

PRESBYTERIAN
RE-UNION
MEMORIAL
VOLUME
1837-1871



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✓ PRESBYTERIAN REUNION:

A MEMORIAL VOLUME.

1837—1871.

*"Ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν· οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς
ἄρτου μετέχομεν.—1 CORINTHIANS x. 17.*



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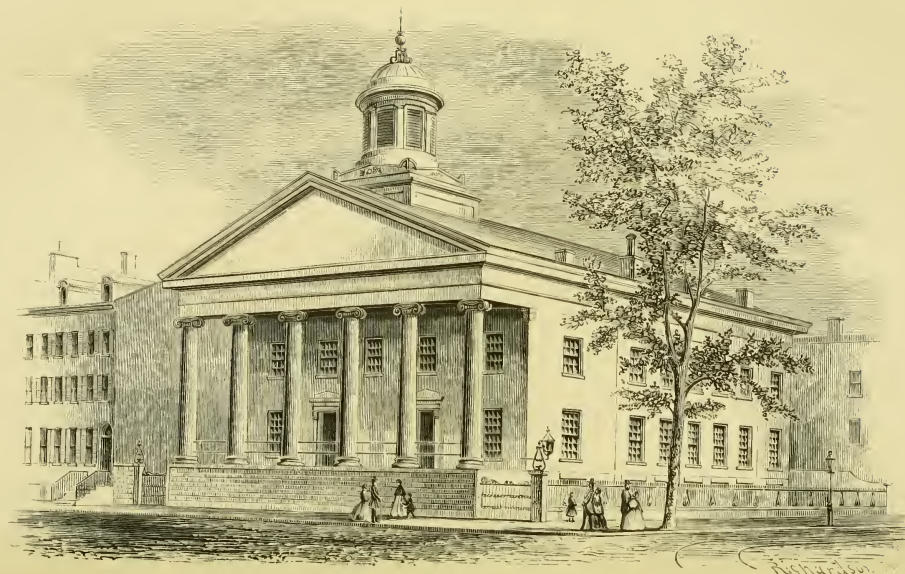
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FIRST CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE RECONSTRUCTION.

BY THE REV. G. S. PLUMLEY.

What Reconstruction is. — The General Assembly of 1870. — Philadelphia. — Organization. — Incidents. — Joint Committee on Reconstruction. — Its Report as modified. — The new Synods and Presbyteries. — Theological Seminaries. — Home Missions. — Foreign Missions. — Publication. — Sabbath School Literature. — Education. — Selection of Candidates. — Church Erection. — Ministerial Relief. — Work for the Freedmen. — Concentration of the Plans of the Church. — Remarks of Dr. John C. Backus. — Report on the Finances of the Church. — Committee on Unification. — The Southern Church. — Popular Education. — Memorial Fund. — Heidelberg Catechism. — Social Reunion. — Work of the Assembly well performed. — Satisfaction of the Church. — What yet remains to be done. — Hopes and Responsibilities. — God's Promise.

UPON the consolidated Church is laid the task of Reconstruction. This includes a new arrangement of Synods and Presbyteries, constitutional and other changes made necessary by combining into one two previously distinct branches, and a fresh adjustment of the agencies hitherto employed by them both for missionary and other Christian efforts. Its full accomplishment will, moreover, add to the power of the Church as an instrument for doing good, it will prune her administration from everything not approved by experience, it will enable her to adapt her plans to the demands of the present and the future, and more fully equip her for the mighty work to which her God now calls her. Such a task may well employ the best

thoughts and most earnest prayers of all her officers and members, for the Divine voice once more is saying to her, "Thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations."

If this view of the magnitude and scope of the work of Reconstruction be correct, the General Assembly of 1870 performed its full share of it, by defining its outlines, and commencing to fill them up.

The object of the present chapter is to review what this Assembly thus transacted, and to indicate what yet remains for its successors to accomplish.

Philadelphia was in every way most appropriately a place of meeting for the first Assembly of the Reunited Presbyterian Church. It has been claimed that the first Presbyterian Church in this country was here organized. The mother Presbytery was formed in the same city in 1705. Forty-four General Assemblies had here been welcomed previous to the division, and after it, nine of the Old School and seven of the New School Assemblies transacted their business in Philadelphia. Its very name suggests harmony, and during the sessions of 1870, its citizens, with liberal kindness and unsurpassed hospitality, accommodated the nearly six hundred delegates that composed the Assembly, rendering their sojourn most agreeable, and filling up the intervals of their business with pleasant, social entertainments.

The General Assembly convened, as was most fitting, with that congregation from which all others in the city date their origin, in the First Presbyterian Church, on Washington Square (the Rev. Albert Barnes and

Herrick Johnson, D.D., pastors), on Thursday, May 19, 1870, at 11 A. M.

To prepare for this meeting, arrangements of the most ample character had been made by a joint-committee, consisting of the Rev. Herrick Johnson, D.D., chairman, the Rev. Alexander Reed, D.D., the Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D.D., and Messrs. William G. Crowell, Morris Patterson, and J. A. Gardner. These gentlemen were indefatigable in their endeavor to secure the comfort of their numerous guests. Their forethought had provided ample accommodations for all the wants of the large deliberative body meeting with them, and from the commencement to the close of its protracted sessions, the cheerfulness and constant courtesy with which their arduous labors were rendered elicited the united commendation of all for whom they toiled. The thorough success of their efforts deserves special mention.

As the opening exercises commenced in the spacious edifice of the First Church, the sight was pleasant and impressive. The ground floor of the house was nearly filled by the Commissioners and the Delegates from various kindred bodies. Upon the platform were seated representatives of the Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church of Great Britain, and of the Irish Presbyterian Church; also the Rev. Thomas DeWitt, D.D., one of the oldest ministers of the Reformed (late Reformed Dutch) Church. A floral committee had tastefully decorated the pulpit, the desks of the clerks, and the galleries with choice evergreens and flowers. Over the pulpit they had suspended the words: "NOW ARE THEY MANY MEMBERS, YET BUT ONE

BODY;" while at the rear end of the Church were seen the date of the division with that of the Reunion: 1837, 1870. An audience, that crowded every portion of the building not reserved for the Assembly, gladly united with its members in the services of praise and prayer which preceded the sermon of the Rev. Dr. Fowler, the last Moderator of the New School branch. This discourse at once entered upon the subject of the Reconstruction of the Reunited Church, and suggested its outlines.

Dr. Fowler's text was Ephesians iv. 4: "There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." The preparation of this discourse was somewhat advanced before it was noticed that the Rev. F. Allison, D.D., had chosen the same text when preaching in Philadelphia, May 24, 1758, before "The Reverend Synod of Philadelphia and the Reverend Commission of the Synod of New York," on occasion of the former Reunion of the Presbyterian Church. Instead, however, of changing the text, as was his impulse at first, Dr. Fowler retained it, as sanctioned by such an authority for it, rather than interdicted by such a use of it.

The portion of the sermon which relates to Reconstruction is as follows:—

First, the Reunion lays upon us *a work of reconstruction*. I will not intrude on the part assigned to committees appointed to report to this General Assembly. They are charged chiefly with the necessary changes in the boundaries of our judicatories, and with the combination of our two sets of evangelistic agencies. The further question arises, *Is any modification of our ecclesiastical administration desirable and feasible?*

Everything distinctive in our polity is beyond inquiry, of course. As none of us entertain a thought, so none of us could present a proposition

looking the most remotely to the least alteration of our Presbyterianism. We fully approve it. We ardently love it. Study and observation and experiment commend it to our judgments and hearts. But is our method of operation incapable of improvement? Has trial developed no faults or defects in the organs we furnish for the functions of our Church?

For example, how is it in reference to *supervision*? Our organization provides for it. Indeed, it is characterized by it. We define Presbyterianism as "a series of courts of review and control." But ours is a supervision by bodies. Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly exercise it. Is there not a measure, and is there not a method of it, that could be entrusted to individuals, and that would be useful to the Church? None of us could be reconciled to an Episcopacy—technically so called. The parity of the ministry is inviolable among us, and imperiousness and inquisitiveness are intolerable by us. We must be freemen and peers. And we would not sacrifice self-training, self-incitement, self-restraint, for the quickening and check of a bishop's crook and eye. We must be, we will be, laws to ourselves. But cannot individualism be reconciled with a supervision by individuals, and would not our Presbyterianism be helped by it? Prelacy and Methodism largely owe their efficiency to it, and guarded against excess and abuse, and an appendix to supervision by judicatories, might it not add to our force?

This would be no novelty in Presbyterianism, as it would be no intrusion upon it. John Knox established it in the Scotch Kirk, which he divided into ten dioceses, for each of which a superintendent was appointed. The first Book of Discipline directed that these superintendents should have their own special kirks, besides the common charge of others, and that they should not "remain in their own kirks above three or four months, but should pass again to their visitations." Their duty was described as not only to preach where they went, but to "examine the doctrines, life, diligence, and behavior of the ministers, elders, and deacons;" to "consider the order of the kirk, the manners of the people, how the poor are provided, how the youth are instructed, how the purity and discipline of the kirk are kept, how heinous and horrible crimes are corrected," and to "administer and dress things out of order with their counsel the best way they may."

The genius of Presbyterianism presides in the study. Our ministers are the thinkers and scholars of their profession, and particularly set apart for the inculcation of principles and doctrines. Diligently do they prosecute their special mission, and they need little additional incitement and guidance in it. We feel our shortcomings and deficiencies more in out-of-

door work, and who of us but often need responsible counsel and help, and how invaluable they would be to the juniors among us!

Our churches suffer from the lack of oversight. Pastors tend well the folds over which they are severally set; but, with here and there an exception, our Presbyteries and Synods very imperfectly watch the shepherdless flocks. As ecclesiastical bodies do not and cannot whisper caution and advice and encouragement and stimulus to those of their members who call for the delicate administration of such an office, so they are too cumbersome for all the activities of a missionary field. They are compelled to undertake them by the exigencies of new settlements, and are occasionally aroused to them in established communities, but their efforts are generally transient and fitful. And the result is disastrous. Scores and hundreds of churches die of neglect, and scores and hundreds of opportunities for churches are lost. Episcopacy has an advantage here, and Methodist Episcopacy is making the most of it. It takes up our expiring flocks and puts them in well-tended folds.

And would not an arrangement for a kind and measure of supervision, by individuals as well as by bodies, abate an evil, of which both our church and ministers are the victims? I can hardly bring myself to publish the fact, for it seems like proclaiming either our weakness or our shame, and yet the stress of the case compels me to state, that while our last minutes report 4,181 ministers, and 4,330 churches, more than 1,000 of our ministers are stated supplies, or without permanent engagements; and nearly 800 are wholly unemployed, and less than 1,500 are pastors; and more than 1,500 of our churches are served by stated supplies, and nearly 1,000 have no regular supplies of any kind. Suppose that one-half of these unemployed ministers are aged or infirm, or otherwise incompetent for pulpit and pastoral labor, we then have 400 ministers, qualified to preach and visit, without pulpits and parishes. Most of the 1,000 vacant churches are small and feeble, but the greater their need of care, and with 400 able-bodied and well-trained ministers disengaged in our bounds, they ought to be served,

The impossibility of a support for these 400 ministers in these 1,000 churches is not the reason of their being unemployed, for long-continued experiment by a sister denomination shows that it can be furnished. What is needed, though not all that is needed, is an accepted medium of communication between the two, and also some degree of authority to bring them to terms. Left, as each church so much is left, to provide for itself, and left, as each minister so much is left, to settle himself, our Minutes will continue to report their humiliating tale. And is it not distressing to think of this amount of cultivated and consecrated power lying idle in the

midst of this abounding waste, and must there not be something faulty or wanting in the administration that admits of it?

All modification of our methods of ecclesiastical action may seem too perilous to be risked; but more is to be feared from a timid conservatism than from a bold amendment. None of us, I am sure, are content with our present degree of efficiency. We make no comparisons with other denominations, but we are dissatisfied with ourselves. We have not the life, the vigor, the enterprise that become a Christian church in this day and in this land.

According to the plan of Reunion adopted by the Assemblies of 1869, the Moderators of the two Assemblies of 1869 jointly presided until the new Moderator was chosen. By this arrangement the Rev. Philemon H. Fowler, D.D., Moderator of the Assembly that met in May, 1869, in the Church of the Covenant, New York, having preached the sermon, the Rev. Melancthon W. Jacobus, D.D., LL.D., Moderator of the Assembly that met in May, 1869, in the Brick Church, New York, took the chair, for the purpose of putting the votes and deciding questions of order.

Prayer having been offered by Dr. Jacobus, the Rev. J. Trumbull Backus, D.D., was by acclamation elected Moderator. Also by a unanimous vote, the following gentlemen were elected clerks:

The Rev. Edwin F. Hatfield, D.D., Stated Clerk, the Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D.D., Permanent Clerk; and the Rev. Villeroy D. Reed, D.D., Hon. S. F. McCoy, and Ezra M. Kingsley, Esq., Temporary Clerks.

The following telegram was read, and received with applause:

ALLEGHENY CITY, PA., }
May 19, 1870. }

To the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church:

The Moderator of the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church

immediately preceding the separation, sends greeting to the first Reunited Assembly of the same through their Moderator, praying that their proceedings may be distinguished by the wisdom that is from above, and cemented by the charity which is the bond of perfectness.

DAVID ELLIOTT.

The Rev. Dr. Hatfield, by appointment of the Assembly, prepared a reply, using for the purpose the words of Psalm xcii., verses 12-15: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; to shew that the Lord is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

After the preliminary organization, in which was thus exhibited an entire unanimity, the Assembly commenced its appropriate work. A Joint Committee on Reconstruction had been appointed by the Assemblies of 1869. This Committee, of which the Rev. Dr. Musgrave was Chairman, and the Rev. Dr. Hatfield, Secretary, reported at an early stage of the proceedings. The consideration of this report, that involved the boundaries of the Synods, arrangements for the formation of new Presbyteries, and important constitutional changes, occupied more of the time of the Assembly than any other subject. It originally proposed the establishment of all the Presbyteries during the sessions of the Assembly of 1870, a plan being suggested by which the various representatives of the Synods in the house should meet and nominate bounds to be afterward ratified by the whole Assembly. For this, the method finally adopted was, after not a little discussion, substituted. The

specific work of reconstructing the Presbyteries was remitted to the Synods, when organized, as defined by the Assembly. These Synods were directed to meet for the purpose of thus arranging the bounds of the new Presbyteries previous to July 15, 1870. In several other particulars the very able report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction was changed by amendments, all of which were fully discussed and quite unanimously adopted.

As this report will possess a historical value, it seems proper to insert it in here in its amended form :

Your Committee have held three several meetings in the city of Philadelphia — one in January, another in March, and the final one the present month, just before the meeting of the Assembly. The second, and most important of all our meetings, had the presence of every member. We have endeavored diligently and faithfully to attend to the business of Reconstruction, which had been intrusted to us.

Our duties, as described in the concurrent resolutions of the two Assemblies for our appointment, were — “to prepare and propose to the General Assembly of the United Church a proper adjustment of the boundaries of the Presbyteries and Synods, and the ratio of representation; and any amendments of the Constitution, which they may think necessary to secure efficiency and harmony in the administration of the Church, so greatly increased and so rapidly extending.” Under this minute, especially the latter part, many supposed our powers very extensive, and our range of subjects almost unrestricted. We have not so judged, but preferred to keep closely to what is more specially mentioned or clearly implied.

Numerous communications on these matters have reached us; a few from ecclesiastical bodies, or associations of ministers, but chiefly from individuals; *all* which have been respectfully and patiently considered, though the suggestions contained in some of them we may have failed to adopt. Many of them either fell in with our own convictions, or tended somewhat to modify them; a few recommended changes so great and radical in the constitution of Presbyteries, Synods, and the Assembly, that we could not approve of them; some, we thought, might better come before your body from another quarter; while others, though important and salu-

tary, would cause such agitation and opposition, if proposed, as might seriously disturb the peace and harmony of our so-happily united Church. We have thought proper to recommend only measures which were of immediate and pressing necessity, leaving other matters to future and fuller development.

THE SYNODS.

First, then, as to the consolidation, adjustment, and defining the boundaries of *Synods*; we recommend the following, viz., the Synods of —

1. LONG ISLAND; to comprise the counties of Kings, Queens, Suffolk, and Richmond, N. Y.

2. NEW YORK; to comprise the counties of New York, Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Orange, Ulster, and Sullivan, N. Y., with our ministers and churches in the New England States.

3. ALBANY; to include north of the line of the Synod of New York, and east of the west line of the counties of Greene, Schoharie, Montgomery, Fulton, Hamilton, and Franklin, N. Y.

4. UTICA; to extend west of the Synod of Albany, to the west line of Tioga, Cortland, Onondaga, and Oswego counties, N. Y., and to the State line on the north.

5. GENEVA; to comprise the counties west of Utica to the west line of Steuben, Ontario, and Wayne counties, N. Y.

6. GENESEE; to embrace all the counties of New York west of the Synod of Geneva.

7. NEW JERSEY; to be conterminous with that State, and have also attached to it the Presbytery of Corisco.

8. PHILADELPHIA; to embrace the eastern part of Pennsylvania to the west line of the counties of Bradford, Sullivan, Luzerne, Schuylkill, Lebanon, and York; and to have attached to it the Presbytery of Western Africa.

9. HARRISBURG; to comprise the central counties of Pennsylvania west of the Synod of Philadelphia, and east of the west line of the counties of McKean, Cameron, Clearfield, Blair, and Bedford.

10. ERIE; to comprise the north-west counties of Pennsylvania, west of the Synod of Harrisburg, and bounded south by the counties of Cambria and Westmoreland, and the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, to the State line, except that part of Indiana County lying east and south of the Blacklick Creek.

11. PITTSBURG; to comprise the remainder of Pennsylvania west of the Synod of Harrisburg, and south of the Synod of Erie; with all of West Virginia west of the Allegheny ridge.

12. BALTIMORE; to contain Delaware, Maryland, the District of Co-

lumbia, and our ministers and churches in Virginia and West Virginia, east of the Allegheny ridge; to have attached to it, also, the Presbytery of Rio Janeiro.

13. ATLANTIC; to embrace the States of North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.

14. CLEVELAND; to extend from the Ohio State line, on the east, to the west and south lines of the counties of Lorain, Medina, Summit, Stark, Tuscarawas, Guernsey, Noble, and Monroe, Ohio.

15. TOLEDO; to comprise the counties west of the Synod of Cleveland, and to be bounded by the east and south lines of the counties of Erie, Huron, Crawford, Wyandot, Hardin, Logan, Champaign, Shelby, and Mercer, Ohio.

16. CINCINNATI; to comprise the counties bounded by the north and east lines of Darke, Miami, Clark, Greene, Fayette, Ross, Vinton, and Gallia, Ohio.

17. COLUMBUS; to comprise the remaining, being the central, counties of the State of Ohio.

18. MICHIGAN; to embrace the whole of the lower peninsula of that State.

19. KENTUCKY; to be conterminous with that State.

20. TENNESSEE; to embrace the States of Tennessee, Louisiana, and Texas, with all our ministers and churches in the States intervening.

21. INDIANA, SOUTH; to extend to the northern line of the counties of Wayne, Henry, Hancock, Marion, Hendricks, Putnam, Clay, and Vigo, Ind.

22. INDIANA, NORTH; to embrace all of the State north of this line.

23. ILLINOIS, SOUTH; to comprise all of the State south of the north line of Edgar, Douglas, Moultrie, Shelby, Christian, Montgomery, Macoupin, Green, and Calhoun counties.

24. ILLINOIS, CENTRAL; to comprise the counties north of the above line to the south line of Kankakee, Grundy, La Salle, Putnam, Bureau, Henry, and Mercer counties, Ill.

25. ILLINOIS, NORTH; to comprise the remaining counties of the State, bounded on the south by the north line of the Synod of Illinois, Central.

26. WISCONSIN; to take in all that State, the upper peninsula of Michigan, and the county of St. Louis in the State of Minnesota.

27. MINNESOTA; to comprise the State of Minnesota, except as above, and the territory of Dacotah.

28. IOWA, NORTH; to comprise all the State of Iowa north of the south

line of Clinton, Jones, Linn, Benton, Tama, Marshall, Story, Boone, Greene, Carroll, Crawford, and Manona counties.

29. IOWA, SOUTH; to comprise the remainder of the State of Iowa, with Nebraska and the Territory of Wyoming.

30. MISSOURI; to be conterminous with the State of Missouri.

31. KANSAS; to extend over that State, Colorado, New Mexico, and the Indian Territories.

32. PACIFIC; to embrace all the region west of the Rocky Mountains.

33. INDIA; to comprise all our missionaries and churches in that country.

34. CHINA; to comprise all our missionaries and churches in China, Siam, and Japan.

THE PRESBYTERIES.

In regard to fixing the boundaries of the various *Presbyteries*, which seemed as distinctly assigned to us, we have felt not only that it would be a most onerous task, which we could hardly do, for all parts, with just discrimination, or to general satisfaction, but that it seemed to fall more properly under the province of the different Synods or their representatives, who could do it, when assembled, more understandingly and to the fuller content of those interested, than if done by us or by this Assembly. Accordingly, it is proposed that this specific work be remitted to the several Synods, as now defined by this Assembly. And, for the purpose of securing uniformity of action on the part of the Synods throughout the whole Church, it is recommended that each Synod being convened, as hereinafter provided, shall organize the Presbyteries within its bounds in accordance with the following general principles, viz. :

1. That each several Presbytery, with the ministers and churches within its limits, be defined as to boundaries by geographical lines, or with respect to the most convenient lines of travel.

2. That Presbyteries be enlarged, and the formation of small ones be discouraged; none formed hereafter to consist of less than five ministers, the quorum for business remaining as heretofore.

3. That in the formation or arrangement of Presbyteries by the respective Synods it be recommended that no Presbytery consist of less than ten ministers — except in outlying, frontier, and missionary districts, and then to be constituted as large as possible.

4. That when two or more congregations, on different sides of a Synodical or Presbyterian line, are under one pastoral charge, they shall all, for the time, belong to that Presbytery with which the minister is connected, but only so long as such pastoral relation continues.

5. That ministers without charge are required to unite with that Presbytery within the geographical limits of which they ordinarily reside, or are nearest to, and to which they shall be amenable for the proper discharge of their ordination engagements.

6. That the Presbyteries and Synods heretofore existing, which shall lose their present organization by consolidation under these arrangements, shall be considered and designated as continuing their succession in that Synod, now defined, or Presbytery to be constituted, which includes the largest portion, counting both ministers and churches of said body as existing May 19th, 1870, to preserve its records, and attend, as may be found necessary, to its business and interests.

That the Commissioners of the Presbyteries within the bounds of each Synod, as fixed by this Assembly, be respectively appointed a Committee to designate the day, not later than July 15th, 1870, when, and the place where, each Synod shall hold its first meeting, for the reorganization of the Presbyteries within its bounds, and for the transaction of any other business that may come before them; also, to nominate some one to preach the opening sermon, and preside until the Synod shall be organized by the choice of a Moderator; and report the same to this General Assembly for its action.

REPRESENTATION.

The next general subject is that of *Representation* in the General Assembly, and a proper ratio for the same.

Your Committee, after full and repeated consideration of this important and difficult subject, are of the opinion that a change to Synodical representation is necessary, in order to bring the numbers in the Assembly within due limits, and secure equal rights to all parts of the Church. But, so far as we can discover, the Church generally is not yet prepared for such a change; and the Committee desire to avoid all occasion of discord in our united Church, or needless discussions on this subject in this General Assembly. Therefore, no change from Presbyterial representation is proposed; nor would we at present advise any change in the ratio of representation, but leave the matter as it is ordered by chapter xii., section 2, of the Form of Government.

LIMITATION OF APPEALS.

For the relief of the General Assembly in the dispatch of business, and to discourage pertinacious litigation in Church courts, the Committee recommend that all Appeals, References, and Complaints terminate at the Synod, except in relation to questions of constitutional law, or the trial of a minister for heresy in doctrine.

STANDING RULES.

For the purpose of securing the necessary constitutional changes for the foregoing objects, the Committee propose that this General Assembly send down to the Presbyteries the following *Overtures*, viz. :

1. In the Form of Government, chapter x., section 2, after the word *Ministers*, to insert, "in number not less than five."

2. In the Form of Government, chapter xii., section 4, to add to the first sentence, at its close, the following words: "and which relate exclusively to the construction of the Constitution, or the trial of a minister for heresy in doctrine."

3. In the Form of Government, chapter xi., at the end of section 4, to add the following sentence: "Every case of the trial of a minister for heresy in doctrine, and all questions relating exclusively to the construction of the Constitution, may be carried by appeal or complaint to the General Assembly; in all other cases or questions the decision of the Synod shall be final."

4. In the Book of Discipline, chapter vii., section 2, to read as follows, viz. : "Every kind of decision which is formed in any church judicatory, except the highest, may be reviewed by a superior judicatory, subject to the limitation of appeals from the Synod as provided in the Form of Government, and may be carried before it in one or the other of the four following ways."

Moreover, it is recommended that the Assembly instruct and order all the Presbyteries, when reconstructed, at their first appointed meeting, to vote directly *yea* or *nay* on these several *Overtures*, and send forthwith an attested copy of their action to the Stated Clerk of the Assembly, who shall keep an accurate account of the same, and report it to the next Assembly.

Finally, your Committee will close their report with a suggestion for the action of the Assembly, which they think would secure greater efficiency and dispatch in their business.

OVERTURES TO THE ASSEMBLY.

As much time is consumed, and the attention of the Assembly distracted with *Overtures*, and Questions of minor importance, coming up from various quarters, impeding the transaction of business of more general interest, it is recommended that the Assembly order that, hereafter, Bills and *Overtures* come up only from Synods or Presbyteries; yet that this may not prevent any Committee of Bills and *Overtures* from bringing before the house, of its own motion, upon a two-thirds vote of

the Committee, any matter which they may deem of sufficient importance to engage the attention of the General Assembly.

After the adoption of this report as amended, arrangements were immediately made for convening the various Synods defined by it. An enabling act, prepared by the Rev. Dr. Hatfield and Hon. William Strong, was also passed, by which the several Synods and the Presbyteries that compose them become the legal successors of those into which the Church was formerly divided. Since the adjournment of the Assembly these Synods have met in conformity with its appointment, and, with the greatest harmony, have performed their part, in turn defining the bounds of the new Presbyteries according to the principles adopted in the report on Reconstruction. It is a remarkable fact that thus, without any friction or dissatisfaction, the number of the Presbyteries has been reduced from two hundred and fifty-nine to one hundred and sixty-five. Most of these are well bounded by geographical lines, so laid down that the convenience of the members of them, and the advantage of the churches composing them, are well secured.

When the Reunion was still in progress, and not yet consummated, the remark was frequently heard that the relation of the THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES to the General Assembly would give rise to difficult and delicate questions. Some of them were already subject to the Assembly's control; others were under Presbyterian supervision, or that of a Board of Directors. It was feared that the effort to bring them all under one plan of administration satisfactory to the whole Church

would occasion prolonged, perhaps excited discussions. Happily, such fears were not justified by the event. In the Providence of God, at a very early stage of its sessions, the whole matter was brought before the General Assembly, in such a form as seemed to meet the views of all the brethren, and to promise in the future the utmost harmony and success in the management and direction of these Seminaries. The Directors of the Union Theological Seminary, New York, had prepared a memorial, which was read to the Assembly. In this paper they suggest as a rule and plan, that the Board of Directors of each Seminary be authorized to appoint its professors, subject to the veto of the General Assembly. A Memorial appended to the Report of the Directors of Princeton Theological Seminary made request for the same rule, asking also that the Board of Directors of Princeton Seminary have power besides to fill vacancies in their number, subject to the Assembly's veto. In behalf of the Trustees of Auburn and Lane Seminaries, representations were made that their Boards will give most cordial assent to the plan proposed, or to any other plan which the Assembly adopts. In view of these communications, the Rev. Dr. Musgrave, in the course of some remarks upon the Report of the Directors of Princeton Seminary, proceeded to say :

Will you allow me to add, that this is an additional cause for congratulation and for thanksgiving to God [applause]; that even these questions of the Theological Seminaries, which we thought the most difficult to adjust and that would be likely to give us the greatest trouble, are thus amicably adjusted by their respective Boards of Directors. [Applause.] Is it not another proof that the whole Reunion is from God, and that we

have the earnest of perpetual unity and harmony not only, but of increased efficiency in every department of our work? [Applause.]

In accordance with these views the Committee on Theological Seminaries reported the following plan and resolutions to the Assembly, which were subsequently adopted:

1. Accepting the offer so generously made by the Directors of the Union Theological Seminary in New York, a Seminary independent hitherto of all direct ecclesiastical control, to invest the General Assembly with the right of a *veto* in the election of Professors in that institution, this Assembly would invite all those Theological Seminaries not now under the control of the General Assembly, to adopt, at their earliest convenience, the same rule and method, to the end that throughout the whole Presbyterian Church there may be uniform and complete confidence in those intrusted with the training of our candidates for the ministry.

2. That the several Boards of Directors of those Seminaries which are now under the control of the General Assembly shall be authorized to elect, suspend, and displace the Professors of the Seminaries under their care, subject in all cases to the *veto* of the General Assembly, to whom they shall annually make a full report of their proceedings, and to whom their minutes shall be submitted whenever the Assembly shall require them to be produced. These Boards shall further be authorized to fix the salaries of the Professors, and to fill their own vacancies, subject in all cases to the *veto* of the General Assembly.

3. *Resolved*, That a committee of five be appointed by the Assembly to propose such alterations in the plans of the Seminaries now under the control of the Assembly, as shall be deemed necessary to carry into effect the principles above stated, and that said Committee report to this or to the next succeeding Assembly,

4. In case the Board of Directors of any Theological Seminary now under the control of the General Assembly should prefer to retain their present relation to this body, the plan of such Seminary shall remain unaltered.

Passing in review the Assembly's work of Reconstruction, it is not essential to observe as to the record the same order in which the different topics came up for

decision. With reference to all the Boards and Permanent Committees of both the Old and the New School, the Assemblies of 1869, at their adjourned meetings at Pittsburg, raised Joint Committees to combine and consolidate the former organizations, and to report to the General Assembly of 1870. In each case these Committees faithfully discharged their trust, and, with some judicious modifications, their reports were adopted. The great importance of the subject demands an early reference to the plans adopted for HOME MISSIONS and for FOREIGN MISSIONS. The Board of Domestic Missions of the Old School, and the Permanent Committee on Home Missions of the New School, each presented its Annual Report to the Assembly. A Standing Committee, of which the Chairman was of the late Old School branch, carefully considered these documents. In reviewing them in its report and resolutions, this Committee spoke in terms of approbation with reference to both organizations, commending the efficiency and competency of their management. The following extract from the Report of the New School Permanent Committee on Home Missions was especially approved, as well calculated to indicate the proposed future policy of the new Board in the Re-united Church:

There was an obvious propriety that we should insure those whom we sent into the field against suffering. We first guaranteed them \$600 and their necessary travelling expenses, and as prices advanced we were compelled to advance the rate per annum \$200 more. We found in the field at first many who, for want of adequate support, could not give themselves wholly to their ministry. Some were teachers, many were farmers, and in consequence many of them were non-resident stated

supplies. We have believed it a better policy and the only true economy to pay the laborer more, so that we could command his entire services.

The Joint Committee on Home Missions had recommended that the name of the new Board be, "The Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." This suggestion was adopted, and also the following provisions, with reference to the late "Board of Domestic Missions," and "Permanent Committee on Home Missions:—"

1. That this Assembly designate the locality in which the chief operations of the new Board shall be carried on, and in which the principal office for that purpose shall be located.

2. That a Committee be appointed by this Assembly, whose duty it shall be to endeavor to procure all the legislation required by the exigencies of the case, and direct the transfer of property now held by the two bodies above described, on receiving the opinion of competent counsel that the authority of the new body is perfect.

3. Meantime, till such a result has been reached, that both of the existing organizations be kept up in the form required by their respective charters.

Subsequently, by an affirmative vote of two-thirds, the Assembly decided that the place for the future Board of Home Missions shall be the city of New York. It having been agreed that the existence of both the Board of Domestic Missions and the Permanent Committee on Home Missions, as corporate bodies, be maintained until such a time as they can be joined into one Board, thereupon two Secretaries and a Treasurer were elected by acclamation, as the officers of the new Board into which they are to be merged. The Assembly, however, while thus exercising its right to designate the officers of one of its Boards, expressed its desire that the act, apparently necessary in the peculiar

exigencies of the case, might not be used as a precedent under ordinary circumstances. Arrangements were also made by which the necessary legislation for combining both the existing organizations into one may be promptly and satisfactorily obtained. The new Board will consist of twenty members, five constituting a quorum. There is every indication that in the future Church our Domestic Missionaries will be more adequately supported, and that their work will more thoroughly than ever before enlist the prayers and efforts of all God's people.

In many portions of the field where two or more Mission stations have hitherto existed, these will be combined into one, which, by its greater strength, will become more efficient for good. By a similar concentration of resources, in various places where two missionaries have hitherto labored, one will be retained, and the other commissioned to a new and more destitute position, where he will find ample room in which to work for Christ.

As to FOREIGN MISSIONS, the task of the General Assembly was more simple, as there were not two Boards or Committees to be fused together. The New School having hitherto performed its part in the matter through the American Board, the only measure necessary was to give both former branches a proper representation for the future management of the work. The consolidated Church adopts as its own the old organization, retaining its name. The number of the Board was fixed by the Assembly at fifteen members, divided into classes of five each, each class serving three years, and one-third of the whole number con-

stituting a quorum. The churches of the former New School branch are preparing, after the present financial year, to retire from their long and pleasant connection with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and to bring their contributions and their co-operation to the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. It was understood that a third Secretary, elected from the former New School branch, would be added to the two former Secretaries of the Board. The work of assuming the support and control of certain missions hitherto sustained by the New School branch, in correspondence with the American Board, must evidently be a gradual one. Harmony and kindly feeling will doubtless still obtain between those sister societies, that work together in different fields for a common object. A Committee appointed by the New School Assembly, in 1869, to confer with the American Board, was continued to complete the negotiations already commenced, and to report to the next Assembly.

The report of this Committee, of which the Rev. Dr. Jonathan F. Stearns was the Chairman, is so important that it is given in full in the Appendix, as well as the action of the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to which the conference of the Assembly's Committee with the officers of that Board gave rise.

The subject of PUBLICATION occupied much of the attention of the Assembly, and elicited considerable debate. Both portions of the Church possessed organizations well officered and appointed to perform the work of preparing and circulating religious literature

on a liberal scale. Both were located in Philadelphia. Both were found to be operating faithfully and successfully. The General Assembly combined them into one Board, under the title of "The Presbyterian Board of Publication." This Board is to be composed of forty-eight members, taken in equal number from each of the late branches—one-half ministers. They are divided into three classes, each class serving for three years. Presbyteries are hereafter to appoint a Presbyterian Publication Committee, which Committee shall, in that Presbytery, supervise the work of securing an annual collection for this Board from each of its churches; shall search out and recommend to the Board suitable persons to act as colporteurs; shall correspond with the Board in reference to its work in that Presbytery; and shall do whatever else may tend to promote the work and interests of the Board, and to secure a thorough distribution of the Board's publications within and throughout the bounds of the Presbytery.

All the property of both the former organizations is to be united and placed in charge of the new Board, and an equal representation within it is secured to both of the former branches of the Church. A prolonged debate upon the appropriation of the future profits of the Board resulted in the adoption of the following important declaration:

It is to be understood by all parties to this arrangement, and it is directed by this General Assembly, that the property thus vested in "The Trustees of the Presbyterian Board of Publication," together with all which may hereafter be given to it for publication purposes, and all the net profits of its business, are to be perpetually and sacredly used in the work of publishing and diffusing a sound religious literature, and for no

other purpose, in accordance with trusts heretofore accepted and pledges heretofore given.

• It was also decided to sell the real estate used previously by the Old School branch, and to erect upon the premises of the other, or near them, a larger house, adequate to the extended operations of the new Board. The resolution to effect this result was followed by the adoption of the following:

In order that the above recommendation may be carried out so as to provide ample accommodation for the Board's future business, and for all our other Presbyterian interests in this city, without the absorption of any part of its capital now used and needed for the publication and distribution of a religious literature, it is recommended that the sum of one hundred thousand dollars be raised among our churches and people for the erection and equipment of said Publication House, and all contributions made thereto shall be recognized as a part of the offering of five millions of dollars, which it was at Pittsburg resolved to raise.

The Assembly also adopted these recommendations:

We recommend the Board to give special and prominent attention to Sabbath-school literature, and to its introduction into Sabbath schools.

We recommend that the Board, at as early a date as possible, consider the propriety of establishing a Department of Sabbath Schools, whose office it shall be to promote the number and efficiency of Sabbath schools throughout the congregations of the Presbyterian Church.

We recommend that the excellent "Sabbath School Visitor" should be circulated much more widely than it has hitherto been, and that the pastors and churches should exert themselves to secure this end.

We recommend that the two publications, the "Record" and the "Presbyterian Monthly," be merged in one, and that measures be devised and adopted to have that one periodical competently edited, and full of information likely to interest the families of our people.

Deeply impressed with the importance of the colportage work conducted by the Board, we would strongly urge its extension, as being the means best fitted to make known the truths of salvation to multitudes in our country, and to Roman Catholics and persons separated from the ordinary means of grace.

We recommend that the Board consider what may be the best means of effecting some understanding as to the issue of Books of Psalmody, and report on the subject to the next General Assembly.

We are happy to find that Books and Tracts have been furnished so generally to ministers, to domestic and foreign missionaries, and to Sabbath schools; and recommend that these gifts be continued and increased.

It will be evident, from a careful perusal of the above papers, that in no respect was the action of the Assembly more thorough or provident than in its direction of this important subject. The new Board of Publication enters upon its career with ample accommodations for its printing and other mechanical work, with abundant capital, with an eligible salesroom, and with the ripe experience of its officers. A bright future, full of the triumphs of saving truth, is assured to it, if God's blessing accompanies it hereafter as it has accompanied its predecessors.

In their plans for the EDUCATION of young men with a view to the ministry, but little difference was found to exist between the policy of the Board of Education of the Old School, and that of the Permanent Committee on Education of the New School. Upon the recommendation of the Joint Committee to adjust their affairs, the Assembly adopted the following measures:

The title of the new Board is, "The Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." Its objects shall be the general superintendence of the Church's work in furnishing a pious, educated, and efficient ministry in sufficient numbers to meet the calls of its congregations, to supply the wants of the destitute classes and regions in our own country, and to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It shall provide for the collection and judicious distribution of the funds which may be requisite in the proper education of candidates for the ministry under its care, and it shall, in co-operation with the

ecclesiastical courts, do whatever may be proper and necessary to develop an active interest in education throughout the Church.

The Board will consist of twelve members, of which six are to be ministers. It is to be divided, like the other Boards, into three classes, so that a portion will be elected each year. Five constitute a quorum. The fifth and sixth articles of the Constitution define the functions of the Board, and the relation of the Presbyteries to it, thus:

ARTICLE V.

Functions. — SEC. 1. The Board shall act through the Presbyteries of the Church. Candidates for the ministry, when properly examined and received by the Presbyteries, and recommended for aid to the Board, shall receive the amount specified, within the limits prescribed by the Assembly, provided in all cases that a discretionary power, necessary to the general trust committed, shall be exercised by the Board; and the Board shall require that each recommendation shall be accompanied with such information as may be necessary to the intelligent and judicious performance of its duties.

SEC. 2. It shall exercise a general supervisory care over the students, through annual renewals of recommendations from Presbyteries, and quarterly reports from instructors, and through the correspondence of its Secretary, and his personal visits to literary and theological institutions and the judicatories of the Church, and by other appropriate instrumentalities.

SEC. 3. It shall take all suitable means to inform the Church as to the duties and interests relating to the consecration of her young men to the office of the ministry, and their sound and thorough education, and to urge the effective care of her judicatories over them; and it shall make such statements and appeals as are calculated to secure contributions sufficient for the accomplishment of its ends. It shall make a full annual report of its work to the General Assembly.

ARTICLE VI.

Relation of the Presbyteries to the Board. — It shall be the duty of each Presbytery to see that collections are taken up annually for this cause in all the churches under its care; to make the subject of increase of candidates for the ministry a topic of serious consideration in its meetings, at

least once a year ; to appoint a standing committee to act for Presbytery in all matters pertaining to this cause, when it is not in session ; to recommend to the Board proper cases for its aid, and to make an annual report of the transactions of the Presbytery on the whole subject to the Board, previous to the meetings of the General Assembly.

The Board is to be located in Philadelphia, and is instructed to take such legal steps as are necessary to secure to it the present property of the Board of Education, located at Philadelphia, and the Permanent Committee, located at New York ; so that this property, and any funds with which either is or may be intrusted, or which may hereafter be received by bequest or otherwise, for purposes of ministerial education, shall be managed by one and the same Board and its successors as trustees thereof ; and that said Board have authority to apply for and obtain a charter of incorporation, or such modification of the existing charter as they may deem proper. It is further recommended that the organizations of the "Permanent Committee on Education" and the "Board of Education" be continued, so far as may be necessary for the purpose of holding and transferring to the Board of Education, as arranged by the present General Assembly, such funds and trusts as may have been, or shall be, committed to them.

In subsequently adopting the suggestions of the Standing Committee upon this subject, the General Assembly acknowledged the need of a careful selection of candidates, and of a high standard of qualifications for the work of the ministry. It recommended ample provision for the wants of the students of the Church ; and, while acknowledging that the processes and ap-

pliances for the education of the rising ministry admit of great improvements, insisted upon the importance of having the youthful candidates trained to *preach well*, in the highest sense of the phrase. The above extracts from the Assembly's action sufficiently exhibit the fact that the Reunited Church recognizes the indispensable importance of a thoroughly trained ministry, while making ample provision to secure it for its future members. The new Board of Education goes into operation with about six hundred young men under its care, more than two hundred of whom will be pursuing their theological studies. With the results of a past useful history to aid its highly respected officers, and the prayers and benefactions of the many thousands of our Zion, it cannot fail to do its precious work wisely and well.

As to CHURCH ERECTION, the action of the General Assembly was well considered and thorough. It was rendered the more simple, because, while the Church Erection Fund of the New School was a chartered institution, the Board of Church Extension of the Old School was without a charter or permanent funds. Among the recommendations adopted were these :

That the operations of the United Church be carried on under the charter of "The Trustees of the Church Erection Fund of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," and that its location be continued in the city of New York.

That the members of the Board be chosen impartially from both branches of the Church ; that their number be twenty-one, consisting of ten ministers and eleven elders acting in connection with the Presbyterian Church ; and that the entire Board so formed be expected to meet at least once each year.

That fifteen members, seven ministers and eight elders, shall reside in the city of New York or its vicinity. That at an early day an amendment of the charter be obtained, authorizing these fifteen local members

to act as Trustees of the Fund; but until such change can be secured, nine of the fifteen members shall continue to hold the said Trusteeship under the provisions now existing.

That six members of the Board, three ministers and three elders, shall be chosen from the West. This recommendation is made in view of the fact that certain properties held by the Board of Church Extension are temporarily located in Missouri, and require a local supervision. It also seems desirable that the Board shall have representatives on the ground who may secure those grants of land which are so freely offered for Church purposes by railroad and town companies throughout the West; also to have special oversight in the matter of insurance on church properties—a matter of great importance, in which it is feared there is at present great neglect.

The Assembly also called the attention of its Presbyteries and churches to the importance of this work. Its language is:

If any comparison may be made, it is more important to secure the church edifice (in the present condition of our frontier, with its rapidly increasing land prices) than the missionary himself. We may provide the missionary next year, but with the land for a church it is now or never.

In making arrangements for MINISTERIAL RELIEF, the Assembly of 1870, availing itself of the labors of its Joint Committee, arranged for more thoroughly supplying the wants of the veteran soldiers of the Church, and their widows and orphans. The centre of operations for this necessary fund is to be Philadelphia. It is placed, under the supervision of the Assembly, in the hands of faithful and kindly men. With officers of tried experience and fidelity, it is recommended in the strongest terms to the justice and liberality of the churches.

The work of the Presbyterian Church for the FREEDMEN, as its value demands, received a full share of time

and attention. In the deliberations that it called forth, several brethren of color, representatives of Southern Presbyteries, were listened to with much pleasure. The Assembly's Committee (Old School), and the Freedmen's Department of the Presbyterian Committee of Home Missions (New School), and their secretaries, were praised for their fidelity and energy in the prosecution of the work committed to them.

It was resolved to conduct the efforts of the Church for the colored race in this country, including both their religious and educational interests, under the charge of a Committee of twelve members, five being a quorum, with its location in the city of Pittsburg. The cause was earnestly commended to the churches, and the various Boards were recommended to co-operate with the Committee supervising it. In re-organizing this Committee the Assembly expressed its opinion that the great need of the Freedmen to-day is a supply of competent preachers and teachers, raised up from among themselves. It also adopted this language:

For help in this matter we look with hope to Lincoln University, Bidle Memorial Institute, and the Normal School of Winchester, Va., and other similar institutions established by our Church. We especially urge the necessity of providing schools where females may enjoy advantages that may enable them to keep pace with the other sex in intellectual and moral elevation.

One of the most important discussions of the General Assembly occurred in connection with resolutions introduced by the Rev. John C. Backus, D.D. These resolutions, although not passed, and thus not appearing in the Minutes for 1870, deserve notice not only for their

intrinsic value, but principally because the consideration of them paved the way for the suggestion of a plan for the "unification" of the work of the Church, to be consummated by another Assembly. One of these resolutions is as follows:

Resolved, That a Committee of fifteen, representing all sections of the Church, and having power to fill vacancies, be appointed by this General Assembly to examine all the above reports and the plans and modes of benevolent operations of sister churches at home and abroad, and with all the light thus gained to devise a general uniform plan, that shall combine and economize and give as much efficiency as possible to all our schemes of benevolence, and report the same to the next General Assembly.

In its support, Dr. Backus said :

We are about to enter upon the great work of this Church, which is to devise the best plans for the purpose of extending this Church throughout the land and throughout the world, according to the great commission of our Master. We are in a peculiarly serious position. Various committees have reported to us. There is a great difference of opinion in this body in regard to a great many of the points which they have recommended. Now, the question is, Is this Reunion to be now the means of awakening a greater interest in these great objects, and of providing this Church with the machinery and the means that shall give to them the greatest possible success?

We are, at this time, about to enter upon a great and new sphere of action. We have a great body which is to be put now in motion as it has never been before.

We have four thousand ministers, and half a million of members, and half a million of children to be educated, and a million of adherents; and now the question is, How shall we best enter upon this great work? Our Committees have all been reporting to us from time to time, and have rendered a very important service. They have provided for the welding together of the Church in regard to these various operations, and their plans have been well considered. But there have been many ways proposed by which to bring out all the powers and agencies of this great Church. Here and there are gentlemen who feel that it is of the greatest importance that the eldership of the Church be developed in this great matter. Now, sir, we have sessions which can operate in this way. We have Synods which cover

the larger districts, but none of these are brought into play in this matter. If you appoint committees in your Presbyteries, who shall take the oversight of these benevolent operations in the churches under their care, and then make the Chairmen of the Presbyterial Committees in which those Presbyteries are, and the Chairmen of the Synodical Committees thus composed, constitute the Boards of this Church, then you will have a machinery in operation that will bring all this body into play in all its various powers and agencies, so as to accomplish the end you desire. And now not only will this more conform to the great principles which we desire to promote throughout this country, but we have around us sister churches in this land who have been making great advances beyond us in regard to this most important matter.

Hitherto, our Boards and Committees have all acted separately, without reference to each other. There is no combination, and yet you will perceive that it would be a very serious thing for this Church to saddle itself with all those expenses of the machinery, that seems to a great many of us to need a great deal of harmonizing in its different parts, to make it effective in this great work; and therefore we propose that you shall appoint a committee, and bring all of these reports together in harmony, with no jarring, and make each one contribute to the efficiency of the other. This we feel to be of the greatest possible importance in this great work, as these Boards are now proposed to be constituted. According to the present arrangement, no Board represents this Presbyterian Church. It does not have reference to all its parts, but it is simply constituted of those belonging to a particular locality who will be regarded as a clique having no particular knowledge of the various parts of the Church, standing afar off, and having no knowledge of those churches that are distant, and no means of developing their liberality, and making them efficient in this great work. We want to harmonize all these things. It has been suggested that some of the Boards be united together; others have suggested to combine all in one treasury, and there are a great many plans and schemes upon this subject that seem to call for the special attention of the Church.

These remarks had prepared the minds of the members of Assembly to seek a more compact combination of the present plans for benevolence, and a resolution from the Committee on the Finances of the Church subsequently furnished the occasion for securing it. This is the resolution referred to:

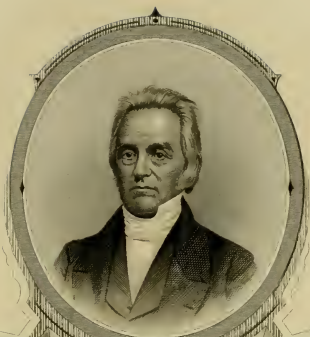
Resolved, That it be recommended to the General Assembly, at their next meeting, to appoint a Treasury Board, consisting of twenty, composed largely of business men of standing and character, to be divided into four classes of one, two, three, and four years, and the Assembly to elect annually five — the Board to have charge of all the funds annually contributed for the benevolent operations of the Church, and to meet the drafts of each of the Boards for the amounts annually appropriated by the Assembly, or designated by the donors, so far as they have received the money, and to report annually to the Assembly.

During the consideration of the above, the Rev. Dr. C. C. Beatty offered the following resolution, which was adopted :

Resolved, That so much of the Report of the Joint Committee on Finance as relates to the permanent financial operations of the Church be referred to a select committee of twenty-one, which shall consider and recommend to the next Assembly a mode of carrying out the suggestions of the Joint Committee on this first branch of their report; and that, with a view to the uniform arrangement and administration of our entire "benevolent work," this same committee of twenty-one shall, if possible, recommend a plan for simplifying and consolidating our various operations, and for enlisting the vigorous and effective sympathy and co-operation of all our Presbyteries and all our congregations with the Boards of the Church as they may be organized.

To this Committee of twenty-one, the Moderator, the Rev. J. Trumbull Backus, D.D., was, by a special and unanimous vote, added, and made its Chairman and Convener. As the Church expands, and its benevolent work grows commensurately, our most judicious minds may well be occupied in welding together more and more closely its active agencies, that they may not only be as simple as possible in their constitution, but by direct communication with pastors and churches call out the interest and sympathies of the entire body.

Several important matters were discussed and passed



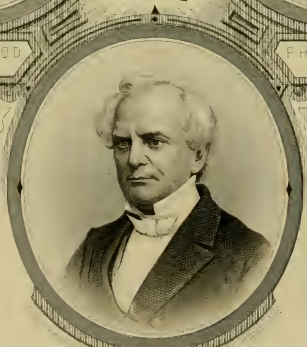
DAVID ELLIOTT D.D.



M. W. JACOBS D.D.



F. H. FOWLER D.D.



TRUMBULL B. PHELPS D.D.

upon by the Assembly, which, although not immediately essential to the reconstruction of the Church, yet had a relation to it too obvious to be omitted from this record.

Early in its sessions a movement was made to open a friendly correspondence with the "Southern Presbyterian Church." With this object the following paper, offered by the Rev. William Adams, D.D., was unanimously adopted:

Whereas, This General Assembly, believing that the interests of the Kingdom of our Lord throughout our entire country will be gradually promoted by healing all unnecessary divisions,

Whereas, This General Assembly desires the speedy establishment of cordial fraternal relations with the body known as the "Southern Presbyterian Church," upon terms of mutual confidence, respect, and Christian honor and love,

Whereas, We believe that the terms of Reunion between the two branches of the Presbyterian Church at the North, now so happily consummated, present an auspicious opportunity for the adjustment of such relations; therefore be it

Resolved, 1. That a Committee of five ministers and four elders be appointed by this Assembly to confer with a similar Committee if it shall be appointed by the Assembly now in session in the city of Louisville, in respect to opening a friendly correspondence between the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches, and that the result of such conference be reported to the General Assembly of 1871.

Resolved, 2. That with a view to the furtherance of the object contemplated in the appointment of said Committee, this Assembly hereby reaffirms the "Concurrent Declaration" of the two Assemblies which met in the city of New York last year, viz. :

"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."

Resolved, 3. That two Ministers and one Elder of this Committee appointed by this Assembly be designated as delegates to convey to the Assembly now in session at Louisville, a copy of these resolutions, with our Christian salutation.

In accordance with the above resolutions, a deputation consisting of the Rev. Dr. John C. Backus, the Rev. Dr. Henry J. Van Dyke, and Hon. Wm. E. Dodge, visited Louisville, Ky., where the Southern General Assembly was in session. They were received with kindness and cordiality by the delegates of that Assembly, and, in the presence of a large audience, explained their mission. While they were speaking, the breathless interest and deep emotion of their hearers gave good hope of the success of their efforts, and, at the conclusion of their remarks, many took them by the hand and thanked them for coming.

To the regret, however, of the Assembly, the Committee charged with preparing a response to its peaceful overtures sent the following paper :

LOUISVILLE, KY., MAY 28th, 1870.

Rev. E. F. Hatfield, D.D., Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

DEAR BROTHER : — The “General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States,” in session at Louisville, has directed me to forward to you the following official document. It is a true extract from the Minutes of Friday, May the 27th.

The Committee on Foreign Correspondence, to whom was referred the overture for reunion from the Old School General Assembly, North, of 1869, at its sessions in the city of New York ; and also the proposition from the United Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church, now sitting in Philadelphia, conveyed to us by a special delegation, respectfully report :

That the former of these documents is virtually superseded by the latter ; because the body by whom it was adopted has since been merged into the United Assembly, from which emanates a new and fresh proposal reflecting the views of the larger constituency. To this proposition, then, “that a committee of five ministers and four elders be appointed by this Assembly, to confer with a similar Committee of their Assembly in respect to opening a friendly correspondence between the Northern and

Southern Presbyterian Church" — your Committee recommend the following answer to be returned :

Whatever obstructions may exist in the way of cordial intercourse between the two bodies above named, are entirely of a public nature, and involve grave and fundamental principles. 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 (as it has always believed and declared) 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 Assembly, North, and the churches represented therein, such amity as fidelity to our principles could under any possible circumstances permit. Under this view the appointment of a Committee of Conference might seem wholly unnecessary; but, in order to exhibit before the Christian world the spirit of conciliation and kindness to the last degree, this Assembly agrees to appoint a Committee of Conference to meet a similar Committee already appointed by the Northern Assembly, with instructions to the same that the difficulties which lie in the way of cordial correspondence between the two bodies must be distinctly met and removed, and which may be comprehensively stated in the following particulars :

1. Both the wings of the now United Assembly, during their separate existence before the fusion, did fatally complicate themselves with the State, in political utterances deliberately uttered year after year; and which, in our judgment, were a sad betrayal of the cause and kingdom of our common Lord and Head. We believe it to be solely incumbent upon the Northern Presbyterian Church, not with reference to us, but before the Christian world, and before our Divine Master and King, to purge itself of this error, and by public proclamation of the truth to place the crown once more upon the head of Jesus Christ as the alone King of Zion. In default of which, the Southern Presbyterian Church, which has already suffered much in maintaining the independence and spirituality of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth, feels constrained to bear public testimony against this defection of our late associates from the truth. Nor can we, by official correspondence even, consent to blunt the edge of this, our testimony concerning the very nature and mission of the Church as a purely spiritual body among men.

2. The union now consummated between the Old and New School Assemblies, North, was accomplished by methods which, in our judgment,

involve a total surrender of all the great testimonies of the Church for the fundamental doctrines of grace at a time when the victory of truth over error hung long in the balance. The United Assembly stands of necessity upon an allowed latitude of interpretation of the standards, and must come at length to embrace nearly all shades of doctrinal belief. Of those falling testimonies we are the sole surviving heirs, which we must lift from the dust, and bear to the generations after us. It would be a serious compromise of this sacred trust to enter into public and official fellowship with those repudiating these testimonies; and to do this expressly upon the ground, as stated in the preamble to the overture before us, "that the terms of reunion between the two branches of the Presbyterian Church at the North, now happily consummated, present an auspicious opportunity for the adjustment of such relations" —to found a correspondence professedly upon this idea would be to endorse that which we thoroughly disapprove.

3. Some of the members of our own body were, but a short time since, violently and unconstitutionally expelled from the communion of one branch of the now United Northern Assembly, under ecclesiastical charges which, if true, render them utterly infamous before the Church and the world. It is to the last degree unsatisfactory to construe this offensive legislation obsolete by the mere fusion of that body with another, or through the operation of a faint declaration which was not intended, originally, to cover this case. This is no mere "rule" or "precedent," but a solemn sentence of outlawry against what is now an important and constituent part of our own body. Every principle of honor and of good faith compels us to say that an unequivocal repudiation of that interpretation of the law under which these men were condemned, must be a condition precedent to any official correspondence on our part.

4. It is well known that similar injurious accusations were preferred against the whole Southern Presbyterian Church, with which the ear of the whole world has been filled. Extending, as these charges do, to heresy and blasphemy, they cannot be quietly ignored by an indirection of any sort. If true, we are not worthy of the "confidence, respect, Christian honor and love" which are tendered to us in this overture; if untrue, Christian manliness and truth require them to be openly and squarely withdrawn. So long as they remain upon record they are an impassable barrier to official intercourse.

Yours fraternally,

JOSEPH R. WILSON,

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian
Church in the United States.

To this letter a reply was adopted by the Assembly in terms as follows :

Whereas, This General Assembly, at an early period of its sessions, declared its desire to establish cordial, fraternal relations with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S., commonly known as the Southern Assembly, upon the basis of Christian honor, confidence, and love ; and with a view to the attainment of this end, appointed a committee of five ministers and four elders, to confer with a similar committee, if it should be appointed by the Assembly then in session at Louisville, "in regard to the amicable settlement of all existing difficulties, and the opening of a friendly correspondence between the Northern and Southern churches," and for the furtherance of the objects contemplated in the appointment of said committee, and with a view to remove the obstacles which might prevent the acceptance of our proposals by our Southern brethren, reaffirmed the concurrent declaration of the two Assemblies which met in New York last year, to the effect that "no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both the bodies shall be of any authority in the re-united body, except so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon ;" and as a further pledge of our sincerity in this movement, sent a copy of our resolutions, together with our Christian salutation, to the Assembly at Louisville, by the hands of delegates chosen for that purpose,

And *whereas*, the Southern Assembly, while receiving our delegates with marked courtesy, and formally complying with our proposition for the appointment of a committee of conference, has nevertheless accompanied that appointment with declarations and conditions which we cannot consistently accept, because they involve a virtual pre-judgment of the very difficulties concerning which we invited the conference. Therefore,

Resolved, That the further consideration of the subject be postponed and the committee be discharged. At the same time we cannot forbear to express our profound regret, that a measure designed and, as we believe, eminently fitted to promote the establishment of peace and the advancement of our Redeemer's kingdom in every part of our country, has apparently failed to accomplish its object. We earnestly hope that the negotiations thus suspended may soon be resumed under happier auspices, and hereby declare our readiness to renew our proposal for a friendly correspondence whenever our Southern brethren shall signify their readiness to accept it in the form and spirit in which it has been offered.

On motion of the Rev. George L. Prentiss, D.D., a committee of five was appointed to consider the perils which beset the system of popular education in this country, and to prepare a minute expressing upon the question the sentiment of the General Assembly. Subsequently, as the chairman of this committee, Dr. Prentiss offered a very satisfactory report, which was unanimously adopted. This report contained the resolutions following:

1. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly regards the free public school as an essential part of our republican system, as conducive in the highest degree to the moral unity, common spirit, and kindly sympathies of American citizenship, and as closely connected with all the best interests of Christian society in the United States.

2. *Resolved*, That in the judgment of the General Assembly the divorce of popular education from all religious elements, while involving a radical departure from the spirit and principles in which our public school system had its origin, would be eminently unwise, unjust, and a moral calamity to the nation.

3. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly is also entirely opposed to the appropriation of any portion of the public school funds for the support of sectarian institutions, and would regard the establishment of such a policy as fraught with the greatest mischief, not only to the cause of popular education, but hardly less to the interests of American freedom, unity, and progress.

4. *Resolved*, That whereas the Bible is not only the *Magna Charta* of the spiritual rights and liberties of mankind, but is also pre-eminently our National Book, the best model of our mother-tongue, and the fountain of our highest thought and of our ruling ideas, both in private and public life, the General Assembly would regard its expulsion from the schools of the people as a deplorable and suicidal act; nor can it perceive that any real advantage could thereby be gained to the cause of popular education.

5. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly, conscious of being actuated in this matter by no other motive than the greatest good of the whole country, hereby professes its readiness to co-operate with all Christian people, of whatever name, and with all good citizens, in so modifying and perfecting our noble public school system, as to obviate as far as

practicable the conscientious scruples and difficulties of any of its friends, and thus to render it a fountain of still greater light and benediction to us and our children after us to the latest generation.

It was to be expected that, with the zeal and enthusiasm that filled this Assembly, it would endeavor actively to carry out the plans inaugurated by its predecessors for raising a Memorial Fund of Five Millions of Dollars, as a special thank-offering to the treasury of the Lord. After sufficient deliberation, the following gentlemen were appointed a Committee to raise the amount:

W. S. GILMAN, of New York, Chairman.
JOHN CROSBY BROWN, of New York.
JOHN E. PARSONS, of New York.
BENJAMIN F. BUTLER, of New York.
WILLIAM T. BOOTH, of New York.
ALEXANDER WHILLDIN, of Philadelphia.
GEORGE JUNKIN, of Philadelphia
ISAAC SCARRITT, of Alton, Illinois.
ARCHIBALD McCLURE, JR., of Albany, N. Y.

This Committee was instructed to prepare and forward to each congregation, through the pastor, stated supply, or session, to be laid before each member of the congregation, a clear, distinct, and minute plan for subscribing, reporting, collecting, and forwarding the amounts contributed to this fund, and also to prepare and send suitable blanks for these purposes.

The Assembly also instructed the Presbyteries and Synods, at their Fall meetings, to make careful inquiry of each pastor and elder, and know if these subscriptions have been presented to the individuals of all our congregations, and in cases of failure, to take such measures as may best secure this result.

Institutions were also designated by the Assembly, to which, if contributions are given, these may be counted as included in the Memorial Fund, namely :

I. Theological seminaries, and colleges, and seminaries for the education of our daughters, including buildings and endowments of the same, it being understood that such institutions shall be chartered, and shall be in connection with the Presbyterian Church.

II. Literary institutions for the raising of a native Gospel ministry in heathen lands.

III. Church buildings and manses originating subsequently to the union, and otherwise entitled to public aid ; hospitals and orphan asylums in connection with the Church.

IV. Institutions for the education and evangelization of the Freedmen.

V. Special contributions for the establishment of a Permanent Sustentation Fund, which shall include appropriations for the support of disabled ministers and their families.

A committee, appointed by the last Old School Assembly, to consider upon the allowance of the Heidelberg Catechism in the churches, presented a report which was unanimously adopted. The resolutions at its close, thus made the action of the Assembly of 1870, are the following :

1. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly recognizes in the Heidelberg Catechism a valuable Scriptural compendium of Christian doctrine and duty.

2. *Resolved*, That if any churches desire to employ the Heidelberg Catechism in the instruction of their children, they may do so with the approbation of this Assembly.

3. *Resolved*, That this Assembly cordially rejoices at the continued and increasing evidences of agreement and of union among those whose symbols maintain in common the faith once delivered to the saints.

Allusion has been made to the remarkable kindness and generosity with which the members of the various congregations of Philadelphia entertained the Assembly. Besides numerous private receptions, and a constant ex-

hibition of hospitality on the part of the families of both ministers and laymen, the SOCIAL REUNION of Thursday evening, May 26th, deserves a grateful commemoration. That all the members of the Assembly, with their kind hosts, and very many distinguished men in attendance upon the sessions of the body might meet together most pleasantly, the Academy of Music was selected, as affording very great facilities for such a gathering. This spacious building was beautifully decorated with flowers, while a multitude of singing birds were so arranged as to fill the air with their cheering melody. A motto of welcome was placed in a conspicuous position: "THE CHURCH WHICH IS IN PHILADELPHIA SALUTETH YOU." A large committee of ladies and gentlemen had made such ample provision for the entertainment of the great company that were assembled at this most agreeable reunion, that none were incommoded, and all enjoyed it to the full. In one portion of the building, short addresses from eloquent men, some of them from other lands, attracted an applauding concourse. In other parts, groups were collected for conversation and the interchange of joyful congratulations over the happy progress of the Church's peaceful work. And in a spacious hall, with convenient ingress and egress, others were enjoying a repast comprising in bountiful profusion the choicest viands, sufficing for all the great company thus collected. On a subsequent evening the Oratorio of the Messiah was rendered in the same building, at the expense of the citizens of Philadelphia, in honor of the Assembly. These brief references but imperfectly describe most successful public exhibitions of the deep and cordial interest which evi-

dently existed in all the churches and congregations of Philadelphia with regard to this General Assembly, permitted, in God's Providence, to consummate the work of Reunion, and to provide for the future progress of Christ's kingdom.

In rapidly reviewing the process of Reconstruction, as aided by the members of the Assembly of 1870, we cannot fail to be impressed with the promptness of their action, as well as with its satisfactory results. Every duplicate Board or Permanent Committee was combined upon principles somewhat similar, it is true, but yet by methods greatly varying with the peculiar circumstances of each case. Here one is called by the name of the organization as known to the Old School; here another receives the title formerly employed by the New School. One results from the fusing together of both the former agencies; in the case of others, a choice is made of that which, by reason of its better charter or more perfect plan, promises to do the most good. And, as in the Assembly itself these results were reached with no excited discussion or unfriendly ardor, but in the exercise of Christian courtesy and with an evident desire to seek the glory of God and the welfare of souls, so have the tidings of what was effected been received through the churches. On every hand we hear expressions of gratification and thankfulness with reference to the work so far completed without any rivalries or jealousies or complaints.

The history of ecclesiastical bodies may well be challenged to present any parallel to the wonderful readiness with which the entire Church now adapts itself to the new ordering of all its plans as thus

arranged. Private opinions and interests have been subordinated to the common judgment and the general welfare. Under the evident superintendence of God's Holy Spirit and the plain direction of God's Providence, radical changes have taken place. But these, subjected to the tests of combined wisdom and experience, as gained by both the former branches of the Church, are cordially accepted by all. There appear to be no parties, no dissatisfied minorities, no unwilling protesters. With happy hearts and devout thanksgivings, Judah and Ephraim and Levi and Benjamin and all the other tribes merge their distinctive names and their separate plans in their sincere affection for the united Israel into which, as one, they flow together.

And now some may ask, What further is needed to finish the work of Reconstruction so happily begun? In one sense, but little more, since the foundations are carefully selected, well laid, and strongly cemented. In another sense, much more, since upon these noble foundations there must be erected a structure vast and enduring.

In indicating briefly the following portions of the yet uncompleted task, they are referred to because now occupying the attention of our thinking and progressive minds in various parts of the Church. Some of them are very generally deemed desirable, others require yet to be more thoroughly elaborated and matured. If adopted by the Church, time and use must prove their value or reveal their defects. Few, however, will deny that the present is an auspicious period in which to increase the efficiency of our system and to adapt its methods more perfectly to the demands of our country

and the world. It furnishes an occasion such as seldom can occur in the history of any communion, to make needed changes and to secure desirable reforms. It is a grand opportunity, a transition epoch, when the wisdom and experience of the past may guide us so that, holding fast to all that is really valuable in our traditional methods, we may also incorporate upon our system whatever the sound judgment and the ripe reflection of our most judicious leaders endorse and approve of as requisite for the enlarged and increasing usefulness of the Church.

Our Presbyterian Homes in the great cities east and west are yet to be built. A Psalmody adequate to the wants of this wide-spread Zion is to be selected and prepared. A Manse is not yet found in every congregation. Some Sustentation plan remains to be suggested, that the Church, from the overflow of congregations whose concentrated wealth suffers a very trifling draft when from it but one ministry is sustained, may pour forth to the aid of feeble folds enough to save them from the sorrow or reproach of awarding to faithful pastors a scandalous maintenance. Some method must be devised by which the humbler and middling classes in cities and towns shall be more generally attracted to God's altars, that rich and poor may there meet together. A multitude of churches and mission chapels need to be built in our crowded centres of population, and at frontier points that will soon become such centres. The relations of the Church to popular education, and its responsibilities in training all children and youth are to be more clearly defined. Our Christian women, the deaconesses of primitive times,

and in every age numerically, and by reason of their great capabilities for extensive usefulness, an invaluable band of helpers, await the disposal of the Church, saying, "Here we are; send us." A host of unordained servants of Christ, laymen, it is true, yet gifted and educated, are ready to go everywhere preaching the Word in the shop, at the market, on the railway, from house to house, through the secular week, and on the Sabbath day in halls, parks, or streets, desiring to be told how they may perform this function decently and in order. Chairs for the instruction of missionaries in foreign and especially Eastern languages are yet to be endowed, that every man may speedily hear in his own tongue the wonderful works of God, and another stupendous Pentecost of conversions follow. Such preparatory steps are awaited as may draw other kindred churches to ours, or ours to them, as far as God intends organic union or fraternal correspondence between these, His witnesses. Some old measures must be revived, or new plans secured that may bring with increasing numbers the baptized members of the Saviour's fold to assume every duty of a religious life, until all the Church's children be taught of God, and great be the peace of her children. The session must be restored to its ancient efficiency, and its elders become more thoroughly the helps they were ordained to be, with a Scriptural and settled plan by which the efficient may be retained, and, ruling well, have double honor; while the inefficient, and such as experience declares cannot serve to edification, may retire from the active exercise of the office. Unemployed ministers must, by some well-ordered and perpetuated means, be set at work,

and vacancies be constantly supplied. The arrangements for a Memorial Fund and kindred schemes must develop a system by which every son and daughter of the Lord's house shall habitually, upon the first day of the week, lay by in store an offering as God hath prospered them. A return to what is regarded by them as the New Testament use of the diaconate is by some demanded, who desire that the deacons may be more numerous and more fully employed, and that those who are of Israel may direct the Church's temporalities, according to the dictates of consciences instructed by the Holy Oracles and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

But we may not longer dwell upon these things, which are suggested in various quarters, and which many hope for as yet to result from the full Reconstruction of our beloved Church. To her future history and destiny the eye of faith may well look forward with glad and prayerful anticipations. How auspicious the beginnings of her prosperity! How solemn the responsibilities of those who now in God's Providence have committed to them this precious ark to bear forward! Truly there is much land to be possessed. Most of all gifts, do we not need individual piety, personal holiness, the entire consecration each of his one soul to Christ? Let but every heart be filled with love to Jesus, every closet be witness to new and more solemn devotion, each family altar blaze with a more constant and holy sacrifice, each pulpit and pew be filled by those who are absolutely dedicated to the service of the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, and His voice will send to us its sweet, assuring promise, "MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE, AND I WILL GIVE THEE REST."