

# THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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## ARTICLE I.

### THE CHRIST OF JOHN.

1. The germ of the doctrine of the Christ was cast into the soil of Eden. Straightway it sprang up into a vigorous plant, which has outlived and far surpassed all the glories of Paradise. Its growth through the centuries has not been constant or uniform. Long periods have elapsed without any perceptible progress; but these have been followed by epochs of great and sometimes even startling development. In the fulness of the times God was manifest in the flesh, and dwelt among us for a third of a century. For about another third of a century the Canon of Scripture was not extended beyond the limits of the Old Testament. Malachi had uttered the precious promise, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." This was the latest promise in the Hebrew tongue. Through the long succeeding night, in which there was no vision and no revelation, it lingered in the air like a sweet presence, cheering the hearts and sustaining the hopes of all who in that troublous time waited for the consolation of Israel. But now the messenger had prepared the way. Christ, born in Bethlehem of Juda, had finished the work given him to do; had been crucified under Pontius Pilate; had been dead and buried; had risen again on the third day, had ascended on high, led cap-

## ARTICLE IV.

## DR. THORNWELL AND OUR CHURCH POLICY.

At the Staunton Assembly, in the discussion of Retrenchment and Reform, the minority sought to strengthen their position by claiming that Dr. Thornwell had advocated the principles which lie at the basis of their movement. This was denied with emphasis by the majority. The January number of this REVIEW has placed the question before the Church in such a light as to awaken an interest in the minds of many as to what were Dr. Thornwell's views on the matters at issue. The most satisfactory way to settle the question, perhaps, would be for THE REVIEW to republish in full Dr. T.'s writings and discussions upon the subject. As this, however, is probably impracticable, it may answer the purpose to present copious extracts from his *Collected Writings*. It must not be thought amiss if the same quotations which have heretofore been presented shall appear again in this article.

There are three points on which the minority claimed the concurrence with them of Dr. T.: as to ministerial Secretary-Treasurerships; the employment of deacons by the higher courts of the Church; and the direct conduct of the evangelistic work of the Church by the Presbyteries. It is the object of this paper to ascertain how far this claim was well founded.

I. As to the propriety of putting ministers, as Secretaries and Treasurers, over the general work of missions. The minority questioned the propriety of this plan for two reasons: 1. Because it gives to ministers, *as such*, the power of jurisdiction; and, 2. Because the financial duties of a Treasurer do not pertain to them.

We do not differ as to ministers' possessing, *as elders*, the power of jurisdiction. The majority and the minority are at one upon this point; because it is one of the essential elements of the Presbyterian system, distinguishing it from Prelacy. The majority, however, do not admit that in fact the Secretaries of our

Executive Committees exercise the *potestas jurisdictionis*. We do not propose to argue this point, but simply to see what Dr. Thornwell thought of it. He says:

"The parity of the ministry is a fundamental principle among all Presbyterians. Whatever differences superior piety, learning, and talents may make in the *man*, we allow no difference in the *office*. We tolerate no official authority in one minister above another. Our system does not admit it. But the fact is unquestionable, that the various officers of our Boards are invested with a control over their brethren, and a power in the Church, just as real and just as dangerous as the authority of a prelate. They constitute a college of ecclesiastical functionaries who determine the character and shape the destinies of the Presbyterian Church in these United States of America. \* \* \* We will dare venture the assertion that there is not a Presbytery in the land which possesses so real a power, and which can exercise it so speedily and efficiently, as the Corresponding Secretaries and Executive Committees of our different Boards. \* \* \* From the very nature of the case, this undue accumulation of power in a few hands must always be the practical result of this system. This single fact shows that it is rotten to the core, and utterly alien from all our habits, feelings, and associations as Presbyterians. The machinery which no human wisdom can put into operation, without destroying the official equality of the ministry—which always and inevitably works a few men to the uppermost seats in the synagogue—may answer for Papists and Prelatists, but it is death to Presbyterianism."—*Collected Writings*, Vol. IV., pp. 156-8.

The answer to this is, that Dr. T. is here speaking of Corresponding Secretaries of Boards, and not of such officers at the head of Executive Committees. This is true, and should not be overlooked or forgotten. If, then, these officers of our Executive Committees do not possess, and do not in fact exercise, the powers of jurisdiction—do not appoint missionaries, nor designate their fields of labor, nor authorise all appropriations and expenditures of money in the general work of the Church,—they do not fall under the criticism of the extracts above quoted.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> While it is foreign to the purpose of this paper to discuss any of the questions raised in it, (the design being to simply give Dr. Thornwell's views,) our respect for the venerable Secretary for Foreign Missions is so great that we shall endeavor to answer his inquiry as to the prelatical powers of Corresponding Secretaries and Executive Committees.

Again : The minority objected to the imposition of financial duties on ministerial Secretaries, and claimed the support of Dr. T. for this opinion. This is what he says :

"The Corresponding Secretary and the general agent of these Boards are discharging the peculiar functions of neither minister, elder, nor deacon. They certainly are not pastors, and are just as far from being evangelists. They do not claim to be ruling elders, and much less would they submit to be called deacons in the sense of our Book. What, then, are they? Where are their mixed and heterogeneous functions recognised as belonging to any single individual, from the first to the last of our Constitution? They combine into one discordant whole some of the duties of every officer acknowledged in our system—they are two-thirds deacons, one-sixth elder, and one-sixth preacher. The duties, and not the name, make the office. You may call them *ministers*, and ordain them as such; but if they do not discharge, constantly and faithfully, the duties of ministers, God assuredly does not regard them in that light, and man should not. \* \* \* The temporary business of a secretary or scribe in any public meeting we understand; the temporary agency of a pastor for a specific purpose we acknowledge to be scriptural; but the appointing of men to a permanent and standing vocation, in which it is impossible to be faithful in any of the standing offices of the Church, we do not understand; for we have not so learned Presbyterianism."—*Ibidem*, pp. 149, 150. See also p. 211.

We do not know that there is any reply to be made here by the majority; for there is no difference, in this respect, between the ministerial Treasurer of a Board and of an Executive Committee.

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tees. As the minority presented this point very tenderly and very respectfully, and on the suggestion of Dr. Thornwell, it would be sufficient to refer Dr. W. to pp. 149–154, 156–8, Vol. IV., *Thornwell's Collected Writings*.

As he desires information as to the specific prelatial powers committed to our Secretaries and Executive Committees, we would refer him to pp. 152, 153, especially. The appointment of missionaries, the designation of their fields of labor, and the control of the purse of the Church, are there set forth by Dr. Thornwell as the presbyterial or episcopal powers exercised by Secretaries and Executive Committees of the old Church. If such or similar prerogatives are not now enjoyed and exercised by these officers in our Church, they do not fall under Dr. Thornwell's censure, that "the tendency of their practical working is to introduce a system of virtual-Prelacy."

II. The minority held to the propriety of using the deacons as the general financial officers of all the Church courts. The majority objected on the ground that deacons are limited, in their sphere, to their own congregation, and, in their functions, to the care of the poor. It was claimed that Dr. Thornwell sustained the minority in their view.

First, as to *function*. Dr. T. says :

"By intrusting all pecuniary matters into the hands of men ordained under solemn sanctions for the purpose, our spiritual courts would soon cease to be, what they are to an alarming extent at present, mere corporations for secular business. If all our Boards were converted into mere benches of deacons, commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts, there would be no serious grounds of objection to them."—*Ib.*, p. 155.

"But it seems that deacons are to be intrusted with nothing but the care of the poor. Is the reviewer (Dr. Smyth) yet to learn that the common method of instruction pursued in the Scriptures is to inculcate general truths by insisting on their particular applications, rather than dealing in abstract statements? \* \* \* As, then, it is frequently the method of Scripture to teach by example, where is the impropriety in supposing that the attention to the poor, enjoined upon the deacons, was intended to include the whole department of secular business with which the Church was to be concerned? \* \* \* It must be perfectly obvious to every candid mind that the entire secular business of the Church was intrusted to the deacons."—*Ib.*, pp. 200, 201.

Again, as to the *sphere* of the deacon. The minority contended that his sphere was coextensive with his functions; and that, as "the whole department of secular business" properly belonged to him, he should be employed as the financial officer of the higher courts. They claimed that Dr. Thornwell had taught the same doctrine. Here is the proof:

"Our Book, however, does not confine deacons to particular congregations. There should be a competent number of them in each particular church, but we insist upon it that Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly should also have the deacons to attend to their pecuniary matters. Those ordained at Jerusalem were not confined to a specific congregation, but acted for the whole college of the apostles."—*Ib.*, p. 155.

"That deacons are officers elected and ordained in particular churches, is true. So are elders; but as there is nothing in this fact inconsistent

with an elder's acting for the Church at large in our ecclesiastical courts, so there is nothing to prevent the deacon from exercising his peculiar functions in a wider sphere. \* \* He must either admit that the Presbyterian form of government is unscriptural, or that deacons may act for Presbyteries as they act for their particular congregations. \* \* \* The idea that a deacon cannot attend to the secular business of the Presbytery or Assembly, without being removed from his particular congregation, is perfectly ludicrous and absurd."—*Ib.*, 199–202.

III. But the chief point of interest is as to the proper agency to which the Church should commit the conduct of its missionary operations.

In all matters of controversy, it is important that the issues shall be exactly and clearly made. Two plans have been advocated for the carrying on of the evangelistic work of the Church: the one by a central agency, the General Assembly; the other by a distributive agency, the Presbyteries. The former plan is susceptible of two modes. As the General Assembly is not a permanent body, is in session only about two weeks in the year, and is too large for executive work, no one has thought it possible that the various evangelistic enterprises could be conducted directly by it. It is necessary that it should intrust the work to some smaller, permanent body. Just here the views diverge. According to the one, the central agency, in direct charge of missions, should be an independent organism, a permanent commission of the General Assembly, known as a Board. According to the other, it should be a dependent organ of the Assembly, an Executive Committee.

We may properly say, therefore, that three plans of conducting our missionary work have been proposed and advocated: 1. By Boards, organised commissions of the Assembly; 2. By Executive Committees of the Assembly; 3. By the Presbyteries.

The Northern Church employs the first; our Church uses the second; the advocates of reform contend for the last, except as to foreign missions. So far as centralisation is concerned, these plans are graded. The first embodies it fully; the second has less; while the third is an emphatic protest against it.

It is manifest that the holders of the first view would be diametrically opposed to the last, and, if forced to give up their own,

might compromise on the second. So the advocates of Presbyterian management would contest every inch with the Boards, and, if compelled to do so, would accept the Executive Committee. The second is clearly the compromise ground between the others as extremes. Before the disruption, the contest was between the first and second plans, the Boards and the Executive Committees; in our Church, it is between the second and third, the Executive Committees and the Presbyteries.

The question as to Dr. Thornwell is, which of these three plans he preferred. It can be still further simplified by eliminating the first. No one doubts that he was opposed in principle to the Board system. This narrows the issue to the question, Did Dr. Thornwell prefer the central agency of the Executive Committee, or the distributive agency of the Presbyteries?

The advocates of the Presbyterian plan put themselves to the greatest possible disadvantage in thus narrowing the issue, for the reason that, in the great discussions in which Dr. Thornwell engaged, the Executive Committee and the Presbyterian plans were never brought into direct conflict. It would be entirely sufficient to show that Dr. Thornwell favored the Presbyterian plan. This was all that was asserted at Staunton. Nevertheless, the issue as thus made is accepted, and we are to see whether Dr. Thornwell not only preferred Executive Committees to Boards, but Presbyteries to them both.

For the reason just given, it is needful to notice that Boards and Executive Committees have certain features in common; to imitate Dr. Lefevre, they are both species of the same genus, central or General Assembly agency. As species of the same genus, they must have common marks, and must also have differentia, by which they are distinguished. They agree in being agencies of the General Assembly; in having as their executive head a Secretary; so far as Foreign Missions is concerned, in their general powers; and in having a central treasury. They differ in the degree of their dependence upon and subordination to the General Assembly.

In settling the issue now made, it will be pertinent to quote Dr. Thornwell, in his argument against Boards, only so far as he

objected to what they have in common with the Executive Committees. His objections to the points in which they differ will, of course, not be pertinent.

The important point is as to the *powers* of the Boards and Executive Committees. If they have powers in common, and Dr. Thornwell objected to these powers, then he objected seriously to both forms of the central agency plan. Our Executive Committee of Foreign Missions is empowered "to take direction and control of the Foreign Missionary work, subject to such instruction as may be given by the General Assembly from time to time; to appoint missionaries and assistant missionaries; to designate their fields of labor, and provide for their support; \* \* \* to authorise appropriations and expenditures of money," etc. Dr. Thornwell: "Look at the following grant of power to the Board of Foreign Missions in the 4th Article of its Constitution: 'To the Executive Committee, etc., shall belong the duty of *appointing* all missionaries and agents; of designating their fields of labor; to authorise all appropriations and expenditures of money,' etc. These powers, it will be observed, are identical. Now, Dr. Thornwell's criticism:

"This ample investiture of power renders them to all intents and purposes ecclesiastical courts. They exercise dominion in the Lord's house. To say that this is not their true character, because they are responsible to the General Assembly, would be to deny that the Presbytery is an ecclesiastical court, because it is responsible to the Synod. . . The possession and exercise of power must distinguish a court. . . . Here is unquestionably the power of judging of the qualifications of ministers—their fitness for particular stations; and here is a right conveyed to control and manage and direct their labors. . . . The Assembly unquestionably had no right to take from the Presbytery its constitutional authority and to vest it in any other organisation. . . . It is plain that, under the present system, so far is Presbytery from being the radical and leading court, which in all Presbyterian Churches, according to Dr. Miller, it is, the Boards themselves are all in all, and the poor Presbyteries are dwindled down into mere auxiliaries—hewers of wood and drawers of water."—*Ibidem*, pp. 151-4.

The next point in common between the Boards and Executive Committees is the Central Treasury, from which the missionaries are supported. Dr. Thornwell objected to this:



"For this business it is supposed that the Presbyteries are wholly unqualified. It has been frequently admitted that while everything connected with the spiritual aspects of Domestic and Foreign Missions falls appropriately within the province of the Presbytery, there is no adequate arrangement in our Book for conducting the pecuniary matters of the various stations with efficiency and success. This we apprehend is a great mistake. In the first place, the Constitution provides that the judicatory sending out any missionary must support him. In the second place, the Book provides that our churches should be furnished with a class of officers for the express purpose of attending to the temporal matters of the church; and these deacons might be made the collecting agents of the Presbytery in every congregation, and through them the necessary funds could be easily obtained and without expense. For transmission to foreign parts, nothing more would be necessary than simply to employ either some extensive merchant in any of our large cities, who for the usual percentage would attend to the whole matter, or a committee of deacons appointed by the Assembly for the purpose."—*Ib.*, p. 154.

Again, the Boards and Executive Committees being alike in that they both require all the churches to contribute to a common fund, from which the missionaries are supported, Dr. Thornwell had another objection:

"It is obvious that whatever system of arrangements for accomplishing this purpose may be adopted, it should give the fullest security that the contributions of the Church go to support *nothing but the gospel*. The people should know the character and sentiments of the missionaries sustained by their liberality. But what security do the Boards give? None but the endorsement of the Presbytery or Presbyteries that ordained the evangelists. The Assembly has virtually declared this to be no security by requiring every Presbytery to examine ministers from any other Presbytery coming within its bounds. . . . We, therefore, leave our churches in fearful uncertainty as to what they are actually sending to heathen lands in the name of the gospel. . . . This difficulty would be obviated by carrying out the provisions of our Book. The Presbytery that sends a man *would know him*; the churches within its bounds would know him, and consequently would know what they are supporting."—*Ib.*, p. 166.

The quotations so far are taken from Dr. Thornwell's first publication on this general subject. To his views, as thus expressed, Dr. Smyth, of Charleston, S. C., made vigorous opposition in a rejoinder. It will comfort the feeble minority of

to-day to know that Dr. Smyth stigmatised Dr. Thornwell's ideas as "perfectly chimerical," "mere theoretical hypothesis," "built upon the most Utopian and gratuitous assumptions," "a novelty, an innovation," "unscriptural, unconstitutional," "preposterous in the extreme," "altogether visionary." We shall quote only one passage from it, as showing how he understood Dr. Thornwell:

"The propriety and necessity of Boards or *committees of any kind* for the management of the various benevolent operations in which the Church is engaged, . . . is the question before us. We are thus earnest in calling attention to this point, *which is so clearly laid down by the objector himself*, because in a subsequent part of his discussion he argues against our organisation on the ground that the Boards, as distinct from Committees, are unnecessary. Such an agency, call it either a Board or a Committee, as he maintains, is directly subversive of the Form of Government embodied in the Constitution of our Church."—*Ibidem*, p. 594. [The *italics* are ours.]

Did Dr. Smyth misunderstand and misrepresent Dr. Thornwell? Did Dr. Thornwell repudiate this construction of his position? Let us turn to Dr. Thornwell's rejoinder, and learn whether he repudiated this statement of his views:

Page 194: "The Presbyteries are courts acknowledged by our Constitution; deacons are officers recognised in every particular congregation, and capable of being employed in the service of the Presbyteries and the higher tribunals of the Church. If one Presbytery should be too feeble to support its missionaries, provision is made in our Book for its obtaining assistance from neighboring Presbyteries. This is certainly the plan, and the only plan, contemplated by the framers of our Form of Government."

"Why cannot the Presbyteries accomplish this work just as efficiently as the Boards? . . . Is there anything in this too hard or too mysterious for a Presbytery to perform? The money must be collected from particular congregations, and I do not see why the demands of a Presbytery should be less respected than the authority of a Board. . . . We are next to consider the number of ministers to be sent forth. Why cannot the Presbyteries count them as well as a Board? And why cannot the Presbyteries support them just as comfortably? The money, after all, must be collected from the various churches under the care of the different Presbyteries, and, for aught I can see, this matter can be attended to just as well by those who have the immediate charge of those churches as by a body five hundred miles off. . . . The reviewer's

proposition was that Presbyteries are inadequate to send the gospel to the heathen; the proof is, that sending the gospel to the heathen includes a great many particulars, and not a solitary reason is given why these particulars, so elaborately detailed, are beyond the capacity of the Presbyteries to manage or conduct. . . The plan insisted on is, that the courts of the Church, the *Presbyteries*, are to do the business now done by the Boards, and to employ these deacons, according to God's appointment, as their financial agents."—Pp. 196–9.

"If the Boards have committees to carry out the details of their plans during the interim of their sessions, what is to prevent the Presbyteries from adopting the same arrangement, and what is to hinder the Presbyteries from meeting just as often as emergencies may require? In Chapter XVIII. of our Form of Government, such a committee in each Presbytery seems to be contemplated; and this, by the way, is an additional proof that our fathers intended to intrust the whole work of missions to the care of the Presbyteries. . . Before closing this article, I wish to present a few additional considerations showing that the Presbyteries ought to take the whole business of missions into their own hands: 1. The first is, that the Constitution of the Church absolutely requires it. . . Now this power is expressly given to the Presbyteries, and to the Presbyteries exclusively; and hence, by necessary inference, the Presbyteries are the missionary agents contemplated by our system, The Synods and General Assembly cannot directly interfere until the Presbyteries have done their work," &c. . . "How undeniably plain, then, that our Constitution never contemplated any other agencies for missions but Presbyteries."—Pp. 203, 204, 212, 213.

These passages have been quoted in wearisome abundance, to show that Dr. Thornwell, not by a chance expression, but again and again, pronounced in favor of the Presbyterian plan; even after Dr. Smyth had said that, in doing so, he condemned Executive Committees as General Assembly agencies, as well as the Boards.

It will be observed that, while Dr. Thornwell does not limit himself to Foreign Missions, he gives that department of Church enterprise special prominence in the discussion. He tells us, page 193, why he does so: "As the work of Foreign Missions is confessedly the most difficult enterprise with which the Church is intrusted, if it can be shown that she is perfectly competent to conduct this department of labor without foreign assistance, extraneous agencies will hardly be demanded for any other part of

her duty." He then proceeds to show, as we have already seen, that the Presbyteries can, and should, directly undertake it.

We shall now examine the reasons presented by the majority as showing that Dr. Thornwell did not really believe in the Presbyterial, but preferred the Executive Committee plan. These are summed up in the writings, acts, and biography of Dr. Thornwell, and the testimony of Drs. Adger and Girardeau. We shall consider them in the order thus given.

First, the *writings* of Dr. Thornwell. There were two entirely distinct discussions of this question, in which Dr. Thornwell took a part. The first was, as it were, private, carried on in the periodicals of the day. In this, Dr. Thornwell had Dr. Smyth as his antagonist. The second was public and official, in the General Assembly at Rochester, in 1860; that is, it began there, and was continued in the *Princeton* and *Southern Presbyterian Reviews*. Here Dr. Hodge was his opponent. The issues in the two discussions were quite different, and it is in *an ignoring of this fact* that all the trouble has occurred. In the first, which was inaugurated by Dr. Thornwell, it was a comparison of the Board and Presbyterial plans of evangelism. The Committee plan is hardly mentioned. In the other, it is the Board and Committee plans that make the issue, and the Presbyterial plan is not even broached.

Now, it is manifest that, in the first discussion, Dr. Thornwell favored the Presbyterial plan. It is equally clear that, in the second, he favored the Committee plan. How is this? we naturally inquire. Did he change his views? This is possible. There is a sense in which it is presumptively true that he did. There is doubtless room for a difference of opinion among intelligent people on this question. If he at first thought the Presbyterial plan the right one, and afterwards saw reason to repudiate it for the Executive Committee idea, then let us honor him for acting upon it. But there is another sense, in which the presumption is against the change of his views. Here we make two points: 1. That there is nothing in the second discussion which is necessarily inconsistent with what he said in the first. This is a very important fact. The meaning is this: he could prefer the Pres-

byterial to the Board plan, and, at the same time, with perfect consistency, prefer the Executive Committee plan to the Boards; or, to state the same truth somewhat differently, he could prefer Executive Committees to Boards, and yet prefer the Presbyterial plan to either. Is not this so? The two discussions are not inconsistent. The same man, with the same views, might have conducted both. If this is so, surely the presumption is against the change.

2. But again, if Dr. Thornwell, in his later days, did really change his judgment on this question, so far as to repudiate his earlier published views, would he not have distinctly said so? Was he not under obligation to say so? The fact that he did not, and that his later utterances are consistent with his earlier, demonstrate that he still maintained the views held in the Smyth discussion. Still, it may be asked, Why did he not bring them forward at Rochester? Why did he not advocate the Presbyterial plan there, if he still held it? A satisfactory answer can be given to this by remembering that Dr. Thornwell claimed to be a practical man. He held it wiser to contend for a possibility than to fight a windmill. He doubtless knew that but few would follow him in advocating so radical a change as from the Boards to the Presbyteries. He might hope, however, for success in urging a substitution of Executive Committees for the Boards; and it would have been a step in the direction of his real preference. A half loaf is better than no bread, is a principle on which we are often compelled to act.

This will properly introduce, and, at the same time, meet, the second argument of the majority—that Dr. Thornwell's last acts prove that he favored the Executive Committee plan. They certainly do prove it. If he had not favored this plan, he would not have moved its adoption at the Augusta Assembly in 1861. But why, and how far, did he favor it? Was it in preference to the Presbyterial plan? or was it simply because he preferred it to the Boards? In the light of what has been already said and seen, it seems clear that he favored this, as knowing that the Presbyterial plan was in advance of this age, and that it was then either the Executive Committee or the Boards.

Moreover, just here a fact showing his adhesion to his former views in one of the issues between the majority and minority, is seen in the act above noticed. In the Constitution of our Committee of Foreign Missions, doubtless through him, it was provided that deacons might be chosen as members of the Executive Committee. This was one of the points for which he contended in the Smyth discussion.

As a further fact, showing that Dr. Thornwell's coöperation with the Executive Committee plan does not necessarily prove that he preferred it, it may be stated that he was from time to time a member of the Boards of the old Church. He coöperated with the Boards while he denounced them. Why might he not, then, have coöperated with Executive Committees, while preferring Presbyterian management?

In this connection, moreover, we should remember that Dr. Thornwell was always ready to submit to the majority. Clear proof of this is seen in the Rochester debate. He there said: "My brother twits me with supporting the Boards while professing to be conscientiously opposed to the principles of their constitution. Would he have us to be factious? Moderator, I never have said to my brethren, to whom I promised submission in the Lord, 'I cannot submit, I will not submit!' I will submit to my brethren, even where I think they are mistaken, if the submission be not sinful."—*Ib.*, p. 233. You see it further in the fact that he withdrew his protest which he had submitted against the perpetuation of the Board system. He was not an uncompromising theorist. This conciliatory spirit explains his acquiescence in the Executive Committee plan. The same reflections will explain what is adduced by Dr. Palmer in his *Biography*.

Now, finally, reference is made to the editorial comments of *Drs. Adger and Girardeau* prefixed to the discussion of the Board question. Let us have this testimony and see its force:

"Touching the employment of deacons in the general service of the Church, the conduct of missions by Presbyteries, and the unscripturalness and unconstitutionality of Boards, Dr. Thornwell was content with urging his views earnestly; but he made it a principle through

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life always to submit to his brethren in matters of established and recognised policy. His temper had in it no spice whatever of the seditious or the radical. As to the conduct of missions, while insisting on the competency of the Presbyteries, and preferring their control to that of Boards, he did not object on principle to the Assembly's undertaking the management of that work, provided that its control was *direct* through a mere Executive Committee. No man had more to do than he with the organisation of our present Executive Committees. In fact, his principles regarding Boards have been fully and cordially adopted by our Church."

It is probable that every statement here, as meant by its distinguished authors, is true. What does it aver? 1. That Dr. Thornwell's views concerning Boards have been adopted by our Church. This is manifest, as we have no Boards. 2. That he assisted in the organisation of our Executive Committees. This is manifest, as he moved the resolutions organising them. 3. That he believed in the employment of deacons in the general service of the Church, and preferred the conduct of missions by the Presbyteries; but in these matters submitted to the majority of his brethren.

The conclusion seems to be, that Dr. Thornwell, at one time, strongly favored the Presbyterial as "certainly the plan, and the only plan, contemplated by the framers of our Form of Government," asserting that it was "undeniably plain that our Constitution never contemplated any other agencies for missions but Presbyteries;" and that he either changed his views or was inconsistent, if at any future date, he preferred Executive Committees, except as a concession to the views of his brethren.

Reviewing the whole field, it is manifest that Dr. Thornwell put himself on record as opposed to ministerial Secretaries and Treasurers; as holding the deacon to be the general financial officer of the Church, to be used as such by all the courts, Assembly as well as Session; and as advocating the conduct of missions directly by the Presbyteries. The minority were justified in quoting him as sustaining them in these views.

Whether he and they are right on these questions is a different matter. He was a fallible man; he may have been *wrong*. Many of his expressions but few will approve, and some of his

arguments the minority would not now present. His position on Foreign Missions is not held by the minority. The propriety of his views is one thing; that he held them is quite another. Many that hold the position of the majority will doubtless agree that Dr. Thornwell did maintain the views of the minority on the points here set forth.

J. A. QUARLES.

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ARTICLE V.

A BRIEF REPLY TO DR. WILSON ON OUR HOME MISSIONS.

Our beloved and venerable brother, the Secretary of Foreign Missions, in his article on Home Missions, in the April number of this journal, referred so pointedly to the present writer as to make it necessary for him to rise to a personal explanation. His profound respect and affection for his life-long friend, and his knowledge of the paramount influence wielded by him all over our Church, demands that he make the effort to roll off from himself the weight of the criticism and the censure with which he feels that he is in danger of being crushed. Dr. Wilson says of the present writer: "The charge of combination for mutual protection was preferred against the Secretaries at the last (Staunton) Assembly, and when proof was demanded, it could not be brought forward; but the speaker explained that it was to the *liability* to such abuse of power that he had special reference;" and then came an *argumentum ad hominem* about Seminary Professors, levelled against both the writer and Dr. Dabney.

Now, it is not denied that the present writer did say that "the fellow-feeling natural to these executive agencies, as children of a common mother, results in a combination of influence for each other, and to resist criticism." It was expressly declared, however, that it was not intended to charge "the conscious formation of any corrupt 'ring power.'" The "tendency to combination," it was said, "was uncalculated and unconscious, and, therefore, the more a subject of solicitude." "It was not the fault of the