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APPENDIX TO MINUTES OF SYNOD.

The consideration of the following Documents which, for the sake of distinction, we have numbered 1, 2, 3, was deferred till next meeting of Synod. It was understood that they should be published, not as a part of the Minutes, inasmuch as they had not been acted upon, but as an Appendix to the Minutes. We have placed them in the beginning of the No. that in binding, the Minutes and they may come together.

—ED.

NO. 1. REPORT ON CIVIL RELATIONS.—Your committee on the Signs of the Times report in part, on the paper relative to our civil relations, submitted to Synod by the Rev. Mr. Milligan. The chief means by which the Spirit of the Lord of hosts has reformed the nations, is the diffusion of gospel truth. "I will preach thy word to kings," has been sung for ages by the church. For many ages the kings of the earth have been in a state of open hostility to Messiah, our Prince. The word which the church in this part of her song of praise, promises to preach must, according to this vow, be preached to wicked rulers as public civil functionaries. In performing this duty, the church must use the same plainness and fidelity in declaring the whole counsel of God to the great men of the earth, that she does when addressing those who occupy humbler stations. They must "reprove, rebuke and exhort kings with all authority and long suffering." This must be done, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.

There are several ways in which this may be done, as,

A LETTER ON THE LATE SCHISM.

DEAR BROTHER—

The schism made by three members of our late Synod, shortly after its adjournment, has produced some sensation, and as it is important that the truth should be known, I shall furnish you with the facts, so far as I am in possession of them, that you may lay them before the public.

The ministers engaged in this extraordinary business, were Messrs. Lusk and Steele. One ruling elder who was a member of Synod, and I hear one or two others from a distance were associated with them. General Synod, you recollect adjourned about noon of Friday. The Western S. Synod met that afternoon. At this meeting, none of the three members were present. On Saturday morning, I called at the house where they lodged, to ascertain whether Mr. Steele intended to stay with us till after the Sabbath, and if so, to engage him to preach for me part of the day. He informed me that he intended to start immediately—that he was just getting ready for his journey. Mr. Lusk made a similar statement. In the afternoon I was informed, they were still in town, and that there appeared to be something of mystery hanging over their movements. The fact, however, soon became public, that they had on that day constituted themselves into an independent presbytery, and thus performed the operation of self-amputation, or more expressively, committed ecclesiastical suicide.

As they assigned no reasons, before their departure, we are left to conjecture the cause of this strange movement. The case has no precedent nor parallel in the history of schism. It is perfectly unique. Like all persons who contemplate suicide, they kept their design a profound secret. They appear to have been afraid to discover their purpose, lest Synod would have prevented its accomplishment. If otherwise, why not give Synod, or some of its members intimation of the cause of dissatisfaction, that means might be employed for its removal? - If these brethren had objections to the action of Synod, so serious that they could remain no longer with us, why not make them known at the proper time?—Where was the faithfulness or honesty of giving a tacit approbation to the proceedings of Synod, and at the same time be meditating an elopement?

But themselves being witnesses, it can be made appear that no violation of principle, no dereliction of duty on the part of Synod, gave occasion to this schism. They sat, deliberated, and those of them who were constituent members, voted during the whole sessions of Synod till its final adjournment.— This fact is sufficient to make out the case. If Synod had erred so far, as to warrant any of its members to withdraw from the church, could they have conscientiously retained their seats after the act was committed? How does a man of principle act in such a case? Does he not at once protest and, if he find it necessary to maintain a good conscience, then decline the authority of the court? How else could he follow the divine direction, “Plead with your mother, plead?” But so far from doing this, these brethren appeared in general satisfied with the deeds of Synod from first to last. Now if we believe conscience had any thing to do with the whole matter, they must have conscientiously held the closest ecclesiastical fellowship with their brethren, up to the time of the final adjournment of Synod. And how they could conscientiously withdraw from the church afterwards, I am utterly at a loss to conceive. The conclusion is irresistible, that they were not impelled by love to the truth, and zeal for the testimony, still less by affection for the brethren and a desire to promote the unity of the church, in separating themselves from those with whom they had joined counsel in the judicatories of the Lord’s house.

That the whole plan was preconcerted, circumstances put beyond doubt. There are three probable reasons why the consummation of the deed was deferred till after the adjournment of Synod. First, a fear of suspension by that court.— Indeed this reason has been assigned by some of their adherents. But why fear, if they were conscious of a good cause? A good man, on the side of truth, has no such fear. He knows that “what is bound on earth,” in such a case, is *not* “bound in heaven.” Church courts “can do nothing against the truth but for the truth.” If these men had been confident in the righteousness of their cause, they would have done their duty, and regarded suspension as a *fulmen brutum*. Again, they had probably a faint hope of taking some with them.— They knew there was some diversity of opinion among the members of Synod, about the propriety of joining voluntary associations for promoting moral reformation; and by making that a hobby they might expect to ride away with a part of

the church. Two brands cast into the Synod by them; one a memorial, and the other a preamble and set of resolutions against those associations, were extinguished, not much to their satisfaction. If they were serious in wishing the church to require her members to stand aloof from these societies, why could they not wait sixteen months longer—till next meeting of Synod, when it stands pledged to give the subject its early attention? And there was a strong inducement for them to wait, for there was ample evidence of a disposition pretty general and growing, to take such a course. To myself and others, who believe there is a necessity for this, such evidence was highly gratifying. And so it would have been to these brethren, if their hearts had been set on this matter with that sincerity some would have us to believe. Another reason which might have induced them to continue in Synod till its adjournment, was to obtain their quota of the fund for travelling expenses. This they would have missed, had they withdrawn while Synod was sitting. They knew this, and I think it is not uncharitable to suppose it had its weight.

Against these misguided brethren I have no disposition to bring a railing accusation. "To their Master, they stand or fall." They may think they have sufficient reason for making a new rent in the church scarcely restored from the effects of a former calamity. But they should remember, that schism in the church is a serious matter; and sympathies on the one hand, and prejudices on the other, are dangerous guides, especially when they lead and drive away from the church. Before the judgment seat they and we must render our account. And then who will answer for this schism?—The Spirit of God by the apostle, Rom. xvi. 17, has given us solemn warning. "I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine ye have learned, and avoid them." Let our brethren take heed.

For these things our eyes should weep. Let us be frequent and fervent in prayer, that destructions may come to a perpetual end. For the elect's sake these days of tribulation shall be shortened. The Lord sits on the floods. He will "still the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." The watchmen shall yet see eye to eye. May the Lord bring us all into the chambers of his gracious presence, and surround us with the arms of almighty protection till his indignation be overpast.

Your brother in covenant bonds,

Allegheny, July 16th, 1840.

THOS. SPROULL.