whole subject of Temperance Societies, and all other secular institutions for moral ends, the adoption of the following minute:

"The Church of Jesus Christ is a spiritual body, to which have been given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, to the end of the world. It is the great instrumentality of the Saviour, through which, by his eternal Spirit, he dispenses salvation to the objects of his love. Its ends are holiness and life, to the manifestation of the riches and glory of Divine grace, and not simply morality, decency and good order, which

specially applied to the Colonization Society, as one of the associations forbidden to intrude within the sanctuary of the church.

We cannot protract this article by a full discussion of this great question. We heartily rejoice that it is mooted, and that it has, fortunately, attracted the attention of the church. Let it be discussed in its length and breadth till the church shall settle her faith upon this point immovably upon the word of God—and may He who guides the church ever grant, whenever this great truth is attempted to be overborne, that faith-

---

may to some extent be secured without faith in the Redeemer, or the transforming efficacy of the Holy Spirit. The laws of the church are the authoritative injunctions of Christ, and not the covenants, however benevolent in their origin and aim, which men have instituted of their own will: and the ground of obligation which the church, *as such*, inculcates, is the authority of God speaking in His word, and not pledges of honor which create, measure and define, the peculiar duties of all voluntary associations. In this kingdom of God the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners, and no church judiciary ought to pretend to make laws which shall bind the conscience, or to issue recommendations which shall regulate manners, without the warrant, explicit or implied, of the revealed will of God. It is hence beside the province of the church to render its courts, which God ordained for spiritual purposes, subsidiary to the schemes of any association founded in the human will, and liable to all its changes and caprices. No Court of Christ can exact of his people to unite with the Temperance, Moral Reform, Colonization, or any other society, which may seek their aid. Connection with such institutions is a matter of Christian liberty. Their objects may be, in every respect, worthy of the countenance and support of all good men, but in so far as they are moral and essentially obligatory, the church promotes them among its own members, and to none others does its jurisdiction extend, by the means which God has ordained for the edification of his children. Still, in the exercise of their Christian liberty, as good citizens, as patriotic subjects of the State, from motives of philanthropy, and from love to God, Christian people may choose to adopt this particular mode of attempting to achieve the good at which all moral societies profess to aim, they have a right to do so, and the church, as long as they endorse no false principles, and countenance no wrong practices, cannot interfere with them. Recognizing these propositions as the truths of the word of God, this General Assembly, as a court of Jesus Christ, cannot league itself with any voluntary society, cannot exact of those who are subject to its discipline to do so; but must leave the whole matter where the Scriptures leave it, to the prudence, philanthropy and good sense of God's children; each man having a right to do as to him shall seem good.

“These societies must appeal not to church courts, but to church members. When they proclaim principles that are Scriptural and sound, it is not denied that the church has a right, and under certain circumstances may be bound to bear

ful men may be raised up who shall testify with the Prophet, "say ye not, a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy."

The unexpected length to which this article has grown, forbids our dwelling upon any acts of the Assembly. It would have been pleasant to report the very grateful remarks of Dr. Fisher, delegate from the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, as well as the neat response made to him by the Moderator. We shall easily be forgiven for omitting the judicial cases, as no important principles were involved in any of them. The overtures submitted to the Assembly we have passed by, as no discussion was raised upon any of them; it is a fair presumption if they excited so little interest in the house, they would as little interest the reader. After singing and prayer, and an affectionate valedictory address, made by the Moderator, the Assembly was dissolved in usual form, and another Assembly was required to meet in the First Presbyterian Church, in the city of Rochester, New York, on the third Thursday of May, A. D. 1860.

We review, with unmingled satisfaction, the history of this venerable court, remarkable, not only as being the largest that has ever convened, but for the harmony that characterized its deliberations—a harmony not disturbed even by the exciting topics which engaged its attention. We do not regret the debate on the North-western Seminary, since it should silence the calumny that the peace prevailing in the old school ranks

---

testimony in their favor; and when, on the other hand, they inculcate doctrines which are infidel, heretical and dangerous, the church has a right to condemn them. In conformity with these statements, the General Assembly has no hesitation in cordially approving of abstinence from intoxicating drinks as a matter of Christian expediency, according to the words of the Apostle in Romans xiv. 21, 'It is good neither to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak,' and in expressing its affectionate interest in the cause of temperance—and would recommend to its Ministers and Elders who have become connected with temperance societies, to use every effort to prevent the introduction of any other principle as the ground of their pledge, and to throw around these institutions those safeguards which shall be the means of rescuing them from the excesses to which they are liable from influences opposed to, or aside from, the Gospel of Christ."—*Minutes*, 1848, p. 58.

is deceptive and external, only needing a match to be applied in order to explode the mine. The match was applied in one of the most offensive and incendiary speeches ever flung upon a deliberative assembly; and it went quietly out, simply because there was no train which it could ignite. Above all, we rejoice in the evidence furnished by the debates, that the church is more and more clearly comprehending her own principles, and more and more earnestly addressing her energies to the great work of subduing the world to Christ, her Lord.

---

ARTICLE VIII.

*The Knowledge of God, Subjectively Considered. Being the Second Part of Theology considered as a Science of Positive Truth, both inductive and deductive.* By ROBERT J. BRECKINRIDGE, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Theology in the Seminary at Danville, Kentucky. *Non sine luce.* New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. Louisville: A. Davidson. 1859; pp. 697.

That a second volume, so weighty in matter and so bulky in form, should have been written and prepared for the press within the time that has elapsed since the publication of the first, is a testimony to the diligence and industry of the author which vindicates him from all suspicion of making his professorship a sinecure. Dr. Breckinridge measures life by labor and not by years. A man of action, he finds no place for rest, he seeks no repose, in this sublunary scene, where the Master's commission is only to work. The truth is, in every state the unimpeded exercise of energy is bliss—it is not action, but toil, not exertion but drudgery, that constitutes the bitterness of labor—soundness of mind is as inconsistent with torpor as soundness of body with lethargy. Motion is the sign of life, and delight in motion an unfailing symptom of health. It is an omen of good that our Professors, in all our Seminaries, seem to