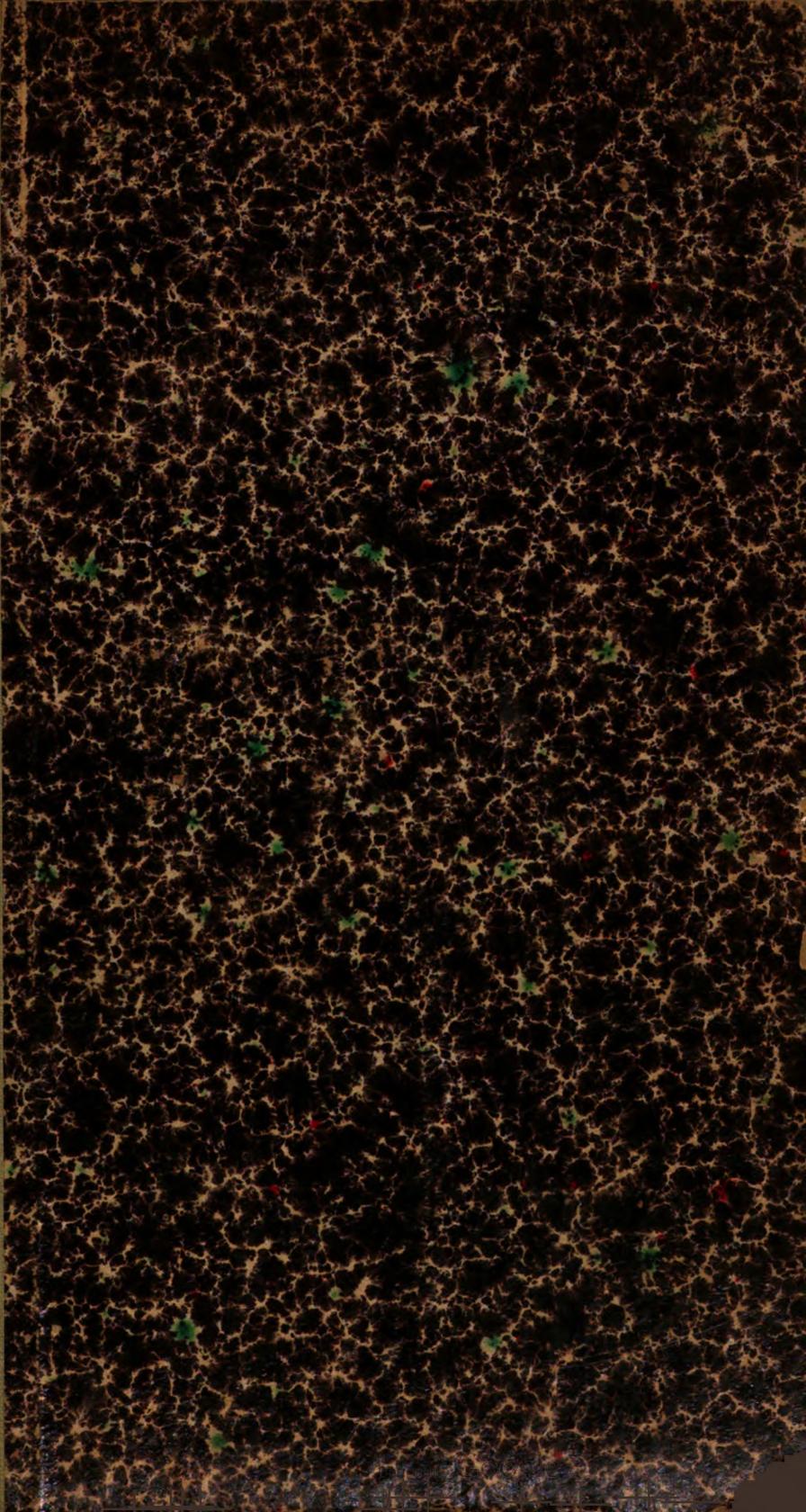
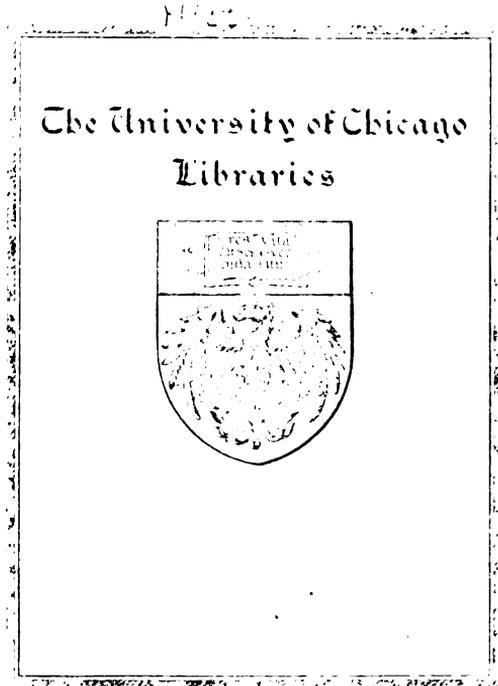


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REUNION OVERTURE

OF THE

Northern General Assembly

TO THE

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

CONSIDERED:

OR, THE

Records of the Northern O. S. Assembly,

FROM A. D. 1861 TO 1869,

REVIEWED.

JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI:

CLARION STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.

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REUNION OVERTURE

OF THE
CHICAGO LIBRARIES

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NOTE.

The following articles, originally published in the columns of the *South-Western Presbyterian*, under the signature of "PRESBYTER," are now collected in pamphlet form, under a call from different portions of the Church.

The facts set forth therein, form a part of the history of our times; and the argument is unobtrusively addressed, without even the author's name, to the reader's intelligence. .

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him."

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ARTICLE I.

Overture of the Northern Old School General Assembly to the Southern, Considered.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Old School Northern Assembly, during its sessions in the City of New York, May, 1869, adopted the following resolutions:

WHEREAS, The last General Assembly acknowledged the separate and independent existence of the Presbyterian Church in the Southern States, and enjoined upon all subordinate courts so to treat it, thus according to its ministers and members the privilege of admission to our body upon the same terms which are extended to ministers and members of other branches of the Presbyterian Church, in this country; therefore

Resolved, That this General Assembly hereby conveys its Christian salutations to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Southern States, and gives expression to its sentiments of Christian fraternity and fellowship toward the ministers of that body.

And as we inherit and hold with them the same ancient symbols of faith; the same forms of government and worship, thus representing before the world the same sacred principles to which our common ancestors witnessed, and which we have maintained, together, in the past; and, especially, since we occupy adjacent and, in many cases, common territory, we deem it due to our one Lord, and to the best interests of His kingdom on earth, to express the desire that the day may not be distant when we may again be united in one great organization that shall cover our whole land, and embrace all branches of the Presbyterian Church.

Resolved, That the Stated Clerk be directed to forward a copy of these resolutions to the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in the Southern States.

The formal adoption of this paper, with its official transmission to the Southern Assembly, brings up—in a form that cannot be avoided—the whole subject of our re-integration into the body from which we were separated in 1861.

It may be observed, *in limine*, as rather a curious fact in the history of diplomatic intercourse, that the body issuing these salutations, and inviting us to an early organic union with itself, in a few days thereafter, made preparation for its own demise. The long-pending negotiations between the Old and New School Churches, North, culminated this year in the decision of the Presbyteries that it should be accomplished, if at all, upon the basis of the Standards, *simpliciter*. This is accepted by both Assemblies, sitting side by side, in the same city, and is sent down for formal ratification to their respective Presbyteries. The two Assemblies

thereupon adjourn, to meet on the 10th of November, in the city of Pittsburg, to receive these returns, and to provide for the meeting of the united body, over which the two Moderators will preside, conjointly, and which shall be organized by the Clerks of both, until, by a new election of officers, the coalescence shall be perfected. The union itself, is, however, an accomplished fact. Nothing remains but the actual pouring of the two acids together into the same tumbler. It can only be arrested by a stupendous revolution in the opinions of the people of the North, which would now be simply disgraceful to both parties, and expose them to the derision and laughter of the whole world.*

When, therefore, the Southern Assembly, in May next, shall give respectful attention to this overture, it will look in vain, through air, earth, or sea, for the body to whom its reply shall be addressed! The echo lingers lovingly upon the ear, but, alas!

“The voice hath passed away,
Whence music, like sweet waters, gushed
But yesterday.”

The venerable Court from which it issued has no longer a separate corporate existence; and survives only as a constituent of a new and larger body, which can have no jurisdiction over the measure thus initiated. Whatever the response of the Southern Assembly may chance to be, there is no utterance possible. “*Hæret in faucibus*,” as some quaint Thomas Fuller may hereafter choose to disguise in pathetic Latin what is simply ludicrous in English; and so the dear Overture will receive an honorable interment in our records.

One is, indeed, at a loss to determine the precise object of a movement doomed to experience such a collapse. The motives, doubtless, were various, in so large a Council, and we will not encounter the peril of an attempt to scan them. Perhaps, in the judgment of many who have watched the course of that body during the past eight years, it was altogether decent that it should have one spasm of conscience in its last hour, and that it should, at least, appear to die in peace with all mankind.

In the present posture of this business it may seem entirely premature to discuss the proposed union upon its merits; but the following reasons not only justify this discussion, but render it singularly opportune just at this juncture:

1. The attention of the Southern Presbyterian Church is articulately challenged to its consideration, which may be all the more cool and impartial, when not under the necessity of a formal and final decision.

2. Centralization and consolidation being the particular idols of the hour, this question will be re-opened in every possible form that will afford the least hope of drawing the Southern Church within the fatal maelstrom.

3. Maligned as we have been, ever since our separate existence in 1861, no fitting opportunity should be lost of placing our record before the world; showing how persistently we have been followed with the curses of Shimei, if not with the persecutions of Saul.

* Since these sentences were written, the fusion has actually taken place.

In several subsequent papers, therefore, the writer proposes to review the legislation of the Northern General Assembly; that our people, looking upon the face of that record, may reach their own conclusion as to the union proposed.

ARTICLE II.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Assembly of 1861.

The Overture, which we are now considering, is clearly tentative in its design. It does not simply convey the Christian salutations of one ecclesiastical body to another, but it embodies an argument for the amalgamation of both—an argument based upon the identity of their symbols of faith and forms of government and worship; upon a common testimony borne during the history of the past; and upon the contiguity, and in some places, the overlapping of the territories of each—and distinctly expresses the hope that both may soon be embraced in a single organization. It is, therefore, shallow to regard it as a simple tender of Christian friendship, to which Christian courtesy compels a favorable response. There are principles involved which lift it out of the region of mere sentiment, as we shall presently discover; and we are free, for ourselves, to acknowledge that, in view of all the relations subsisting between the two bodies, we would require the same conditions for an official correspondence as for organic union. These are so closely identified in the Overture before us, that we shall not attempt any discrimination, but shall blend the two into one and the same proposition, in the strictures that follow.

1. Our first objection, then, to union, in any form, with the Northern Assembly, is based upon the fact that *this body has involved itself in criminal errors touching the Kingly office of Christ; ignoring, persistently, His spiritual kingdom, the Church—betraying her spirituality and independence, and perverting the power of the Keys to uphold the State; and introducing terms of ecclesiastical communion, unwarranted by Holy Scripture, and contradictory to the commands of Christ.* This heavy charge we prefer, with inexpressible sadness, against a Court which has been held in traditional reverence through a life-time; and we are responsible for the proof, drawn from the highest source—the repeated acts and deliverances, as found upon the records of the General Assembly, itself.

Before adducing this testimony, however, let us trace the doctrine of the Church, as laid down in our common and accepted standards, that we may the more clearly discover the nature and extent of the departures from the same. "The visible Church," says our Confession of Faith, "consists of all those, throughout the world, that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. Unto this Catholic visible Church, Christ hath 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; and doth, by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto." * * * "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ,—(Conf., chap. 25; 2, 3, 6.) This language unequivocally declares the spiritual ends she is to accomplish, and the spiritual means she is to employ; and constitutes a terse and exclusive assertion of the sole headship of Christ as her only King.

Again: "The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath appointed a government in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate."—(Conf., 30: 1.) "These Assemblies (congregational, presbyterial and synodical,) ought not to possess any civil jurisdiction, nor inflict any civil penalties. Their power is wholly moral or spiritual—and that only ministerial and declarative."—(Form of Gov., chap. 8: 2.) "Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical, and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the Commonwealth."—(Conf., ch. 31: 4.) These passages, with equal distinctness, define the boundaries of the Church, separating her spiritual jurisdiction from that of the State.

In the face, now, of these formal and explicit statements of the nature and functions of the Church, the Northern Assembly, at its sessions in Philadelphia, in 1861, by a vote of one hundred and fifty-four to sixty-six, adopted, what is known as "the Spring Resolutions." We omit the first—simply appointing a day of fasting and prayer—the second reads as follows:

"Resolved, That this General Assembly, in the spirit of that Christian patriotism which the Scriptures enjoin, and which has always characterized this Church, do hereby acknowledge and declare our obligation to promote and perpetuate, so far as in us lies, the integrity of these United States, and to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its functions, under our noble Constitution; and to this Constitution, in all its provisions, requirements and principles, we profess our unabated loyalty. And to avoid all misconception, the Assembly declares that by the term, Federal Government, as here used, is not meant any particular Administration, or the peculiar opinions of any particular party, but that Central Administration which, being at any time appointed and inaugurated according to the forms prescribed in the Constitution of the United States, is the visible representative of our national existence."

Among all the utterances, more fierce and bitter, which subsequently fell from the lips of this venerable Court, there is not one more penetrating and decisive than this. It touches, as with the point of a needle, the precise issue upon which the late civil war turned. There is not a person of ordinary intelligence in the land who does not know that the

cardo causæ of that whole struggle was the question of allegiance, and to whom it was due. From the formation of the Constitution down to 1861, through a period of seventy-five years, the vexed question was, where sovereignty—the *jus summi imperii*—resided: whether in the people, as they are merged into the mass—one undivided whole; or in the people, as they were originally formed into colonies, and afterwards into States, combining together for purposes distinctly set forth in declarative instruments of union. No one can read the debates of the Convention of 1787, without perceiving that the late war was a fearful legacy left to us by the indecision of our forefathers; and that this question of allegiance, sooner or later, must be settled by the sword, the will of the strongest, the *ultima ratio regum*. During three-fourths of a century the most eminent statesmen, North and South, have been divided upon this issue; one party maintaining, from its point of view, that we were always a nation in the political sense of a people fused into a common and solid mass, who were merely distributed into States for the convenience of local government; the other party maintaining that the Union was simply a *Congress* of States—each, originally, independent and sovereign—yet concurring, for common purposes, to create an organ common to them all, which, as a mere factor or agent, was charged with certain specified trusts, and was invested with certain limited and carefully defined powers. According to the one view, the relation of the citizen to the central authority is immediate, to which, therefore, his allegiance is due; according to the other, his primary relation is to a particular State, to which he owes allegiance, and through which, alone, he comes into contact with the central power.

It forms no part of our purpose to discuss either the one or the other of these theories. Our own views are indeed clear, and unchangeably fixed; but they have nothing to do with this paper. What we wish to have noted is, that it is just this question, lying wholly within the sphere of politics, that the Northern Assembly undertakes to decide. It “declares its obligation to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government;”—though a purely Ecclesiastical Court, it “professes unabated loyalty to the Constitution,” as interpreted by that Federal Government—and carefully defines this to be “that Central Administration” existing at any given time. Could any decision be more pronounced than this? Whilst Statesmen have disputed for nearly a century, whether allegiance was primarily due to the State, or to the Central authority, this Church Court cuts the Gordian knot, and settles, for its whole constituency, South as well as North, (for the Southern Assembly did not then exist,) to whom political allegiance was really due. We have not a word to say as to the political truth or falsehood of this decision. The North may have been entirely in the right, and the South wholly in the wrong, as to this political issue, so far as our present argument is concerned. We do not deny the individual right of a single Presbyterian on the floor of that Assembly, as a citizen, to hold and to express his views, of whatever complexion they might be; nor do we withhold from the Assembly itself the authority to expound the Scriptural duty of obedience to the Civil Magistrate; but when that body assumes to settle the very issue then pending as to that magistrate, declaring in

favor of one competitor, and against the other, it transcended its powers, and obtruded into the Commonwealth, with whose affairs it had been warned not to "intermeddle."

Lest this should appear to any of our readers to be only the judgment of a partisan, we subjoin an extract from the Protest to this deliverance, signed by Dr. Charles Hodge, and forty-five others, members of that same Assembly. It was not possible for the Church to swing from her ancient moorings, and plunge into this frightful apostacy, without an effort on the part of a few faithful witnesses to uphold the ancient testimony for the spirituality of the Church. The Protest reads as follows:

"We the undersigned, respectfully protest against the action of the General Assembly * * * because we deny the right of the General Assembly to decide the political question, to what Government the allegiance of Presbyterians as citizens is due, and its right to make that decision a condition of membership in our Church. That the paper adopted by the Assembly does decide the political question just stated, in our judgment is undeniable. It not only asserts the loyalty of this body to the Constitution and the Union, but it promises, in the name of all the Churches and ministers whom it represents, to do all that in them lies to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Federal Government.

"It is, however, a notorious fact, that many of our ministers and members conscientiously believe that the allegiance of the citizens of this country is primarily due to the States to which they respectively belong; and, therefore, that whenever any State renounces its connection with the United States, and its allegiance to the Constitution, the citizens of that State are bound, by the laws of God, to continue loyal to their State, and obedient to its laws. The paper adopted by the Assembly virtually declares, on the other hand, that the allegiance of citizens is due to the United States, anything in the Constitution, ordinances or laws of the several States to the contrary notwithstanding. * * * It is the allegiance of the Old School Presbyterian Church to the Constitution and the Federal Government which this paper is intended to profess and proclaim. It does, therefore, of necessity, decide the political question which agitates the country. This is a matter clearly beyond the jurisdiction of this House. * * * The General Assembly in thus deciding a political question, and in making that decision practically a condition of membership of the Church, has, in our judgment, violated the Constitution of the Church, and usurped the prerogative of its Divine Master."

Here, then, from the lips of Northern men, who, like Dr. Hodge, were politically in favor of the Assembly's decision, and who threw their vast influence against the South during the whole war, we have the confession that the Assembly, as an ecclesiastical body, was inhibited from making any such utterance—in doing which it "violated the Constitution of the Church; and *usurped the prerogatives of its Divine Master.*" Errors concerning the Kingly office of Christ may not be, in some forms at least, as subversive of salvation, as those relating to His Priestly functions. But it must be remembered that His Kingly office is, equally with the other two, essential to the integrity of the Christian scheme, and the Church is bound to uphold the truth on every side alike. The history of Christianity, moreover, shows most abundantly that errors upon the nature and functions of the Church are always attended by other departures from the Gospel, more immediately fatal to the soul. We regard this betrayal of Christ's supremacy in the Church, on the part of the Assembly, as but the beginning of a declen-

sion, which, we pray God, may be arrested by His grace, before it deepens and widens into utter apostacy from the truth. And when we are invited to consider the question of formal union with such a body, we cannot but pause before we consent to be implicated in their sin, and inquire whither such a union would be likely to drift us.

We have nothing to say of the shameful sycophancy of those in that Assembly who kept up a telegraphic correspondence with members of the Cabinet at Washington, inquiring what legislation by the Church, would be most esteemed at the Capitol. This correspondence, although it was allowed to be produced and read in open Assembly, we forbear to criticise, as being, perhaps, only the action of irresponsible persons. Our determination is to adduce no other evidence than the solemn and official declarations of the Assembly itself, as found upon its records.

ARTICLE III.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Assembly of 1862.

It is a trifle significant that the Northern Assembly of 1862, after organizing in the First Presbyterian Church at Columbus, Ohio, transferred its session to the Hall of the House of Representatives, tendered to their acceptance upon the "Whereas, there is no room in this city large enough for the accommodation of this body." Perhaps the plea was valid; but it strikes one as a little queer that, in the capital of the great State of Ohio, there should not be a church large enough for this venerable court, when our small villages, of less than a thousand inhabitants, gather much larger assemblies every Sabbath in more than one sanctuary of the kind. Still we do not object to an arrangement which so admirably preserved all the "proprieties." It was quite fitting that a court, which, by its action of the preceding year, had placed itself in voluntary subjection to the State, should forsake the House of God, where all the associations would be a protest against their defection; and, doubtless, the surroundings of a Legislative Hall prepared this State-Church to take up and consider the fanatical paper of Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, on "The state of the Country," which, this year, shaped the political utterance of the body. It is noticeable, too, that from this

time to the conclusion of the war, the appointment of a "Committee on the State of the Country," becomes as much a matter of course as the appointment of any one of the Standing Committees; and the adoption of a formal State paper is as regular a part of the proceedings as any deliverance upon missions, or any other subject, purely religious and ecclesiastical. All this is highly symbolic and perfectly consistent.

Our readers know exactly what to expect when Dr. Breckinridge is introduced upon the platform. Gifted with powers of invective, which make him the equal of Warburton, in bitterness, if not in wit, he possesses the same advantage of having the vigorous Saxon to curse in. The envenomed adjectives bristle, like the steel bayonets of an army, in his majestic declamation; deceiving himself and his blind admirers, alike, into the belief that it is argument, and not simply double-distilled abuse.

We give copious extracts from this diatribe of 1862, which is altogether too long to be engrossed in full, that its *animus* may be clearly seen:

"Peace has been wickedly superseded by war, in its worst form, throughout the whole land; and public order has been wickedly superseded by rebellion, anarchy and violence, in the whole southern portion of the Union. All this has been brought to pass in a disloyal and traitorous attempt to overthrow the National Government by military force, and to divide the nation, contrary to the wishes of the vast majority of the people of the nation, and without satisfactory evidence that the majority of the people, in whom the local sovereignty resided, even in the States which revolted, ever authorized any such proceeding, or ever approved the fraud and violence by which this horrible treason has achieved whatever success it has had. This whole treason, rebellion, anarchy, fraud and violence, is utterly contradictory to the dictates of natural religion and morality, and is plainly condemned by the revealed will of God. It is the clear and solemn duty of the National Government to preserve, at whatever cost, the National Union and Constitution; to maintain the laws in their supremacy; to crush force by force; and to restore the reign of public order and peace to the entire nation, by whatever lawful means that are necessary thereto. And it is the bounden duty of the people who compose this great nation, each one in his several place and degree, to uphold the Federal Government, and all persons in authority, whether civil or military, in all their lawful and proper acts, until the end hereinbefore set forth. * * * * *

If, in any case, treason, rebellion and anarchy can possibly be sinful, they are so in the case now desolating large portions of this nation, and laying waste great numbers of Christian congregations, and fatally obstructing every good word and work in those regions. To the Christian people scattered throughout those unfortunate regions, and who have been left, of God, to have any hand in bringing on these terrible calamities, we earnestly address words of exhortation and rebuke, as unto brethren who have sinned exceedingly, and whom God calls to repentance by fearful judgments. *

* * * * * We fear, and we record it with grief, that the Church of God, and the Christian people, to a great extent, and throughout all the revolted States, have done many things that ought not to have been done, and have left undone much that ought to have been done, in this time of trial, rebuke and blasphemy; but concerning the wide schism which is reported to have occurred in many Southern Synods, this Assembly will take no action at this time. It declares, however, its fixed purpose, under all possible circumstances, to labor for the extension and the permanent maintenance of the Church under its care, in every part of the United States. Schism, so far as it exists, we hope to see healed. If that cannot be, it will be disregarded. * * * * *

Let a spirit of quietness, of mutual forbearance, and of ready obedience to authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, illustrate the loyalty, the orthodoxy,

and the piety of the Church. It is more especially to ministers of the Gospel, and amongst them, particularly to any whose first impressions had been, on any account, favorable to the terrible military revolution which has been attempted, and which God's providence has hitherto so singularly rebuked, that these decisive considerations ought to be addressed. And in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, we earnestly exhort all who love God or fear His wrath, to turn a deaf ear to all counsels and suggestions that tend toward a reaction favorable to disloyalty, schism, or disturbance, either in the Church or in the country."

How the fond epithets do hug each other in the round dance of this blazing invective! "Treason"—"rebellion"—"anarchy"—"violence"—"fraud"—"disloyalty"—"schism"—"disturbance"—"conspiracy;" not sprinkled with a graceful diversity over this elegant specimen of literature—but the whole pack, "Tray, Blanch, Sweetheart," and all, opening together in almost each alternate line upon the unfortunate reader. Then the rhetoric gets hot as it spins; and passion mounts to the n-1 degree, in "this horrible treason," "this disloyal and traitorous attempt," "this time of trial, rebuke, and blasphemy." And, finally, with an audacity that is heroic—and which would be sublime, were it not profane—this excited writer manages to put the Almighty hero and there, on every side, as he pleases; pronouncing who "have been left of God," and who "are called to repentance by fearful judgments"; and using the tender name and terrible authority of the Lord Jesus, by which to anathematize the authors of "disloyalty and schism"; whilst the Church, whose highest Court adopts this amiable paper by a vote of 206 to 20, is sweetly assumed to be, "with emphasis, a loyal, orthodox, and pious Church."

The argument against this deliverance by the Northern Assembly, we prefer to give in the language of the Protests, signed by the faithful few who still struggled for the independence and spirituality of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Messrs. A. H. Dumont and B. R. Allen, while

"Assenting to all the principles asserted in this paper, dissent from what they solemnly and conscientiously believe, that in this deliverance the Assembly has contravened the 31st Article, 4th section of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, in its spirit and in its words."

Dr. Stuart Robinson, Dr. S. B. McPheeters, and J. S. Vredenburg, protest

"That in this paper—solemnly speaking in the name of Christ, and by the authority given to the Spiritual Courts—as it seems to us, sundry propositions concerning civil matters are handled and concluded, directly or indirectly, that are forbidden to the ecclesiastical courts, in chapter 31, section 4, of the Confession of Faith. We understand this article of the creed to be not merely an advice of what is expedient, but a brief summing up of the fundamental truths of Presbyterianism. * * * Among these truths are the propositions that there are two distinct and complete governments, divinely appointed for man: one, the civil government, from the Lord Christ, as the King of nations; and the other, the ecclesiastical government, from the Lord Christ, as King of saints. That these two jurisdictions, though to some extent over the same subjects, are ordained of Christ to be kept distinct. * * * That as the power of the sword, committed to the civil government, may not be used to do the spiritual work of the Church, so, on the other hand, the power of the keys, and the agencies and ordinances of the Church government may not be prostituted to the promotion of merely secular and political purposes. * * *

On these general considerations we protest against certain assumptions, which seem to us to be necessarily implied in parts of this paper, of a right in the Assembly to handle and conclude certain questions of fact in the civil and political history of the country; to pronounce upon the question of the duty of the National Government in reference to its civil and military policy; and to declare "loyalty" to be, in common with "orthodoxy and piety," an attribute of the Church and its courts. This use of the authority of the spiritual government to determine these questions of political history, is contrary to Scripture, rendering unto Cæsar the things that are God's; and the assumption of authority to pronounce upon the duty of the National Government, is equally contrary to the Scripture that enjoins on the Church, not *dictation to*, but "subjection to the powers that be."

Rev. A. P. Forman, and four others, present an able Protest, in which, among other things admirably put, he says:

We deny the right of the Assembly, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Christ, to decide any questions, or to utter, as truth, any things not contained in the Bible. We are limited, as a Church Court, in our authoritative teachings, by the Scriptures. Now, the paper adopted seems to assume that the primary allegiance of the citizen belongs to the National Government. Whatever we may believe about this as a political dogma, yet it is a question which cannot be settled by an appeal to the Scriptures, and must depend on an interpretation of a human instrument. So the statement of certain political facts depends on evidence neither in the Scriptures, nor in documents in the possession of this Assembly. Furthermore, the counsel of this paper, as to the duty of the Government to preserve, at whatever cost, the National Union, and to crush force by force, is counsel which we, as a Church Court, are not authorized, either by the Bible, or by special inspiration, in the name and by the authority of Christ, to give. * * *

The idea seems to underlie the paper adopted, that the Church owes allegiance to the State, for it speaks of "loyal Presbyteries and Synods," "loyal Church," etc. The citizen owes allegiance to the State, and is bound to uphold the civil government; but the Church, as such, owes allegiance only to the Lord Jesus; His kingdom is the only kingdom she is bound to uphold, hence she can be loyal only to her own King.

We have little of our own to add to these luminous statements, for we should but repeat the argument presented in the preceding article. The opprobrious terms in this scandalous document are utterly without meaning, if in the articles of confederation the several States remained free, sovereign and independent. This question is now purely historical; and upon it turns the decision whether the late war was, or was not, a rebellion. Whatever the final verdict of history may be, an ecclesiastical court was clearly incompetent to adjudicate it. In the attempt to do so, the Church but soiled her own robes, and betrayed the crown rights of her Redeemer King. This is the indictment we prefer against the Northern Assembly, that it has fearfully sinned against the office and person of our blessed Lord, into participation with which we will not consent to be drawn. We frankly say to our brethren at the North, that we will never enter into ecclesiastical association with them while these offensive epithets glisten upon their records. We never will seek admission into their ecclesiastical halls under the attainder of rebellion and of treason. That there has been war, fierce and bloody, fought on the one side, at least, to the point of sheer exhaustion, is, alas! too painfully known: but that we were rebels or traitors, we do not know. The offensive reproach rings upon our ear at every turn. The flippant literature of the North teems with the slander, as, like the frogs and

lice of Egypt, it comes up into our very bed-chambers. But in silence we bear it, making our solemn appeal from the passion, and prejudice, and fanaticism of the hour, to the tribunal of history; which will reverse these hasty and ill-considered judgments, and pronounce her final verdict in the light of the Constitution as it was framed by our fathers, and in the fast gathering evidence that the grand old Republic they sought to establish went down in the issue of that momentous struggle, as certainly as did the Republic of Rome under the victorious arms of Julius Caesar.

It is no mere sentiment which leads us to say that, whilst charged upon their records with these high crimes against both God and man, we can never homologate with the Northern Church. It is a duty we owe to historic truth—to our own sense of honesty and self-respect—to the children we have begotten, and who must share the infamy or the honor of the names they inherit—and, above all, to the graves of our countless dead, sleeping upon the vast battle-plain from Maryland to Mexico, whose epitaph we are not yet permitted to write.

ARTICLE IV.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Assembly of 1863.

The Assembly of 1863, which met at Peoria, Illinois, did not signalize its political zeal by sitting in a legislative chamber, but sealed its loyalty by sitting beneath the folds of the national flag. For days together, the venerable court was vexed with a grave discussion upon the propriety of this measure. The only banner which the Church in purer days had known, was that of the Covenant which the God of Peace had made with His own redeemed. But this which is now to float from the Church spire at Peoria, was so clearly the symbol of the “world power,” that the matter must be handled with a little tenderness. There is danger lest discord should arise in the loyal ranks, and that, upon a sorry side-issue. A few squeamish consciences might “not esteem this particular act a testimonial of loyalty entirely becoming to a Church Court;” yet the subject being once broached, it would be nothing short of constructive treason for a State Church to decline running up “the beloved

symbol," beneath whose benificent folds might sit the kingdom which is not of this world. But the diplomatic skill of the body was equal to the emergency of the hour. Machiavelli, himself, could not have done better. While the reverend committee is for days gravely incubating in secret, lo! the imperial emblem already flaunts in the breeze; and "your committee recommend that as the Trustees of this Church, concurring in the desire of many members of this Assembly, have displayed from this edifice the American flag, the symbol of national protection, unity and liberty, the particular action contemplated in the original resolution be no further urged upon the attention of this body." Who will not, henceforth, admire the genius of dodge, if there were only a Hogarth to sketch the scene? "Thou can'st not say I did it; shake not thy gory locks at me."

But, of course, the committee on this flag is also a committee on "the state of the country;" and their first difficulty is, that wit cannot be repeated without losing its salt. We give the following extracts from their report, adopted as the Deliverance of this Assembly, by a vote of 180 to 19, plus one non liquet, to whom the case was not yet plain:

"It is well known, on the one hand, that the General Assembly has ever been reluctant to repeat its testimonies upon important matters of public interest; but having given utterance to carefully considered words, is content to abide calmly by its recorded deliverances. Nothing that this Assembly can say, can more fully express the wickedness of the rebellion that has cost so much blood and treasure; can declare, in plainer terms, the guilt before God and man, of those who have inaugurated or maintained, or countenanced, for so little cause, this fratricidal strife; or can more impressively urge the solemn duty of the Government to the lawful exercise of its authority; and of the people, each in his several place, to uphold the civil authorities, to the end that law and order may again reign throughout this entire nation—than these things have already been done by previous Assemblies. * * *

But, on the other hand, it may be well for this General Assembly to re-affirm, as it now solemnly does, the great principles to which utterance has already been given. We do this the more readily, because our beloved Church may be thus understood to take her deliberate and well chosen stand, free from all imputations of haste or excitement. * * *

And because there are those among us who have scruples touching the propriety of any Deliverance of a Church Court, respecting civil matters, this Assembly would add that all strifes of party politics should indeed be banished from our Ecclesiastical Assemblies, and from our pulpits; that Christian people should earnestly guard against promoting partisan divisions; and that the difficulty of accurately deciding, in some cases, what are general and what party principles, should make us careful in our judgment; but that our duty is none the less imperative to uphold the constituted authorities, because minor delicate questions may possibly be involved. Rather, the sphere of the Church is wider and more searching, touching matters of great public interest, than the sphere of the civil magistrate, *in this important respect*: that the civil authorities can take cognizance only of overt acts; while the law, of which the Church of God is the interpreter, searches the heart, and makes every man subject to the civil authority, for conscience sake, &c. * * * Officers may not always command a citizen's confidence; measures may by him be deemed unwise; earnest, lawful efforts may be made for changes he may think desirable; but no causes now exist to vindicate the disloyalty of American citizens towards the United States Government.

The General Assembly would not withhold from the Government of the United States that expression of cordial sympathy which a loyal people should offer. We believe that God has afforded us ample resources to suppress this rebellion, &c. * * * And this Assembly is ready to declare our

unalterable attachment and adherence to the Union established by our fathers, and our unqualified condemnation of the rebellion; to proclaim to the world—the United States, one and undivided, as our country; the lawfully chosen rulers of the land, our rulers; the Government of the United States, our civil government; and its honored flag, our flag.”

So completely crushed out, within two years, was all opposition to the lawless usurpation of civil power by a Church Court, that but one member of the Assembly is bold enough to protest against this action,

—“because, while on the one hand it rightly denounces rebellion, and enjoins the duty of reverence and obedience to the powers that be, on the other it fails to recognize the fundamental antagonism there is between the Kingdom of Christ, in its origin, progress and destiny, and every form of the world-power not founded upon it”

We would not inflict this wearisome verbiage upon the reader, but for the necessity of continuing the chain of evidence by which our charge is sustained against the Northern Assembly, of defection from the truth, as respects the functions and office of the Church. There is in this paper absolutely nothing new; being only a feeble iteration of what the Assembly had before more strongly said, its positions are all covered by the arguments we have already presented. There is the same assumption that by the Constitution sovereignty is vested in the Federal Government, to whom the allegiance is due—and that when eleven great States rise up, in the exercise of a Constitutionally claimed right, to throw off this jurisdiction, it is still specifically an act of rebellion. There is the same assumption of ghostly authority to instruct the civil government in the discharge of its duties; and that in the face of the canon which restrains every Church Court from “intermeddling with civil affairs,” unless by way of petition, or “by way of advice for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate.”—(Confes. of Faith, chapter 31: 4.) Christ says, “My kingdom is not of this world;” this Assembly denies it, and says, it is. Christ says to Peter, “Put up thy sword;” this Assembly draws it from its scabbard, consecrates it with its blessing, and then puts it in the hands of the State, with the injunction to make it drunk with the blood of thousands. “Else would my servants fight for me,” says the Saviour; “crush force by force,” says the Assembly, “we have ample resources to suppress this rebellion.” It is a contrast we may do well to ponder, before we consent to be linked with their transgression.

As testimony, however, this paper is of value in so far as it declares all these deliverances of the General Assembly to be well-considered and deliberate. We are sorry to have thus cancelled the only apology which charity might be able to offer. If the Northern Church has “taken her deliberate and well-chosen stand, free from all imputations of haste or excitement,” “uttering carefully considered words,” then is her guilt so much the greater—and so much the deeper will be her repentance, when the Lord shall discover to her the sin; as by all the analogies of His dealings in the past, we may certainly expect Him to do, if they are still to be His people.

We solicit the readers’ attention to one paragraph in the Assembly’s paper, for the purpose of pointing out a fundamental fallacy in all these utterances of that venerable body. We refer to the distinction between

“general and party principles,” by which it is sought to satisfy the scruples of those who “doubted the propriety of any deliverance of a Church Court, respecting civil matters.” Waiving, now, all criticism of the awkward phraseology employed, and placing a liberal construction upon what was meant to be said, we take the real distinction intended to be this: the ordinary strifes between political parties, in peaceful and quiet times, the Church should eschew—but in a great revolution, which shakes the whole country to its base, and imperils every human interest, then the Church, in her priestly robes, must stand by the anointed rulers, and uphold their authority. We suspect this broad doctrine will require some limitation; and perhaps it may turn out that the last is precisely the case in which the Church is, by her very genius, inhibited from interfering. We have already shown that the precise difficulty in “the late unpleasantness,” was to determine who *were* “the powers that be.” The Assembly, indeed, quietly assumes it to be the Federal or central power, and forthwith pronounces the South in rebellion. But this question it clearly had no more Constitutional or Scriptural right, as an Ecclesiastical Court, to adjudicate, than to determine a disputed succession to the British throne. Still the changes are rung upon “subjection to the powers that be,” which, because the Church is the expounder of Scripture, is made the cover for all these political pronouncements. Was not the Reverend Assembly guilty, throughout, of a misinterpretation and misapplication of that and cognate portions of Holy Writ? To us it seems an injunction to render obedience to a constituted and recognized authority in a normal state of society; restraining from individual disobedience, and from petty conspiracies, against the same. But is there not such a thing as the right of revolution? May not an oppressed people rise in their majesty and throw off a tyrant’s yoke, though he be anointed as their ruler? Will the American Church undertake to interpret these Scriptures as binding the yoke of authority, however oppressive, upon the neck of the subject? If so, then have we re-affirmed the old theory of “the Divine right of kings,” and the old doctrine of “blind and passive obedience.” Then must the Church ever stand in the way of human progress, linking her spiritual sanctions with oppression and wrong; and by eternal penalties, holding the world in hopeless bondage, forever.

Take, as a concrete illustration, the revolution of 1776, when thirteen colonies threw off an acknowledged allegiance to the British crown, and fought through seven years for independence. Had they failed, they had been rebels; they succeeded, and were patriots. So thin, in the world’s flippant judgment, is the partition between the two. But surely there is, in the universe, a judgment that does not err, and which, from the beginning, scanned the true nature of that heroic struggle. But, according to the Assembly’s doctrine, they never were anything else but rebels, involved in “a horrible treason,” and “a frightful conspiracy.” And by this doctrine, every one in those tremendous majorities which voted in these Assemblies, had they lived eighty-six years ago, must have been a Tory. He could only have said, George the III is your recognized Sovereign, and the Scriptures enjoin “subjection to the powers that be.” This illustration shows, better than any abstract argu-

ment, that some limitation must be thrown around this doctrine of the Assembly, or it is convicted as false. And this limitation points out exactly their mistake in the interpretation and application of all these passages of Scripture. When the Bible says, "let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for the powers that be are ordained of God;" or again, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates;" or again, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake;" it teaches subordination to constituted authorities in a normal condition of society, where the ruler is known, and his jurisdiction is recognized. This the Church is to teach in her doctrine, and to enforce in her discipline—the very nature of the case making it plain to whom the obedience is due. But in those mighty convulsions of society, where a whole people rise up against their monarch, or where half a nation is arrayed against the other half—when especially, resort is made to the arbitrament of arms to determine who shall rule—the Church is bound to stand aside and wait the issue. Not until this is closed, and the supremacy fixes itself demonstrably somewhere, is she able to come forth and say, this point being settled, render the obedience which is due. As the kingdom which is not of this world, she is restrained from entering into these strifes, and determining who is Cæsar and who is not. He is presupposed as known and acknowledged, when the injunction comes, "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." The Church is no Warwick, to make and to unmake kings. Even upon their own theory, that supreme power lodged in the Federal Government, the Assembly, as a spiritual Court, had no authority to pronounce whether the South had, or had not, good and sufficient reasons for throwing off an acknowledged subjection; how much less, when it was precisely this disputed question of sovereignty which was submitted to the arbitration of battle?

ARTICLE V.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Assembly of 1864.

The minutes of 1864 exhibit throughout, the same stilted and stale denunciation of the war, as "a powerful and atrociously wicked rebellion, threatening not only our existence as a people, but the annihilation of the principles of a free Christian government," which we have sufficiently exposed in our preceding articles. We desire to say nothing more of the impertinence of these assumptions, by which a Church court attempts to decide between the claims of rival Cæsars.

A single sentence, however, in the Narrative, claims attention, as a distinct acknowledgement of the extent to which political preaching was then carried; and which has, in this honorable mention of it, constructively at least, the sanction of the Assembly:

“That while the pulpit has, in general, been true to its character in teaching the religious duty of the citizen—in inculcating the duty of subjection to the powers that be, and exposing the guilt of treason and rebellion—it has not been diverted from its great mission as the interpreter of God’s revealed truth to man, and become the expounder of questions which are purely secular.”

We will allow the confession and the disclaimer to go side by side. If the Northern “pulpit was, in general, true to its character, in exposing the guilt of treason and rebellion,” we know from these utterances of the Assembly just how far it was “diverted” from its proper work, and just how far it did “become the expounder of questions purely secular.” The admission and *quasi* justification of the general fact, is all that we care to note.

The political feature of this year’s proceedings consists in two acts of civil legislation—showing a clear advance in the direction towards Erastianism. The first respects a proposed amendment of the Federal Constitution, recognizing Christianity as by statute, the common law of the land :

Resolved, That it is our solemn national duty to amend our fundamental and organic law, that the Preamble of the National Constitution shall read, in substance, as follows :

“We, the people of the United States, *hereby acknowledging Almighty God as the source of all authority and power in civil government, the Lord Jesus Christ as the Governor among the nations, and His revealed will as the supreme law of the land, in order to constitute a Christian government, and in order to form a more perfect union; establish justice; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defence; promote the general welfare; and secure the inalienable rights and the blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,* to ourselves, our posterity, *and all, the people do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*”

The italics, which are our own, indicate the interpolations in this venerable instrument, so that by a glance of the eye the reader may be able to eliminate the principles intended to be incorporated by the Assembly. It is, however, far from our purpose to discuss the immense proposition of engrafting Christianity upon the civil government, with the Scriptures as its supreme law, simply because it is irrelevant to the object we have in view. Nor do we intend to oppose the right of a spiritual court, if it be satisfied of the wisdom of the suggestion, to bring it by petition or memorial, as they propose, before the attention of Congress. It may, perhaps, be classed among those religious questions which an ecclesiastical body might properly consider; however it might, in its practical outworking, implicate the State with the Church. All this might be urged in argument against the adoption of the principle, but does not strictly debar the Church from a due consideration of it in her spiritual courts. The decision will turn, of course, upon what is included in the mediatorial authority and rule of Jesus Christ—which being determined only by the Scriptures, brings the discussion within the range of ecclesiastical debate. But we call the reader’s attention to the other and far more subtle interpolation which is proposed. The transfer from the Declaration of Independence of that memorable sentence respecting “inalienable rights”—what has this to do with the other proposition, to which it is fastened, as a tail to the kite? Every

man knows how this language has been wrested from the sense in which it was used by our forefathers, and made to do partisan service by the disorganizing agitators of the past thirty years. The effort, therefore, to introduce it into the most important and the only authoritative political symbol and that, too, surreptitiously, under the cover of another proposition which, by its overwhelming importance, would naturally absorb the public attention—smacks of that political zeal which does not disdain the finesse of the partisan. What, too, is meant by that awkward phrase, "*and all the people,*" lugged in by the ears, where it has scarcely a logical connexion, and most certainly no natural affinity? It is an obtrusive and unblushing effort to foist upon the Constitution an utterance that should justify all the machinations of the Jacobins, who, for a generation past, have endeavored to force emancipation at every hazard; and from the consideration of which, this Assembly was restrained by its own organic law, which denies it the right of debating any question of civil policy.

But the reference to this topic conducts us to the second piece of legislation attempted by this body, and a most flagrant usurpation of the powers and functions of the State. It relates to the immediate emancipation of the slave; which, assuming to be the infallible interpreter of Divine Providence, it decrees in the following terms and italics:

It is our judgment that the recent events of our history, and the present condition of our Church and country, furnish manifest tokens that *the time has at length come in the providence of God, when it is His will that every vestige of human slavery among us should be effaced, and that every Christian man should address himself with industry and earnestness to his appropriate part in the performance of this great duty.* Whatever excuses for its postponement may heretofore have existed, no longer avail. When the country was at peace within itself, and the Church was unbroken, many consciences were perplexed in the presence of this great evil, for the want of an adequate remedy. Slavery was so formidably entrenched behind the ramparts of personal interests and prejudices, that to attack it with a view to its speedy overthrow, appeared to be attacking the very existence of the social order itself, and was characterized as the inevitable introduction of an anarchy, worse in its consequences than the evil for which it seemed to be the only cure. But the folly and weakness of men have been the illustrations of God's wisdom and power. Under the influence of the most incomprehensible infatuation of wickedness, those who were most deeply interested in the perpetuation of slavery *have taken away every motive for its further toleration.* * * *

It is the President's declared policy not to consent to the re-organization of civil government within the seceded States, upon any other basis than that of emancipation. In the loyal States, where slavery has not been abolished, measures of emancipation in different stages of progress, have been set on foot, and are near their consummation; and propositions for an amendment to the Federal Constitution, prohibiting slavery in all the States and territories, are now pending in the National Congress; so that, in our present situation, the interests of peace and social order are identified with the success of the cause of emancipation.

If this venerable court did not shrink from the responsibility of adjudicating the most fundamental and difficult question of our national politics, which had been in litigation from the beginning of our national existence, it ought not to surprise us that it should try its hand at spiritual legislation, in matters just as clearly beyond its jurisdiction. The institution of slavery is, however, purely civil in its character, and therefore belongs exclusively to the State; and the Church has no

other responsibility connected with it than to expound and enforce the duties arising from it, as in all other relations between man and man. The question of its continuance or destruction is one of those social and political problems belonging to the organization of society and the construction of governments, which lie wholly under the jurisdiction of the civil power. Yet this purely secular question is taken up in the discussions of a Church court, and determined with an authority, in the interpretation of God's providence, which it neither reached by inspiration, nor drew from the teachings of Holy Writ.

The reader will observe, too, how the Assembly, in this utterance, mixed itself up with "the President's policy," and "the re-organization of civil government in the seceded States," with "amendments to the Federal Constitution," and the prospective action of the National Congress, as though it were a *tiers etat* in the Commonwealth; and how the argument in this paper turns upon "the interests of peace and order;" "the preservation of liberty and independence," and "the principles of free Christian government;" and how this pious and venerable Court regales itself with the anticipated punishment hereby to be inflicted upon "the bloody rebellion," which "has taken away every motive for its further toleration," its decree of emancipation being confessedly an act of confiscation. With so perfect an aspirate does this Ecclesiastical Council pronounce the Shibboleth of the Senate Chamber, and echo from Newark the debates which originate at Washington.

This is all we have to say, at present, touching this matter. We are satisfied if the reader but notes the discordance between this bold usurpation of legislative power in civil matters, and the peremptory injunction of our ecclesiastical law, forbidding to intermeddle with the affairs of the Commonwealth, except by way of petition, or to resolve scruples of conscience at the magistrate's request. He can hardly forbear, also, to recognize another discrepancy, still more startling—that between this legislation upon American slavery, and that of Christ and His Apostles upon the immeasurably worse system which then prevailed throughout the Roman world.

Before concluding our criticism upon these proceedings of 1864, we notice a singular incident, dropped faintly upon the Record, but which is a singularly suggestive hint. Very early in the session a resolution was offered calling for a day of fasting and prayer, as seemingly demanded by the circumstances of the country. A mysterious reluctance is manifested to the entertainment of the overture; when, lo! it is suddenly squelched by substituting a day of thanksgiving, instead. If the key is sought for so complete a reversal of the original proposition, it will be found in the reason assigned in debate by the mover and advocates of the change, that the appointment of a Fast, just at this juncture, would "produce an unfavorable impression at Washington, and distress the Executive and his advisers, at Washington." To this complexion has it come at last, that the Church of God changes its mourning into song, simply to aid the diplomatic policy of the Cabinet, in warding off an apprehended recognition of the Confederate Government by the European powers. And what renders the complication worse is the fact that before adjourning the Assembly did proceed to

appoint a Fast—wisely fixing it, however, three months off, in September, just on the eve of a Presidential election. Not only so, the minute—adopted in reference to this Fast—instead of being couched in those general terms usually employed, runs into a singular and minute specification of public sins to be confessed; among the rest, “for the sins and evils essentially growing out of and sustained by our long continued system of slavery,” and “the prevalence of that extreme party spirit which leads good men to support—for positions of trust and power—candidates of known unfitness, or bad character.” What a beautiful margin here for the ventilation of all manner of political questions in those pulpits so “true, in general, to their character, in exposing the guilt of treason and rebellion!” And how nicely timed—on the eve of one of the great elections, which every four years shake this continent as with the throes of an earthquake—is the ecclesiastical thong, fitted with its appropriate text, to whip in refractory politicians all over the land! But we forbear. In our next article we shall take up the deliverances of 1865.



ARTICLE VI.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Assembly of 1865.

When the tribe of Benjamin had been nearly exterminated, we are told in the Book of Judges, that “all the people came to the House of God, and abode there till even, before God, and lifted up their voice, and wept sore, and said, O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?” This beautiful precedent we might have expected the Presbyterian Church to follow when it met in solemn Assembly, at the city of Pittsburg, in May, 1865. It was shortly after the surrender of the Southern forces, and the termination of hostilities; and the poor South lay panting and bleeding under the steel of the conqueror. The war-path of a victorious army—cut through the heart of her territory—smoked with the ruins of sacked cities and burning homes. Hungry and spent, feeble women and starving children lined this path of war, picking up the grains of corn which had fallen from the horses’ mouths during a night’s bivouac; and our famished soldiery sprang from the arms they had stacked, to ask their former foes for bread. Perhaps the warrior justi-

fied these severities upon the plea of Cromwell, when he put to death the garrison at Drogheda, that it was necessary, to "cut the Irish war to the heart." But now that it is all done, surely the children of Israel will "repent them for Benjamin, their brother." Sorrow will darken the face, and tears will moisten the cheeks of this venerable Council, at Pittsburg, that *eleven* tribes should be lacking in Israel. 'Alas! nothing is seen but the flush of fierce exultation in the hour of triumph; not a whisper is heard, but of vindictive retribution! Who will not exclaim, with David, "Let us fall, now, into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are great; and let us not fall into the hands of man?" It is impossible now to say what would have been the result, if a generous reconciliation had been tendered in the hour of broken-heartedness, as we sat upon the ruin of all our hopes. If the Overture of 1869 had been the Overture of 1865, there had been fewer difficulties to surmount, and an easier return to the bosoms that had not ceased to love. But the spirit of peace did not waft his wing over that haughty Council. Had he been frightened away by the discordant sounds of the four preceding Conventions? Certain it is, the water-spout of political fury, which had been gathering through four years of strife, burst, in the first hour of peace, in a deluge of wrath, on the Southern Church.

In support of this allegation we quote from a Minute adopted, as follows:

"WHEREAS, During the existence of the great rebellion, which has disturbed the peace, and threatened the life of the nation, a large number of the Presbyteries and Synods in the Southern States, whose names are on the roll of the General Assembly as constituent parts of this body, have organized an Assembly, denominated, 'the General Assembly of the Confederate States of America,' in order to render their aid in that attempt to establish, by means of the rebellion, a separate national existence, and 'to conserve and perpetuate the system of slavery,' therefore,

"Resolved, That this Assembly regards the civil rebellion for the perpetuation of negro slavery as a great crime, both against our National Government and against God; and the secession of those Presbyteries and Synods from the Presbyterian Church, under such circumstances, and for such reasons, as unwarranted, schismatical and unconstitutional.

"Resolved, 2, That the General Assembly does not intend to abandon the territory in which those Churches are formed, or to compromise the rights of any of the Church Courts, or ministers, or ruling elders and private members belonging to them, who are loyal to the Government of the United States, and to the Presbyterian Church. On the contrary, this Assembly will recognize such loyal persons as constituting the Churches, Presbyteries, and Synods, in all the bounds of the schism, and will use earnest endeavors to restore and revive all such Churches, and Church Courts.

"Resolved, 3, The Assembly hereby declares that it will recognize, as the Church, the members of any Church within the bounds of the schism, who are loyal to the Government of the United States of America, and whose views are in harmony with the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, and with the several testimonies of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of domestic slavery, etc."

We forbear citing the remainder of this lengthy paper, in which provision is made in detail for giving efficiency to the principles above enunciated. But we may quote, in this precise connexion, a portion of the instructions given to their Board of Domestic Missions, as found in the two following resolutions:

“Resolved, 3, That the General Assembly direct the Board of Domestic Missions to take prompt and efficient measures to restore and build up the Presbyterian congregations in the Southern States of this Union, by the appointment and support of prudent and devoted missionaries.

“Resolved, 4, That none be appointed but those who give satisfactory evidence of their loyalty to the National Government; and that they are in cordial sympathy with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in her testimony on doctrine, loyalty and freedom.”

The aspersions against the Southern Church, in the foregoing extracts, we reserve for special consideration hereafter. We are, at present, establishing the charge of an unlawful complicity with the State, on the part of the Northern Church.

It will be observed how exactly this Assembly adopts the policy of the Government. As the one decides that the States must all remain in the Union, even if they are to be pinned there with the bayonet; so the other decrees all the Southern Presbyteries and Synods to be “unconstitutionally and schismatically” withdrawn from the Assembly’s jurisdiction. As the State claims the right to coerce the seceded States back into the Union, so the Church will coerce the schismatical Presbyteries back into their old ecclesiastical fellowship. And precisely the same measures of reconstruction are proposed in the Church, which have worked so awkwardly in the State, viz: a wholesale disfranchisement of all who are suspected of disloyalty, and the erection of petty minorities in Churches and Church Courts into Churches and Courts in whom all the rights and franchises of a true succession are to vest.

It will be observed, again, with what vigor this Assembly addresses itself to the task of sowing discord and creating schism in the bosom of the Southern Church, by the “appointment and support of devoted missionaries,” who, like the carpet-bag politicians in the State, shall swoop down upon the prey, fanning the flame of discontent, if haply, it should anywhere burst forth; and offering every species of ecclesiastical bribe to the minorities whom they shall induce to secede. We are not without practical proof of the methods by which this fraternal scheme of disintegration was to be worked. For example, in the case at this moment pending, of the Church at Jacksonville, Florida, where the property is wrested by a minority, and held in the grasp—by the way—of the very Central Presbytery of Philadelphia, with whom this late Overture of re-union originated: and which, at the very moment it extends with one hand these fraternal salutations, holds with the other the property of a Southern Church, wrested from it by the very process initiated by this Assembly of 1865, upon which we are now commenting. And if this scheme of disintegration did not generally succeed “within the bounds of the schism,” the failure is due to the wonderful unanimity of our own people, presenting so few fissures in which to drive the wedge of division and strife.

It will be further noted how uniformly a profession of loyalty to the Government is made the test of adhesion to the Assembly, and the distinguishing qualification of their agents, who are to be employed in this work of ecclesiastical reconstruction. And, finally, how these political utterances ere exalted to the nature of “testimonies;” and how, in these

testimonies, "loyalty" and "freedom," are co-ordinated with "doctrine" and "the Confession of Faith"—the same emphasis being placed upon both. Nay, so far is this carried, that these testimonies on "loyalty and freedom" are to be received *ex animo*, just like the doctrines of our religious creed. Inquisition is made into the secret heart, whose hidden "sympathies" must all be in harmony with these Deliverances. Orthodoxy, piety, general fitness for the work of preaching the Gospel, are all of them to be set aside, if "satisfactory evidence is not given" upon this new and purely political test of "loyalty to the National Government!" However discreetly in silence a godly minister may seal his lips upon these disputed points of allegiance and human rights, he is proscribed in the Ecclesiastical Star Chamber, at Philadelphia, from which the commissions are issued to the Evangelists of the Church, unless his concealed *sympathies* should be in conformity with the new standard erected.

But, the brevity of a newspaper article forbids expansion. We must be content with barely writing out the facts themselves, upon which the reader must make his own reflections. We pass on, then, to the action taken by this Assembly on the overture from the Presbytery of California, inquiring "what course ought to be taken in admitting to this body ministers who are suspected of disloyalty to the Government of the United States?"

From the answer it would seem that a needless alarm had seized the body, lest there should be a general rush of the eight hundred ministers in the South, into its embrace, against which invasion the doors must be closed in season. We give only what is necessary to enable the reader to understand the spirit of this paper:

III. It is hereby ordered that all our Presbyteries examine every minister applying for admission, from any Presbytery or other ecclesiastical body, in the Southern States, on the following points:

1. Whether he has, in any way, directly or indirectly, of his own free will and consent, or without external constraint, been concerned at any time in aiding or countenancing the rebellion and the war which has been waged against the United States; and if it be found, by his own confession, or from sufficient testimony, that he has been so concerned, that he be required to confess and forsake his sin in this regard, before he shall be received.

2. Whether he holds that the system of negro slavery in the South is a Divine institution; and that it is "the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery, as there maintained;" and if it be found that he holds either of these doctrines, that he be not received without renouncing and forsaking these errors.

IV. This injunction to Presbyteries is, in like manner, applicable to Synods; and it is hereby ordered that upon the application of any Presbytery, &c., such Synod shall examine all the members of said Presbytery on the points above named, &c.

V. Church Sessions are also ordered to examine all applicants for Church membership, by persons from the Southern States, or who have been living in the South since the rebellion, concerning their conduct and principles, on the points above specified; and if it be found that, of their own free will, they have taken up arms against the United States, or that they hold slavery to be an ordinance of God, such persons shall not be admitted to the communion of the Church, till they give evidence of repentance for their sin, and renounce their error.

We shall recur hereafter to this paper, and render our own opinions, and those of our people, on some of its allegations; which may turn out a rather different version from that which these translators have given.

We are dealing now, simply with the *politics* of this document, and the spirit which it breathes towards the Southern Church. Here, then, precisely at the close of the war, before we had time to view our altered condition, and to look the questions of future duty in the face, this venerable Assembly closes down upon us as rebels in the Church, no less than in the State, to whom a due punishment must be meted out. Instead of an overture saluting us as brethren in Christ, we are denounced as rebels and schismatics. Instead of the sweet wish that "we may again be united in one great organization," the door is slammed, rudely and violently against any return; and then is locked, bolted and barred by imposed conditions, which the venerable body knew could never be complied with, through all time.

Although the Presbyterian Church at the South was thoroughly organized, with a complete scale of Courts, this Assembly claims jurisdiction over her whole territory; proceeds in an effort to disintegrate her; then appoints measures of reconstruction from the chaos which is to be wrought; and winds up with a bill of attainder, which, if it could only take effect, would deprive all the ministers and Churches of the Southern Assembly, of every ecclesiastical franchise. Singularly enough, too, the charges preferred do not touch one of the doctrines of grace, but are based upon subjects on which human opinion has, through all ages, been the most divided, and lying exclusively within the sphere of the State; the nature and limitation of civil allegiance, and the doctrine of natural rights. Thus, with entire consistency, the Northern Assembly follows the established precedents of its previous legislation, and stamps its own character as rather a Political than an Ecclesiastical body.

ARTICLE VII.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Assembly of 1865--Continued.

The Minutes of 1865 teem with political complications, which could not be brought under review in a single article. We take up next, the Paper on "The State of the Country."

It was a grand opportunity. War had ceased, and peace was restored; the North had triumphed, and the South was subdued. The Assembly, duly impressed with the sublimity of the occasion, reverentially arose to receive and adopt the report of their committee. We presume they sat

down again, under the conviction that they had listened to about the hardest, driest, flattest paper that a great occasion ever produced. Yet it ought not to surprise us. The fierce and cruel spirit of that Council could not achieve what alone was suitable to the hour—a testimony that should be humble in its gratitude, and pathetic in its joy. Assuming the form of thanksgiving to God, it should have throbbled with genuine religious emotion, from the first word to the last. In reality, the first word and the last are all that are religious in their tone, while the body of the paper rings with purely political issues. It expatiates upon “the inextinguishable love for our National Union, with which the hearts of the loyal people were filled”—upon “the mighty host of valiant men who were ready to give their lives in defense of our National Government”—upon “the various departments of that Government, which equipped and maintained our vast army and navy”—upon “the leaders of wisdom, courage and skill, suited for every emergency”—upon “the unwonted benevolence which promoted the physical comfort and spiritual welfare of our soldiers and sailors.” It canonizes Mr. Lincoln, to whom all public and private virtues are assigned; and rejoices that, though falling at length beneath the blow of an assassin, he was “permitted to see the power of the rebellion crushed; its strongholds repossessed; its conquered armies forced to surrender; the national honor, untarnished by acts of barbarism or cruelty, vindicated!!!—the integrity of the Union preserved, the scheme of emancipation, which he had the wisdom to devise and the courage to execute, made effective to the deliverance from bondage of four million of slaves,” &c. Such is the tenor of this document, which, save as it has in it the name of God, cannot be distinguished from any similar instrument emanating from a legislative chamber.

The last evidence which we adduce from these Records of 1865, is the Assembly's decision upon the complaint of Rev. Robert P. Farris, and the Session of the First Church of St. Charles, against the Synod of Missouri; into which, for the sake of brevity, we sink the case of Rev. Dr. McPheeters, decided the preceding year, as the same principles cover both. We will recite the history of this case, as briefly as possible. During the ascendancy of military authority in the State of Missouri, in the year 1864, there was issued the celebrated “Rosencrans-Order,” requiring every person participating in the proceedings of any convention, synod, ministerium, assembly, conference, council, or by whatever name called, to take and subscribe to an oath of allegiance in the following terms:

“——, of —— county, State of ——, do hereby solemnly swear that I will bear true allegiance to the United States, and support and sustain the Constitution and laws thereof; that I will maintain the National Sovereignty paramount to that of all State, county, or Confederate powers; that I will discountenance, discourage, and forever oppose secession, rebellion, and the disintegration of the Federal Union; that I disclaim and denounce all faith and fellowship with the so-called Confederate armies; and pledge my honor, my property, and my life to the sacred performance of this, my solemn oath of allegiance to the Government of the United States of America.”

This stringent oath was required to be filed in the Provost Marshal's office; and it was made the duty of all Assistant Provost Marshals to

enforce this order, upon all assemblages; the members of which should be held guilty of a military offence, if any person was permitted to participate in their proceedings without first taking and filing the required oath. When, accordingly, the Synod of Missouri met, the Rev. Mr. Farris, and Mr. Watson, representative of the Church in St. Charles, claimed their seats, without the qualification of this oath. We are absolutely ignorant of their political opinions; they may have been, in favor of the South, or in favor of the North, it matters not. They were men, at least, jealous for the honor of the Church, and for the independence of her courts. The Moderator, however, in conformity with the above military order, ruled them both out of the body; and though admitting that they were members, denied them the right of participating in the proceedings. Of this "grievous injustice" they complained to the Assembly, and claimed redress. The Assembly dismissed the complaint upon the pitiful evasion that there was no action of the Synod, as such, but only of the Moderator, from which the complainants took no appeal to the body—although it was clearly shown that the members of the Synod, by their acquiescence, made the decision of the Moderator their own; and that the refusal of a seat in the body carried with it the denial of all appeal, as they were peremptorily ordered to be silent when attempting even a remonstrance against this violent and unconstitutional decision. We do not care to enter upon the discussion of technicalities of this sort; believing that if these could be raised, the gravity of the case demanded that it should have been taken up, and decided upon its merits. But what will the reader say to the following language of the Assembly, in which this outrage upon the freedom and independence of the Church Courts is glozed over:

"Great allowance should be made for the peculiarly embarrassing circumstances under which the Synod met, and the caution and deliberation which were requisite to avoid a needless conflict with the military authorities. The Assembly is not called upon to decide any thing in regard to the propriety or impropriety of the military order referred to in the protest; but it is satisfied that it is no just cause of complaint against Church officers, or Church Courts, that they rendered obedience to it, or refused to disobey it. If office-bearers and judicatories of the Church felt, in conscience, bound to submit to this order, they who desired to resist it have no good ground for complaint against those who refused to aid them in such resistance."

We are almost afraid to trust the pen in delineating the shameless sycophancy of this utterance; and, what is immeasurably worse, the base betrayal of the Saviour's sovereignty over his own Church. If there is a fundamental right, it is that of every ordained minister to sit and deliberate in the Court of the Church, of which he is a permanent member. Yet here stands the man of the sword upon the threshold of the Synod of Missouri, imposing *civil* oath as a qualification for admission. The oath may have been a very proper oath to be imposed upon these men, as *citizens*; we have nothing to say about that. But it was simply monstrous to impose it upon them as *ministers*, who, by the Constitution of the Church, were already members of the Court assembled, and whose rights and privileges there were held under ecclesiastical, and not civil law. All this, however, dreadful as it is, could be tolerated as occurring in disjointed times. But when the General

Assembly, meeting after the close of the war, and no longer coerced by the plea of military necessity, apologies for the act, and partly justifies it, this appears to us an amazing dereliction from a great and solemn trust. One would have thought that the occasion would be gladly seized to repair any dislocations of their system through the rudeness of war; that, jealous for the freedom of the Church, they would be in haste to assert her supremacy within her own jurisdiction; that the State would be reminded that she was a free, spiritual commonwealth; and that care would be taken lest these infractions should be drawn, hereafter, into precedent. Yet this Assembly coolly says "it is not called upon to decide anything in regard to the propriety or impropriety of the military order referred to;" and that if Church officers and courts see fit to obey it, "there is no good ground for complaint." A year or two later, this venerable Church, smarting under the adverse decisions of the Kentucky courts, found its heart stirred by the spirit of the Old Covenanters, and read a lecture to the State in these remarkable words:

"As Jesus Christ hath appointed a regular government and discipline in His Church, no law of any Commonwealth should interfere with, let, or hinder the due exercise thereof, among the voluntary members of any denomination of Christians, according to their own profession and belief."

But then, that was only little Kentucky, with her little shire sovereignty; if, however, the "paramount sovereignty" should place its military heel upon the very neck of the Church, "this Assembly is not called upon to decide upon its propriety or impropriety." So intense is the loyalty to Cæsar—so feeble is the loyalty to Christ!

With this review of the Records of 1865, we close the testimony as to the political and secular character of the Northern Assembly; not that the evidence is exhausted, but that the task we have undertaken is thoroughly distasteful to us, and we are glad to abridge it, as far as possible. The evidence we have supplied is overwhelming. It consists of deliverances repeated through five successive years, varying in form, but singularly unanimous in their import—made each year in the face of the truth, as set forth in the protests drawn up by faithful men, and which were bound to be considered in order to be answered—deliverances, as we are often reminded, which were deliberately weighed before they were uttered—which are exalted into solemn testimonies, to be received *ex animo*, and upon the same level with the doctrines of the Confession—testimonies upon precisely the most uncertain and disputed topics within the range of human discussion, which introduce new terms of Christian and ecclesiastical communion—and which culminate at last in the most abject surrender of the Church's independence and liberty to the drawn sword of the State. What is to us inconceivably sad, is the reflection that the Old School body is just now about to close its career in that form of organization in which these things were done, without one word of retraction or sign of penitence. Merging into another and larger body, of which it will hereafter be only a constituent element, there will shortly be no Court in existence which will have any jurisdiction in the premises. It is a solemn crisis when our actions pass beyond recall. This Northern

Church is now in the very act of sealing up all these testimonies, and of depositing them in the archives of history, never to be opened until the judgment day. In a few months it will be impossible for her to take back any of these rash utterances. Stereotyped upon the page of history, the record must stand unchanged, until it passes under the review of that Infinite Being, against whom this great wrong has been done. But whilst the doors of their ecclesiastical halls are closing together, never to be unbarred through all time, we hang up this our protest against their pernicious intermeddling with the affairs of the Commonwealth, and our reply to the challenge which they have proffered why we cannot be integrated into one body with them.

ARTICLE VIII.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Declaration and Testimony.

The charge of disloyalty to Christ, in His kingly rule over the Church sustained in the preceding papers against the Northern Assembly, by no means exhausts the argument against the proposed Overture for Union. We proceed, now,

II. To our SECOND objection, based upon *the flagrant violations of the Constitution, in the Assembly's treatment of the signers of the Declaration and Testimony*; destroying all confidence in its interpretation of the only instrument which serves as a bond of union between the members of the same ecclesiastical organization.

It will be necessary to recite the history of this affair somewhat in detail, that the reader may estimate the force of the objection.

It was not possible for the Church to enter upon a policy which so fully complicated her with the State, without earnest opposition from many who still prized her spirituality and independence, as one of the doctrines of their ancient faith. Hence, as we have already seen, protest after protest was filed against these political utterances. As the war spirit became more rampant, this voice of resistance indeed became weaker; until, after 1862, it was almost silenced. This, however was due to no change in the convictions of the protestants; but rather to the apparent hopelessness of opposition, and to the fact that the Delegates returned to the succeeding Assemblies were chosen under the war feeling, and perfectly reflected the popular passions. But when, in 1865, this frenzy burst forth in the proscriptive edicts which disgraced the Assembly at Pittsburg, the slumbering spirit of dissent was again

evoked, and uttered its remonstrances in tones that could no longer be smothered. Christian men, who loved the truth, were aghast at the peril which confronted the Church of God. They had mourned in secret over her sad declension—cherishing, perhaps, the hope that when the extraordinary pressure of the war should cease, then the Church would return, under the instincts of piety, to the old paths in which she had been accustomed to walk. What was their dismay when, in the first hour of peace, these aberrations were not only endorsed, but fastened upon the Church as the fixed policy, to which her future legislation must be rigidly conformed? The exigency of the hour called for measures of unusual vigor, if the Church was to be plucked from the abyss into which she had already plunged. A solemn Declaration and Testimony was accordingly drawn up against the entire political action of the five Assemblies, from 1861 to 1865 inclusive. This paper, in nervous language, recapitulated the errors into which the Church had fallen. It is too long to be here engrossed, covering more than twenty pages of print. We subjoin, however, its several specifications, for the reader's information:

“In the name, therefore, of the Living God, the Holy One of Israel, we do solemnly testify:—

1. Against the assumption, on the part of the Courts of the Church, of the right to decide questions of State policy.

2. Against the doctrine that the Church, *as such*, owes allegiance to human rulers or governments.

3. Against the sanction given by the Church to the perversion of the teachings of Christ and His Apostles, upon the subject of the duty of Christians, as citizens, to ‘render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,’ and to ‘be subject unto the higher powers.’

4. Against the action of the Assembly on the subject of slavery and emancipation, in 1864, and as confirmed in 1865:

In that it omits, altogether, all reference to the uniform and most important declarations contained in its previous expressions of opinion, that *immediate and indiscriminate emancipation of the negro slaves amongst us would be unjust and injurious* to both master and slave.

And then, upon this basis of suppression and perversion, there is laid down a new doctrine upon this subject of slavery unknown to the Apostolic and primitive Church—a doctrine which has its origin in infidelity and fanaticism, and which the Presbyterian Church had, before, uniformly treated as a dangerous error, &c.

5. We testify against the unjust and scandalous contradiction of their own recorded testimony, and the well-known facts, in regard to the labors of the Presbyterian Church and ministry, for the *Christianizing of the slaves of the South and the preaching to them of the Gospel of Christ*.

6. We testify against the doctrine, widely taught in the Church, and even countenanced by the Assembly, that the acts and deliverances of the Courts of Christ's Commonwealth may properly be based upon, and shaped in accordance with the ordinances and laws of State Legislatures; the orders and proclamations of military chieftains; and even the results of popular votes given at the elections.

7. We testify against the doctrine that the will of God, as to the duty of the Church and of His people, is to be learned from particular provincial events; and that the teachings of the Scriptures are to be interpreted by these providences. Thus the Word of God is subjected to the mere caprice of man's own fancy; and its supreme authority, as the only infallible rule of faith and duty, is subordinated to the blind and ever erring interpretations that may be put upon certain isolated occurrences, &c.

8. We testify against the sanction which has been given, both directly and

indirectly, to the usurpations, by the secular and military power, of authority in and over the worship and government of the Church.

9. We testify against that alliance which has been virtually formed by the Church with the State, by which the State has been encouraged, and even invited, to use the Church as an instrument for giving effect to its various schemes of a political character. And, on the other hand, the Church has become a subordinate agent to enforce, with ecclesiastical pains and penalties, the demands of the State.

10. We testify against that persecution that has been carried on for these five years past, and with increasing malignity, towards all those who have steadfastly refused to sanction or acquiesce in these departures of the Church from the foundations of truth and righteousness.

11. We testify against the wide-spread and destructive perversion of the commission of the ministry, and the province of Church courts.

12. We testify against the action of the Assembly in reference to the Churches in the seceded and border States, and against the basing of that action upon an assertion of what the Assembly had the clearest evidence was not true.

13. We testify against that act of the Assembly by which the Board of Domestic Missions are constituted a court of final and superior jurisdiction, to judge of the orthodoxy of the ministers and the soundness of their views, touching the nature of the government of the United States, &c.

14. We testify against all and every movement in the Church, however cautiously or plausibly veiled, which looks to a union of the State with the Church, or a subordination of the one to the other, or the interference of either with the jurisdiction of the other.

Against each and all these errors in doctrine and practice we testify :

1. Because they are contrary to the Word of God, and subversive of its inspiration and supreme authority, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

2. Because they are contrary to the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church, as taught in her Confession, Catechisms, and Constitution.

3. Because they tend to obliterate all the lines of separation between the civil and ecclesiastical powers; to confound their jurisdiction; to identify them with each other, and so to destroy the freedom of both.

4. Because they have brought the ministry, and ordinances of religion, and the authority of the Church, into public disrepute.

5. Because they tend to keep up strife and alienation among brethren of a common faith, and thus delay the pacification of the country.

6. Because they are schismatical."

Such is the substance of this important document, which we cannot condense further, without rendering it unintelligible. It is indispensable to the discussion we have in hand, since, without it, the action of the Assembly, when it came, in 1866, to consider its contents, could not be understood. It shows, too, most clearly, that we have not overstated, in our previous articles the defection of the Northern Church in her entanglement with the State; since the faithful, within her own bosom, were thus constrained to lift up the banner of their testimony against the corruptions which were sweeping the Church from her ancient foundations.

This Declaration was numerously signed, particularly in the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri, and was also largely circulated throughout the bounds of the Old School Church, at the North. It was also formally adopted by the Presbytery of Louisville, on the 2d of September, 1865; and became a solemn covenant by which all the signers pledged themselves to each other, to "use their best endeavors to bring back the Church of their fathers to her ancient purity and integrity," and if finally compelled to "withdraw from those who have departed from

the truth, to go, bearing with them the true Presbyterian Church, with her doctrine, order, worship and freedom, as they have been given her by her Divine Head, and transmitted from generation to generation by the hands of saints, confessors and martyrs."

But the Northern Church was not in the temper to be reformed. The dominant party, which had risen into power upon the whirlwind of political passions, was too much intoxicated with the lust of dominion to brook any restraint upon its arbitrary will. The overwhelming majority by which, through five years of intense excitement, it had succeeded in passing all its measures, gave assurance of an easy triumph over this feeble band whose only weapon was a Declaration, on the unpopular side, against the madness and fury which were ruling the country. The solemn appeal, which summoned the Church to reflection and to repentance, only goaded her to frenzy; and the Assembly which met in 1866, in the city of St. Louis, instead of coolly weighing the remonstrances addressed to its conscience, only thought of crushing out, by one decisive blow, what it was pleased to denounce as "*as an organized conspiracy.*" "Let the righteous smite me", says David, "it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head." But here is a public and united appeal to the intelligence and piety of the whole Church, upon subjects that vitally affect her honor and the Master's glory, which this venerable Council does not pause even to consider. At the very threshold of its proceedings it erects the ecclesiastical guillotine, and displays all the tortures of ecclesiastical discipline.

The Assembly was opened in the usual form, at eleven o'clock, on Thursday, May 17, 1866. At four in the afternoon the Moderator and Clerk were duly elected; just then, at precisely the earliest moment that business could be introduced, the following resolution was offered:

WHEREAS, It is understood that the Presbytery of Louisville has openly defied the General Assembly, and refused to submit to its orders, in a pamphlet adopted by it, of which the following is a specimen, viz: "we will not sustain or execute, or in any manner, assist in the execution of the orders passed at the last two Assemblies, on the subject of slavery and loyalty; and with reference to the conducting of missions in the Southern States; and with regard to the Ministers, members and Churches in the seceded and border States"; and,

WHEREAS, Said Presbytery has commissioned and sent to this Assembly, at least one Commissioner, who, if the order of the last Assembly had been faithfully executed by said Presbytery, there is the strongest ground for believing would have been suspended from the functions of the Gospel ministry; therefore,

Resolved, That until the Assembly shall have examined and decided upon the conduct of said Presbytery, the Commissioners therefrom shall not be entitled to seats in this body.

After an ineffectual attempt to lay this resolution upon the table, which only resulted in carrying the decision over till the following morning, early the next day, as soon as the standing Committees had been announced, this resolution was adopted, under the operation of the previous question, called for by the mover himself, by a vote of 206 to 56. Immediately upon its passage, the same self-appointed prosecutor in this anomalous judicial proceeding, offered a second resolution, in the following terms:

“Resolved, That a committee of seven be appointed, to be composed of four ministers and three ruling elders, to examine into the facts connected with the alleged acts and proceedings of the Louisville Presbytery; and whether it is entitled to representation in this General Assembly; and to recommend what action, if any, this Assembly should take in regard to said Presbytery.”

This resolution, like the preceding, was adopted, under the gag-law which arrests debate, known in parliamentary circles as “the previous question.”

But we arrest the history at this point to be resumed in our next article.

ARTICLE IX.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Declaration and Testimony—Continued.

The narrative of last week left the Committee of Seven deliberating what further action should be taken by the Assembly, after ejecting the Commissioners of the Presbytery of Louisville. The elaborate report of this Committee, after aggregating all the sharp expressions in the Declaration and Testimony, so as to work the Assembly up to the proper degree of irritation, proceeds to find in this whole movement, proof of “an organized conspiracy against the honor, the peace and the unity of the body of Christ.” It proposes, therefore, that the Presbytery of Louisville be forthwith dissolved, as “recusant and rebellious;” and that a new Presbytery be constituted of certain parties named, who must, however, subscribe a formula, avowing their disapproval of the Declaration and Testimony. Two months’ grace is also allowed to the signers of that wicked document, to retract their error; after which, if still recusant, their pastoral relations are to be, *ipso facto*, dissolved. This form of discipline was, however, superseded by the famous Gurley substitute; as unique a specimen of legislative joinery as can be found upon human records. It is embraced in the following resolutions:

1. Resolved, That this General Assembly does hereby condemn the Declaration and Testimony, as a slander against the Church; schismatical in its character and aims; and its adoption, by any of our Church Courts, as an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly.
2. Resolved, That the whole subject contemplated in this report, including the report itself, be referred to the next General Assembly.

40 Declaration and Testimony—Records of 1867.

3. Resolved, That the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, and the members of the Presbytery of Louisville, who voted to adopt that paper, be summoned to appear before the next General Assembly, to answer what they have done in this matter; and that until their case is decided, they shall not be permitted to sit as members of any Church Court, higher than the Session

4. Resolved, That if any Presbytery shall disregard this action of the General Assembly; and at any meeting shall enroll, as entitled to a seat or seats in the body, one or more of the persons designated in the preceding resolution, and summoned to appear before the next General Assembly, then that Presbytery shall, *ipso facto*, be dissolved; and its ministers and elders, who adhere to this action of the Assembly, are hereby authorized and directed—in such cases—to take charge of the Presbyterial records, to retain the name, and exercise all the authority and functions of the original Presbytery, until the next meeting of the General Assembly.

5. Resolved, That Synods, at their next stated meetings, in making up their rolls, shall be guided and governed by this action of the General Assembly.

Curiously enough, eight reasons, assigned by the mover himself, for their adoption, are appended to these resolutions, like a codicil to a will. It is probably the first time the reader ever heard of a deliberative body adopting the argument used on the floor of debate, as *quasi* part of its own decision. But this slight departure from Parliamentary usage will be readily excused in a Council, which doubtless felt that its anomalous legislation needed sadly to be bolstered. The adoption of these justified resolutions of course arrested proceedings for the present, and we must turn to the records of 1867 for the consummation.

As might have been anticipated, these harsh and divisive measures rent the Church asunder, in those sections where the strength of opposition lay. The two Synods of Kentucky and Missouri were split in twain; and the line of separation was drawn through each of the Presbyteries, of which these bodies were respectively composed. As soon, therefore, as the Assembly of 1867 convened in the city of Cincinnati, the first duty to which it was summoned was to decide between the claims of rival Presbyteries contesting the right of representation in that Court. This matter, together with all others relating to the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, was referred to an august committee of ten. Pending the discussion of its report the claimants for contested seats were heard, and two of the Declaration signers appeared, in obedience to citation, and offered their defence; after which, by the overwhelming vote of 261 to 4, the paper was adopted which made a final disposition of all these issues. "By one sweeping sentence of outlawry two Synods and twelve Presbyteries in the States of Kentucky and Missouri, embracing some 150 ministers, 250 Churches, 500 ruling elders, and 15,000 communicants," were disowned and dropped; "these unlawful Synods and Presbyteries," to quote the language of this report, "having been dissolved by their own act, under an order of the last General Assembly, and being organized in open defiance or disregard of said order."

Then follows, as a matter of course, the grace of reconstruction out of all this chaos. All members of these "unlawful organizations," if not signers of the Declaration, may be received into the bosom of the Church, upon the simple expression, to the proper Presbytery, of a de-

sire to adhere; but those who had put their signature to this naughty instrument, must first purge themselves by the following formula of abjuration:

"I, A—B—, hereby declare my desire to adhere to the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America; and do now promise to render due obedience in the Lord, to the authority of all its courts, embracing the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly; and to this end, inasmuch as the last General Assembly pronounced the aforesaid Declaration and Testimony to be a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims, and its adoption by any of our Church Courts an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly, I do hereby disclaim that I had any intention to rebel against, or renounce the authority of the General Assembly, in signing the Declaration and Testimony; and I hereby withdraw all language deemed by the General Assembly offensive or disrespectful, in which its sentiments are expressed."

A similar enactment, *mutatis mutandis*, was made for ruling elders, and all the lower courts were instructed to carry out, in their sphere, the provisions above specified. Thus, simply by bill, not less than two hundred essentially judicial cases were dispatched, without the usual form of hearing and trial, in a single comprehensive vote.

We are now in sufficient possession of the facts to enter upon their analysis, and to see where the most important principles of Constitutional law were contravened.

We assert then, that, upon the very threshold of these proceedings; the displacement of the Commissioners of the Louisville Presbytery was an open violation of our ecclesiastical canons, and *struck at the foundation of all representative government*. The very terms by which such a government is defined, fix the right, in every portion of the constituency, to appear and act, through its appointed representative. The right of the representative to sit, is simply the right of the constituent to send; and the right by which one deputy may claim his seat, is the right by which all claim. If a factious majority may rise at will, and rule one member out of the house, they simply undermine the principle upon which they all stand, in common, and vitiate the integrity of the Court. A Legislative Assembly has, indeed, the right to determine the qualifications of its own members; that is, to determine whether they have been duly chosen to represent a given constituency. But the modern theory that this *creates* the right of the representative to his seat, which comes to him by grant from the House of which he forms a part, subverts the very idea of representation, and establishes an autocracy. The fact is, this is not a privilege that is conceded, but a right that is recognized; and this right founds simply upon the will of the constituency by whom he has been chosen. The instant this fundamental right is denied, the government has changed its form, and ceases to be any longer representative. Indeed, with such jealousy is this essential right guarded in all legislative bodies, that even when rival claimants contest the right to seats in the same, one or the other is instantly admitted, upon *prima facie* evidence, until the case can be adjudicated; upon the clear principle, that under no circumstances can a constituency be deprived of its right of representation in the bodies of which it is an integral part.

In the case before us, the Louisville Presbytery was undeniably a portion of the Assembly's constituency. Its commissioners had presented, in due form, their credentials, and had been regularly enrolled and reported as members of the judicatory. Their right was not challenged by a single competitor. The exception against their ejection was, therefore well taken by Dr. Van Dyke and others, that by it "the Assembly violated the fundamental principles of its organization, and vitiated its own integrity as the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church." The reply of the Assembly was a mere quibble, and conspicuously evaded the issue that was raised. It was no answer to say, that under this construction, "the validity of nearly every meeting of the Assembly would be vitiated," since in no one of them "have all the particular Churches and Presbyteries been actually represented in the body." The protestors did not allege that "the actual presence of the whole company of representatives" was essential to the Constitution of the Court; but that the denial of a seat to such as were present, was the violation of a fundamental right, and destroyed the only principle upon which the body could be organized at all. The distinction is obvious between the voluntary absence of one party, who does not claim his right, and the forcible exclusion of another who earnestly insists upon his. It is the denial of this right to a constituency, claiming representation, which we charge as a violation of the organic law.

The only instance in which, according to our Discipline, a commissioner can be unseated, is in a judicial case, where the Presbytery he represents is party to a suit pending in the higher court; upon the obvious ground that an interested party cannot sit in judgment upon his own case. But even then his rights as a legislator are untouched. He deliberates and votes, until his particular case is reached, and the body resolves itself into a Court for its trial. In the matter, however, of the Louisville Presbytery, it is not assumed that the proceedings were judicial. At the time it was taken up, the Assembly could not possibly know whether any prosecution had been entered, which would demand its attention as an appellate tribunal. Immediately upon its organization, and before a single item of business had been introduced, a member of the House rises, and extemporizes a charge against this Presbytery, without observing any of the forms of judicial process. Forthwith the body proceeds, by simple resolution, under the operation of the previous question, without debate, to oust the Commissioners from their seats, which they held under the seal of their Presbytery, and by the enrollment of the Assembly's own Committee on Commissions. The proceeding, therefore, is illegal; not simply as infringing the letter of a particular statute, which would have been comparatively harmless; but as overturning the fundamental, primary, and organic law under which all the courts of the Church are constituted. It was not simply illegal, but unconstitutional—and in its remote effect, revolutionary and fatal to the liberties of the Church. Let us suppose the principle carried out on an extended scale. The Church, for example, passes through an exciting controversy, in which the parties are somewhat evenly balanced. Just before the Assembly meets, a convention or caucus is held, as was done in 1866, in which the tactics of one

or other of these parties are carefully arranged. Instantly upon the organization of the Assembly, a charge is trumped up of a conspiracy against the honor and peace of the Church; upon which, by a simple resolution, a majority of only five shall turn out of doors nearly one half of the Court, until this fractional majority shall be able to decide everything its own way; what, then, becomes of the freedom of God's people? Is the difference essential whether this violent despotism is practiced by a majority of five, or five hundred? Is not the principle the same, whether the victims be only these four Commissioners from the Presbytery of Louisville, or the representatives of a hundred Presbyteries, over the breadth of a continent? Sanction this principle, and what is to hinder the fluctuating majorities in our Church Courts from attempting successive *coups d'etat*, which will keep the Church in a state of chronic revolution and anarchy.

With a fourfold majority in the Assembly of 1866, entirely subservient to its leaders, the votes of these four men could not in the least degree affect the decision of the body. It was, therefore, purely a wanton exercise of power, not justified by any plea of necessity. The obvious design was, by one decisive blow, to strike terror into the hearts of any who might be meditating opposition to the action of preceding Assemblies. It was the display of boot and thumbscrew, and all the instruments of ecclesiastical torture, without even the decency of concealment behind the black curtain; in order to overcome dissent, and crush, at once, the rising spirit of insubordination to a lawless and aggressive despotism. It is, therefore, a fearful illustration of the tyranny which always characterizes those who break away from Constitutional restraints; who trample under foot the most sacred of all rights, rather than brook resistance to their own will; and who become delirious with passion in proportion to their emancipation from all control. But we must reserve further strictures to the next article.

ARTICLE X.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

The Declaration and Testimony—Concluded.

Resuming our strictures upon the Assembly's action touching the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, we charge further upon that body that it *flagrantly violated the Constitution of the Church in over-riding all the forms of judicial process, and in undertaking to manage an essentially judicial case by purely legislative methods.* No feature of our Presbyterian system is more marked than the jealousy with which it protects the rights of an accused party; and the solicitude it evinces to secure an impartial trial. Indeed, so far are these precautions carried, that a wily criminal sometimes succeeds in entrenching himself so securely in legal

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technicalities, that it becomes difficult to convict even when the moral evidence of guilt is overwhelming. For example, our Discipline requires that the charges shall be specifically drawn, the witnesses distinctly named, and the evidence stated, by which every point in the indictment is to be substantiated; citations not only to be issued, but actually served, and that to the certain knowledge of the court; in default of appearance from whatever cause, a positive arrest is put upon the trial until the citation has been renewed; testimony to be reduced to writing and read to the witnesses, who certify to the accuracy of the record; counsel to be assigned, if needed, so as to secure an adequate defense; and all the methods are carefully detailed by which a cause is brought under the jurisdiction of the appellate courts.

In the case, however, of these Declaration signers, every one of these salutary safeguards, was ignored; and the bold attempt ventured to reach a decision, *per saltum*, by what we distinguish as the legislative method in opposition to the judicial. Let the reader decide for himself if this was not *essentially* a judicial case. The charges preferred are of the most damaging nature: That the Testimony issued by these parties was "a slander against the church, schismatical in its character and aims, and the adoption of it by a church court an act of rebellion;" that it was "a violent and studied disruption of christian bonds," "a bold denial of mutual obligations," "an organized conspiracy against the honor, the peace and the unity of the body of Christ." Surely if ever there were judicial charges, these accusations of slander, rebellion, schism, conspiracy, and the violation of covenanted engagements, come under that category. These are not simple misdemeanors, but capital crimes against the very existence of the spiritual commonwealth; and the court which charges such offences, if it does not undertake the proof, is itself guilty of defamation. It is needless to add that there is no method of proof but that of judicial investigation. That the Assembly did not pursue this method is precisely the offense we now charge upon that body; but the nature of the allegations made the case intrinsically a judicial one.

It is curious, too, to observe how, in the very effort to avoid it, this construction is forced upon the Assembly itself. For upon what other principle could the Assembly of 1866 *summon* the Declaration signers and the members of the Louisville Presbytery "to appear before the next General Assembly, to answer for what they have done in this matter?" Upon what other principle did the Assembly of 1867 patiently listen to the defense of those who, in obedience to this citation, pleaded at its bar? Upon what other principle did that Assembly pronounce "the refusal of many of those cited to appear as a gross violation of their duty? All this is purely judicial language, and can be addressed only to parties who lie under charges from which they require to be vindicated.

But what finally settles the intrinsic judicial character of this case, is the penalty inflicted. All the Declaration signers are interdicted from sitting as members of any church court higher than the Session, during the interval their case is pending before the Assembly; and the final sentence passed in 1867 upon all who refused to subscribe a recantation, was that their names should be dropped from the rolls; which simply

means exclusion from the church of their fathers, and the dissolution of every ecclesiastical tie which may have been the joy of their life. The last penalty of our ecclesiastical law, short of deposition and excommunication, is visited upon these men; but how it could be done, if they were not viewed as criminals under the judicial censure of an acknowledged court, passes all comprehension.

So far, however, from treating this strictly judicial case by judicial process, the Assembly disposes of it by bill. It does not embarrass itself with any of the tedious forms of a tribunal, but sits throughout as a chamber of deputies. It renders its decision not as a decree, but in the shape of a simple resolution. It enacts, where it should pronounce. By mere motion, pressed to its adoption under the gag of the previous question, the commissioners from Louisville are voted to be criminals, unworthy of the seats they were sent to fill. By simple resolution, all the Declaration signers are for one year stripped of their functions as rulers in the House of God. And, finally, it is by the adoption of a parliamentary report that two entire Synods and twelve Presbyteries are outlawed and driven from the fold of the church. The reader will observe that we are not speaking now of the enormity of the penalty, but of the mode of its infliction. From the foundation of the earth, was there ever before such a commingling of legislative and judicial proceedings, as found in the famous *ipso facto* order of 1866, and the famous omnibus bill of 1867? Parties, without specified charges, without citation, without being present before the body, without the possibility of a hearing, without argument and without trial, are convicted of capital offenses against the dignity of the church, and are visited with the penultimate penalty of the law; and all this is done in a legislative chamber under the forms of mere parliamentary order, not in a court of justice under the solemn sanctions of a judicial tribunal.

The complexion of this proceeding is rendered darker by the fact that it was totally unnecessary. In that very Assembly of 1866, the whole subject was brought up in a natural and judicial form by an appeal and complaint of Rev. R. J. Breckinridge and others against the several acts of the Synod of Kentucky, in the matters appearing on the records of the Presbytery of Louisville at its recent sessions, and in matters contained in a certain printed and published paper, entitled "Declaration and Testimony," etc. This appeal and complaint, after being referred to the Assembly of 1867, was finally dismissed by that body "for the reason that the adoption of the report previously made by this committee (of Ten) renders further consideration of its subject-matter unnecessary." In this perfectly cool manner does this Assembly substitute its action as a legislature, for the functions it was called to discharge as a judge. The simple fact is, the radical leaders in that Assembly did not dare to meet the Declaration men upon the issues of their protest before a judicial tribunal. Every item in that testimony would have been substantiated from the Word of God and the Constitution of the church. The hazard was too great to be incurred. It involved far less responsibility to condemn these men unheard, and to legislate them out of the way. However this may be, it is fatal to liberty when one department of a government absorbs the others. Power is distributed be-

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between the legislature, judiciary and executive, that they may operate as mutual checks. When these checks are destroyed, and power centres upon a single will, freedom shrieks and totters to its fall.

Nor were the principles of our Presbyterian system less fundamentally violated in the character of the sentence inflicted. When the Assembly pronounced the Declaration and Testimony "slandrous," "schismatical" and "rebellious," it did thereby table charges against the signers of that paper. When it further summoned these to appear at the bar of the next Assembly to answer to these charges, it did recognize the case as *pro tanto* judicial. By what show of justice, then, did it proceed to pass any sentence at all, while the case was yet pending and no defense had as yet been heard? It was a clear violation, not only of express statute, but of essential justice, to postpone a trial an entire year, and to inflict meanwhile, a sentence by which ordained ministers and elders were deprived of every ecclesiastical franchise above the church session. True, in one of the eight reasons by which the Assembly justifies its action, this is termed, by a sweet euphemism, "*an abridgment of privilege*" only. An abridgment of privilege, forsooth! Officers in the church hold no position by *privilege*, except from the Lord Jesus their King and Head; and in the sense of the Apostle when he says, "for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." But, so far as man is concerned, from the moment of ordination they hold their office by *constitutional right*; and all the courts on earth, from the Assembly down to the Parochial Presbytery, cannot touch one of them with its little finger, except in the exercise of constitutional discipline by judicial process. Had the Assembly been sitting, as it should have been, under the limitations and sanctions of a judicial tribunal, it would scarcely have blundered into this mistake of confounding the mere *agency* of a church court in conveying a power, with an original *prerogative* to grant that power. It may be timely to remind our brethren at the North of the old doctrine of the church, which they have well nigh forgotten: that the source of all spiritual power is in the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as He hath created offices in his church, calls whomsoever He will to discharge the functions thereof; and this Divine call is simply manifested through election by the people, and through ordination by the court. So that it is simply absurd to talk of "abridging privileges" which were never bestowed; and which exist only as rights held directly from Christ, and by the constitution which He has given to the church.

But, look next at the *character* of the sentence itself. We wish to know what sort of ecclesiastical hermaphrodite this is, which the Assembly creates by "abridgment." Ordained Presbyters, who are shut up in the discharge of all their functions within the limits of a single congregation! We had supposed that the doctrine of the unity of the church was fundamental in our system; and that a minister, when ordained, was a minister of the whole church. We had supposed that particular Sessions were obliged to integrate into the Presbytery, and Presbyteries, in turn, into Synods and the General Assembly. The old theory of Presbyterianism used to be that under the operation of two principles, expansion and unity, the church grew and yet was held together; that these constituted the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which, under their joint

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operation, gave us our system of graduated and appellate courts; and that these were bound together in indissoluble unity, as the radii and circumference of the circle. We fail, therefore, to comprehend this "abridgment of privilege" which cuts through the centre of this circle, and sends Ministers and Sessions flying off at a tangent, touching the circle indeed, but forming no part of it. Our ecclesiastical geometry needs reconstruction sadly, before we can harmonize with this new Presbyterianism of the Gurley-Stanton school. While this cordon is drawn around individual Sessions, we ask for the *lex scripta* which justifies the denial of their fundamental right to be represented, directly or remotely, in all the courts of the church. We understand how a Presbyter can be deposed, and, with the loss of his office, be deprived of all the rights appertaining thereto. But we cannot understand, either from the letter of the law, or from the genius of our system, how one shall remain a Presbyter and yet be enjoined the exercise of the necessary functions of his office. "To be, or not to be"—it was the alternative that puzzled Hamlet. Had he lived in our day, he would have discovered that contradictions can be united.

This anomalous legislation finds its climax, however, in the penalty by which it is enforced—the *ipso facto* dissolution of every Presbytery which should venture to disobey it. If but a single signer of the Declaration should happen, throughout the bounds of the church, to be enrolled in any Presbytery, presto! it dissolves into thin air, and "though it be sought for, yet shall it never be found again." We understand how a Presbytery may be constitutionally dissolved, *post facto*, and its members distributed in other connexions; but this contingent legislation of the new Presbyterianism which dissolves proleptically, by a self-acting power which makes the unfortunate court guilty of *felo de se*,—this is a "higher law" belonging to a region of morals we have never explored. But when its design is penetrated, to operate a reconstruction of the body which shall be both a pliant tool and a bloody executioner, we recognize one of the marks which define a tyrant.

We charge, finally, upon the Assembly, that it has practically overturned the constitution of the church, in stretching its own power over persons and subjects not within its jurisdiction—thus overlapping and, to that extent, obliterating the inferior courts. These are all necessary alike to the integrity of our system. This rises by natural gradation from the individual Session, through Presbyteries and Synods, to the General Assembly as the apex of the cone. But observe, that as we ascend, the subjects brought within the sphere of the higher courts become more and more general, and details are more and more remitted to the lower. The Presbytery, for example, handles those matters which affect the welfare of all its churches in common; while the minute concerns of each of those are remanded to its own session, until in the Assembly we find the jurisdiction restricted to those matters which affect the church as an organic whole. In the nature of things this distribution is bound to take place. Hence the constitution expressly defines the sphere of all these courts, and guards against any concurrent jurisdiction by which they may be brought into competition and collision. As to the Assembly, its powers are not

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only strictly delegated, but the methods are clearly stated by which all subjects are brought within its sphere—showing that, as the highest appellate court, its jurisdiction is only critical and corrective, not parallel or concurrent. This distinction is radical, unless all power is to centre in a body the most remote from the churches; and all the intermediate courts, which form the only protection against absolutism, are to be blotted out.

The Assembly, therefore, was guilty of usurpation: 1. In instituting process, by common fame, against the Declaration signers; inasmuch as it has no original jurisdiction in cases of "offense," which must first be acquired before it can be exercised. 2. In citing those parties to appear at the bar of the next Assembly; inasmuch as they were amenable, as teaching and ruling elders, in the first instance only to the Presbyteries and Sessions, respectively. 3. In passing and executing sentence upon them; the case having never been brought before it in any of the ways prescribed by the constitution. By that instrument there are only four methods through which the Assembly acquires jurisdiction in cases of "offense;" by review and control, by reference, by appeal, and by complaint; all of which presuppose the antecedent action of the lower courts.

If, however, in the exercise of review and control, the Assembly should have knowledge *ab extra* of any delinquency in these courts, the constitution provides a remedy; the Assembly may cite the delinquent court to appear and answer for what it has failed to do—to which lower court the case must then be remitted to be taken up, etc. (See Discipline, chap. 7, sec. 1, art. 6.) This then was the course which the Assembly of 1866 was obviously bound to pursue. If by "common fame" it knew that matters were going wrong in the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri, it should have brought the same to the attention of these courts, under a citation to appear and show what they had done in the premises; and thus only could it acquire jurisdiction over the parties and subjects involved. Indeed, this is substantially acknowledged by the Assembly itself when it apologetically says: "Such was notoriously the condition of the lower courts, almost universally, in the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri, that it would have been nothing less than vain trifling with sacred interests, which were greatly imperilled, to have remanded the cases of these brethren to those courts." The plain English of which is, that these courts were not subservient to the behests of a rampant majority; which could not brook the delay necessary to bring the case legitimately before the Assembly, and therefore these fearful powers must be assumed in defiance of the plain instructions of the law.

Nor was it valid to usurp this jurisdiction under the general powers, granted in the twelfth chapter of the Form of Government, of "deciding controversies," of "reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error or immorality," of "suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations." However the Assembly may strive to base its defense upon this chapter, it must be remembered that these specified powers are not given to be exercised at discretion, but in accordance with the fixed provisions of the constitution elsewhere minutely stated. There

cannot be “errors” without advocates, nor “controversies and schisms” without parties, nor “disputations” without wranglers; and these must all pass up through the lower courts, and by constitutional forms, before an appellate tribunal can find them within its jurisdiction. Even when upon “common fame” it discharges the functions of a grand jury and finds a true bill, it must send the case for trial to the subordinate court and receive it upon appeal within its sphere.

But in an article already too long, the reader must be content with hints which admit of large extension. Those familiar with all this history will perceive that we have omitted many details deserving notice. Our object has been not to indulge in minor criticism upon petty deviations from this or that particular statute; but to exhibit the wholesale unconstitutionality of these proceedings, in which the organic law of the church has been overthrown, and all the safeguards of ecclesiastical independence and freedom utterly prostrated. This is abundantly sufficient for our purpose.

The bearing of all this against the proposed overture for union is twofold. In the first place, of what use is it for us to unite with an ecclesiastical body which recognizes no law but its own will, and whose history shows that it is bound by no instruments however sacred? And in the second place, a portion of these Declaration men, who were so outraged in these unconstitutional proceedings, have found a refuge and a home in our body. Although our Assembly, at Nashville, did not deem it consistent with its dignity to become a party to their contest, yet by the incorporation of their statement of principles in our official records, we have given our endorsement to the same. It is, therefore, a most serious question whether in good faith we can bind them hand and foot, and replace them in a church from which they have been rudely and unconstitutionally expelled.

ARTICLE XI.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

Slanders Against the Southern Church.

The ten preceding articles have sufficiently presented our first two objections to the proposed union with the Northern Old School Assembly: 1, from the political deliverances of that body, in direct contravention of the Lord's testimony that his kingdom is not of this world; and, 2, from the unlawful course pursued towards those who earnestly protested against this defection, casting them out of the church in a way wholly subversive of the fundamental principles of the Presbyterian system. The argument we have next to employ touches more nearly the personal honor and self-respect of our own body. We advance, then,

III. A THIRD OBJECTION, *based on the slanders deliberately uttered against the Southern Presbyterian Church, and remaining still uncanceled upon the records of the Assembly, which now proposes this overture for union.*

We denounce as slanderous :

1. *The charge that the Southern Assembly was organized in the interest, and to subserve the ends of the Confederate Government;*
2. *The charge that the Southern Church, in separating from the Northern, was guilty of unwarranted schism:*
3. *That the Southern Church had changed its ground on the subject of slavery, so as to hold opinions that were heretical and blasphemous.*

Each of these charges is distinctly preferred as the basis of the legislation against us; we propose to subject them all to an articulate examination.

The first allegation is couched in the following preamble to certain resolutions adopted in 1865:

“WHEREAS, During the existence of the great rebellion which has disturbed the peace and threatened the life of the nation, a large number of Presbyteries and Synods in the Southern States, whose names are on the rolls of the General Assembly as constituent parts of this body, have organized an Assembly denominated the General Assembly of the Confederate States of America, *in order to render their aid in the attempt to establish by means of the rebellion, a separate national existence, and to aid and perpetuate the system of slavery.* therefore,
Resolved, &c.”

The italics are ours, for the purpose of riveting the reader's attention to the single issue which we are now discussing. The question is not now whether the late war was, or was not, a rebellion; nor whether the Northern Assembly was, or was not, competent, as a spiritual Court, to pronounce it such; nor whether logical consistency required them to bolt and bar the door against our return to their jurisdiction, until we had professed repentance for our guilt in the premises. We have said nearly all that we care to offer on most of these points. We are concerned now simply with the charge brought forward in the above quotation that the Southern Assembly was organized “*to render their aid in the attempt to establish, by means of the rebellion, a separate national existence.*” What specially aggravates the slander, is, that it was reiterated and defended, in the face of evidence to the contrary, presented in the protest of Dr. Samuel R. Wilson, and others.

The reader will scarcely be able to restrain a smile at the nature of the proofs by which this tremendous charge is sustained; however this feeling may give place to profound sadness, that a venerable court of the Lord Jesus should found such a calumny upon such pretexts. The Assembly proceeds to say that “this judgment was not founded on any isolated and specific delivrance to that effect by the seceding Assembly—but upon a multitude of facts, notorious and uncontradicted, patent to every observer of the course of events.”

What, then, are these portentous and “patent facts?” Why, first of all, that Drs. Palmer and Thornwell—both of them advocates of secession and slavery, and who had published much that was offensive to Northern taste—were members of the first Southern Assembly, and

were honored with the confidence of their brethren: the one being chosen to preach the opening sermon, and to preside over the sessions of that body; the other being appointed to "the delicate duty of preparing the Address to all the churches of Jesus Christ, throughout the earth;" *secondly*, that this same Address "assumes that the country was already divided into two nationalities—thus, in effect, declaring the sinlessness of the rebellion;" and that it recognizes "the antagonism between Northern and Southern sentiment on the subject of slavery," to be so entire, "that the religious, *as well as the secular*, interests of both will be more effectually promoted by a complete and lasting separation;" *thirdly*, that the Southern Assembly of 1862, in its Narrative, gratefully acknowledges the unanimity with which "their congregations have evinced their cordial sympathy with the people of the Confederate States, in their efforts to maintain their cherished rights and institutions against the despotic power which is attempting to crush them—a struggle which is not alone for civil rights, and property, and home; but also for religion, for the Church, for the Gospel, and for existence itself;" and, *fourthly*, that the Southern Assembly of 1864, in its Narrative, declared it to be "the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery" and to make it both a blessing to the master and the slave."

These four points make up the whole evidence which is adduced. The reader is assured that we are neither trifling with him, nor mutilating the record. Positively, these are all the "patent facts, notorious and uncontradicted," upon which this grave accusation is based. It will be seen at a glance that, admitting all the premises, there remains an awful chasm—*hiatus valde defendendus*—between these and the conclusion which is deduced. It is undoubtedly "patent" that not *two* only, but *all* the members of the first Southern Assembly, were Secessionists, upon principle; but the rule of logic is not apparent by which the simple presence of Drs. Palmer and Thorwell spread such a taint over the body, as to convert it into an organization to subserve the ends of the Confederate Government; unless it be the rule of logic by which the presence of a single signer of the Declaration and Testimony should forthwith dissolve a Presbytery; that is to say, the arbitrary will of an arbitrary Council, that it should be so. Admitting, further, in all its strength, the conviction expressed by us, that the secular and religious interests of North and South would be promoted by separating into two nationalities—it is a tremendous leap to the inference that our Assembly was organized for the purpose of establishing that separate nationality. Doubtless, too, the Southern people were singularly united in support of the rebellion, so-called; but how the thankful recognition of even this "patent fact" should prove the Assembly to be organized for the purpose of carrying on a civil war, would baffle even Aristotle himself, with the help of all his categories. As to the fourth specification that the Southern Church declared "its mission to conserve slavery," we shall reserve the most we have to say until we reach the third slander, in which that subject is involved. It refreshes us, however, not a little, to observe the necessity laid upon our accusers of harping on this single string. From sheer poverty of material, out of which to frame their

charges, after searching through all our records, they come back perpetually to this one damaging confession, as they regard it. It is like the everlasting cry, "Calvin burned Servetus;" which, though a thousand times refuted, is still rung out upon the world—on the principle, we suppose, that a lie, well stuck to, is just as good as the truth—and which, by endless iteration, is made to eclipse the fires of Smithfield, and all the *auto-da-fes* of Italy, Portugal and Spain. It certainly evinces entire want of candor to seize upon a purely incidental expression like this, which crept into a document where nothing of the sort was expected, and was adopted by the Assembly at the heel of its sessions amidst the hurry and confusion of final adjournment—and then to set it over, as we shall presently show, against the well-considered and formal deliverances of the body, when that subject was immediately under discussion. Adversaries must be sorely pressed when they resort to shifts like these. But suppose it to have been cautiously and deliberately uttered, it falls far short of the proof that is required. Grant that the Southern Church did believe in "its mission to conserve the institution of slavery," how does that prove that she was organized for that end? We would like to see the syllogism constructed, in any one of the figures of logic, bringing the premises and conclusions together in any thing like a lawful marriage. We were all secessionists and pro-slavery men—granted. We did organize a Southern General Assembly—granted. Here, then, are the two premises of the syllogism—and we would be glad to see the bridge thrown over the yawning gulf betwixt them and the "ergo" of the Northern Assembly that the Southern Church was organized "to establish, by means of the rebellion, a separate national existence."

But this sort of apologetic defence does not satisfy us. We shall nail the falsehood upon the forehead of those who uttered it; so that, if not retracted, they shall bear the infamy of published slanderers, before the world.

It might be assumed that forty-seven Presbyteries, scattered through eleven Southern Synods, would scarcely meet and organize a new General Assembly, without setting forth the grounds of their separation from the Northern Church, and proclaiming the principles by which they would, hereafter, be guided. The preparation of this important document was entrusted to the ablest member of the body, who has since passed beyond the censure and applause of men, the Rev. Dr. Thornwell—a name never mentioned without affectionate reverence by any who have the intelligence to appreciate genius, or the virtue to love true nobility of soul. In a paper entitled "An Address to all the Churches of Jesus Christ, throughout the earth," are set forth, with all that precision of thought and language which characterized the productions of the illustrious author, the distinctive views of the Southern Presbyterian Church. Read, and read again, amid the solemn stillness which pervades an audience whose emotions are repressed by a sacred awe, it was finally adopted, and laid upon the Moderator's table; when, one by one, the members came silently forward and signed the instrument with their own hands. The original manuscript, with these auto-graph signatures, is doubtless now on file in the Assembly's archives.

Certainly, in such a document, prepared by such a hand, and adopted with such unusual solemnity, we may expect to find, if anywhere, an articulate and authoritative exposition of the principles and views of the Southern Church, upon the points comprised in this indictment. The following extracts will throw some light upon the charge we are now considering :

“ We have separated from our brethren of the North as Abraham separated from Lot—because we are persuaded that the interests of true religion will be more effectually subserved by two independent Churches, under the circumstances in which the two countries are placed, than by one united body. In the first place, the course of the last Assembly, at Philadelphia, conclusively shows that if we should remain together, the political questions which divide us as citizens will be obtruded on our Church Courts, and discussed by Christian ministers and elders, with all the acrimony, bitterness and rancor with which such questions are usually discussed by men of the world. * * * * * An Assembly, composed of representatives from two such countries could have no security for peace, except in a steady, uncompromising adherence to the Scriptural principle, that it would know no man after the flesh; that it would abolish the distinctions of Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, and recognize nothing but the new creature in Christ Jesus. The moment it permits itself to know the Confederate or the United States; the moment its members meet as citizens of these countries, our political differences will be transferred to the House of God, and the passions of the forum will expel the spirit of holy love, and of Christian communion. * * * * * The only conceivable condition, therefore, upon which the Church of the North and the South could remain together, as one body, with any prospect of success, is the rigorous exclusion of the questions and passions of the forum from its halls of debate. This is what always ought to be done. The provinces of the Church and State are perfectly distinct, and the one has no right to usurp the jurisdiction of the other. The State is a natural institute, founded in the constitution of man, as moral and social, and designed to realize the idea of Justice; it is the society of rights. The Church is a supernatural institute, founded in the facts of redemption, and is designed to realize the idea of Grace; it is the society of the redeemed. The State aims at social order; the Church, at spiritual holiness. The State looks to the visible and outward; the Church is concerned for the invisible and inward. The badge of the State's authority is the sword, by which it becomes a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well; the badge of the Church's authority is the keys, by which it opens and shuts the Kingdom of Heaven, according as men are believing or impenitent. The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual; that of the State includes the exercise of force. The Constitution of the Church is a divine revelation; the Constitution of the State must be determined by human reason, and the course of Providential events. The Church has no right to construct or modify a government for the State; and the State has no right to frame a creed or polity for the Church. They are as planets, moving in different orbits; and unless each one is confined to its own track, the consequences may be as disastrous in the moral world, as the collision of different spheres in the world of matter. * * * * * We have never confounded Cæsar and Christ; and we have never mixed the issues of this world with the weighty matters that properly belong to us as citizens of the Kingdom of God.”

In reference to the subject of slavery, we introduce here but a single extract from this important and solemn Declaration of Principles, as follows :

“ We would have it distinctly understood that, in our ecclesiastical capacity, we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery—that is to say, we have no commission either to propagate or abolish it. The policy of its existence, or non-existence, is a question which exclusively belongs to the

State. We have no right, as a Church, to enjoin it as a duty, or to condemn it as a sin. Our business is with the duties which spring from the relation—the duties of the masters, on the one hand, and of the slaves on the other. These duties we are to proclaim and to enforce with spiritual sanctions. The social, civil, political problems connected with this great subject, transcend our sphere; as God has not entrusted to His Church the organization of society, the construction of governments, nor the allotment of individuals to their various stations.”

We submit to every honest mind whether the Southern Assembly, if, with prophetic instinct, it had anticipated the calumny, now under discussion, could have framed a more articulate refutation. In a paper which is intended to be purely testimonial and declarative, it affirms that to “subserve the interests of true religion,” two independent Churches (not States), had been formed. It declares that it separated from the Northern Assembly, in order to avoid those political questions which had been sprung in the latter, and which would be constantly obtruded upon us, if we had remained together. It pronounces that “the Assembly should know neither the Confederate nor the United States,” as a spiritual court. It distinguishes, with dialectic precision, between the Church and the State, whose jurisdictions are reciprocally exclusive of each other, and cannot be confounded, without ruin. It proclaims that it had never “mixed the issues of this world with those of the Kingdom of God.” It avows that, as an ecclesiastical court, it had nothing to do with the question of slavery, except to enforce the moral duties arising out of the relation; and solemnly testifies that the Church had never been “entrusted with the organization of society, or the construction of governments.” Yet, in the face of these most explicit statements, this very body is charged as having been organized for the very purpose of creating a civil government, and of establishing a separate nationality; that is to say, it is charged with doing the very thing which it declares it had never done, and from which it feels itself to be restrained by its most sacred and cherished convictions. If this be not slander, we do not know where a concrete case can be found to illustrate the definition of the word.

Is further proof desired as to the falsehood of this charge? Then mark the following language in the sermon with which the Sessions of the Southern Assembly was opened, and which was ordered to be published in the Appendix to the Minutes:

“The mission of the Church given us here to execute, is to lift up, throughout the world, our testimony for this headship of Christ. The convocation of this Assembly is, in part, that testimony. But a little while since, it was attempted, in the most august Court of our Church, to place the crown of our Lord upon the head of Cæsar; to bind that, body, which is Christ’s fulness, to the chariot in which that Cæsar rides. * * * * * The voice went up, throughout our land, of indignant remonstrance against the usurpation; of solemn protest against the sacrilege. And now this Parliament of the Lord’s freemen solemnly declares that, by the terms of her great charter, none but Jesus may be the King of Zion. Once more, in this distant age, and in these ends of the earth, the Church must declare for the supremacy of her head, and fling out the consecrated ensign, with the old inscription, for Christ and His crown.”

All these testimonies to the spirituality of the Church, as a kingdom not of this world, were again endorsed and reaffirmed in 1866, in the following terms:

“Upon no one subject is the mind of this Assembly more clearly ascertained; upon no one doctrine is there a more solid or perfect agreement amongst those whom this Assembly represents, than the non-secular and non-political character of the Church of Jesus Christ. Whatever ambiguous or indiscreet expressions may have been extorted under the pressure of extraordinary excitement, from individuals amongst us, the Assembly of this Church deliberately reaffirms the testimony given in the Solemn Address to the Churches of Jesus Christ, throughout the Earth, issued in 1861, during its first session, in the city of Augusta.”

This extract completes the chain of evidence that, from the commencement of its career, to 1866, the Southern Assembly had never, in any form, entangled itself with the State. Though deliberately charged with being organized to aid in establishing a nationality, it never once appointed a “committee on the state of the country;” never adopted a paper, filled with political issues; never proclaimed its “obligation to promote and perpetuate the integrity of the Confederate States; and to strengthen, uphold and encourage the Confederate Government;” never “professed its unabated loyalty” to any civil power; never suffered the indignity of having a civil oath administered to its Presbyters as a qualification for sitting in the Church courts. But, on the contrary, it declares that it separated from the Northern Church in order to escape these political complications; in which, not we, but our accusers themselves, were involved. To affirm, then, that the Southern Assembly was organized to assist in the establishment of the State, is simply to affirm that it surrendered all the distinctive principles which had thus brought it out from the bosom of the Northern Church: and that it surrendered these precisely at the moment it was, testimonially, proclaiming them to the world.

These slanders we have borne in silence through more than four years. We can afford to bear them, because they are false; but for this very reason, the Northern Church cannot afford to utter them. For their sakes, alone, and for the honor of our common religion, we desire their retraction—in deference to that commandment of the Decalogue, which enjoins: “*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.*”

ARTICLE XII.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

Slanders Against the Southern Church--Continued.

We are brought, now, to the consideration of—

II. *The second slander against the Southern Church; viz: the charge of Schism.* It is conveyed in the following resolution, adopted by the Northern Assembly in 1865:

“Resolved, That this Assembly regards the civil rebellion for the perpetuation of negro slavery as a great crime, both against our National Govern-

ment against God: and the secession of these Presbyteries and Synods from the Presbyterian Church, under such circumstances and for such reasons, as unwarranted, schismatical and unconstitutional."

This language is slightly ambiguous, in that it seems to condition the charge of schism upon the assumption that it had "the perpetuation of negro slavery" for its object. Having disproved this in our preceding article, provided that defense were allowed, this other charge, being hypothetically made, might be construed as withdrawn. On the other hand, this limiting clause does not condition the *schism* any more than it conditions the *rebellion*, which is uniformly denounced as a crime, *per se*. In reality, the restriction amounts to little. Since every division in the Christian Church does not involve the guilt of schism, which derives its character from the spirit that actuates it, the Assembly was constrained to the admission that simple withdrawal from their jurisdiction did not, of itself, establish this crime against us. This is all that the limitation in their language really imports: for they distinctly affirm the "secession" to have occurred "under such circumstances" as to make the separation "schismatical." In their judgment, parties who were involved in unlawful resistance to the civil authority, could not be acquitted of blame in withdrawing, also, from the jurisdiction of the Church. What is termed rebellion in the one case, is denominated schism in the other. Accordingly, in the series of resolutions, of which that above cited is only the first, the Assembly proceeds to claim the whole territory covered by the Southern Church, whose existence is disallowed as an unlawful organization, and never referred to but under the contemptuous phrase "*the bounds of the schisms.*" If any doubt should remain as to the Assembly's intention, categorically to prefer this charge, it will be dissipated by the language of the Assembly of 1868, when the first movement towards conciliation was made:

"Resolved, That the Assembly also takes this occasion to say that while it cannot justify those brethren in separating themselves from the Church of their fathers, it regrets their withdrawal, and expresses the earnest hope that they may see their way clear to return to their former relations."

We have emphasised the words we wish to have noted. If, in their more tender moments, when their hearts began to yearn after their brethren, they felt constrained to pronounce our separation "*unjustifiable,*" we have, in this calmer utterance, a commentary upon the text of 1865. The charge of schism is distinctly tabled, and, up to the present moment, it has not been withdrawn.

Are we amenable to the indictment? If it shall be fairly disproved, then is it a slander which honorable men are bound, in justice to themselves, to retract,

Our own Assembly, at the time of its organization in 1861, naturally felt obliged to vindicate itself in respect to this matter. We were the withdrawing party, and the presumption, of course, was that the *fault* of the separation was ours, as well as the *act*. At any rate, the challenge rested constructively, upon us, to show cause for the separation, of which we were, ostensibly, the originators. It was mainly to parry this censure, and to approve ourselves before the Christian world, that "the

Address to the Churches of Jesus Christ, throughout the earth," was framed, from which we have had occasion, so largely, to quote. In that declarative instrument the Southern Assembly speaks as follows :

"We should be sorry to be regarded by our brethren in any part of the world as guilty of schism. We are not conscious of any purpose to rend the body of Christ. On the contrary, our aim has been to promote the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. If we know our own hearts, and can form any just estimate of the motives which have governed us, we have been prompted by a sincere desire to promote the glory of God, and the efficiency energy, harmony and zeal of His visible kingdom in the earth."

After this general disclaimer, the address proceeds to justify the separation which had taken place, on the ground that the course pursued by the Northern Assembly plainly showed that if the two sections, rent asunder by civil war, should remain ecclesiastically united, "political questions would be obtruded upon the Church Courts," and "discussed with rancor." The commissioners from both sections would "wrangle over questions which had split them into two Confederacies," "opening the door for the introduction of the worst passions of human nature into the deliberations of Church Courts," &c. ; a long argument in this direction being concluded in these words :

"For the sake of peace, therefore, for Christian charity, for the honor of the Church, and for the glory of God, we have been constrained, as much as in us lies, to remove all occasion of offence. We have quietly separated ; and we are grateful to God, that, while leaving for the sake of peace, we leave with the humble consciousness that we, ourselves, have never given occasion to break the peace."

Then follows a paragraph from which, on account of its intrinsic value, as setting forth what truly constitutes schism, we will be pardoned an extended quotation :

"The unity of the Church does not require a formal bond of union among the congregations of believers throughout the earth. It does not demand a vast imperial monarchy like that of Rome ; nor a strictly universal council, like that to which the complete development of Presbyterianism would naturally give rise. The Church Catholic is one, in Christ ; but it is not necessarily, one visible, all-absorbing organization upon earth. There is no schism where there is no breach of charity. Churches may be perfectly at one in every principle of faith and order, and yet, geographically distinct, and mutually independent. As the unity of the human race is not disturbed by its division into countries and nations, so the unity of the spiritual seed of Christ is neither broken nor impaired by separation and division into various Church constitutions. * * * * That the division into national Churches, that is, Churches bounded by national lines, is, in the present condition of human nature, a benefit, seems to us too obvious for proof. It realizes to the Church Catholic, all the advantages of a division of labor. It makes a Church organization homogeneous and compact ; it stimulates holy rivalry and zeal ; it removes all grounds of suspicion and jealousy on the part of the State. What is lost in expansion, is gained in energy. The Church Catholic, as thus divided—and yet spiritually one—divided but not rent, is a beautiful illustration of the great philosophical principle which pervades all nature, the co-existence of the one with the many."

These extracts disclose, not simply the reasons for the separation, but also the spirit in which it was effected. We might, therefore, safely rest the defence here, and submit the case to the candor of mankind ;

but justice to ourselves demands a more complete exoneration from the charge under discussion; and if the accusation should be shifted upon those who have tabled it against us, it will not be the first instance on record of a kindred retribution. The real, unprovoked, and guilty author of this schism, if schism there be, is the Northern Assembly itself. From first to last they, and they alone, are responsible for it before the world and before God.

The famous "Spring Resolutions," adopted at Philadelphia, in May, 1861, formed the wedge which reft asunder the grand old Church. These resolutions, it will be remembered, pledged the whole Presbyterian Church "to promote and perpetuate the integrity of the United States;" "to strengthen, uphold, and encourage the Federal Government in the exercise of all its functions;" and defined this to be "that central administration which, being at any time appointed and inaugurated, is the visible representative of the National existence." This extraordinary action was taken in face of the fact that Eleven Sovereign States had already withdrawn from the Federal Union, and had established a government of their own. It was, therefore, simply a writ of ejection against ten Synods, forty-seven Presbyteries, seven hundred ministers, and over a thousand Churches, embracing seventy-five thousand communicants! who, living within the bounds of the seceded States, could not redeem this pledge, authoritatively and unconstitutionally made in their behalf. This was recognized as the necessary effect of the resolutions, at the time of their passage. It was distinctly set forth, on the floor of debate, by the Southern Commissioners, who were present; and it was pointedly argued in the Protest against this action, signed by Dr. Hodge, and forty-five other members of that Assembly. Its equivalence to an act of expulsion of the whole Southern wing of the Church, is thus assumed in the language of their Protest:

"This action of the Assembly in the premises, puts into the mouths of all represented in this body, a declaration of loyalty and allegiance to the Union and to the Federal Government; but such declarations made by the members of our Church, residing in what is called the seceding States, is treasonable. Presbyterians, under the jurisdiction of those States, therefore, can not make that declaration. They are, consequently, forced to choose between allegiance to their State and allegiance to the Church. * * * *
* * * The Assembly have now descended from this high position, in making a political opinion, a particular theory of the Constitution—however correct and important that theory may be—the condition of membership in our body; and thus, we fear, have endangered the unity of the Church."—*See Dr. Hodge's Protest.*

So far was the Southern Church from initiating the schism, that even after the commencement of civil war, and the two sections were arrayed against each other, with all the furniture of battle, Commissioners from Southern Presbyteries found their way through hostile camps, to sit in the National Council of the Church at Philadelphia. Many amongst us—and the writer of these lines was one of that class—indulged the golden hope that the power of the Gospel would have a sublime illustration, when the Church could be seen to bear this extraordinary pressure, and the bonds of ecclesiastical fellowship be preserved unbroken, even between those living in hostile lands. How this

beautiful vision was dispelled by the passage of the "Spring Resolutions," we need not again recite. But no sooner were these published than the Southern Presbyteries began to dissolve their connection with the Old Church, around which clustered so many precious associations of the past. We have not their records before us, but they all based this separation upon the unconstitutional and arbitrary proceedings of the Northern Assembly. *Ex uno disce omnes*: the Presbytery of which the writer was a member, after reviewing the Northern action in a lengthy preamble, concluded it with the following resolution:

"Resolved, That in view of the unconstitutional, erastian, tyrannical, and *virtually excinding act* of the late General Assembly, sitting at Philadelphia, in May last, we do hereby, with a solemn protest against this act, declare, in the fear of God, our connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, to be dissolved."

So far, then, the evidence is complete. After the signal gun of the revolution had been fired, Southern Commissioners are found sitting by the side of Northern, in the General Assembly. Not till this body had passed the fatal bill by which they were virtually extruded, is concerted action taken by our own Presbyteries; and these found their dissolution of old ecclesiastical ties upon the excinding character of that measure. Let the world judge who is responsible for the initiation of the schism.

Four years of relentless war ensue, terminating at length with the unconditional surrender of the Southern forces. When, however, the Northern Assembly meets in 1865, at the termination of hostilities, its first act is to pronounce a sentence of outlawry upon the whole Southern Church, as rebels and schismatics. Without pausing a moment to discover what might be the temper of the South in their altered circumstances, they enact a bill disfranchising all the members and office-bearers in ten Synods, with their forty-seven Presbyteries. They bar the door against all return to their jurisdiction by the imposition of conditions which are not simply humiliating, but which no Southern man could accept without the violation of all truth, and the renunciation of all the convictions of a lifetime. They enjoin upon their own courts, from the Session to the Synod, a severe inquisition of all Southern Presbyterians desiring to enter their communion: not as to the evidences of a gracious state, but upon the most abstract and fluctuating questions of human philosophy—the extent of natural rights, and the limitations upon civil obedience. Not content even with this, they inaugurate a system of oppressive measures, with the avowed purpose of disintegrating the Southern Church, and thereby wresting from it the territory which it occupies. On the other hand, our records may be searched in vain, through the whole period of our existence, for a single instance of offensive legislation, or even a single word of reproachful criticism, except it may be the necessary words uttered in 1861, in setting up our defensive plea before the world. Northern Presbyterians have emigrated to the South in shoals, and are received into all our Churches, upon the face of the credentials they bring us, and without examination, except upon the points of faith in Jesus Christ, and birth of the Holy spirit. In the light of this contrast, we ask a candid world to decide who are the true schismatics in the case.

Still further: When, in 1866, negotiations were pending between the Old and New Schools, to effect the amalgamation which is on the eve of being consummated, Dr. Van Dyke, with that magnanimity and candor which have marked his honorable career, moved to include the ministers and congregations of the Southern Church. His amendment was quietly laid upon the table, and no answer of any sort was returned to his indignant protest. Thus, it appears, upon documentary evidence, the schism, commenced in the excising acts of 1861, was continued in the still more violent and proscriptive edicts of 1865, and finally sealed, in 1866, by the point-blank rejection of an overture even to consider the question of reunion with us. The schism, as it was begun, continued, and ended, was the work of the identical party which has so recklessly tabled the accusation against us.

This relentless opposition abates nothing of its force until 1868, when, for the first time, the dove is seen flying over the waters of strife, with the olive leaf in its beak. In response to the various memorials, coming up from several sections of their own body, the Assembly consents at last to drop from its roll the names of our Synods and Presbyteries, which had been so uselessly retained; and also to recognize us "as a separate and independent Church, sustaining the same relations to them as the other branches of the Presbyterian Church." In this connection, too, was passed a third resolution which we have already cited in full, "regretting our withdrawal," which it cannot "justify," and expressing a hope for our return. This is followed, in 1869, by the overture for union which has given occasion to the historical survey contained in these papers.

It is an ungracious office to scan, with a distrustful criticism, propositions which bear upon their face the appearance of reconciliation and charity. At the same time it is forced upon our recollection, that these overtures follow hard upon three years of persistent and ruthless aggression. Not until every method of intimidation has been exhausted, and every form of seduction been employed, upon our weak and poverty-stricken Churches—not until all these efforts to harrass the Southern Church, and to wear it out by violent attrition, have been covered with humiliating discomfiture, do solicitations of friendship fall upon the ear. May God forgive us, if we wrong our brethren of the North by unworthy suspicions! But we may as well speak what is in our thought; "*timeo Danaos dona ferentes.*" Can it be that *policy* is to achieve what *force* could not accomplish? Has the discovery been made that the territory may be *absorbed*, which could not be *conquered*? We will try, however, not to judge the motives of man. Yet, this we must add, that so sudden a conversion from the extreme of enmity would have been more satisfactory to us, were it accompanied by some of the fruits of the spiritual life. Alas! that there should not be even the softened expression of regret for so many acts, through so many years, of bitterness and outrage! Alas! that there should not be magnanimity enough even to lighten the obloquy which they have heaped upon our good name! Alas! that so many calumnies should remain uncanceled, by which we have been aspersed throughout the Christian world!

ARTICLE XIII.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

Slanders Against the Southern Church—Continued.

Two of the three charges against the Southern Church have been fully disproved; viz., those of schism and of political alliance with the Civil Confederate authority. We come now to the

III. *Third allegation, that the Southern Church had changed its ground upon the subject of Slavery, so as to hold opinions that were heretical and blasphemous.*

The Northern Assembly of 1865, ordained that every minister applying for admission into their Church from Southern Presbyteries, and every private member seeking entrance into their communion from the Southern States, should be distinctly interrogated,

“Whether he holds that the system of negro slavery in the South is a Divine institution, and that it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery as there maintained; and if it be found that he holds either of these doctrines, that he be not received without renouncing and forsaking these errors.”

Again, in their reply to the protest of Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Wilson, and others, against this action, they say:

“The last two points of the protest, proceed logically upon the assumption that treason, such as has existed in the Southern States, is not a sin; and that the doctrine that *Southern slavery is a Divine institution to be conserved and perpetuated is not a heresy.*”

Again, in a Pastoral letter, addressed by the Assembly of 1866, to the Churches and people under its care, and which contains an elaborate defence of the previous legislation of the Church on the subjects of “loyalty and freedom,” the following language is employed:

“It was well known that the leading men of the Presbyterian Church in the South, still cherished the same views under which the people had been led into rebellion, that the system of Southern negro slavery was a Divine institution as truly as was the Mosaic system of servitude, and was an ordinance of God in the same category with marriage and civil government.

It was under these circumstances that the Assembly of 1865, took its action upon slavery * * * * * The main point of which, indeed, the only points referring to those who may apply for reception into our Church from the Churches of the South, are, that such applicants shall renounce the errors which assert that the system of negro slavery in the South is a Divine institution; that it is an ordinance of God in the sense above stated, and that it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Churches to conserve the institution of slavery as it was maintained in the South. *That*

these doctrines are not only HERESY *but* BLASPHEMY *is plainly seen from the word of God, etc. * * * * ** Nor does the Assembly deem it useless to observe that while manifestly the views put forth by these deliverances, and the views which it was proposed to elicit from applicants for admission to our Churches and Presbyteries, have regarded *only the more recent opinions* concerning the system of slavery, out of which secession and the war grew for its perpetuation and extension, etc."

These extracts from the records of two consecutive Assemblies, embody the charge under consideration; showing clearly that it has not been overstated in the condensed form in which we have enunciated it. We are distinctly accused of holding "recent opinions concerning the system of slavery," differing from those which had previously been tolerated in the Presbyterian Church; and making, as they express it, "a new state of case," calling for new deliverances on the part of this body. These "more recent opinions" are that slavery is "a Divine institution, as truly as was the Mosaic system of servitude," that it is "an ordinance of God, in the same category with marriage and civil government," and that it is "our mission to conserve and perpetuate it." All which doctrines they declare to be not simply "heretical" but "blasphemous."

No fact in history is more notorious than the original opposition of the South to the introduction of African slavery, at the time "the institution" was fastened upon it through the cupidity of others. The opening of the traffic dates as far back as A. D. 1442, when a Portuguese mariner imported ten blacks into Lisbon. Spain followed eagerly the example of Portugal, and in 1517, Charles V, granted a patent to certain persons for the exclusive supply of 4000 negroes annually to the West India plantations. In 1620, the first slaves were landed in Virginia; and so eagerly did England embark in the new speculation, that from 1680 to 1786, there were imported into the British Possessions about 2,130,000 slaves, making an annual average importation of more than 20,000. Sir John Hawkins, the first Englishman to engage in this traffic, received from Queen Elizabeth the honor of Knighthood, and was made treasurer of the Navy. Her successors on the throne, James I, Charles I and II, James II, and William III, all gave it the royal sanction, and declared it "to be highly beneficial to the nation." Let it be observed, that the first note of opposition to this traffic now so universally reprobated, came from the *Southern Colonies*. As early as 1760, South Carolina proposed an act to prohibit further importation into her dominion. Virginia proposed no less than twenty-three acts imposing duties on slaves, with a view not to revenue, but to the suppression of the traffic, the earliest of which dates back to 1699. In 1772, she presented a petition to the throne "to avert the calamity of a most alarming nature," which if encouraged, "would endanger the very existence of his majesty's American dominions." To all this the British Crown returned an indignant rejection, and enjoined upon the governors of all the Colonies to sanction no law enacted against the slave trade. The first assembly which met in Virginia, after the adoption of her Constitution, prohibited it entirely; and "the inhuman use of the royal negative," against the action of the Colony, on this subject, is enumerated among the reasons of separation from the mother country.

It is further a fact of history, that America interdicted the trade from her ports thirteen years earlier than Great Britain; made it punishable as a crime seven years sooner, and anticipated by four years its final abolition; all of which was done in a Congress largely composed of slave holders, who were the foremost in its denunciation.

We are half ashamed to reproduce these familiar facts, which we have taken almost *ipsisssimis verbis* from Professor Dew's exhaustive treatise. But this rehearsal is far from being useless at this juncture of time. If there be the guilt in slavery, which modern casuistry now detects, history should fix the opprobrium of its introduction where it justly belongs. If, too, the South resisted it with protest and legislative enactment in vain, then will our position be better understood in regarding it as a trust to be accounted for to that Great Being, under whose mysterious providence it was fastened upon us against our will. And perhaps it will be made to appear before this article is closed, that the Southern people stand to-day almost exactly upon the ground which our fathers occupied a full century ago. Their opposition, it will be borne in mind, was not to *slaveholding*, which had not then been submitted to question in any shape; but to the inhumanity of the slave traffic, and to the flooding of their own land with a race of savages whom they would be required to subdue and train to habits of labor. They stood appalled at the inconveniences and perils of such an undertaking, and shrunk from the heavy responsibility which it involved. When, however, the mighty problem was forced upon them, they adapted themselves manfully to its solution. The system of slavery, planted under such circumstances, took root at the South and flourished; until at length it became interwoven into the whole texture of society, and incorporated with all the usages, habits, and civilization of our people.

At a later day, however, a fatal combination began to be formed against slavery, between a religious fanaticism, upon the one hand, and a political and sectional aggression upon the other. The discussion, which was awakened, went down to the bottom of all the principles, religious, social, political, and economical, upon which this institution rested. The fierce assault upon it as inherently a sinful relation, involving us in moral guilt before the world and before God, compelled an appeal to the Scriptures as the only standard by which the truth could be determined. From that examination the South arose with the clearest conviction—and a conviction quite as unanimous as it was clear—that so far from being condemned by the Word of God, slavery was unequivocally sanctioned and regulated by its holy precepts. If our adversaries choose to call this a change of opinion, which was only the confirmation of principles before assumed, but now demonstrated to be true, then let it be remembered it was a change that occurred at least some forty years ago, when the slavery agitation first disturbed the repose of the Church and distracted the councils of the State. It will not do, therefore, to denounce these as "recent opinions," differing from those held by Southern Christians during their long connection with the Northern Assembly. Do our calumniators suppose that, through all this long period of ecclesiastical fellowship with them, we have had a secret unbelief in the lawfulness of slavery, or that we have cherished even undefined misgivings

as to the propriety of our relation to it? That would resolve into a compromise with sin, little honorable to a Christian heart, and would be the most damaging accusation of all against our Christian name. The writer's memory stretches over thirty years of public service; and over this whole interval of time he is unable to detect any variation in the convictions of the Southern people. Precisely what they are to-day, they have been longer than a generation back; and in no one fact are they more entirely agreed than in the clearness and fulness of the scriptural argument for slavery. In the distant Patriarchal ages when the Church was first organized as a separate society, distinct from the State, it was found in the family of a slaveholder, who was able to bring more than three hundred trained men into battle, of those who were born in his house; and whose slaves, by virtue of his proprietary relation to them, were admitted to all the privileges of the covenant. It was distinctly incorporated in the civil institutions of Moses, and its minute details were regulated by Divine legislation. In the time of Christ and his Apostles, we find it diffused throughout the Roman world, in a form more oppressive and severe than in the patriarchal system, which obtained amongst ourselves; and yet so far is it from being repealed or denounced as sinful, all the relative duties arising out of it are eminently defined in that religious code, which is God's final revelation to man until the end of the world. But we have no wish even to restate the old argument on this subject, much less to explain it. One thing is, however, indisputable; that slavery cannot be impugned as a relation in itself immoral and sinful, without vacating the claim to inspiration, and with this the Divine authority of both the Testaments—the Old and the New. And in all our Christian defenses of slavery, the aim has been not to uphold that institution, so much as to oppose the subtle species of infidelity, which sought to accomplish its overthrow by assumptions which placed the whole Bible as an authoritative and final revelation, under the feet of profane scoffers. Slavery is now a perfectly dead issue; but the principles on which its destruction was accomplished, and upon which that destruction is now justified, so far as they profess to be drawn from the Scriptures, are simply infidel; and to their propagation Christian fidelity compels an earnest resistance to the end of time.

When, however, the inference is deduced that we hold slavery to be a "Divine institution" in the same category, with marriage and civil government, the allegation is pure fiction, having no existence but in the inventive imagination of our accusers themselves. In the inaccurate language of popular discussion, some such analogies may have been suggested, for aught we know, by some irresponsible declaimer. But for crudities of this sort the Southern Church cannot be held accountable; and we are very sure that the grave charge, preferred against us in this formal indictment, will excite a general smile as a dogma that is perfectly novel to us. The distinction is too obvious to escape the attention of any but the most superficial thinker. Marriage was ordained by God, in the beginning, as the fundamental relation out of which all human society was to spring. It has its seat in the original appetites and propensions of the nature with which man is endowed; and it is the indispensable method by which shall be brought into being all the successive

generations of mankind. It constitutes the family, the primary society out of which both the State and the Church shall finally emerge; and from its first institution, it has been hallowed by the Divine benediction. In like manner, civil government flows by necessity from the moral and social nature which God has given to us. It originates from the family, so soon as this shall expand into tribes and into nations. Existing at first in the most rudimentary form, it becomes more complex as the relations of human society become more numerous and involved. It was clearly instituted in the germ—in the death penalty announced by God after the flood, in which the civil magistracy is created, and is invested with the jurisdiction of the sword. While throughout the Scriptures, the command “to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s,” is just as imperative as the command “to render unto God the things that are God’s.”

Slavery, on the contrary, as one of the many forms of human servitude, we have always regarded as one of the consequences of the Fall. Evolving itself out of the curse of labor, pronounced upon man for the primary transgression, it is simply one of those adjustments of Divine Providence, by which the necessary subordination in human society is in part secured. In a state of society absolutely perfect, and amongst beings themselves absolutely sinless, slavery, we suppose, would not exist. We cannot conceive of it, for example, as an element of the society in Heaven. But it is the sad mistake of these philanthropic visionaries to legislate for a condition of things purely ideal, such as never can be realized in a fallen world; making “confusion worse confounded,” and establishing universal anarchy in the stead of the imaginary perfection which is the dream of their fancy. We, on the contrary, accept the stubborn fact that ours is a sinful race, placed here under the discipline of a wise and just government; whose method is not to take evil out of the world, but to transform it, converting it into a stupendous educational system, softening and sanctifying it into an ultimate blessing. We do not profess to understand the vast and complex machinery of Divine Providence, with its immense adjustments and compensations, by which one form of evil is set over against another, mutually limiting and mutually controlling; and all in subordination to the purposes of Infinite mercy and love, gradually disciplining a sinful race to a higher and more glorious destiny. But we can adore, where we cannot comprehend. We can admire that combined wisdom and grace, which takes poverty, and pain, and weakness, and disease, and sorrow, and death, transforming them all into a mighty and loving discipline for good. This, then, is the ‘category,’ if our adversaries will deign to believe us, in which we place slavery. One of the processes by which a just, yet beneficent Providence disciplines and trains sinful man, is servitude; and one of the many forms in which that servitude is allowed to shape itself, is slavery. At the very opening of history, after the deluge, we meet the mysterious decree of Jehovah, which doomed a portion of the race to servitude; a doom from which, through the whole tract of succeeding history, they were never extracted; and which seems to have the power of drawing within its dark shadow even those who would be their guardians and protectors.

We cannot penetrate the secrets of that awful Being, "whose glory it is to conceal a thing." It is the assumed privilege of fanaticism alone to be admitted within God's pavillion, and to receive those higher revelations which dispense with the awkward and half articulate utterances of holy scripture. But, standing on the lower plane where the Bible teaches the humble, we do know that Infinite goodness and power have to a large extent taken the curse out of servitude itself, and converted even slavery, which is its most intense form, into a wonderful and gracious discipline for the bondmen. It is not unsusceptible of proof, even *a priori*, that in certain conditions of human society, it is precisely the best and happiest relation in which labor can stand to the intelligence and will that both directs and educates it. But what might be established *in thesi*, has actually been wrought into fact in the demonstrations of history. Within the sixty years which have elapsed since the abolition of the African slave trade, a race of wild and naked savages has been lifted to a degree of knowledge and virtue which, in the estimation of our Northern brethren, justifies them in packing these new-born freedmen, into our Legislatures and Courts, to enact and expound the laws under which we live. It is the highest encomium they could pronounce upon the value of slavery, as a grand educational and disciplinary system. And though we think they slightly overestimate the benefits this system has conferred, we agree with them so far as to believe that the world may safely be challenged to produce a like example in which a barbarous people, at the very lowest point of human degradation, has been civilized, refined, and Christianized in so short a time. We are perfectly willing to lay the illustration before the world, of the method by which God "out of seeming evil educes good." So far then, if our adversaries fancy the term which we do not, it may be called "a Divine institution," as existing in the mind and purposes of the Almighty—as allowed in His most Holy providence—as controlled and subordinated by Him to check and qualify the curse pronounced upon fallen man—as constituting in His hand a wise and necessary discipline for the ignorant and indolent—and as subordinate to ultimate purposes of mercy and love, which we will more perfectly understand in the light of His throne hereafter. But that it is an institution or an ordinance of God in the same sense as marriage and civil government, it was reserved for the poetic imagination of the Northern Assembly first to suggest. We will leave to them all the glory of the discovery; with the simple expression of our dissent from it, as a philosophical or religious dogma.

The further exposition of our own views, which are less transcendental, we must reserve for another article.

ARTICLE XIV.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

Slanders Against the Southern Church—Continued.

The charge brought against the Southern Church, on the subject of slavery, contains, it will be remembered, the following specifications: that her views upon the whole matter have been essentially modified, placing her upon a different ground from that occupied during the long historical connexion with the Northern Church; that she now holds it to be a divine institution equally with the servitude of the Mosaic law; that it is an ordinance of God, in the same sense with marriage and civil government; and that she regarded it as her peculiar mission and to conserve this institution as it was maintained in the South.

The first of these three specifications have been disposed of in our preceding article; it remains therefore to consider the fourth and last.

It is only necessary to say, that this allegation is suspended upon a single equivocal sentence which crept into the narrative of the Southern Assembly, in 1864; and that this document was adopted at the heel of the session, amidst the confusion of a hurried adjournment. Recent military movements in Virginia had made it necessary that a large number of delegates should leave immediately for their homes; and the last proceedings of the body were rushed through in haste for their accommodation. It was under these circumstances the narrative on the state of religion was read, in which no expression of opinion upon any important public question was anticipated; and thus this famous declaration passed without detection. We have certainly paid the penalty for our inconsiderateness, in the use which has been made of this utterance. The Northern Church was not slow to appropriate it as the pivot of her fierce legislation against us, and from it to hurl her anathemas of "heresy and blasphemy." At the same time it is a satisfaction to know that in all their diligent search into our records, they can find only this one poor utterance, out of which to manufacture their bulls of excommunication against an innocent and suffering people.

All that should have been said of it, in any candor, was to point out its apparent inconsistency with the position assumed in 1861, in the "address to the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the earth;" in which it was formally proclaimed "that in our ecclesiastical capacity we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery; that is to say, we have no commission either to propagate or abolish it." Admitting now, for the present, a clear antagonism between the two statements, can any

fair mind hesitate which to accept as the authoritative decision of the Southern Presbyterian Church? The one is an incidental opinion dropped into a paper to which it did not appropriately belong, falling upon the ear in a moment of general distraction, without any previous discussion of the question involved, and pronounced in connection with topics which, as they did not include any polemical issues, would not excite a critical attention. The other is a grave and mature deliverance, contained in a paper intended to be testimonial in its character; in which every sentiment and expression were carefully weighed, which was adopted with singular deliberation and solemnity, and afterwards ratified by the individual signatures of every member of the council; and which presented to the judgment and approval of mankind, the platform upon which the Southern Church proposed to stand. Scarcely any one thing more conspicuously illustrates the extreme partizanship of the Northern Assembly, than its total rejection of this *quasi* judicial decision of our Church, and its seizure of a purely casual and incidental expression, as defining our position before the world on this immensely momentous issue. The question is not what positions have been assumed by particular individuals at the South, however extended their reputation, and however powerful their influence; but what is the attitude of the Church in her organic capacity, speaking authoritatively through her constitutional courts. The Southern Church has, once for all, publicly proclaimed in the hearing of all Christendom, with her right hand raised to Heaven, giving testimony, as it were, under oath before God, that she holds "the policy of the existence or non-existence of slavery to be a question which belongs exclusively to the State," and that "her business is with the duties which spring from the relation," precisely as in all the other complex relationships of human life. If the North will not believe this, it will believe no asseveration which we are able to make on this subject; and of course, if we are held, in their judgment, under the imputation, not of falsehood simply, but even of perjury, there is no good reason why we should be ambitious of their embrace and fellowship.

But really, if the Southern people honestly believed slavery to be a lawful form of servitude, allowed in the providence, and sanctioned in the word of God, where is the guilt of desiring to "conserve" it? The generation now living, and the generation before theirs, found it in existence when they were born; and they found it protected and held under the guarantees of the Federal Constitution. But when a sectional legislation undertook its repression, by drawing a cordon around it that it might choke itself to death within that doomed circle, was it wonderful that the South should resent and resist this encroachment upon their constitutional rights? When, further, a fanatical and intolerant sentiment clamored for its abolition, was it amazing that the South should say, this institution is now interwoven with all that is near and dear to us, and you cannot eliminate it without destroying the whole fabric of social order? And when, lastly, we were remanded to the sacred Scriptures, from which it was expected to overwhelm us in moral guilt before God, was it strange that we should challenge the verdict, and prove its lawfulness by the same high authority. The change was

not in us, but in those who fastened "the institution" upon us; and who fastened it against our will, as we have already seen, in the face of petition, protest, and legislative enactment. The Southern people, organized in the State—not as a Church to which the subject did not appertain—simply declared that they were not willing to immolate themselves, and to inflict a wrong upon the bondman too, in order to meet the saintly caprice which now demanded its destruction. In the nature of things, they must either abandon or conserve the institution; and their crime is that they put into a plain, intelligible word the purpose which they were obliged, by the necessities of their position, to form.

As respects the Christian sentiment of the South, it regarded slavery in the light of a great and solemn trust. Pharisaic Puritanism will, of course, indulge in its usual pious sneer at the statement. Still, we will put it on record, that a Christian people could not construe the providence, which called them to receive into their homes four million of an alien, a barbarous and heathen race, but as the commission from God to educate them for eternity and Heaven. With some measure of fidelity, the Southern Church devoted herself to this great duty; a fidelity, which the Northern Assembly itself has more than once seen fit to mention in terms of honorable praise; and which has received the signet of the Divine approval in the blessing that has accompanied these labors, and in the large results accruing from them. So long as this trust was continued to us in the working of a mysterious Providence, just so long it was to be cherished and its sacred duties fulfilled. The infidel humanitarianism, which "opposed and exalted itself above all that is called God or that is worshipped," was stoutly resisted, when it proclaimed its "higher law" above the teachings of Divine Revelation. Slavery being the object of its assault, had to be religiously defended; not so much for its own sake, but because it was the battle field on which must be fought that peculiar and subtle infidelity of modern times, which was seeking to undermine the foundations of Christianity itself. But no sooner did the issues of war settle the question of the continuance of slavery, than the Christian heart of the South accept the solution of this vast problem which Providence itself afforded. We were now, by the hand of God discharged from the trust which had previously been equally difficult to fulfil, and perilous to let go. Notwithstanding the fact that three-fifths of our property was virtually confiscated by the stroke of the pen which decreed emancipation, with the additional loss of another fifth in the depreciation of our landed estates, yet in all this wide-spread financial ruin not a whimper of complaint has been heard from Southern lips. Slavery was one of the stakes of the war; the decision of the sword was against us, and our people accepted without a murmur the result of the struggle. They were too manly to whine over what was irreparable, and took poverty to their bosom as though it were a bride. The piety of the South went deeper. It acknowledged the hand of God in cutting the knot, the most vexatious of the age; and in freeing it from all the responsibilities of a trust which must be "conserved" so long as it remained, and from which there could be no discharge but through the omnipotence of his own will.

Whether the negro race can properly use the privileges of that freedom upon which they have been so suddenly precipitated—whether the degeneracy in character now so apparent will be confined to a brief and transitional period—whether they can ever be educated, even by the forced culture to which they are now subjected, to a due appreciation of their duties and franchises—are questions which we will not in this connection discuss. We would not so much as embarrass the outworking of this problem, by the expression of an unfavorable opinion. We are the friends of the black man now, as we were his guardians and protectors before; we wish him well in his new career; and so far as may be consistent with the higher duty and respect which we owe to our own race, we would help him onward in the ascending path to usefulness, happiness and honor. So far as in us lies, we would retain him under the influence of a pure and wholesome Christianity, and prevent his relapse into the fetishism of his pagan ancestors. But whatever his destiny may be, we are clear to say for ourselves, that were it in our power to accomplish his return to bondage, by the simple turning over of the hand, that hand would lie unmoved upon the table which is before us. "Is he made free? let him use it rather," and "abide in the calling wherein he is called." Nor is this a singular crotchet of the writer alone; we are very sure that the entire virtue and intelligence of the South agree in this verdict. With perfect consistency the most earnest pro-slavery advocates in the South, who contended for the conservation of slavery while the institution existed, consent to be divested of all its grave responsibilities as soon as the institution is destroyed, without the intervention of their agency. Of course, we do not expect this testimony to be received by Northern and European Radicals. Their mind and conscience have been too long trained to believe simply what they wish, to credit any witness whose depositions shall contradict their *a priori* inference of what from their premises ought logically to flow. Nevertheless we deliver the testimony over to history, and leave it to work its own way into the convictions of mankind.

It was with reference to this present attitude of the Southern mind on the subject of slavery, that we said in our preceding article, we occupy substantially the ground of our fathers at the time this system was inaugurated. They resisted it by petition and by protest, till resistance became hopeless. When forced upon them by royal mandate and commercial cupidity, they accepted it as a mysterious yet providential trust. Through more than a century, the conditions of that trust have been fulfilled by their descendants. We now accept, from the same ordaining and controlling will, our discharge from all responsibilities in this matter, and do it without a murmur. In either case, a deep and foul wrong has been committed; in fastening upon the South against its will what, equally against its will, has been taken away. And whilst our good name is loaded with obloquy for the existence of slavery, the saintly Pharisees whose fathers forced it upon an unwilling people, engage in their wholesale spoliation; and then, complacently patting their pious breasts, "thank God that they are not as this publican!" "Verily, there is a God which judgeth in the earth;" to him we commit our vindication, when He shall "prepare His throne for judgment."

We have now, according to promise, dissected the slanders pronounced against the Southern Church by the Northern Assembly. I. That it was organized as the ally of the Confederate Government, in the interests of the rebellion. II. That it is guilty of unwarranted Schism, in separating from them. III. That it holds recent and heretical opinions on the subject of negro slavery. The reader must judge with what success they have been disproved. There remain, however, a few things to be said in the application of all this to the proposed re-union of the South with the North, in ecclesiastical fellowship. With what consistency or honor can the Northern Church desire affiliation with parties who lie under the taint of this heavy indictment? Can they possibly compound with 'heresy,' or tolerate 'blasphemy' in their spotless communion? This point is put with exceeding sharpness in their Pastoral letter of 1866: This instrument officially proclaims that "any concession touching the offenses of such persons would have been a connivance at their sin, and would have brought down upon them, and upon us alike, the displeasure of God." It declares that "ecclesiastical fellowship may be restored, whenever it can be done upon those principles which six General Assemblies have announced"—and that "to form a union upon any other basis would only serve to bring together those who could not act in harmony, and to perpetuate strife and alienation." Is there, then, a particle of evidence that since 1865, the Southern Church has retracted any one of those "erroneous opinions," for which, at that time, she was formally cut off? We believe that scarcely a single individual can be found among the 900 ministers and 80,000 members in our communion, who has resiled, by the breadth of a hair, from the abstract opinions held by him eight years ago, upon any of these subjects. If guilty in 1865, we are equally guilty in 1869; with the special aggravation of persistence in error in the face of solemn warning, and in derogation of the discipline which the Northern Church has attempted to enforce. How then can their declared and only basis of union be set aside; and those who are "sinners above all that dwell in Judea" be received into fellowship, without the repentance and confession solemnly affirmed to be indispensable? What, further, would be our own *status* in the combined church, should we see proper to accept the overture under discussion? Would we sit clean in the midst of our peers, or as convicts who have served out their term in the galleys? Honorable men—if "rebels" and "schismatics," and "blaspheming heretics" may arrogate to themselves such a degree of respectability—do not prefer to hold an equivocal position. We desire therefore to know whether, coming in under the amnesty of this overture, we shall still be under the taint of these enormous crimes, the due punishment of which alone is remitted; or whether our return will be construed as "dead-lettering" our offences, as the overture itself is supposed to "dead-letter" the charges preferred.

This brings us precisely to the dilemma, between whose horns we are constrained now to place the Old School Assembly of the North. Either they *do believe* or else they do *not believe* the charges they have tabled against us. If, in their opinion, these charges are *true*, then their proposal to us, of re-union, is simply a shameful dereliction of religious

principle. If, on the other hand, in their judgment these charges are *false*, then it is the last degree dishonorable that they do not openly and squarely retract them. We at the South, who have been educated under the barbarous influence of slavery, hold the obligation to truth to be especially sacred. Every man amongst us is responsible for his words. If he speaks the truth, he is considered bound to establish it as such and to adhere to it at every hazard. If, through mistake of any sort, he utters what is false, he is equally bound, upon the exposure of his error, instantly, and without mental reservation, to cancel it. The moment he attempts to equivocate between the two, he is stamped with the infamy of being twice a liar. The theory of "dead-lettering" one's word, by which a thing is said and not said at one and the same moment of time, has not yet found its way into our systems of morals. We wish to be honest and truthful ourselves, and to deal with honesty and truth in other men. Where we do not find these attributes, our desire is to turn from the path where these are not, and to pass aside. We distinctly arraign our traducers before the bar of their own conscience, that lower tribunal of God in the human soul, from which we ascend to the higher tribunal at the last day; and we demand that their charges against the Southern Church shall either be substantiated by proof, or else be formally and honorably withdrawn. The Overture, tendered to us as a *tertium quid*, equivocates between the two, and is a disreputable proposal. We wish to be at peace with all mankind, and in fellowship with the universal Church of God; but we have long since recognized that "the mind cannot move in charity, nor rest in Providence, unless it turn upon the poles of *truth*."

ARTICLE XV.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

Union of the Old and New School Assemblies.

The length to which this series of articles has extended, compels an occasional resume of the argument, that its links may be preserved unbroken. Our first objection to re-union with the Northern Assembly was based upon its complicity with the State, and the perversion of ecclesiastical authority to decide purely political questions. The second objection was founded upon the flagrant violation of fundamental and organic law, in the excision of the Declaration and Testimony signers, involving a total overthrow of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

The third was drawn from the triple slanders pronounced against the Southern Church, rendering it inconsistent with our personal honor to accept the proffered embrace. The next step in the discussion brings us to,

IV. THE FOURTH OBJECTION, *founded upon the consolidation, now almost accomplished, between the two wings of the Northern Church, the Old School and the New.*

It is alleged in favor of this amalgamation, that the causes of separation existing thirty years ago have ceased to operate. During a single generation, the New School Body, it is said, has drifted into sounder orthodoxy and into clearer views upon the nature and functions of the Church. We are at too great a distance to be able to form an independent judgment upon this point. But we are willing to accept the fact upon testimony; although the Old School Church, through whom this testimony is derived, has herself renounced so many principles which were once regarded as immovably settled, and has so cut loose from the conservatism upon which we once thought her securely anchored, that we cannot but suspect the approximation of the two bodies to be mutual. Indeed, from all that has occurred during the past eight years, we can readily admit that no good reason may exist for the continuance of a separation between parties who may now be divided rather in name than in principle.

A sense of delicacy would restrain any comment upon this union, were we not invited to become partners in the alliance. As matters now stand, our acceptance of this invitation from one of the parties could only integrate us into the combined Church. We are obliged therefore, however reluctantly, to scan the negotiations so soon to terminate in marriage, and augur the prospects of the happy pair.

The original difficulty, at the time of the schism in 1837-8, was not the degree of unsoundness which actually existed in the New School ranks, so much as their determination to insist upon a lax subscription of the Doctrinal Standards. This was the core of the trouble. The Old School was the champion of orthodoxy, and demanded a reception of our formulas of faith in the precise terms in which they were rendered. The New School was the advocate of liberty; so that under a general adherence to these venerated symbols, a wide latitude might be allowed in their explication. Both parties professed to receive, and perhaps in the main did receive the same standards of truth; but, they divided upon the question of toleration, in the manifold interpretation of the same. Now, so far as we can see, it is precisely this distinctive principle of Old Schoolism which has been surrendered in the recent diplomacy between the two bodies. This surrender carries with it the abrogation of all those solemn testimonies for the truth, which have been the glory and the crown of a witness-bearing Church; and delivers over both parties in the new alliance to a loose and uncertain theology. It is simply another of those schemes of comprehension which shall embrace, within certain limits, it is true, opinions of every shape and hue—a sort of "Broad Church" for a sort of "liberal Christianity."

We make no inquisition then into the relative orthodoxy of either party—let them stand perfectly equal in our estimation. But if the

progress of the negotiation between them reveals that the issue raised in the original controversy has been abandoned, then the whole case is thrown back precisely as it stood in 1837; and the dereliction of the Old School body, North, constitutes a reason why we should take up the falling testimonies, common to us and them as a portion of our joint history. This we propose to show by examination of the records. The Old School Assembly of 1866, then, expresses its "desire for re-union with the other branch of the Presbyterian Church at the earliest time, consistent with *agreement in doctrine, order and polity, on the basis of our common standards*;" and appoints a committee of conference "in regard to the desirableness and practicability of re-union." Here now in the words we have italicized, stands out the old affection for a rigid construction of the standards. We have the testimony Dr. Samuel J. Baird, in the introduction to his recent history of the New School—who of course is held responsible for the statement—that "when the two committees met, that of the Old School proposed as the basis of union, strict conformity to the standards in doctrine and order. This basis was urged with great earnestness upon the New School members; but was firmly and utterly repudiated by them. The Old School insisted that the Confession of Faith should be adopted in its obvious, fair, historical sense. The New School claimed that it should be adopted in "the sense in which it has been heretofore received in the two Churches." The truth of this statement is confirmed by the awkward and periphrastic language of the paper actually adopted by the joint Committees, and submitted in their report to the two Assemblies of 1867. It reads thus:

"The re-union shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards. The Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted 'as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures;' and its fair, historical sense, as it is accepted by the two bodies in opposition to Antinomianism and Fatalism on the one hand, and to Arminianism and Pelagianism on the other, shall be the sense in which it is received and adopted," etc.

Here is the same haggling over the terms of subscription, which marked the controversy in 1837; and the same adroit construction of language, to cover up an issue and to conceal a compromise. The original doubt was, whether the New School party did "sincerely" receive the Confession of Faith; at least, in the sense in which that word was understood by the Old School. This fact is, however, quietly ignored in the phrase "shall continue to receive;" and it is assumed that the subscription, on both sides, was in precisely the same unequivocal sense—which everybody knows was exactly the point in dispute. Again, if the above article had been content to say, the "fair, historical sense" is the sense that is meant, this would have been satisfactory. But when it is added, "as it is accepted by the two bodies," the old issue is re-opened; for it was always denied that the New School accepted that same "fair historical sense;" which was precisely what the other side was attempting to enforce. If this "historical sense" goes no further than as it was understood by both, it settles nothing between them, and leaves the case where it was. Still worse, two sets of errors are carefully balanced against each other, like a pair of saddle bags: the Old School to appro-

appropriate the Antinomianism and Fatalism, and the New School to accept the charge of Arminianism and Pelagianism; the plain English of which is, that there was a double divergence from the standards—the Old School being as much implicated in error as the New, but in the opposite direction. What does all this mean, but that the whole article is a compromise to save the New School from censure, and that the sense of the standards lies somewhere along the line between these two extremes. For the life of us we cannot see why parties, who receive our symbols *bona-fide*, should not be able to say so straight out, and to accept the same upon the four sides of the square.

But we continue the history. The Assembly of 1867, sent this plan of union, without any expression of opinion, to the Presbyteries for critical examination; and the Committee was ordered to sit longer and avail themselves of any suggestions that should be offered. "By a strong majority of the Presbyteries," we quote again from Dr. Baird's History, "the plan of re-union was disapproved, as involving a surrender of sacred principles," etc. The joint committee of the two Assemblies again met, consulted, discussed, and "was about to adjourn in despair" of any satisfactory result, when the Old School members gave way to the persistent demands of the other side, in the adoption of the following revised and amplified form of the doctrinal basis; which was accordingly sent up in the report to the two Assemblies of 1868. It reads as follows:

"The re-union shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, 'as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures;' it being understood that this Confession is received in its proper historical—that is, the Calvinistic or Reformed—sense; it is also understood that various methods of viewing, stating, explaining, and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession, which do not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system, are to be freely allowed in the united Church, as they have hitherto been allowed in the separate Churches," etc.

Here is compromise adjusting its scales, in which the two bodies are impartially weighed. The "historical sense" is now defined by the additional words, "Calvinistic or Reformed," evidently to satisfy the refractory Old School; while as an offset, the New School is propitiated by the pointed declaration that the same liberty in viewing and stating doctrine is to be allowed, with which they had always been familiar. The strange absurdity seems not to have struck the Committee, of accepting standards which are not a final authority; and the still greater absurdity of setting the Church adrift upon the wide sea of ecclesiastical history, to find in Calvinistic or Reform utterances a standard for the standards. One would suppose it far easier to get directly at the meaning of an outspoken instrument, like the Confession of Faith, with its terse, dogmatic propositions, than to gather up the voices scattered through all the centuries.

This doctrinal basis was promptly recognized in the New School Assembly as conceding all they claimed; for they interpreted it as "binding the United Church to tolerate such doctrines and explanations

as have been allowed as orthodox by either branch; and that any particular Presbytery must judge not merely from its own opinion of the same, but in view of what has been allowed by either one or the other of the separate branches." In the Old School Assembly, there were some to discover that the Grecian horse was fairly in the walls of Troy. A number of amendments were proposed, not to embarrass the re-union, as the movers solemnly declared, but to put it into such a form as might be honestly accepted by the whole Church. These amendments were all, however, summarily tabled; and the basis, as we have above given it, was adopted, and sent down to the Presbyteries. No sooner, however, is this action taken, than the Assembly becomes dissatisfied with its work; and passes a resolution substantially rescinding it, and bringing the basis down to an acceptance of the standards, *simpliciter*, and without explanation of the sense in which they are received, whether Pickwickian or otherwise. This modification is telegraphed to the other body in session at Harrisburg, Pa. Even with this supplemental legislation, it becomes necessary to tinker at a treaty which many doubtless felt to concede too much. On the day before the adjournment, another resolution is adopted and telegraphed to Harrisburg, very much to the amazement of the venerable council there sitting. The resolution reads thus:

"Resolved, That this Assembly hereby desires it to be distinctly understood, that the first article of the report of the Joint Re-union Committee, which is the doctrinal basis of union, and which was adopted on Friday evening last by this Assembly, is not to be interpreted as giving license to the propagation of doctrines which have been condemned by either Assembly; nor permit any Presbytery in the united Church to license or ordain to the work of the ministry any candidate who maintains any form of doctrine condemned by either Assembly."

Was there ever such a game of cross-purposes between dignified personages before? Here is a solemn form of treaty agreed upon after two years of hard committee work, and cancelled the very day after its adoption. And while Dr. Hickok is glorying at Harrisburg that all doctrines are to be tolerated which have ever been allowed in either branch, lo! Dr. Hall is moving at Albany that no form of doctrine shall be allowed which has ever been condemned in either branch! No wonder that the Presbyteries were sorely puzzled to know what were the terms of union really sent down to them for final action. And no wonder that they saw no escape from all this tangle but by throwing out of the basis all explanatory phrases of every kind; which accordingly was the answer returned to the Assembly of 1869. In that body, therefore, the basis is boiled down to a simple acceptance of the Standards themselves, as may be seen from the form adopted after the third revision:

"The re-union shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity."

Upon this basis, the two branches are doubtless being united at the moment we are writing, through the ratification of the Presbyteries sent up to the Assembly in extraordinary session, at the city of Pittsburg.

Some other points in this protracted negotiation remain to be presented, which we must reserve for another paper. The careful reader will observe that on the one point discussed in this—the doctrinal basis—there has been a steady recession by the Old School from the ground upon which they stood at the opening of these conferences, and from the historical ground which they have occupied ever since the schism in 1837. That ground was “agreement in doctrine, order and polity,” ascertained by an appeal directly to the Standards. It does not require a conference of more than five minutes, to settle this question of agreement; for an honest answer upon some half dozen points, will determine the latitude and longitude of any one on the whole broad sea of theology. Instead of this we find the two Assemblies tugging through three entire years to find “a sense” in which to accept the Standards. At first, it is “the fair, historic sense, as it is accepted by both parties,” lying somewhere between the two extremes of Antinomianism and Pelagianism. This satisfies the New School, as giving verge enough for their adventurous liberty of thought; but it does not suit the Old School, with whom it is more important to think rightly than to think boldly. Next, it is “the Calvinistic Reformed sense,” with large toleration for divergence in explanation. This too, suits the New School, but not exactly the Old. Lastly, it is the naked Standards in no defined sense at all. If this had been proposed and accepted at first, we might have had fewer misgivings. But chosen at the last as a makeshift, after painful and abortive attempts to find a sense in which to agree, is it not plain that both parties are precisely where they were thirty years ago, when this very matter first divided them? The standards are accepted without “a sense; and each will go its way and fix the “sense” exactly as it pleases either. But this precisely was the thing that each did prior to the disruption; and “the thirty years’ war” has accomplished nothing. The Confession of Faith, too, “*shall continue to be sincerely received.*” If the reception was always sincere, which is now only to be continued, pray, how came they ever to part?

ARTICLE XVI.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

Union of the Old and New School Assemblies—Concluded.

In four other points besides that of the doctrinal basis, the Old School Assembly has given way to the firmer will of the New School; vacating thus, one by one, all the positions that were held at the period of disruption in 1837-38. The reader must be patient in tracing all the steps of this cumulative argument.

1. Among the "Concurrent Declarations" accompanying the doctrinal basis, occurs the following :

"There should be one set of committees or boards for Home and Foreign Missions, and the other religious enterprises of the Church; which the Churches should be encouraged to sustain, *though free to cast their contributions into other channels*, if they desire to do so.

In the clause we have emphasized, the *anguis in herba* stands revealed to all who are posted in the history of this controversy. To those who are not, it is necessary to state that one of the vexed questions which led to the separation at first, was, whether the great work of evangelizing the world should be carried on by the Church in her organized capacity, and under the charter of her King and Head; or whether it should be committed to voluntary and irresponsible associations, working at discretion and independent of ecclesiastical control. The New School party, thirty years ago, contended earnestly for the latter; giving in its adhesion to such associations as the American Education and Home Missionary Societies, and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The Old School, on the other hand, demanded that the work of the Church should be done directly by the Church and under the constant supervision of the ecclesiastical courts. We were told, however, that the New School body had, in the lapse of a generation, worked off their Congregational tendencies, and had adopted sound Church principles. We were not prepared, therefore, for this breaking out of the old sore. Yet here it is. The New School still demands, and the Old School now concedes—that Church and voluntary agency shall be placed upon a level, with just a shade of preference for the former. The Churches are very moderately "encouraged" to sustain their own boards, while a full ecclesiastical license is given to contribute through other channels, if they prefer. Of course, no authority can prevent a man from distributing his money to whom he pleases. But this means to throw the shield of ecclesiastical authorization around both Church and voluntary agency, and to legitimize both. And already, before the union is yet consummated, we see some of the Northern journals putting forth the claims of the American Board for the management of Foreign Missions. Thus again has the New School triumphed in these negotiations; and the Old School has, a second time, surrendered the issues of 1837. We believe, however, in the Old School doctrine still; and will not consent that the Church shall lay at the feet of any irresponsible organization, her Divine commission to evangelize the world.

2. A second of these Concurrent Declarations provides that the Old School Theological Seminaries may be transferred, if they so desire, from Assembly to Synodical control; so as softly to persuade the New School Seminaries, which have always kicked at ecclesiastical supervision, to come within the traces of Church authority. What a beautiful treaty this, with "the reciprocity all on one side." The Old School Seminaries, which already have the halter, may choose the master in whose hands that halter may be held; while those of the New School are sweetly "advised" to receive the bit in some form, so as to secure the benefit of "an official recognition." How coaxingly the case is

put, to avoid the mortification of a disdainful rejection! Well, we give the New School credit for diplomatic skill, and to the Old we award the palm of superior generosity.

3. Concession ends not here. One of the special causes of irritation between the two bodies, was the rule requiring every minister passing from one Presbytery to another, even with clean papers, to make a statement, under interrogatory, of his doctrinal and ecclesiastical views. In our wide American territory, with a population singularly heterogeneous and diverging evermore from its original type by the influx of strangers, and with the continued pressure of our religious exigencies, there was a constant tendency to depress the standard of qualification required of intrants into the office of the ministry. The history of the Church abundantly illustrated the wisdom of this precaution against the spread of error; by thus bringing it to detection through these repeated occasional re-examinations. It was therefore made obligatory on the lower courts by the General Assembly, in the exercise of those large supervisory powers defined in the twelfth chapter of the form of Government. This rule, although impartially enforced upon all the ministers of our own communion, was always, and to the last degree, offensive to the New School. It was denounced as inconsistent with the unity of the Church, and especially as being invidious and inquisitorial in its spirit. During thirty years, however, the Old School has persistently refused to relax its rigor; and the usage is to this day universal throughout our Presbyteries.

The New School has never forgotten its original hostility to the requirement. And now let us see how gently the new treaty lets the Old School down from its platform, to that of the other side. The tenth of the "concurrent declarations" provides:

"In order to avoid the revival of past issues by the continuance of any usage in either branch of the Church, that has growth out of former conflicts, it is earnestly recommended to the lower judicatories of the Church, that they conform their practice in relation to all such usages, as far as is consistent with their conviction of duty, to the general custom of the Church prior to the controversy that resulted in the separation."

That is to say, the General Assembly softens its own defeat, and seeks to propitiate such of its own Presbyteries as may still prize this safeguard, by leaving it to be exercised at discretion as a privilege; while, at the same time, it satisfies all New School scruples by withdrawing the sanction of ecclesiastical authority, and by throwing the whole weight of its counsel against the continuance of the usage, once insisted upon as a law, and thoroughly incorporated with the practice of the Church. Here again, in the great wrestling match, the New School has the advantage, and the party with the weakest back is thrown.

4. Even yet the Old School has not reached the depth of its humiliation. It is a melancholy hour, when either the individual or an organized body first lets go the grasp upon principle. That moment with the Old School was in 1861, when the whirlwind of political fanaticism lifted her fairly off her feet; and now she must slide down the slippery descent till she reaches the bottom. In all these negotiations, she is at the mercy of her adroit competitor, simply because she has no principles, while the other has.

And the surrender is not complete until she expunges all her testimonies delivered with such solemnity thirty years ago. In two other "concurrent declarations," the fatal consent is given which makes her old glorious record a *tabula rasa*. Read then as follows:

"The publications of the Board of Publication (O. S.) and of the Publication Committee (N. S.) should continue to be issued as at present; leaving it to the Board of Publication of the United Church to revise these issues, any perfect a catalogue of the United Church, so as to *exclude invidious references to past controversies.*"

Will even this Index Expurgatorius satisfy New School exactions? and what more has the Old School to expunge? Saturn must devour all his offspring; for read again in another "concurrent declaration":

"And no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both the bodies should be of any authority, until re-established in the United body; except in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon."

We have put these two together because they belong to the same category of expunging resolutions, and because together they sweep the field of the past clean to the very horizon. Not a shrub of Testimony, or of Deliverance, is left to break the view in all the wide expanse. Every book and tract issued by the board, in defense or explanation of Old School positions, as a witness for the doctrines of Grace in the great semi-pelagian controversy, is tabooed. Every rule or precedent is abolished, until ratified in the United Church; thus strangely bringing the whole legislation of each section, for an entire generation, under the review of the other. What is this but the operator's knife cutting three-and-thirty years out of the history and life of the Church, and bringing the two edges of the wound together for adhesion. The whole intervening period, filled with various and solemn transactions, is dropped out; and the United Church of 1869 is placed in immediate connexion with the United Church of 1836. Nothing, absolutely nothing, between the two marks the chasm of the last thirty years, but the narrow seam of the suture of the sundered parts. This is no peculiar conceit of ours only. We have seen it claimed already in the New School papers, that the last article quoted cuts through even to the "excising acts" themselves, and to the famous "Act and Testimony;" and potentially repeals every Deliverance of the Old School Church, up to the very genesis of the schism which is now healed. There may yet spring from this far-reaching clause some curious complications; if the New School shall choose to press the advantage they have gained, to its last logical results. And we certainly expect shortly to see an adroit use of this, in extricating the Northern Church from all the folly and madness of its course during the past eight years. We will be told presently, all that political complicity of which you complain—all those grandiloquent Deliverances upon loyalty, of which we were once so proud—all those atrocious slanders against the Southern Church, of which we ought to be heartily ashamed—and all that massacre of the Declaration signers under the ecclesiastical guillotine; does it not all belong to a history which is expunged? Everything you have conjured up as an obstruction to reunion with us, we have fairly "dead-lettered;" for remember, is it not

written in the book of the great treaty, that "no rule or precedent passed by either body shall be of any authority until it is ratified by both. It, however, remains to be seen, whether high-minded men will consent to be thus constructively vindicated from charges that are thus constructively abolished; while history, which cannot be abolished at all, holds in its solemn keeping the grave indictment against us.

The sum of the whole is, that the Old School is historically dead, swallowed alive by the New. However the two moderators may bow to each other with all the grimace of ecclesiastical etiquette; and, however, the two bodies may seek each to attach the other by reciprocal resolutions in order to preserve the legal succession; the stubborn fact remains that, throughout the negotiations between them, the New School, through superior firmness of will, has won all the points in the diplomatic game. In the first collision, a virtual surrender was involved in the terms of the doctrinal basis. From that moment the Old School held no differentiating principles in her hands. With feeble resistance against the assault upon her minor positions, she yielded at length upon every solitary issue, and her defeat is absolute.

All this is inexpressibly sad to us, who still love the doctrines and testimonies of the Old historic Church: as sad to us, as to the watchman upon the walls at Princeton, whose wail, like the bell of the foundering ship which the storm-wind tolls, peals upon the ear in the melancholy words, "if the truth be lost, all is lost.

But no, God will always have his witnesses upon the earth. Hidden here in the corner of the land, shut out from the sympathy and communion of the whole Christian world, with name traduced and slandered as the name of God's witnesses always is—here in this prostrate land of the South is a faithful Church still, which will seize these falling testimonies for the truth, and bear them to the coming ages. The strange and melancholy dereliction of our Northern brethren makes the duty all the more imperative to us. Those precious utterances of the past are ours. We sat in those venerable councils when, thirty years ago, the Church stood for the Redeemer and his blessed truth. The voice of Testimony is still the voice of our suffering Church. To this end is she still in the midst of the flames, that from the torture of fire she may speak the words of all the martyrs through all the ages. And for this reason alone, if no other existed, the Presbyterian Church of the South can never enter into this alliance. We pronounce nothing against the orthodoxy of either of the two parties who have entered into treaty. That is not our issue: but that the treaty itself is built upon the wreck of all the great and solemn Testimonies of the Church; when all that makes the gospel precious to a human soul was placed in peril, and a disguised Pelagianism sought to root out the cross of Christ from the face of the earth.

ARTICLE XVII.

OVERTURE OF THE NORTHERN OLD SCHOOL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO THE SOUTHERN, CONSIDERED.

(Concluded.)

We are brought in this concluding paper to—

V. *Our Fifth and Final Objection* to the proposed re-union with the Northern Church; which is *the utter ruin of the Presbyterian cause at the South, that must inevitably ensue.*

In the first place, if, by some strange infatuation through judicial abandonment of God, the majority of our ministers should agree to the Overture, a powerful minority would remain who would utterly refuse to accompany them. All that would be gained therefore, would be a schism, rending a now happy and united Church in two hostile parts. It is preposterous to suppose, that conscientious and truth loving men would easily lay aside their strong convictions of the faithless degeneracy of the Northern Church. The spirituality and independence of that kingdom which the Redeemer proclaimed to be not of this world, they have persistently renounced—and their pledges of allegiance have been openly transferred to an earthly power. Not until, by open and solemn proclamation, the supremacy in His own kingdom is replaced upon the head of our Sovereign Lord, can the question of re-union be entertained for a moment. Not till the violated constitution of the Church has been lifted from the dust, and the wounds healed in its outraged authority, can we place our necks in the power of those who trifle with its sword. Not till we recover our good name from the wilful slanders which attain them, can we sit in ecclesiastical fellowship with those who have dishonored us. And in no case can we surrender to oblivion, if not reproach, those Testimonies of a past generation, deserving to be held in everlasting honor for its fidelity to the doctrines of salvation by grace. And should there be no minority to take up the cause of a betrayed and ruined Church, then would solid masses of the people break off from our communion, and fill the ranks of other Churches which still bear aloft the protest against wrong, and cherish principles which the faithless generation of their own have renounced. It would be a spectacle for angels to weep over, to see this harmonious Southern Church thus rent by faction; or remaining united only through the desertion of thousands, who now repose with such loving trust upon her maternal bosom.

But, suppose this peril past, and Southern pastors and people, an undivided whole, integrated into the one unbroken Presbyterian Church of America—What then? Ah, if by some miracle of grace, God

would bring back our brethren of the North to the principles they have forsaken, how soon might this vision of love be realized! We solemnly declare that, as far as we know our own hearts, it is no mere sentiment of honor, nor feeling of passion, which bars this blessed consummation. Let the Northern Church but stand again upon the platform of our fathers, and with Christian magnanimity retrace the errors in which they have wandered from the sacred Covenants of old; and we are prepared to blot out the memories that are painful, and to consider the things that make for peace. But we are constrained to take the condition of things as now existing; and to reason from this the probable results of what would not be reunion, but absorption. Let us squarely face the facts as they actually appear.

By an overwhelming majority of three to one, in some instances approximating closely the entire vote of the body, the most extreme radical measures have been carried through eight consecutive Assemblies. Now, reinforce this majority by the unanimous voice of the radical New School, and what chance will the South have in the United Church? If, in the comparatively sound Synod of New Jersey, under the eye and influence of Princeton, a vote is passed in the autumn of 1869, throwing into prominence the exposition of civil duties in the pulpit, * what can the South do towards staying the flood of Erastianism? When a lax theology shall have sown broadcast the seeds of heresy, how shall the South root out from its own field the tares which are tolerated by treaty? With the "historic sense" of the Standards ever varying between the extremes of Antinomianism and Pelagianism, how shall the equation of orthodoxy be obtained, so as to know the true position of this "Broad Church" at any given time?

Besides these difficulties, which are general in their character, there are others bearing more directly against ourselves. With the extraordinary powers claimed by the Northern Assembly, as being the source whence all power is derived to the lower courts, and in consequence of which it feels authorized to assume original jurisdiction in all cases at will, what guarantee has the South that this sweeping power will not be employed with terrible discrimination against us? It will be vain to plead the safeguards of the constitution; for it is the singular and dreadful feature of modern tyranny that it oppresses under forms of

* At the late meeting of the Old School Synod of New Jersey, a resolution was introduced declaring it to be the duty of every "minister, in view of the political corruptions of these days, to advise his congregation as to their vote upon political questions, and as to whom of the candidates for offices within the gift of the people they should lend their support."

In this form, the resolution was rather too bold. It was therefore modified and adopted as follows:

Resolved, That it belongs to the office of pastor to give full instruction to his congregation upon their duties as citizens, especially in reference to their supporting for offices within the gift of the people, honest, conscientious, and competent men."

This, however, was no worse than the resolution introduced in the Old School General Assembly of 1869, at New York, instructing the American Government what should be its political attitude toward Great Britain; and which, in an amended form, was adopted by that body.

law, and perverts that into an instrument of cruelty which was intended as a protection against outrage. Nor does it appease our fear to be told, that these haughty assumptions will be held in check by the more moderate views of the New School on the whole subject of Church power. Unfortunately, these do not spring from a more correct theory of ecclesiastical government: but are simply an infusion of the principles of Independency. Can we take shelter under their wing, by consenting to dwarf the courts of the Church into mere advisory councils and executive agencies? It would be a sad alternative to undermine the foundations of Presbyterianism itself, in order to find a hiding place from the Presbyterian Inquisition. What then will the South do when, under the plea of "Review and Control," all our Presbyteries are criminally arraigned before the Assembly's bar; and by simple resolution, the highest court shall direct its legislative powers towards our general "reconstruction?" Is it not transparently clear, that we shall then be in the same condition *ecclesiastically* that we are *politically*?

What this latter is, need not be told to us at the South. For the benefit of the North which does not know it, the situation may be very tersely described in a few sentences. It is grinding taxation, without representation. It is the proscription of the intelligence and virtue of the South at the ballot-box. It is the exclusion of all statesmanship from our domestic legislatures, and of all judicial learning from our courts of justice. It is remanding the most difficult problems of social and political economy to the ignorance and barbarism of the country, for solution. It is the swarming of political debauchees and worthless adventurers from abroad, to fill our offices of public trust. It is corruption and bribery, with unblushing front, battenng upon the spoils of a ruined people, and upon the richer revenues intercepted from the public exchequer. It is a free land converted into a Roman province, ruled by greedy Prætors such as those against whom Cicero thundered his invectives before the Roman Senate. It is a brave and generous race writhing in the fetters of a tyranny, the more galling because exercised through legal and constitutional forms. It is the proffer of a liberty to us, which, like "the Maiden" of the Inquisition, lacerates with secret knives the victims held in her fatal embrace. It is the infliction in peace of daily wrongs, more bitter to us than all the spoliations of war and the bloody appetite of the sword.

Bring the Church, then, beneath the sway of this Radicalism, always most intense in its religious form, and behold the results: an obtrusive criticism of all our acts—an unfriendly legislation thrusting its offensive edicts upon us at each Annual Assembly—the enforcement of social views upon a people who cannot receive them—secret emissaries sowing discord in our peaceful Churches—feeble minorities recognized upon every side issue, and invested with the corporate chartered rights wrested from majorities—the deposition of Presbyters, and the outlawry of courts, who refuse to execute the decrees of tyranny—in a word, the entire disintegration of the Southern Church, in order to its reconstruction in accordance with the progressive ideas of the age. To this persistent aggression we shall have nothing to oppose but a feeble protest;

treated either with the indignity of silence, or answered with the taunt that all is done in the due exercise of constitutional power, against which resistance is only rebellion.

We should be blind not to perceive the tendency to imperialism in the Church as well as in the State. As to the latter, the deed is done. Beneath the dead forms of our ancient Republicanism, the empire, into which republics so easily drift, already stretches its giant bulk, as yet only half conscious of its strength. When it fully wakes, it will be to put on the royal attire, before the wondering gaze of those who think it the transformation of the instant. With the States stripped of sovereignty, and sunk into satrapies—with the Supreme Legislature absorbing the Executive and controlling the Judiciary, working both as the puppets of its will—with the Constitution but a piece of parchment, written in the black letter of the past—who, that thinks at all, thinks to doubt that the old government under which he was born, is already stone-dead? Like chastity and truth, the Union was gone the instant it required to be protected by force. The stuffed skin may hang for a time upon the walls of the Capitol, just as the Roman Senate was sitting still, when Cæsar fell at Pompey's statue. But the gray-headed men of to-day will live to behold the empire spread its purple skirt over the continent, from sea to sea. What lies beyond that point we do not choose to predict; though the alternative that will present itself, may be seen plainly enough in the glass of history. In like manner, unconsciously perhaps, but beneath the same forming influence, the Church is struggling to realize the same imperial grandeur. Our unwavering conviction is, that just this ambitious pressure has brought together the Old and New School at the North; and this now, with such a sudden and unwonted sweetness, is wooing the outcast South to enlarge still more these portly dimensions. Far be it from us, to deny that many sincere Christians in the North have long mourned over the divisions of the Church, and earnestly prayed to see the fragments of our Lord's torn body re-united once more. But that their Radical leaders, who for eight years have been hacking at the Church as though it were a Mexican chapparal, have been animated by any such generous and pious spirit, we do not begin to believe. There looms up before their eye the vision of an imperial Church, covering with its jurisdiction a large and civilized continent; able to cope with other like spiritual empires, for ascendancy in power and influence. When these, therefore, turn their gaze toward us, it is to covet the territory we occupy, and without which they cannot geographically claim to be a National Church. Now that the great preliminary union has been accomplished amongst themselves, no danger is apprehended that we will be an element of disturbance; or that we can, in our wonderful unity, ever hold the balance of power between contending parties. With the splendid working majority of about seven-eighths in the combined Church, the South can never be more than a tail to the great kite. We may therefore be safely admitted into the grand alliance, with the clear advantage of an immense stretch in their territorial domain, the only supplement needed to complete their nationality; and beyond even this, with the moral capital acquired before the world in the magnanimity, which extends such won-

derful grace to "rebels," "schismatics," and "blaspheming heretics." It is, we fear, this lust of dominion, this ambition to outstrip rival Churches in the breadth of their influence, this desire to make the Presbyterian body, by means of its very bulk, a power in the land before which even the State may be willing to lower its crest, that is at the bottom of all these schemes of comprehension. We cannot join in the "Te Deums" which are being chanted through the land, as though the blessed spirit of God had thrown over all these unions the mantle of love. Would that we could believe this! But in that case, the evidence would be furnished in the fruits of grace. So far as the Overture to us is concerned, we cannot be insensible that it comes upon the back of systematic persecution, misrepresentation, and abuse continued for years; nothing of which is confessed or retracted, but the whole stereotyped upon official records, which are now to be sealed up and deposited in the archives of history forever.

Our task is finished. This review of Northern Old School legislation during the past eight years is now submitted to our brethren at the South for their consideration. The facts which it spreads out, are now within the reach of all; and these alone are needed as the basis of their independent conclusions. The argument each can construct for himself; and we have no apprehension that any will be caught in the snare of the proposed union. "In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." In the present attitude of the Northern mind, and with their principles so plainly avowed, their embrace would be to us simple death. It is not, therefore, for our own people these papers have been prepared, so much as to render to those abroad the views we entertain of the entire course of the Northern Church, ever since these public troubles began. Carrying with us "the mens sibi conscia recti," we have preserved an indignant silence towards the calumnies heaped upon us, until silence has been construed into the admission of guilt. It is, perhaps, time that truth should find a tongue; and when the challenge of schism is laid at the very feet of the Southern Church, a response was demanded. In the preceding articles the reasons are submitted to a candid world why, in the writer's judgment, the Overture should be courteously but firmly declined.

In the strictures which have been indulged, the Assembly as a unit has been held responsible for its acts. At the same time, we are perfectly aware that high minded and honorable men, both lay and clerical, in that Northern Church, mourn sincerely over all that we have condemned. Through all these bitter years they have carried in their hearts a protest against this declension, which has been recorded on high to their praise. We desire to say, with emphasis, that not a word we have written is intended for them. A Christian heart can feel only a living sympathy for those who, by necessary association, are bound up in the responsibility for deeds which they could not prevent, and which they individually repudiate. There are not a few in the Northern Church whose character we reverence, and with whom it would be a joy in life to be in daily fellowship. All of this class, whether known to us, or only known to Him who knows us all, we exempt from any participation in these acts of the common body to which they belong. And

though we think they lost a golden opportunity for clearing their skirts, and perhaps for reforming the Church, in not appropriating the Declaration and Testimony, and modifying it to their own views; we accept this as an honest mistake on the part of men who were bewildered by the perplexities of their position. We extend to all the true-hearted at the North, who love the Spiritual Church of our blessed Lord, with all her earnest testimony for the truth, the right hand of Christian love over all the chasm of revolution and war, controversy and schism.

As to the tremendous majorities who carried these wild and reckless measures, charity pleads for them that they are but an illustration of that kind of education of which the North in its higher civilization boasts; which crushes out all the individuality and independence of the man, and converts the masses into a herd of buffaloes following pell-mell after their leaders, "*obedientia fracti animi.*" Our prayer is that their inconsiderateness may be forgiven. And finally, as to those leaders themselves, whose heart was in all this sad betrayal of the Master and his Church, and who will defend and justify it to the end, it is needless to say that for them we have neither fellowship nor respect. And our prayer is, that, before they die, grace may be given them to repent of that which they will never be able to repair. As for our own slandered Church, we commend her to Him whose heart was broken by reproach, and to the vindication of the last day.

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