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ARTICLE I.

THE FOREIGN EVANGELIST AS VIEWED BY ONE IN THE FOREIGN FIELD.

III.

HIS HOME RELATIONS.

To the Presbytery.

The editorial published in the *Missionary* for May, 1874, was written "to present the views of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions" upon the subject of the foreign evangelist's home relations. About two weeks after its publication, it was indirectly approved by the Columbus Assembly, as we have seen. Within a year thereafter, the pamphlet entitled *Ecclesiastical Status of Foreign Missionaries* was published. This paper, however, is confined entirely to the question of his relation to the native Church, alluding only incidentally, on page 9, to his home relations. The *Manual* was published and approved, as we have already seen, in 1877, in which the same theories are announced, on this point, as in the two papers just cited.

Now, it is a very curious fact that the views of the Executive Committee on our home relations, as thus presented from time to time, have never been discussed. So far as is known, not one syllable, *pro* or *con*, has ever been elicited from the Church. Not

but *treats* them as belonging to the latter. They are both. Their administration is at once an act of teaching and an act of government.

We wish to add, that the venerable Secretary of Foreign Missions has not seen or heard a word of this paper; nor will he, until it appears in the REVIEW; nor has there been a word of conference with him or any other of "the Baltimore brethren" as to its subject-matter. The writer alone is responsible. It would be almost a miracle, if, in discussing so new and difficult a subject, he had not employed both terms and concepts which his brethren of a different opinion will not compel him to modify. He expects it; and may Christ give triumph to the truth, whatever it is.

J. A. LEFEVRE.

ARTICLE III.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

The subject at the head of this article has been so fully discussed in the religious newspapers and in the courts of the Church as to be well nigh threadbare. Still, it may not be amiss, before the last act of the drama is concluded, to review its history from the beginning, and to trace the successive stages of its development. Such a survey will throw some light upon the present attitude of the Southern Church; and may perhaps determine whether she is adhering to her declared principles, or is receding from them. It may not affect the final result, which many regard as substantially reached, and as only needing the outward ceremonies expressing it to the world. Should no change be wrought in a single mind, it will nevertheless be of advantage to put on permanent record a connected history of the case; as it will certainly relieve the conscience to make a last effort towards extricating the Church so dearly loved from the peril of a great mistake.

The original policy of the Northern Church towards the South-

ern was not that of *conciliation*, but of *conquest*. When their Assembly convened at Pittsburg in May, 1865, the war had terminated in the surrender at Appomattox, and the South lay prostrate under the heel of the conqueror. Not a tear of pity was shed over her alleged errors, such as a suffering Saviour wept over sinning Jerusalem. It was not the hour for mercy, but for unrelenting justice; and with a firm hand was it meted out by that haughty council. It began by declaring the secession of those Presbyteries and Synods which now constitute the Southern General Assembly to be "unwarranted, schismatical, and unconstitutional." It announced its purpose "not to abandon the territory in which those churches are formed, or to compromise the rights of any of the church courts, or ministers, 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, it determined to "recognise, *as the church*, the members of any church within the bounds of the schism, who are loyal," etc., etc. To give effect to these declarations, "the Board of Domestic Missions was directed 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," care being taken that "none be appointed but those who give satisfactory evidence of their loyalty," and the like.

It is not necessary to draw the reader's attention to this unchristian attempt to sow the seeds of discord and strife amongst a people sufficiently burdened with sorrows of another kind. Nor will we dwell upon particular illustrations of the zeal with which these measures were carried out, in cases which can easily enough be cited. All this is past now, and let it be remembered only so far as it reveals the spirit in which the Southern Church was first approached by those who soon became so anxious for the Fraternal embrace. Fidelity to history requires, however, one further illustration of this domineering spirit to be given. Lest the eight hundred ministers of the South, together with their churches, should rush too suddenly into her bosom, this cautious Assembly duly enacts that every minister from any Presbytery in the South,

and every private member from any Southern church, seeking admission into their fold, shall be examined as to his opinions and conduct during the rebellion; and if a participant therein, shall "be required to confess and forsake his sin in this regard." Flushed with the triumph of their arms, the Northern Church had no other thought than to dragoon their brethren at the South into abject ecclesiastical submission.

It gives us no pleasure to recur to this period of intense sectional bitterness; nor would we do so except to point a warning. The Northern Church purposed nothing then but to *absorb* the Southern; it proposes to itself nothing but that now. Whatever may be the faults of that people, they possess one quality of the virtuous man which Horace describes in the words: "*Tenax propositi.*" They never give up what they once undertake. If it cannot be accomplished in one way, it will be in another. In our negotiations with them on this subject of Fraternal Relations, if we recede from our testimony by the breadth of a hair, their purpose of absorption will be accomplished finally, and it will be the absorption of conquest.

This condition of things continued three years, from 1865 to 1868; during which time it became apparent that force accomplished nothing. With all their efforts at disintegration the wedge could be driven in nowhere, and the Southern Church became more and more compact under the pressure. Whether the failure of this coercive policy led to its abandonment, or whether in the interval passion had subsided and Christian sentiments began to resume their sway, in 1868 more gentle measures were inaugurated. The knowledge of this change was communicated to us through a paper adopted in 1869, the preamble of which reads thus: "Whereas the last General Assembly" (of course, that of 1868) "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," etc.

The two bodies were, by this action, put upon a more friendly footing than before, and the way was now open for a more perfect adjustment of differences. Accordingly the Resolution following the above recited preamble proceeds to convey to our body the Christian salutations of the Assembly of 1869, and to "give expression to its sentiments of fraternity and fellowship;" and, after a compact argument addressed to that point, expressed "the desire that the day may not be distant when we may be united in one great organisation that shall cover our whole land and embrace all branches of the Presbyterian Church." The reader will not fail to notice the distinctness with which the absorption of the Southern Church is here proposed, in the most blissful forgetfulness that their entire record, bristling with accusations and slanders, formed a *chevaux de frise* from which the most impetuous cavalry charge would be repulsed.

This paper did not reach the Southern Assembly until 1870, during the sessions at Louisville. It was accompanied with another overture adopted at Philadelphia in 1870, which was borne to us by a délégation appointed for the purpose. The latter paper, after reaffirming the pacific sentiments of its predecessor, goes beyond it in the recognition of difficulties in the way of reconciliation, and proposing a practical method for their removal. It will be remembered that in the negotiations which resulted in bringing the Old and New School bodies together at the North, the most troublesome obstruction was found to exist in certain testimonies and deliverances fulminated in the past by the one against the other. The problem was how to get these out of the way without a flat retraction. They were at length simply dead-lettered in the following concurrent declaration from both the parties: "That no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies shall be of any authority in the reunited body, except in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon." It is reported that when this cunning declaration was framed, an astute ecclesiastic pointed out the use to which it might be put in healing the breach with the South. At any rate, it was gravely proposed by the Northern Assembly at Philadelphia, and elaborately pressed by the worthy delegates

at Louisville, that we should come in through this hole in the wall, through which, like Ezekiel of old, they had brought out so much of the stuff in their house; and among the rest, why not constructively all the utterances so offensive to the Southern Church.

We have noted the change of base in the Northern Church from 1865 to 1870; what, in the meantime, has been the attitude of the Southern body on this question of fraternity? In 1861, when the Southern Assembly was first organized, its position was defined in these words: "We desire to cultivate peace and charity with our fellow-Christians throughout the world—we invite to ecclesiastical communion all who maintain our principles of faith and order." In 1865, at the close of the war, the following language is used, and the spirit of which should be placed in contrast with that of the Northern Assembly in the same year: "It may be proper at this point to declare concerning other Churches in the most explicit manner, that in the true idea of 'the communion of saints,' we would willingly hold fellowship with all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; and especially do we signify to all bodies, ministers, and people of the Presbyterian Church, struggling to maintain the true principles of the same time-honored Confession, our desire to establish the most intimate relations with them which may be found mutually edifying and for the glory of God."

The active hostility of the Northern Church in this very year 1865, which has been already described, imposed upon the Southern body the duty of preserving a calm and dignified silence. This remained unbroken until she was approached by the other party in 1870 with an overture of peace. The following bold proclamation was made in that year: "The Southern Presbyterian Church can confidently appeal to all the acts and declarations of all their Assemblies, that no attitude of aggression or hostility has been, or is now, assumed by it towards the Northern Church. And this General Assembly distinctly avows that no grievances experienced by us, however real, would justify us in acts of aggression, or a spirit of malice or retaliation, against any branch of Christ's visible kingdom. We are prepared, therefore, in advance of all discussion, to exercise towards the General As-

sembly North, and the churches represented therein, such amity as fidelity to our principles could, under any possible circumstances, permit." It must not be allowed to escape notice that from the time of her organisation in 1861 to the first advance made to her in 1870, a period of nine years, the Southern Church remained quiet and passive under grievous wrongs. She would indulge in no recriminations; but as the party aggrieved, she was restrained by a sense of self-respect from any approach to the other side. This is emphasised here, as indicating a fixed policy marked out on principle for herself by the Southern Church.

To the proposition for appointing a Committee of Conference to meet a similar Committee from the Northern side, a favorable answer was returned. Such a Committee was raised, "with instructions that the difficulties in the way of cordial correspondence between the two bodies must be distinctly met and removed." To leave no doubt as to the nature of these difficulties, they were articulately stated under four heads: 1. The political deliverances of both wings of the Northern Assembly, against which the Southern Church felt constrained to bear testimony; 2. The union between the Old and New School organisations North, effected by methods which involved the surrender of past testimonies for the truth; 3. The unconstitutional legislation by which the Declaration and Testimony men of Missouri and Kentucky had been expelled from the Northern Church; 4. The injurious accusations against the Southern Church, which had filled the ears of the world. It only remains to be added, that when this action was reported to the Assembly at Philadelphia, "the further consideration of the subject was postponed, and their Committee discharged," on the alleged ground that all the questions at issue had been prejudged by us. Thus ended the first chapter of this diplomatic history.

Negotiations were not resumed until 1874, and then simultaneously by both the estranged parties. The Southern Assembly of that year was overtured on the subject by two of its Presbyteries; one of which specially desired the appointment of a Committee of Conference, without instructions of any kind. A paper was also received from the Northern Assembly, adopted

in 1873, deploring the existing divisions, and announcing the appointment of a Conference Committee on their part. To this the Southern Assembly made response by raising a Committee untrammelled by instructions; and the two Committees met shortly after, in the famous Baltimore Conference. This overture of the Northern Assembly should not be dismissed without a brief statement of its contents, which were somewhat remarkable. It declared all former action of the Old and New School wings of their body, touching the Southern Church, to be null and void since their reunion, and of no effect as a precedent in the future. It expressed confidence in the orthodoxy and piety of the Southern Church, and, as an offset to their political deliverances, made liberal quotations from the standards as to the relation which the Church sustains to the State. It is not probable that these general protestations had much influence in determining the action of our own body; for, in a vigorous protest against this action, it was shown (1) that the measures declared null and void had been enforced only the year before in the Walnut Street church case; (2) that the slanderous charges against the character and motives of our ministers and people remained still without retraction; and (3) that the Northern Assembly had always professed to acknowledge the spirituality and independence of the Church during the very period they were trampling these sacred principles in the dust.

We are brought now to the Conference of the two Committees in the city of Baltimore, in January, 1875, and reported in May following to the respective Assemblies. It was opened with a proposal from the Northern side, to "recommend the interchange of delegates, thus recognising each other as corresponding bodies." To which it was replied by the Southern Committee, that they had been appointed to confer about the removal of the causes which had hitherto prevented such interchange; which were then distinctly stated under two general heads—*unjust and injurious accusations, and the course pursued in regard to Church property.* The second of these topics was never reached, the Conference having broken down upon the first. The failure is easily explained. The Northern Committee insisted that all the accusa-

tions and imputations complained of had been cancelled in the concurrent declaration which has been already quoted, "that no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies, shall be of any authority in the reunited body," etc. The Southern side objected that this was an arrangement to facilitate the union of the Old and New School bodies North, and had originally no reference to the Southern Church; that it was an indirection at best, and failed to meet the issue betwixt themselves and us in an honest and manly way; and that it could not, by its own terms, go back of the year in which it was adopted, and did not therefore touch our grievances at all. In declining this settlement of the case, the Southern Committee proceeded to say: "If your Assembly could see its way clear to say in a few plain words to this effect, that these obnoxious things were said and done in times of great excitement, that they are to be regretted, and that now, in a calm review, the imputations cast upon the Southern Church are disapproved, that would end the difficulty at once." This suggestion was peremptorily declined, and the Conference was dissolved without coming to any agreement.

The only matter of any present importance in the proceedings of the Baltimore Conference is the alleged elimination of the political utterances by the Northern Assembly from the grounds of offence and complaint. With reference, therefore, to what we shall hereafter say upon this point, it is necessary to give here the text of their action: "It is suitable to represent freely and fully to the brethren of your Committee that this kind of political action, begun in 1861 and carried on in successive Assemblies through 1866, constitutes at once a most weighty grievance to us, because much of it was aimed at our people; and constitutes also a serious hindrance to establishing fraternal relations, because they are lamentable departures from some of the fundamental principles laid down in those noble standards which, as you truly observe, we hold in common." Then follow a few specifications in which this offence was committed. A little later, these additional words were employed: "It is at this point that reference is made to your political enactments and opinions, partly because much of it was aimed at our own people, and all of it was en-

acted while that Assembly still held us on their roll as a part of their own body. But we have not said that we refuse fraternal relations for these causes, or that they are an insuperable obstacle. We say they constitute a serious hindrance. By this statement we abide." The reader will please to note the form and the extent to which this grievous politicization of the Northern Church is waived as a barrier to fraternal intercourse. We shall have use for it in the sequel.

The records of the Southern Assembly for the year 1876, contain but two references to this particular subject. The Presbytery of St. Louis having sent up an overture requesting "some action in regard to fraternal relations with the Northern General Assembly, in order to remove misapprehensions as to the true position of our Church," the following resolution was adopted: "That the action of the Baltimore Conference, approved by the Assembly at St. Louis, explains with sufficient clearness the position of our Church. But inasmuch as it is represented by the overture, misapprehension exists in the minds of some of our people as to the spirit of this action, in order to show our disposition to remove on our part real or seeming hindrances to friendly feeling, the Assembly explicitly declares, that while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Northern General Assembly, no acts or deliverances of the Southern General Assemblies are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Northern General Assembly, or of the historical bodies of which it is the successor." A double use was made of this resolution, in sending it to the Northern Assembly at Brooklyn, N. Y., in answer to a telegram received from that body "expressing its hearty and united wishes for the establishment of cordial correspondence," and "reiterating its cordial desire to establish fraternal relations on terms of perfect equality and reciprocity, as soon as it is agreeable to their brethren to respond to this assurance by a similar expression."

It will be observed, that with all these reiterated proffers of amity and intercourse, not a word is said, nor a step taken, to remove the causes of alienation so distinctly brought to view in the Baltimore Conference. Nothing remained, therefore, for the

Southern Assembly but to reply: "We are ready most cordially to enter on fraternal relations with your body on any terms honorable to both parties;" and with this was sent, in further explanation, the answer to the overture from the St. Louis Presbytery, which has already been recited.

In 1877 the subject was brought up in the Southern Assembly by a communication from the Northern, which returned, *in ipsissimis verbis*, the declaration sent to them by us the preceding year, as taken from the answer to the St. Louis Presbytery. The reply to this equivocal trifling was conveyed in the following language: "That we cannot regard this communication as satisfactory, because we can discover in it no reference whatever to the first and main part of the paper adopted by our Assembly at Savannah, and communicated to the Brooklyn Assembly. This Assembly can add nothing on this subject to the action of the Assembly at St. Louis adopting the basis proposed by our Committee of Conference at Baltimore, and reaffirmed by the Assembly at Savannah. If our Northern brethren can meet us on these terms, which truth and righteousness seem to us to require, then we are ready to establish such relations with them during the present sessions of the Assembly."

Thus far in these negotiations, so persistent had been the refusal of the Northern body to consider the basis of the Baltimore platform, that a protest was entered against the action of the New Orleans Assembly, on the ground that "it is inconsistent with self-respect to press this ultimatum after its distinct and repeated declinatures by the Northern Assembly."

During the years 1878, 1879, 1880, and 1881, the discussion was revived in no form; but Christian salutations were exchanged between the two bodies in their annual convocations. In 1882 the subject was reopened, with perhaps greater vigor from having slept so long and peacefully. It was brought up before the Assembly at Atlanta, by overtures from four Presbyteries, desiring the establishment of fraternal relations with the Northern Assembly, by sending forthwith a delegation to that body, in session at Springfield, Ill. A proposition so definite and conclusive, was bound to excite a lively discussion; and after a

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tangled debate, the following paper was adopted: "In order to remove all difficulties in the way of that full and formal correspondence which, on our part, we are prepared to accept, we adopt the following minute: That while receding from no principle, we do hereby declare our regret for, and withdrawal of, all expressions of our Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon, or offensive to, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

"*Resolved*, That a copy of this paper be sent by telegraph to the General Assembly now in session at Springfield, Ill., for their prayerful consideration, and, *mutatis mutandis*, for their reciprocal concurrence, as affording a basis for the exchange of delegates forthwith."

The Northern Assembly, upon receiving this message, immediately telegraphed back their adoption of this paper, without the alteration of a letter or a point; and by this identity of action, the two bodies were permitted to rejoice in the supposed termination of this unhappy dispute. Alas, that so brilliant a prospect should be again darkened with clouds! In a short time came a private telegram from the Moderator of the Northern council, conveying a resolution adopted to this effect: "That in the action now being taken, we disclaim any reference to the action of preceding Assemblies concerning loyalty and rebellion, but we refer only to those concerning schism, heresy, and blasphemy." Whereupon a telegram of inquiry is sent from Atlanta, couched in these rather undiplomatic words: "If the action of your Assembly, telegraphed by your Moderator to our Moderator, does not modify the concurrent resolution adopted by your Assembly and ours, we are prepared to send delegates forthwith." To which the following answer was received: "The action referred to does not modify, but it explains, the concurrent resolution; and the explanation is on the face of the action. There is nothing behind it or between the lines." The final action of the Atlanta Assembly was to "declare its entire satisfaction with the full and explicit terms in which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has expressed its 'reciprocal concurrence' in the paper transmitted to said Assembly

on fraternal correspondence." Delegates were accordingly appointed to bear the greetings of our body to the other at their meeting in May, 1883.

From this history briefly, but sufficiently, sketched, we deduce the points to which the attention of the reader is respectfully solicited.

1. The conciliatory and Christian attitude of the Southern Presbyterian Church throughout this painful controversy, is most conspicuous. At the period of organisation in 1861, amidst the agonies of a civil war, she stretched forth her hand in "peace and charity" to the whole Christian world. In 1865, at the very moment when excommunication and proscription were decreed as 'the portion of her cup,' she desired "fellowship with all who love the Lord Jesus," and to "establish the most intimate relations with all the branches of the Presbyterian Church." In 1870 she responded to the first request for a conference with the other side, and made a frank statement of the difficulties to be removed. In 1874 she consented to renew negotiations for peace, after they had been abruptly broken off by the other side, and withheld instructions to her agents which, in the former instance, had given offence. In 1875, reducing the causes of estrangement to their minimum, that is, to the injurious accusations against her good name, so considerate was she of the feelings of the other party, as to make allowance for the excitement and heat of the times when these things were said and done, and to suggest this as a ground upon which they might, without humiliation, be withdrawn. In 1876, she not only reiterated her "desire for fraternal relations upon terms honorable to both parties," but actually led the way in removing all obstacles by purging her own records of what had been excepted against by the opposition. We have reserved the statement of this interesting fact for insertion here. Whilst the pride and dignity of the Northern Church refused even to look upon the blots which defaced their legislation during four years, the Southern Church, upon a simple intimation that one of her utterances had excited unfavorable criticism, appointed in 1875 a Committee to examine her entire records, with the view of discovering and correcting anything inconsistent with her

declared principles or with the standards. This Committee reported in 1876 the following, which was adopted: "Inasmuch as some incidental expressions, uttered in times of great public excitement, are found upon our records, and have been pointed out in the report of the Committee, which seem to be ambiguous or inconsistent with the above declarations and others of like import, this Assembly does hereby disavow them wherever found, and does not recognise such as forming any part of the well-considered authoritative teaching or testimony of our Church." Through consecutive years, down to 1882, the same attitude of Christian readiness to adjust all differences is consistently maintained; until wearied out with the unwillingness of the other side to attempt the solution of the difficulty, she herself, at the last Assembly in Atlanta, takes the initiative, and proposes a resolution, which, if adopted by both the parties, will cut the knot and let them both out of the trouble. •

All this is in brilliant contrast with the course of the Northern Church, which commenced with open hostility and acts of aggression, then proposed a conference for the adjustment of differences, from which she backed down as soon as those differences were honestly stated. When the conference was finally held, she peremptorily declined the mildest terms of reconciliation which honor and truth would allow to be offered—proposing on her part only to dead-letter, and that by an obscure indirection, charges which honesty and candor required her openly to withdraw; and finally allowed herself to be outstripped in magnanimity, by receiving the tender of reconciliation which she ought to have made; the acceptance of which is traversed by a back-handed retraction of one-half of what was professedly conceded. We present this contrast in no boastful or self-righteous spirit, as though we had not much ourselves to confess and bewail before Almighty God; but because the strong inclination, manifested in some quarters to close this dispute on any terms, springs possibly from the apprehension that we are held guilty before the world of an unamiable and unforgiving spirit. If our record could be placed fully before the Christian public, we should be sure of a hearty acquittal of this charge. It is a comfort to know that the records of both

the parties lie open before the omniscient Judge, by whose verdict of unerring justice we are willing to abide. Meanwhile, we would be glad to have our own people so familiar with their own history as to be led by no maudlin sentiment to overthrow truth in the attempt to secure peace.

2. It is apparent, from the preceding history, that the Atlanta Assembly has not only departed from, but has reversed, the position of the Southern Church, upon this subject of fraternal relations. From the beginning the attitude of the Southern Church has been that of quiet expectation of approach from the other side. It was the only attitude consistent with self-respect. At two epochs, at her organisation and again at the close of the war, she had extended the hand of fellowship especially to the Presbyterian household of faith. She was met from the Northern Church by a decree of outlawry and confiscation. What could she do but retire within her own borders, and preserve her dignity by entire silence and reserve? She was thus quiet and passive from 1865 to 1870. When delegates appeared from the other side with a proposal for conference, they were received with marked courtesy; but at the same time the difficulties in the way of perfect amity were fully disclosed. The attitude was that of a party which was sought, and which responded to overtures made by another. So that for four years longer, from 1870 to 1874, the Southern Church still felt "her strength was to sit still." After the conference at Baltimore, she put forth her ultimatum, and stood by it from 1875 to 1882, to this effect: "As soon as, by a few plain words, these hard accusations, uttered in times of great excitement, are withdrawn, we are ready to establish a cordial correspondence." We are not discussing the wisdom or the propriety of this position. The only object is to show, from the form of the proposition, that the responsibility was thrown upon the Northern Church to take the next step. The language of our Church has always been, "Whatever obstructions may be in the way of ecclesiastical fellowship, were not created by us; we cannot allow ourselves to be placed in the false position before the world of parties who had been guilty of wrong to the Northern Church. Having placed nothing in the way of Christian

fraternity, there is nothing for us to remove." Such was her language in 1870; and her practice, through all the years from 1865 to 1882, has been consistent with it. From first to last, her attitude has been that of anxiety to be at peace, but waiting for the offender to remove the obstructions which he had put in the way.

From this fixed policy, adopted deliberately and upon principle, there is not a single deviation until the last Atlanta Assembly reversed the position of the parties and made the Southern Church the suitor of the Northern. By taking the initiative, and hypothetically placing herself by the side of the aggressor, and making the same confession, she hoped to coax the apology from the other side which would fulfil the conditions which her honor required. Nothing is presented here to the reader but the historical fact that the action at Atlanta was revolutionary. The carefully considered policy adhered to through seventeen years, and sanctioned by the endorsement of seventeen consecutive Assemblies, is suddenly abandoned and reversed. The Church is no longer standing upon the ground she had deliberately chosen, but is drifting at sea, upon an expedient which may prove to have neither rudder nor keel. It was a very grave responsibility for any Assembly to assume—a responsibility more clearly seen and more deeply felt by the members of that venerable court since its adjournment, than during the confusion and darkness of an excited debate. We will not perplex this issue by discussing the constitutional right of the Assembly to assume this power; but was it safe to encounter the risks which have been subsequently shown to be involved? It may be replied, that four Presbyteries clamored for a change in our relations with the Northern Church. There were sixty-two Presbyteries which were silent; and the overwhelming presumption was that the policy of seventeen years and of seventeen Assemblies, was the policy which the Church would prefer. Was it therefore morally right for one Assembly, in the hurry of a few days, to unsettle the established policy of our entire previous history, without first ascertaining the mind of the Church? Was it fraternal, nay, was it in any sense fair, to spring such a movement upon the Assem-

bly, carry it through with a rush, and commit the whole Church to a policy which cannot afterwards be discussed upon its merits? As the case now stands, the question comes up in the form, Can the Atlanta action be arrested? Many, who deplore that action as unwise, feel that the thing is done, and cannot be undone. Others, who equally bewail the mistake which has been made, are unwilling to antagonise the highest Church court, and thus to weaken all Church authority. Others, again, weary of the continual agitation, have withheld from further participation in it, leaving matters to take whatever shape others may determine. Thus, by different routes, men reach the same conclusion, and an accidental majority is created, which does not reflect the true mind of the Church. Is any course fair which leads to such complications? Is it strange that a deep dissatisfaction is pervading the Church, and setting not a few to think what further limitations can be placed upon the power of a court which enable a single Assembly by a *coup d'état* to capture the Church? But this is rather more than we undertook to say under this head. Our only object was to show that the Atlanta Assembly has changed the entire policy of the Church and reversed the position of the parties in this controversy, and that we no longer stand upon the ground occupied through the whole of our previous career.

This is not all. The Atlanta Assembly has, in the resolution adopted by it and sent to the Northern Assembly for its concurrent adoption, conceded what we have hitherto steadfastly refused to acknowledge as true. Our declaration in 1870 was, "Our records may be searched in vain for a single act of aggression, or a single unfriendly declaration against the Northern Church." Still later, in 1876, lest any accidental word of asperity should have crept in since, it was declared that in condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Northern Assembly, nothing was to be construed as reflecting upon the religious character of that body. Special pains were taken, therefore, to cancel voluntarily and beforehand any chance expression that might be offensive. In view of these well known facts, what right had the Assembly of 1882 to "declare their regret for and withdrawal

of all expressions of our Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon, or offensive to, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America"? We anticipate the reply: This statement was drawn in accordance with the code of honor acknowledged even by worldly men, in order to save the *amour propre* of the other party, and render it easier for him to make an acknowledgment which means more from him than from us. Is it strange, then, that the other party, finding themselves caught in a diplomatic snare, should retort severely as they did, by a recalcitrant resolution, which in turn put the sting upon us? Human nature being open to just such resentments, it was most natural for a wary antagonist to take this sort of reprisal; and we are not sure but the Atlanta Assembly richly deserved to feel the recoil of their own gun. We are of those who do not believe much in diplomacy in the affairs of Christ's kingdom and amongst his people. But the question for the reader to ask in this connexion is, Who gave the Atlanta Assembly the right to confess to the Northern Church what the Southern Church had over and again denied to be true? With all our veneration for the courts of the Church, we feel that this august body will find it difficult to withdraw its shoulders from a responsibility to which it will be held by the verdict of time.

3. We proceed to show that the treaty of peace concluded between the two Assemblies in May last violates the conditions laid down in the Baltimore Conference—in substance, if not absolutely in form. In this utterance, we grapple with the position deemed impregnable by the advocates of this pacification. Their line of defence is, that the Northern Assembly, having conceded all that the Southern Church laid down in its ultimatum when it sanctioned the proceedings of the Baltimore Conference, no alternative is left us but to accept the disclaimer which is made, and to put the offence out of sight forever. This would certainly be true, if the action of the Springfield Assembly had terminated with the adoption, *simpliciter*, of what is designated as the "concurrent resolution." We have criticised the Atlanta Assembly for thus formulating the terms by which our grievances should be redressed, and thereby reversing the position in which the two

parties stood. But it cannot be denied that the proposed action went to the bottom of all the accusations against us, and made an honorable and satisfactory adjustment of the dispute. Had the "concurrent resolution" been adopted alone, not a whisper of objection would have been heard throughout the South. The reconciliation would have been accepted as frank, manly, and Christian—obliterating every trace of the old feud, and rendering the sentiment of our people towards their brethren at the North cordial and grateful. But, as the reader well knows, this was not the action taken by the Assembly at Springfield. The "concurrent resolution" was not adopted until a rider was fastened upon it which changed its whole aspect as a measure of pacification. The Herrick Johnson resolution, as it is commonly distinguished—which was deemed of such importance that it was passed by the body before the main resolution, which it was intended to qualify—formally sets forth that, in declaring "their regret for, and withdrawal of, all expressions of their Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon or offensive to the Southern Assembly," no reference is made to "the acts concerning loyalty and rebellion, but only to those concerning schism, heresy, and blasphemy." This is not the action proposed by our Assembly to theirs for concurrent adoption, but one wholly different.

But, it is replied, the Northern Assembly has explicitly affirmed that this rider fastened upon the main resolution, "does not modify it, but only explains it;" and that we are obliged, by common courtesy, to accept the interpretation they put upon their own act, and of course the disclaimer which this includes. It is impossible for us, however, to abdicate the exercise of our own judgment and reason, and believe that a paper is not modified when it *is* modified. Men of the world may accept a disclaimer which they know to be false and absurd, since the code of honor is framed only to stop a quarrel, and not to regulate the subsequent intercourse of the parties. But Christians profess to base their action upon truth and righteousness; this pacification is intended to bring the parties into bonds of amity and fellowship. How, then, can we ground a reconciliation upon an equivocal agreement which is construed differently between the parties? Is

it satisfactory to say to the one litigant, You must in courtesy accept the interpretation of your contestant, though your own judgment is clear that he is mistaken? For our part, we are heartily tired of all this legislation which "palters in a double sense;" which blows hot and cold with the same breath; which says and doesn't say, in the same word; which dead-letters where it ought to retract; which seeks its end by indirection, rather than by open declarations; which is diplomatic, when it should be candid. A reconciliation which rests upon subtle constructions and hair-line discriminations is not worth the paper upon which the agreement is executed. The friendship which deserves the name, must be frank, open, and sincere. Everything short of this is hypocrisy before God.

But the Herrick Johnson Resolution, it is rejoined, did nothing more than take out of the category of things withdrawn the original political deliverances of the Northern Assembly during and immediately after the war. And since all this political legislation is waived by the Baltimore Conference as a barrier to fraternal relations, the action taken by both Assemblies is in agreement with the terms we ourselves have offered, and we are bound by our antecedent pledge to abide by the treaty thus made. Grant, say the Atlanta advocates, that the rider does modify "the Concurrent Resolution" to which it was attached, it does not contravene the platform upon which the Southern Church has stood since 1875; and therefore should not arrest the correspondence between the two bodies. The Northern Assembly, say they, may not have done the beautiful and clean thing by us, and we may mourn that they have shown themselves incapable of a grand magnanimity; still, as they have come up to our proffered ultimatum, our own truth and honor are involved in the acceptance of the result. Of course, if all this be so, there is not a word further to be said; we have simply "sworn to our own hurt," and must keep the oath.

Is it true, however, that peace has been concluded upon the terms embraced in the Baltimore platform? Let us look again at the text which we have already engrossed, and see what the Committee did actually say: "This kind of political action, be-

gun in 1861 and carried on in successive Assemblies through 1866, constitutes at once *a most weighty grievance to us*, because much of it was aimed at our people; and constitutes also *a serious hindrance to establishing fraternal relations*, because they are lamentable departures from some of the principles laid down in those noble standards" etc. "But *we have not said that we refuse fraternal relations for these causes, or that they are an insuperable obstacle; we say they constitute a serious hindrance, and by this statement we abide.*" We have italicised the points in this declaration to which we wish to give emphasis. It is admitted freely that the past politication of the Northern Church is not interposed, since the Baltimore Conference, as a bar to intercourse. It was "a weighty grievance" and "a serious hindrance to fraternal relations," which the Southern Committee at Baltimore found it difficult to surmount; but on the ground that we are not held as endorsing the errors of those religious bodies with which correspondence is held, this politication in the past was not construed as "an insuperable obstacle." To the same effect, the Atlanta Assembly inserted in their "Concurrent Resolution" a limiting clause—"without receding from any principle"—which was intended to reserve to both the parties their conscientious convictions of truth and duty, so that neither the one nor the other should be called to the surrender of any principle. But if "a serious hindrance" in the past is waived by us, does this give the offender the right to dig up that "hindrance" out of the past and put it into the very articles of agreement upon which the reconciliation is to rest? We ask the reader to mark the distinction which we draw. The political deliverances from 1861 to 1866 are not urged as a bar to peace; but it is another thing to put forward the right thus to politicize as a claim, the recognition of which is made the condition precedent of the reconciliation. Is this an exaggerated statement of the case? The South says to the North, "Will you, without receding from any principle, withdraw what in your records reflects upon us?" "Yes," replies the North, "everything except what we said against you as rebels and traitors; we cannot touch those utterances without giving up our right to have made them." If peace is concluded

upon these terms, is not this right acknowledged? And was this the thing which was waived by the Baltimore Conference? The South says to the North, "Hold what political opinions you please, and bind your testimonies upon your head as a crown of glory, so far as we are concerned; for we ask you to recede from no principle." "Ah, yes," replies the North, "but that is not enough; it must be entered into the bond between us that these political utterances should have been made, without the recognition of which we will take back nothing." This is the significance of the Herrick Johnson Resolution; and it is a new offence against the Southern Church, reënacting in cold blood all the violences and maledictions of years of intense excitement, rolling them up in one bolus which must be swallowed and inwardly digested as the condition of fraternity. Has the Southern Church since 1875 interpreted the Baltimore ultimatum as meaning this? The Herrick Johnson Resolution unquestionably means something. It was not needed as a protection against the surrender of any of their honest convictions, the Concurrent Resolution itself affording the necessary guarantee in the reservation of every principle held sacred by both the parties. In the way of explanatory legislation it is wholly supererogatory, as much so as would be a duplicate nose upon a man's face. What, then, was its purport and design? We can see no other end than to insert in the body of the treaty between the two parties a recognition of the propriety of all the political affirmations of the Northern Church during the war. We may be willing to waive those utterances in the past as a bar to fellowship, when we are not willing to acknowledge their fitness and propriety, or to embody them in our articles of agreement as one of the conditions of reconciliation. It is insisted, therefore, that the late pacification is not based upon the Baltimore platform; but, on the contrary, in spirit, if not in the letter itself, contravenes all its provisions.

To condense the argument in a nutshell: the Concurrent Resolution, on which it was proposed to base the reconciliation, exactly embodied the Baltimore proposition. It may be paraphrased thus: While receding from no principle, we will not urge your past politicking as "an insuperable obstacle" to fra-

ternal intercourse, "serious hindrance" though it be; and we will withdraw any offensive language we may have employed in relation to it. The Northern Assembly, in its rider to this Concurrent Resolution, palpably spurns the Baltimore platform and practically says, We will do all in our power to make the obstacle insuperable by reaffirming the grievances and compelling your recognition and assent.

4. In establishing official correspondence (we like this term better as being more discriminating than fraternal relations, which really have existed ever since 1868)—in establishing official correspondence upon the present basis, we have taken a position which will in due time necessitate organic union. The Southern brethren who oppose our views say constantly, "Your contention against the political action of the Northern Church is perfectly valid as against all incorporation with that body, but is not valid against formal intercourse with them as a separate organisation." They say further, "Whilst we favor the latter, we are at one with you when it comes to the defeat of the former." But what, dear brethren, if it should then be too late? What if the waters, trickling through the concession we have made in establishing fraternity, should have swept away our entire embankment, and we find ourselves at the mercy of the flood? What, in short, if the very ground beneath our feet should have dropped away, and left us standing upon nothing? When our brethren declare they are as much opposed as ourselves to union with the Northern Church, we believe it fully as to the vast majority of them. Otherwise, we would not take the trouble to pen these lines. But there is a logic in history quite as compulsory as that of the subtlest dialectic. A false step in action, as well as in reasoning, will lead to consequences, however remote, which are inevitable. Our brethren may not wish to go into union; but into union they will go by a fatal necessity, because they have unwittingly given away the only ground upon which resistance could be successfully made.

What, then, is the distinctive feature which separates us from the Northern Church? We profess to hold the same symbols of faith and order; our creed, our government, our worship is the

same; why, then, should we not be brought under the same ecclesiastical jurisdiction? It is only partially satisfactory to reply that such an arrangement would be inconvenient, as making the body too large to be handled. The Presbyterian system is too elastic, in its gradation of courts, to succumb under any practical difficulty of this sort. The true and sufficient answer is, that the two bodies are not at one as to the relations subsisting between the Church and the State. This is the differentiating feature which compels the one to be separate from the other. Observe, too, that it does not come up an abstract dogma, a merely speculative truth. In the providence of God, the Southern wing of the Presbyterian Church was compelled to take issue with the Northern upon this question. It was the wedge driven in by other hands than ours to divide the Church. Without any will or wish of our own, we were forced into an attitude of protest against this defection from our common standards. Of all things on earth, the Northern Church is most anxious to rid themselves of this protest. They would rather do it by absorbing us, since our mere existence, as a separate Church, is an outstanding and visible testimony against them. But if this cannot be accomplished, the next expedient will be to muzzle the protest which they cannot suppress—to spike the cannon which they have not been able to capture.

The Baltimore Conference went very far in weakening that protest, when it consented to waive the past politicization of the Northern Church as a bar to official correspondence. But when we have gone a great deal beyond this, in allowing these political declarations to be imported into the treaty between us, as in part the basis of the reconciliation, what then becomes of our testimony against these political utterances? When organic union becomes the subject of discussion, as it surely must, will we be able to urge their past political action as an objection? The immediate answer will be, "Your plea is barred by the treaty of 1882; in express terms we affirmed our right to have uttered those decrees; and you responded by a resolution declaring 'entire satisfaction with the full and explicit terms in which we expressed our reciprocal concurrence.'" What can we reply to

this? In establishing fraternal relations, the Northern Assembly openly placed her whole political action in our path, as the steps by which we might ascend and stand with them on their platform. In recognising these deliverances on loyalty and rebellion, imported bodily into the treaty of peace by the Herrick Johnson Resolution, we have abandoned our testimony against politics in the church courts, and have forfeited the right to plead it as a bar to organic union. The historic ground upon which the Southern Church was organised in 1861, and upon which she has stood ever since, was ceded by treaty in 1882, and she will find it difficult to show cause to the world why she should longer exist. This is the logic of fraternal relations upon the Atlanta basis. Upon the line of this policy, we must as certainly crumble into the Northern Church at last, as a bank of sand is washed away by the constant action of water. When we become weary of this friction, then, just as we have become weary of the friction now, the Northern Assembly will resume its action of 1874 in some grand affirmation of the spiritual nature of the Church as the kingdom of Christ, and in its entire separation from, and independence of, the State; and will then turn to us and ask, "What do you want more orthodox than this new proclamation of Christ's supremacy?" Will we point to the blemishes upon their records from 1861 to 1866? The withering response will be, You disabled your own testimony by the written agreement of 1882, and it is beyond your power to enable it any more. Having admitted the claim set up in the Herrick Johnson Resolution, by which the "Concurrent Resolution" was "EXPLAINED" to us, we have no longer the right to take issue with the Northern Church upon its mingling of politics with religion. This ground of separation being swept away from our feet, nothing will remain to us but to settle down quietly into her bosom. We are thus emphatic in setting forth the logical consequences of our present position, in the hope our Church will retrace her steps before it is too late and find her anchorage upon her historic testimony as before.

It is greatly to be wished that the Southern Presbyterian Church would gravely consider the danger of her present situa-

tion. Very many of her ministers and members are deeply wounded and grieved. They find the Northern Assembly rising up in cold blood, and absolutely without provocation, to throw anew into their face the taunt of disloyalty and rebellion. The charge is simply absurd in view of the fact that the Federal Government abandoned it with the acknowledgment that the indictment could not be sustained in any Court under the Constitution. We would not, therefore, care for the silly allegation of it in the Herrick Johnson Resolution as passed by the Springfield Assembly, if it had not been accepted by our own supreme court in Atlanta. It is this which has driven the iron so deep into the soul, and bowed down so many with humiliation and sorrow. We are of those who think rebellion is a crime; and could we believe ourselves guilty of it, we would repent in sackcloth and ashes all our days; and to have the charge even constructively recognised by our own Mother, this pains like the killing of a nerve. What lasting injury this unwise attempt at pacification has inflicted upon the Southern Church, time only can disclose. Even though it should not lead to the absorption so much dreaded, its present effect has been to sow distrust and alienation between brethren who honored each other with a supreme affection, and to weaken confidence in the stability of the Church herself and of the principles which she avows. The hollow fraternity with outside parties is dearly purchased with the uneasiness and sorrow and pain it has produced within.¹ In view of all which we think it incumbent upon the next Assembly to represent frankly to the Assembly North that the present settlement is unsatisfactory from the failure on their part to return an untrammelled adoption of the Concurrent Resolution.

B. M. PALMER.

¹ What is more disastrous still, by an arbitrary and ruthless exercise of power the Assembly has already antagonised the Presbyteries to itself—a conflict between the courts of the Church which has only to become chronic to issue in entire disintegration. Yet the fearful peril must be encountered, in order to escape the opposite danger of an oppressive despotism.