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THE question concerning the right relation of religion to civil government has for some years been rapidly coming to the foreground throughout Christendom, and is compelling attention even in heathendom. In proof of this it is only necessary to call to mind the fierce conflicts in Britain and Germany, headed by Gladstone and Bismarck on the one side, and the Roman Pontiff and his subordinate hierarchs on the other ; likewise, the contentions in our own country in regard to religion and sectarianism in State schools, the statutes for Sabbath observance, the taxation of church property, which have evoked an expression as explicit as it is unexampled, in the

son of the order of nature is to be found in this last and unfathomable depth, which every theology supposes in the background of its mysteries. All that we can say is, that the most analogous cause which we can compare with the supreme cause is intelligence. The art of nature proceeds then from a cause, which is at least an intelligence, if it be not something more.

Art. V.—THE ECCLESIASTICAL DISRUPTION OF 1861.

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THIS title is intended to designate the division of the Presbyterian Church in the United States into two bodies, now known, in the popular mind, as the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches. Previous to our late civil war they were one body, under one General Assembly (O. S.) The division was consummated, on the part of the Southern Church, in December, 1861, by the organization of a separate General Assembly. It was not, however, fully recognized and accepted by the Northern Church until 1868, when the General Assembly of that year dropped from its roll the synods, presbyteries, ministers, and churches, which had withdrawn from it in the Southern States seven years before. During the war the Old and New School Churches of the South became united in one body under the Southern General Assembly. The negotiations, which had been pending since 1866, for the reunion of the Old and New School churches of the North, having been successful, the first reunion General Assembly was held in the year 1870. This Assembly made overtures to the General Assembly of the Southern Church for friendly relations with that body. Similar overtures, from time to time, have since been made, but with no favorable result.

It is not the object of this paper to discuss the question of "fraternal relations" between the Northern and Southern Churches, but rather to consider the disruption of the church,

which occurred in 1861, to examine some of the principles announced in its defense, and to consider the causes which led thereto. A chief reason, however, for doing this, is the light thus shed upon the conditions required by the Southern Church in order to such relations.* That which will form the basis of this discussion is the official document, entitled an *Address of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth, unanimously adopted at their Sessions, in Augusta, Georgia, December, 1861*. This Address is always referred to by the leading men of the Southern Church as setting forth the principles on which they stand, and by which they desire the Southern Church to be judged. The Southern General Assembly, of 1865, says: "Four years ago we were constrained to organize a separate Assembly. This was done because of an attempt by a part of the church to impose a yoke upon our consciences, 'which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.' Our testimony upon this, and other points of great interest, is before the Christian churches of the world, in the Address made to them by the General Assembly of 1861." By the "yoke" here mentioned, is meant the action of the General Assembly at Philadelphia, in May, 1861, upon the state of the country. Referring to the subject of slavery, the Southern General Assembly, of 1865, again says: "The Address of our General Assembly, before referred to (1861), contains the only full, unambiguous, deliberate, and authoritative exposition of our views in regard to this matter. We here affirm its whole doctrine to be that of Scripture and reason. It is the old doc-

* Our only reason for placing the important facts contained in this able article upon our pages, is their bearing on this very subject of "fraternal correspondence" with the Southern Church, and the conditions demanded for it. In themselves considered, we would much prefer that they should be left to oblivion, as respects the Northern Church, much as in different forms they still obtrude themselves, directly or indirectly, in the publications of our Southern brethren. But so long as honored brethren of our own church still deem it for edification to urge movements for fraternal correspondence, upon the basis of some retractions or confessions on our part in regard to alleged political, or otherwise injurious, declarations, by our assemblies in the past, with no equivalent acknowledgment on the other side—if, indeed, such acknowledgments on either side are in place at all—we think this article must satisfy all that such a procedure would involve implications alike false and mischievous.—EDITORS.

trine of the church, and the only one which keeps its foundations secure."

The Address of 1861 is thus officially proclaimed to be of the highest authority upon the questions it presents. Its specific object is to vindicate the disruption of the church. Its language on this point is as follows: "The church, in these seceded States, presents now the spectacle of a separate and independent and complete organization, under the style and title of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. In thus taking its place among sister churches of this and other countries, it seems proper that it should set forth the causes which have impelled it to separate from the church of the North, and to indicate a general view of the course which it feels it incumbent upon it to pursue in the new circumstances in which it is placed. We should be sorry to be regarded by our brethren in any part of the world as guilty of schism. We are not conscious of any purpose to rend the body of Christ."

There are two distinct branches of the subject which call for separate consideration. One is historical, and concerns the causes of the disruption. The other involves fundamental principles, which enter into the vital elements of our ecclesiastical life. It will be the natural order to take up the historical question first.

I.

In the opening sentences of this Address, the separation of the Southern Church from the Northern is spoken of as purely voluntary. It says, that "the Presbyteries and Synods in the Confederate States" have "renounced the jurisdiction" of the Northern Assembly, "and dissolved the ties which bound them, ecclesiastically, with their brethren of the North." As "this act of separation left them without any formal union among themselves," they proceeded to organize an Assembly "upon the model of the one whose authority they had just relinquished."

But although this step was voluntary, the Address pleads the action of the Northern Assembly, in May, 1861, as the reason—certainly the occasion—which impelled to the separation. We ask special attention to its language on this point. It says: "The first thing which roused our presbyteries to look the question of separation seriously in the face, was the course of the Assembly

in venturing to determine, as a court of Jesus Christ, which it did by necessary implication, the true interpretation of the Constitution of the United States as to the kind of government it intended to form." Again: "The immediate occasion of our separation was the course of the General Assembly at Philadelphia, in relation to the federal government and the war." Again, after dwelling, at considerable length upon the province of the church in regard to civil affairs, the Address says: "Had these principles been steadily maintained by the Assembly at Philadelphia, it is possible that the ecclesiastical separation of the North and South might have been deferred for years to come." So, again, we find these statements indorsed by the Southern Assembly of 1865, in a passage already cited: "Four years ago we were constrained to organize a separate General Assembly. This was done because of an attempt by a part of the church to impose a yoke upon our consciences," etc.

All who are familiar with the discussions of the last few years, both before and since the proposal was made for fraternal relations, know that the men of the Southern Church have uniformly taken the same ground, assigning the action at Philadelphia, in 1861, as the reason for the separation, just as they have ever since alleged similar action, by subsequent Assemblies, as the reason for continuing the separation. In confirmation of this, the Southern Committee at Baltimore, January, 1875, in their second letter, say: "We can safely assert that our separation from the Northern Assembly was to escape these political complications." Also: "We were constrained in conscience to that separation. A political theory was propounded, which, whether right or wrong, the church had no power to decide." The same committee, in their fifth letter, say: "We were constrained in conscience to separate on account of the action of the Old School Assembly of 1861, deciding a purely political question, and making compliance by our people a condition of good standing in the church." As this action of the committee was approved by the Southern Assembly of 1875, this theory of the disruption has the indorsement of their last Assembly.

We are well aware that it is a serious matter to question the accuracy of such formal and repeated assertions, coming from such large and respectable bodies; but the truth of history

compels the conviction that other considerations, quite independent of, and operating prior to, the meeting of the Assembly in Philadelphia in May, 1861, made a separate ecclesiastical organization in the South a foregone conclusion. There are facts lying outside of this Address which amply warrant and impress this conviction, and there are statements within the Address which cannot well be construed except in accordance with these facts. In a word, we feel warranted in declaring that it was the political situation of the country, real and supposed, rather than the ecclesiastical action at Philadelphia, which furnished the vital and preponderating reason for the ecclesiastical disruption. By the real situation, we mean the country as then involved in war; and by the supposed situation, the belief prevalent throughout the South that the separation of the country into two nations was, even then, an accomplished fact. We shall first present certain statements from this Address which run in this line of thought, along with corroborative testimony, and then detail certain well-established facts which illustrate these statements.

The Address dwells at considerable length on the desirableness and necessity of separate ecclesiastical organizations in the North and the South, in consequence of the fact, that the territory over which the church extended had become divided into two separate nations. It says: "We have separated from our brethren of the North as Abraham separated from Lot, because we are persuaded that the interests of true religion will be more effectually subserved by two independent churches, under the circumstances in which the two countries are placed, than by one united body." Again: "Two nations, under any circumstances, except those of perfect homogeneousness, cannot be united in one church," etc. Again: "An Assembly composed of representatives from two such countries," etc. Besides these clear intimations, this Address argues the point in question more formally. After stating that, "in Protestant countries church organizations have followed national lines," and illustrating it by reference to the fact, that "the Calvinistic Churches of Switzerland are distinct from the Reformed Church of France," and that "the Presbyterians of Ireland belong to a different church from the Presbyterians of Scotland," and after presenting various arguments to show that "the division into national

churches, that is, churches bounded by national lines, is, in the present condition of human nature, a benefit," the Address says: "If it is desirable that each nation should contain a separate and an independent church, the Presbyteries of these Confederate States need no apology for bowing to the decree of Providence, which, in withdrawing their country from the government of the United States, has at the same time determined that they should withdraw from the church of their fathers. It is not that they have ceased to love it, not that they have abjured its ancient principles, or forgotten its glorious history. It is to give these same principles a richer, freer, fuller development among ourselves than they possibly could receive under foreign culture." "In subjection to a foreign power, we could no more accomplish it than the church in the United States could have been developed in dependence upon the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The difficulty there would have been, not the distance of Edinburgh from New York, Philadelphia, or Charleston, but the difference in the manners, habits, customs, and ways of thinking, the social, civil, and political institutions of the people. These same difficulties exist in relation to the Confederate and United States, and render it eminently proper that the church in each should be as separate and independent as the governments."

Now, while it is freely admitted that these statements and this line of argumentation—when viewed from a given standpoint—may possibly be consistent with the averment of this Address, that "the first thing which roused our presbyteries to look the question of separation seriously in the face," etc., was the action at Philadelphia before referred to, yet, when we bear in mind that the division of the country into two nations was then universally received at the South as a settled question—the government of the Confederate States having been fully organized some ten months before—this political division is assigned such prominence and is urged with such force in this Address, as to give it the place of a ruling and decisive reason for the ecclesiastical separation; and thus, in this light, this argument to justify the church in following the fortunes of the State, in the premises, becomes invested with an appreciable importance which can not otherwise attach to it. If this be not its true position and purpose, why is it dwelt upon

at such length, and urged with such variety and aptness of illustration? If, on the other hand, the action at Philadelphia was in itself sufficient to justify a separate organization not only, but was, indeed, the sole and constraining motive thereto, why was the political status pressed into the service so urgently, or rather, why was it urged at all? The argument founded upon that Philadelphia action, if good, should have prevailed, even if the nation had not been sundered; just as the principle alleged to be involved in it is still urged to justify continued separation, notwithstanding the nation is now admitted by all to be one. Indeed, we regard this presentation of the State as a precedent for the church, a strong support, in itself, to the position we take as to the real and prevailing cause of the rending of the church. But when, furthermore, this feature of the Address is sustained by corroborative evidence, in the sentiments of the leading men in the Southern Church upon the political affairs of the country at that time, and more especially, when it is construed in the light of certain facts which we shall adduce—among others, the action of Southern Presbyteries, early in 1861, and before the meeting of the General Assembly at Philadelphia in May—we think it will conclusively appear that the political situation, real and supposed, as before stated, was the decisive element in the ecclesiastical determination to separate, instead of the action taken by the Philadelphia Assembly. This position, moreover, is not a little strengthened by the candid avowal of this Address in these words: “We frankly admit that the mere unconstitutionality of the proceedings of the last Assembly is not, in itself, considered a sufficient ground of separation.”

In presenting the corroborative evidence to which we have alluded, we shall find it necessary to mention certain honored names. Every party, whether in church or state, has its leaders. The Southern Church has never enrolled more distinguished names than those of Drs. Thornwell and Palmer. During the later years of Dr. Thornwell's life he was its acknowledged leader. He was in the South called “the Calhoun of the Church.” It is well known that he penned the Address of the Southern General Assembly of 1861, cited above. Dr. Palmer was the Moderator of that Assembly, and his name is

officially attached to this Address. Since Dr. Thornwell's death no name has been more honored in the Southern Church than that of Dr. Palmer. These two men, as thinkers, writers, pulpit orators, were without rivals among their Southern brethren. Their opinions were revered and their influence was well nigh unbounded. We cite their views, chiefly, because they are pre-eminently representative men.

It is well known that Dr. Thornwell took ground in favor of the secession of the Southern States for a considerable time before it was effected, and that during some two years or more before the war began, he did not hesitate to give expression to his sentiments with great freedom. Of this we have the most undoubted evidence. Dr. Charles Hodge is our first witness. In the *PRINCETON REVIEW*, for July, 1864, on reviewing the proceedings of the General Assembly, for that year, Dr. Hodge says: "In the year 1859, Dr. Thornwell opposed (in the General Assembly) the recommendation of the Colonization Society, on the principle above stated. In private, if not in public, he took the ground, that the division of the country was a certain event."*

* It is but just to the foregoing statement of Dr. Hodge, and to the memory of Dr. Thornwell, to state that Dr. Hodge also says of him, in this article, the following: "He, however, wished to prevent the division of the church as consequent on the division of our National Union. To secure that end, he said it was necessary to adopt the principle, that the only duty of the church, as a teacher, was to preach the gospel, to labor for the salvation of men. He said in his public speech, that if the government choose to reopen the slave-trade, the church would have no right to open her lips against it. This new doctrine excited great attention and feeling. When the Assembly met in 1860, the subject was again brought up, and caused for a time great anxiety. A resolution was prepared and presented by the Committee on Bills and Overtures, affirming the directly opposite doctrine (drafted by Dr. Hodge), and asserting that the church, as God's witness on earth, is authorized and bound to reprove all sin, and to support all truth and righteousness. This resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote of the Assembly. . . . The Bible gives us no rule for deciding the litigated questions about public improvements, a national bank, or a protective tariff, or state-rights. But it does give us rules for pronouncing about slave-laws, the slave-trade, obedience to magistrates, treason, rebellion, and revolution. To shut her mouth on these questions, is to make her unfaithful to her high vocation. The authors of this new theory soon repudiated it; and while those who agreed with them at the North were protesting against church courts saying a word against the rebellion, the pulpits, conventions, synods, and assemblies at the South were resounding with exciting appeals to inflame the spirit of rebellion."

Rev. N. West, D.D., of Cincinnati, is our next witness. For a few days immediately after the adjournment of the Indianapolis Assembly of 1859, Dr. Thornwell was the guest of Rev. Dr. West at Cincinnati, occupying his pulpit, and discussing with him and others the great questions of the day. The following three points were emphasized to Dr. West by Dr. Thornwell: (1.) That while disapproving the horrors of the "middle passage," the African slave-trade was, nevertheless, in essence, "only the application of the principle of emigration to a degraded people, too lazy to emigrate for their own good;" (2.) That "slavery is national, protected by the Constitution and the flag, and we shall never be satisfied until the Dred Scott decision is applied to all the States as well as to the Territories;" (3.) That "the Northern vote for Fremont has so shaken the confidence of the South in the Union, that we are already organizing to go out of it, and mean to go out, in the event of the election of a sectional President." To the question of Dr. Thornwell, "You are opposed to the extension of slavery. Tell me, as you know, is this sentiment of opposition only that of the insignificant abolition party North, or is it the sentiment of the Northern people generally? How high, deep, and broad is it?" Dr. West answered: "Doctor, you may begin

While we do not question what Dr. Hodge here says of Dr. Thornwell, that, in 1859, "he wished to prevent the division of the church, as consequent upon the division of our National Union," yet subsequent facts show (as will be seen in subsequent pages of this article), that, after the presidential election in 1860, and during the winter of 1861, the leaders of the church in the South, and Dr. Thornwell among them, took other ground, and determined on a disruption of the church as "consequent upon" what had then taken place, the "secession" of several States. It may be further true, that the reason why the "resolution" presented by Dr. Hodge in the General Assembly of 1860 (declaring against the "new doctrine"), was "adopted by a unanimous vote"—even Dr. Thornwell not voting against it—was because the leaders had, at that early day, determined to divide the church if the Union should be divided; and the proof that they expected the latter event to occur beyond a doubt, and aided it with all their might, may be found in this article.

[One of the Editors of this REVIEW has published, in the July No. for 1873, p. 509, that Dr. Thornwell said to him, during the sessions of the O. S. Assembly at Rochester in 1860, in substance, that he (Dr. T.) "was especially earnest and anxious that the view of the Boards he was advocating should be adopted by the church, because he expected the disruption of the nation, and he desired to have the church organized on such a basis, that it could remain unbroken after the country should be divided." That is still his distinct recollection. We think the conversation occurred early in the session.—L. H. A.]

at Maine, and sweep the Eastern, Northern, and Western line of the States, then go down deep as the granite foundations of the continent, and then reach up high as the blue heaven; it is as deep, broad, and high as all that!" "Then sir," replied Dr. Thornwell, "civil war must come! I do not expect we shall be allowed to secede peaceably. We will fight to maintain our rights. We will never rest quiet in the Union until our rights under the Constitution are respected, and we are allowed to bring our slaves into Ohio and Illinois, and buy and sell them as we do in South Carolina and Georgia. If what you say is correct, however, as to the anti-slavery sentiment, war must come. Then we shall have two nations, and a border conflict perpetuated throughout our history, and you men will be responsible for it." To this Dr. West answered: "Dr. Thornwell, you cannot over-ride the moral sentiment of the North to the extent of applying the Dred Scott decision to the States. It is too powerful." To this Dr. Thornwell replied: "Then we shall have civil war. We mean to go out. We are determined to force the issue." This was in June, 1859.

The Old School General Assembly met at Rochester in May, 1860. Dr. Thornwell was a member. While that Assembly was in session, Mr. Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency. This naturally led to conversation among the members of the Assembly upon the political state of the country. The Hon. Samuel Galloway was a member of that Assembly from the Presbytery of Columbus. In a conversation between Mr. Galloway and Dr. Thornwell, the latter declared, that if either Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Douglass were elected President (the latter, though not nominated till June, was known to be a prominent aspirant for Presidential honors), the Southern States would inevitably secede from the Union; that neither of these men would be acceptable to the South; that secession, in the event of such a contingency being realized, was already a settled matter in the Southern mind; and that the South would not and ought not to acquiesce in the election of either, for they were equally opposed to the extension of slavery into the Territories—this being well known to be the real question, under the Dred Scott decision by the Supreme Court in 1857, which prompted the South, after the election of Mr. Lincoln, to stake its for-

tunes and the institution of slavery on the secession of the Southern States. This conversation was in May.*

After Mr. Lincoln's election had occurred, and upon a fast-day proclaimed in South Carolina, Nov. 21, 1860, Dr. Thornwell preached a discourse in Columbia, in which he said: "The Union which our fathers designed to be perpetual is on the verge of dissolution. A name once dear to our hearts has become intolerable to entire States. Once admired, loved, almost adored, as the citadel and safeguard of freedom, it has become, in many minds, synonymous with oppression, with treachery, with falsehood, and with violence." "That government has become hateful in the very regions in which it was once hailed with the greatest loyalty."

South Carolina passed her act of secession Dec. 20, 1860. Soon after this a meeting was held at Columbia, the State capital, to ratify the act of secession. A report of this meeting is found in the *North Carolina Presbyterian* of Jan. 5, 1861. Drs. Thornwell, Leland, and Adger, all Professors in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, with three other clergymen, addressed the meeting. A few sentences from Dr. Thornwell's speech will suffice to reveal the animus of the assembly. The report says: "Dr. Thornwell spoke at some length. He said that he had foreseen, and some time ago predicted, the course which our affairs would take, in case that Lincoln, or any other man of his avowed principles, was elected President."

* Although anticipating the course of the narrative of events, another part of Hon. Mr. Galloway's conversation with Dr. Thornwell may here be given, to which there are witnesses still living. It will be remembered that the famous discussion upon the "Re-organization of the Boards" of the church came off in the city of Rochester, in the General Assembly of 1860. In this discussion the Southern column was led by Dr. Thornwell, and the Northern by Dr. Hodge. Mr. Galloway took part in this debate, but not perceiving the force of Dr. Thornwell's objections to Boards, asked him, privately, what was "at the bottom" of the intense Southern resistance to Boards, and why he (Dr. Thornwell) so zealously advocated the erection of a Southern committee to receive the funds of the Southern Presbyteries? Dr. Thornwell's reply was frankly given to this effect, and most of it in these words, viz.: "The country was going to be divided, and the division of the church would follow as an inevitable consequence, and the object of the Southern Presbyteries in the Assembly was to cut loose as quickly as possible from connection with the Boards of the church and concentrate their resources among themselves, so as to be prepared for the issue." After the conversation, it was well understood why the Southern members adhered and voted as they did..

"He advised that the State act with calmness, caution, and decision, and so demean herself toward her sister Southern States, as to secure, if possible, their coöperation with us." "They are one with us, one in race, one in institutions, one in interest, and we believe that they should be one in a separate Southern Confederacy. All the speeches were of a similar tone and breathed the same spirit."

Dr. Thornwell also published an elaborate vindication of the secession of South Carolina, in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* of Jan. 1861, in which he said: "South Carolina has now become a separate and independent State. She takes her place as an equal among the other nations of the earth." "We know it to be a fixed determination of them all (the Southern States) not to acquiesce in the principles which brought Mr. Lincoln into power." "The country must be divided into two people, and the point which we wish now to press upon the whole South is, the importance of preparing at once for this consummation." "Conquered we never can be. We prefer peace, but if war must come, we are prepared to meet it with unshaken confidence in the God of battles."

The course of Dr. Palmer at that early day is well known. His Thanksgiving discourse, preached November 29, 1860, declares that "this Union of our forefathers is already gone." "I throw off the yoke of this Union as readily as did our ancestors the yoke of King George III." "I am impelled to deepen the sentiment of resistance in the Southern mind, and to strengthen the current now flowing toward a union of the South in defense of her chartered rights. It is a duty which I shall not be called to repeat, for such awful junctures do not occur twice in a century."

It is important to note the dates of these utterances (especially from the sermons) of Drs. Thornwell and Palmer. They were preached nearly one full month before the meeting of the Convention which passed the secession act of South Carolina, the first State which entered upon this course. Dr. Thornwell, as before stated, followed his discourse with a speech at the ratification meeting at Columbia, and published his vindication of secession in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* in January, 1861. Dr. Palmer also justified secession in the same *Review* in April, 1861. His article is entitled "Vindication of Seces-

sion and the South," in which he says of South Carolina: "History has nowhere upon her records a more sublime example of moral heroism. Ignorant whether she would be supported, even by her sister across the Savannah, relying on nothing save the righteousness of her cause and the power of God, she took upon her shield and spear as desperate and as sacred a conflict as ever made a State immortal." Extracts of a similar character might be given from the discourses, delivered about the same period, of many other distinguished clergymen of the Southern Presbyterian Church.

The special value which these utterances possess, consists in the fact, that these eloquent ministers of Christ who have urged so strenuously, as a distinguishing characteristic of the Southern Church, that the things of God and Cæsar should be kept wholly apart, were so early in the field in the open advocacy of secession, in the pulpit, upon the platform, and in the public journals. Indeed, they had the credit, at the time, of being far in advance, in this rôle, of many of the foremost of Southern statesmen. Hon. Alex. H. Stephens, who afterward became Vice-President of the Confederate Government, viewed the election of Mr. Lincoln in a very different light. In that same November, 1860, when Drs. Thornwell and Palmer so earnestly pleaded for secession, Mr. Stephens made a speech before the Georgia Legislature, in which he said: "The first question that presents itself is, shall the people of the South secede from the Union in consequence of the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States? My countrymen, I tell you frankly, candidly, earnestly, that I do not think they ought." "This appeal to go out, with all the provisions for good that accompany it, I look upon as a great and, I fear, a fatal, temptation." And yet, "this appeal to go out," vehemently pleaded by the clergy, succeeded.

In short, Southern statesmen deemed the aid of the clergy invaluable in urging secession, and held that without their aid in leading on the church of the South, it could never have been accomplished. Among many testimonies to this affect we cite a single one for illustration. The *Southern Presbyterian*, a weekly religious journal, then and still published at the capital of South Carolina, under date of April 20, 1861, argues this point elaborately. A communication appears, of that date, entitled,

"The Church and the Confederate States of America," which the editor indorses as "written by a gentleman occupying a high civil position in the Confederacy, and an elder in the Presbyterian Church," and in which it is said: "This revolution has been accomplished mainly by the churches. I do not undervalue the name and position and ability of politicians; still, I am sure that our success is chiefly attributable to the support which they derived from the coöperation of the moral sentiment of the country. Without that, embodying, as it obviously did, the will of God, the enterprise would have been a failure. As a mere fact, it is already historical, that the Christian community sustained it with remarkable unanimity." "The reason is, that our church, being sound, has the confidence of the irreligious world. Let the church know this, and realize her strength. She should not now abandon her own grand creation. She should not leave the creature of her prayers and labors to the contingencies of the times, or the tender mercies of less conscientious patriots. She should consummate what she has begun." To this the editor responds, saying: "We have no fears but that the Christian people of the land will prove faithful to their country, in this day of trial, to the very last. As our correspondent suggests, this present revolution is the result of their uprising. Much as is due to many of our sagacious and gifted politicians, they could effect nothing until the religious union of the North and South was dissolved, nor until they received the moral support and coöperation of Southern Christians." This same journal, at an earlier date, March 16, 1861, says, editorially: "As Christian citizens, the whole heart of ministers and people is in this matter," and that "the churches of all denominations and the State are as one on the questions involved." These corroborative testimonies will suffice.*

* We might greatly extend these corroborative testimonies. We add but a single example: It is well known that several of the Southern States hesitated to "secede from the Union," until it was known what course the State of Virginia would take. Her action, it was believed, would be decisive upon Tennessee and Kentucky, and other border slave States. Hence, it was deemed essential to bring as much popular influence as possible to bear upon the Virginia Convention in favor of secession. For this purpose, public meetings were called in various places. One was held at Prince Edward Court House, Va. (the seat of Hampden Sidney College and of the Union

We now ask that the foregoing arguments for secession, taken from the pulpit discourses and elaborated essays of Drs. Thornwell and Palmer—with the succeeding incidents related, to which many of like character might be added—be laid along side of the arguments of the Address of the Southern Assembly, which Dr. Thornwell wrote, and Dr. Palmer signed as moderator, where it is so forcibly put that the church should follow the course of the seceded States. The argument of the Address of December, 1861, is that the Southern Church should separate from the Northern, because the Southern States had severed their connection with the federal government and set up a new nation. The argument of the discourses of the autumn of 1860 is to bring this new nation to the birth, and the argument of the essays which followed in the winter and spring of 1861, is to vindicate its legitimacy, and to urge the church to nurse the child of "her own creation" with tender care, so as to insure its vigorous manhood. As these able prophets had predicted and witnessed its birth, and stood sponsors at its baptism, what is more natural than they that should entreat the mother to follow the fortunes of her promising child?

Theological Seminary), the "call" for which was signed by several Presbyterian clergymen, among whom, conspicuously appear the names of Rev. Robert L. Dabney, D.D. (who heads the list), professor in the theological seminary, and Rev. J. M. P. Atkinson, D.D., president of the college. This "call to the voters of Prince Edward" states as follows: "We urgently invite you to meet in public meeting, at Prince Edward Court House, the 9th day of March (1861), at eleven o'clock, for the purpose of considering the alarming condition of the country. Every day is adding to its danger. The Cotton States have taken their final position, and it is in vain to hope for their return to the Union." "In a few days the new president will be inaugurated, and nothing will remain except the forbearance of insolent enemies to shield us from invasion." "In this state of things the great danger of Virginia is in half measures. The vain attempt to detach her from her natural allies—the Southern States—can only result in a delay and vacillation, which will alarm our population, and drive thousands of our best citizens and laborers and millions of our capital to the Southwest." "Let Virginia, then, move at once, for unless she moves now, the emergency will assuredly come." "In view of these things, we are persuaded that our State Convention should immediately detach the State from the Union. We are profoundly alarmed at the dilatory disposition displayed, the desire to waste time, useless harangues, and the tendency to indecisive measures. We, therefore, request you to meet with us in order to give expression to our views, and to extend to our intelligent and patriotic representative, J. Thornton, Esq., our support and encouragement in the performance of his duty, by requesting him to take the proper steps to move the Virginia Convention to *immediate secession* (italics of the call) without further debate or delay."

While, therefore, we think the Address of Dec. 1861—interpreted in the light of this corroborative testimony—contains within itself strong evidence of the truth of our position, that it was the political status rather than the ecclesiastical action which insured the separation of the Southern Church from the Northern, we find another and wholly independent class of facts which places the correctness of our position beyond all question. These facts, in the shape of official acts of Presbyteries and the arguments of the organs of public opinion, were, some of them, extant several months, and others several weeks before the meeting of the General Assembly in Philadelphia, in May, 1861. We bring a sample of them into as compact a form as possible : (1.) Several Southern Presbyteries which had appointed commissioners to the General Assembly to convene in Philadelphia, called special meetings in April and May, and revoked these appointments. Notices of these meetings and of their action are found in the Southern religious journals of the time, now in our possession. (2.) Some Presbyteries, and those from the extreme South, as Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas, and other points most remote from Philadelphia, were represented, showing that it was not the apprehension of war which kept so many members away. Some in Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, and other less remote points, were not present, because their commissions had been revoked, or they were persuaded by the leaders of the church not to attend. (3.) The unstinted censure which the Southern religious press poured upon Southern commissioners who did sit in that Assembly, is another item of proof of the foregone determination for division. In some instances this censure was very bitter. The speeches and the votes of these commissioners against “the Spring resolutions” did not shield them. The declaration of Southern papers was, that they “should not have appeared there at all.” (4.) The fact that the Synod of South Carolina sent up its records to that Assembly for review is no proof of a willingness to continue ecclesiastically connected with the North, but an incidental testimony to the contrary. Those records had not been sent up for several years before. There is ample reason for believing that a special motive induced the sending of them in the spring of 1861. On this point light is

cast by the *Southern Presbyterian*, published at Columbia, S. C., touching the Synod's new deliverance on the vexed question of slavery, at its meeting in December, 1860. That paper, in its issue of April, 13, 1861, says: "We have said, in as intelligible terms as we could, that, if the act of 1818 is to be regarded as now the opinion, or the faith, or the law, of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, it would be impossible for the Presbyterians in the Confederate States to bear it; and that we thought it due to the South that we should not be left in any uncertainty on this point. It has been the impression of the South that this act had been virtually reversed by subsequent decisions of the Assembly. So the Synod of South Carolina affirmed last December." The motive of the Synod in sending up its records, contrary to its late practice, has been affirmed to be, to draw forth from the Assembly just the action it took, viz.: a disapproval of the Synod's declaration, that the act of 1818 on slavery was "virtually repealed." This would furnish the Synod with an additional argument to use in rallying the people to sustain the Confederate cause. (5.) The Southern religious press took open ground for the division of the church several weeks before the Assembly met in May. We quote a single example. In addition to the above extract of April 13th, we find in the *Southern Presbyterian* of April 27, 1861, an editorial on the "Division of the Presbyterian Church," which says: "We have plainly and unequivocally expressed our conviction (in previous issues), that a separate ecclesiastical organization of the Southern Presbyterian Church will be desirable and necessary." "As to the future relations between Northern and Southern Presbyterians, ecclesiastically, we have no doubt of the issue, and are very well content to let things take their course. We do not think it necessary or expedient to say or do anything to hasten the inevitable result." "In the Assembly which will meet in Philadelphia on the sixteenth of next month, we suppose there will be scarcely one commissioner from the Southern States. If any such appear there, we are convinced it will not be with the approbation of their constituents."

This is a specimen of the testimony to the point in hand which the organs of Southern opinion furnish. In the extracts

produced upon this and other points, we have put the *Southern Presbyterian* and the *Southern Presbyterian Review* on the witness stand as representatives of the Southern religious press, because the former was at the time the leading weekly of the Southern Church, and the latter the only quarterly of that church, Dr. Thornwell being one of its conductors, and because both were published at the capital of South Carolina, the birth-place of secession and the home of Dr. Thornwell. For these reasons their utterances possess a representative and peculiar importance. The facts of the period, then current, as indicated by these quotations, conclusively show that these leaders of public opinion, the men who had such power in both church and state, had determined on ecclesiastical separation months before the Philadelphia Assembly met, and weeks before the attack on Fort Sumter.

We now, therefore, ask that the considerations we have presented be brought together and candidly weighed, with a due observance of principles, facts, and dates of expression and action, and then we request a sober judgment upon the point we have made, viz.: that the decisive and ruling reason for the ecclesiastical disruption of 1861 was far less the action taken at Philadelphia by the Old School General Assembly in May of that year, than the withdrawal of the Southern States from the Government of the United States, and the organization of a new government in the winter of 1861, called the "Confederate States of America," the former being but the subordinate, while the latter was the real and controlling, ground of the separation; and thus, that the leaders of the Southern Church, who largely contributed to form its public opinion and to shape the determination of its councils, resolved upon ecclesiastical separation as soon as the birth and life of the new nation were believed to be assured. In a word, the leaders of a church, which makes its boast above other churches of maintaining in purity the crown rights of her divine head, uncontaminated by any subserviency to the State, made the church, in this act of separation, but the mere follower of the State, chaining the spouse of Christ to the war-chariot of Cæsar—if any branch of the Presbyterian Church is obnoxious to this charge.

II.

The second branch of the subject proposed for examination, involves principles which are held, in the Address of the Southern Assembly of 1861, to be fundamental to the proper conception of the functions and province of the church. The institution around which they are made largely to revolve is the system of negro slavery, as formerly maintained in the South. Although this institution is now dead, and although it is not our intention to discuss its dead issues, the principles in question still live and are held in great reverence.

It has been said, that what Dr. Charles Hodge pronounced a "new doctrine" in the church, first broached by Dr. Thornwell in the General Assembly of 1859 (noticed in a previous page), was devised as a rampart behind which slavery might be safe from molestation in the church. However this may be, the application of this "new doctrine" is by no means confined to that now defunct system. It has been, and still is, so used, as to put beyond the jurisdiction of church courts all those questions which Dr. Hodge mentions for illustration, and others of a similar character.

The first thing which strikes us in this examination, is what we shall call, for the want of a better term, a species of ecclesiastical phenomenology peculiar to the Southern Church, the profundity of which we have never been able to fathom. It is found in the Address of the Assembly of 1861, also in the Pastoral Letter of the Assembly of 1865, and is frequently met with in the pulpit discourses and essays of Southern ministers and in the Southern religious press. It consists in this: that, whereas, it is the height of presumption bordering on apostacy for a church court, especially the highest, to express a judgment upon, or even to touch, a given class of subjects, for the Head of the Church has given it no commission to do so; yet, every clerical member of such court, in his individual capacity as a minister of Christ, in the execution of his commission from the same Head of the Church in preaching the gospel, may expound and urge his views upon this same class of topics, and claim that in so doing he is proclaiming the very will of God. Every person who is familiar with Southern ecclesiastical literature has encountered this phenomenon. Striking illustrations of it are abundant.

The Southern Address of 1861 finds fault with the Northern Assembly of that year for "handling a political topic." It says: "A political theory was propounded," etc. "What we maintain is," that the church "transcended her sphere and usurped the duties of the State." "These are points which the church has no commission to adjudicate." So, also, the Southern Assembly of 1865: "The rightfulness of these several authorities, or to which of them, the allegiance of our people, as citizens, was or is primarily due, are matters upon which a judicatory of the church has no right to pronounce judgment." "These are questions which the Church of Christ has no commission to decide." So, also, the Baltimore Southern Committee, in their second letter, say: "It is suitable to represent freely and fully to the brethren of your committee that this kind of political action, begun in 1861, and carried on in successive Assemblies through 1866, constitutes at once a most weighty grievance to us, because much of it was aimed at our people; but constitutes also a serious hindrance to establishing fraternal relations, because they are lamentable departures from some of the fundamental principles laid down in those noble standards, which, as you truly observe, we hold in common."

Now let the reader call to mind what we have already quoted from the pulpit discourses of Drs. Thornwell and Palmer, urging the people to secession. Dr. Thornwell further says, in the same Fast-day sermon in 1860: "The rights of Congress are only the concessions of the sovereign States." "The Constitution of the United States, in its grants of power to Congress, is only a device by which a general description is given in advance, of the kind of legislation that each State will allow to be obligatory on its own people." We think Dr. Thornwell, in this passage, has fairly won his title of "the Calhoun of the church," for this doctrine is nothing less than sheer "nullification;" but then it was merely an utterance from the pulpit. So Dr. Palmer, in his Thanksgiving discourse of 1860, declares: "It is just this impertinence of human legislation, setting bounds to what God only can regulate, that the South is called this day to resent and resist." "Let the people in all the Southern States in solemn council assembled, reclaim the powers they have delegated." "Let them, further, take all the necessary steps looking to separate and independent existence, and initi-

ate measures for forming a new and homogeneous confederacy. Thus prepared for every contingency, let the crisis come." "I am impelled to deepen the sentiment of resistance, and to strengthen . . . the South in defense of her chartered rights."

According to these exhibitions, every minister, from his pulpit throne, may preach politics of the most radical type—may authoritatively, as a minister of Christ, interpret the Constitution of the United States—and incite the people to open "resistance" to the supreme "powers that be;" but when the same ministers come together in a church court, they suddenly find that "these are questions which the Church of Christ has no commission to decide." And yet, can any person show us where Christ's instructions to his church are held in the Scriptures as more sacred, or are hedged about with more definite limitations, than those which concern the functions of the pulpit in the commission of Christ to his ministers to preach the gospel? Will any one show us where ministers as preachers find any immunity in their commissions which does not equally extend to their functions as members of church courts? But among our Southern brethren, politics on the most divisive questions, running into the very vitals of constitutional law, may grace all their pulpits, but to touch any of these questions in church courts is "virtual apostasy." The changes have been rung upon this "heresy" for the last fifteen years. "The supreme Headship of Christ as King in Zion," (So. Ass., 1865), with all his "crown rights" aglow, is the sign by which we conquer, when convened in that court "of very shadowy authority," as some have claimed, called a General Assembly; but when standing in that place, acknowledged by all Christendom to be ordained of God—the pulpit—the crown may be wrenched from the Saviour's brow, its jewels scattered in the dust, his kingly honor brought into contempt, and high questions of state policy may claim a hearing as properly as the doctrines of faith and repentance.

We have said that we are unable to fathom the depths of this peculiar phenomenon, which makes it right for each individual, in his pulpit, to proclaim these tenets on the authority of God, and yet makes it a heinous sin for any church court, from the lowest to the highest, where every minister may either be personally present, or be represented, to touch them

with the tips of its fingers. Is it said that Christ's "commission" commands it in the one case and forbids it in the other? Then let this be shown from the Scriptures. Or, is it because each minister of the whole church is possessed, individually, of more ability, more wit, more wisdom, and more grace, than the whole combined, that this function is given to each, and denied to all? In mathematics, the sum of all the parts is but equal to the whole. But, in this peculiar phenomenology of the Southern Church, as represented for these subjects by honored leaders, each part is greater than the whole; and though the parts may be multiplied indefinitely, each part shall remain greater than the whole.

But, notwithstanding the Southern Church has urged and reiterated this "new doctrine" since, at least, the year 1859, as seen in the foregoing quotations from its General Assemblies, from that day to this, it were easy to show that it has squarely contradicted itself by regular and persistent official action, through all its courts to the highest, in pronouncing, during this same period, upon all these questions which it has so often affirmed a church court has "no commission" to decide. This species of self-contradiction is seen in the Address of 1861, and in almost every General Assembly of the Southern Church which has since been held. We give an example or two:

All during the war, the Southern Church, by the formal deliverances of one General Assembly after another, took what it so much deprecates as "political action" of as decisive a character as any taken by any Northern Assembly during the same period. It encouraged the Confederate armies in the field by the cheering words: "We honor you for your self-denial and patriotic zeal." "In you are wrapped up all the hopes of our church and country. With the solution of the question, what you are to become, will be determined the problem of our national glory or shame." "We tremble for you as we see you drawn away by the duties of patriotism." "We sympathize with you, as you consecrate everything dear on earth on the altar of patriotic duty." It embalmed by the graceful pen of Dr. Palmer, on the records of its General Assembly, the memory of "Stonewall Jackson," in a beautiful tribute paid to his "military genius," which "made him what

he was, the true soldier and the consummate general," and whose "brilliant career forms so large a part of this young nation's history;" while "the rapidity of his movements imparting to him a seeming ubiquity, the promptness, and daring, and uniform success of his achievements rendered his name a terror to our foes and a tower of strength to ourselves;" and under the loss of this "consummate general" a "word of cheer to our bereaved countrymen" is given, in that "God seems to us only the more to have charged Himself with the care and protection of this struggling Republic." The Southern Assembly of 1862 also declared: "We acknowledge it as a high privilege, as well as a plain duty, for our people to pledge to each other and the government of their choice, their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, in united efforts to drive back the invaders of our soil, and the enemies of our institutions." The same Assembly adds: "The Assembly desires to record, with its solemn approval, this fact of the unanimity of our people in supporting a contest to which religion, as well as patriotism, now summons the citizens of this country, and to implore for them the blessing of God in the course they are now pursuing."

It is seen from this, that while claiming to keep their church courts free from "political contamination," it is a groundless claim; and that while charging "political action" upon the Northern Assembly, they are involved in the same condemnation.

This same phase of self-contradiction is seen in the Address of 1861. Here the topic, concerning which it is very strikingly illustrated, is slavery. In one breath, as a system, it is put beyond the province of a church court to handle; in the next, as a system, it is elaborately discussed, vindicated, sanctioned, commended. The Address says: "In our ecclesiastical capacity, we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery; that is to say, we have no commission either to propagate or abolish it. The policy of its existence or non-existence is a question which exclusively belongs to the State." Again: "Is it not a subject, save in the moral duties which spring from it, which lies beyond the province of the church." And yet, this Address enters into an elaborate defense of slavery as a system. It plants it upon the express authority of the word of

God. It imbeds it in the moral law: "God sanctions it in the first table of the decalogue." It shelters it under the Mosaic code: "Moses treats it as an institution to be regulated, not abolished; legitimated, and not condemned." It protects it from the touch of censure, by the authority of Christ and the apostles: "We find it, again, in the churches founded by the apostles, under the plenary inspiration of the Holy Ghost." This Address claims all this for slavery as a system, and that system the negro slavery of the South. Moreover, it not only defends but commends the system as worthily and, under the circumstances, necessarily perpetual: "We can not forbear to say that the general operation of the system is kindly and benevolent; it is a real and effective discipline; and without it, we are profoundly persuaded that the African race in the midst of us can never be elevated in the scale of being. As long as that race, in its comparative degradation, co-exists side by side with the white, bondage is its normal condition."

It would seem at first sight to be a very plain proposition, to the common mind, that whatever is clearly taught in the Word of God is a subject for the pulpit to teach, and for church courts to handle. But this profound Address involves itself in a triple contradiction. First, it declares that there is one subject which pervades the entire Scriptures, older than the giving of the law, made a precept of the law, running all through the New Testament: and yet this one subject "lies beyond the province of the church." Second, the writer of this Address, and all the ministers of the General Assembly that unanimously adopted it, in direct violation of its own declarations, preach upon this prohibited subject as a part of God's revelation to mankind. Third, the Address itself, in direct contradiction of its main position, shows that it is the most determined "friend of slavery," and that the peculiar system of the South should be made perpetual, as "bondage is the normal condition" of the race involved in that system. In perfect accord with this last sentiment, the Southern Assembly, of 1865, exhibits its strong attachment to the then defunct institution, laments its overthrow, and the giving of freedom to millions, in this fervid tone: "Our church may hold up its hands before heaven and earth, washed of the tremendous responsibility involved in this change in the condition of nearly four million bond servants, and for which it has hitherto been conceded they were unprepared."

We confess that we see no rational way out of this thicket of contradictions but this: the "foes of slavery" have "no commission" to meddle with it; but its "friends" are fully authorized to defend and commend it in the pulpit, and in the highest courts of the church.

Moreover, while the Address of 1861 and the Assembly of 1865 so pointedly rule the subject of slavery out of the church—and at the same time so effectually cut the ground from under their own feet—it is a matter of special interest to note that Southern ministers, in their pulpits, discuss the system, not only in its moral, but in all its political bearings, with the freedom and in the spirit of politicians. Thus Dr. Thornwell: "The plea is still more flagrantly inadequate when applied to the exclusion of slavery from the Territories. All the States have confessedly an equal right of property in them." "The citizens of any State may go there and take up their abode," and "they are at liberty to observe the customs of their own States." Dr. Palmer is equally explicit in presenting from the pulpit the purely social and political bearings of slavery: "Must I pause to show how it has fashioned our modes of life, and determined all our habits of thought and feeling, and molded the very type of our civilization?" And he appears to claim a prescriptive right for the church over civilians to deal with it. "It was debated in ecclesiastical councils before it entered legislative halls." But when he carries it into the sphere of morals and religion, he rises to a sublime height, and gives the Southern Church and people a place which puts all competition out of the question. "To the South the highest position is assigned of defending, before all nations, the cause of all religion and of all truth. In this trust we are resisting the power which wars against constitutions and laws and compacts, against Sabbaths and sanctuaries, against the family, the State, and the church; which blasphemously invades the prerogatives of God, and rebukes the Most High for the errors of his administration, which, if it cannot snatch the reins of empire from his grasp, will lay the universe in ruins at his feet. Is it possible that we shall decline the onset?" But beyond all this, Dr. Palmer finds his commission authorizing and impelling him to proclaim that to the Southern people is committed the "divine trust to conserve and to perpetuate

the institution of slavery as now existing " (in 1860); that it is "the nature and solemnity of our present trust to preserve and transmit our existing system of domestic servitude, with the right, unchanged by man, to go and root itself wherever Providence and nature may carry it;" that, in so doing, "we defend the cause of God and religion;" and in the execution of this trust, he says: "Not till the last man has fallen behind the last rampart shall it drop from our hands, and then only in surrender to God who gave it."

If Dr. Palmer interprets his commission properly—and if he is right, then the same duty is for all—would it not be the most pertinent of all inquiries for church courts of every grade, from the Presbytery up to the General Assembly, to ascertain whether the demands of this vital element in the commission of their ministers had been faithfully performed? Is it not one of the highest functions of church courts, as viewed from the Presbyterian standpoint, to see that the clergy faithfully proclaim the truth, and to watch against the teaching of vital errors? We venture the opinion, that, for the period immediately preceding and during the war, if at no other time, this duty relating to the special point in hand, was discharged with jealous care by the vigilant courts of the Southern Church.

What a spectacle is thus presented in a church which claims to be preëminently the depositary "of all religion and of all truth;" which clings with deathlike grasp to the notion, that sound orthodoxy, as nowhere else, dwells within its pale; and holds that the Northern Church, with which it was once united, has become "virtually apostate," by allowing politics to defile its pulpits and sway its church courts.

If the Address of 1861, in saying, that "in our ecclesiastical capacity" we have nothing to do with slavery, merely means that the State and not the church can pass laws to "propagate or abolish" it, and that in this sense "the policy of its existence or non-existence is a question which belongs exclusively to the State"—if it mean this and nothing more, no one would dispute these propositions. They are the merest truisms, and are scarcely worthy of the place they occupy. But this is not all that is here meant. The teaching of this phase of the Address is that the Church of Christ—not the Southern Church, but the church universal—occupies a position of moral indiffer-

ence toward slavery; "we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery;" that this is its true position; that to take any other is to invade the province of the State and dishonor Christ. This is its plain teaching.

Passing by the fact already stated, if this position be correct—that this Address commits sin for the Assembly which issued it, and for the whole Southern Church—it is worthy of note, that this ground of utter indifference to the system of negro slavery in the South, as it actually existed, would be one of the most remarkable phenomena of the whole case, were it not that every turn the subject takes, every shape it assumes, presents something very remarkable. The common sentiment of Christendom, to-day, in the church and out of it, except in the places where it exists (even if not there), is against slavery. The General Assembly of 1818 unanimously condemned it, and set forth the duty of seeking its universal extinction. All the members of the South voted for this action. But a total revolution was wrought in the sentiments of the South, within a few years previous to the war, concerning the whole system. The Assembly of 1818 declares it "utterly irreconcilable with the law of God," while the Address of 1861 says that "God sanctions it in the first table of the decalogue. The Assembly declares it to be "totally irreconcilable with the spirit and the principles of the Gospel," while the Address claims the Gospel in its favor. The Assembly declares that its evils "connect themselves with its very existence," while Dr. Thornwell pronounces it "a school of virtue." The Assembly declares it "the duty of all Christians to use their unwearied endeavors to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and, if possible, throughout the world," while Dr. Palmer discovers "a divine trust," committed to the Southern Church, "to preserve and transmit" the system to posterity; and while the Southern Assembly of 1864 declares it to be "the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution;" and while the Address of 1861 says, that "as long as that race, in its comparative degradation, co-exists side by side with the white, bondage is its normal condition:" and while the Southern Assembly of 1865 is emphatic in disclaiming all responsibility for giving freedom to "nearly four million bond-servants."

There is not a church nor a people anywhere to be found in Christendom, save the church and people in the Southern portion of the United States, among whom such sentiments as the foregoing are held ; and yet Dr. Palmer, now the foremost man among them all, and speaking for them all, says : “ Just what we were from 1860 to 1865, we have also been from 1865 to 1875, and shall continue to be until we go to the judgment.” And with most surprising boldness, the Southern Assembly of 1865 declares of slavery, as vindicated in the Address of 1861 : “ We here reaffirm its whole doctrine to be that of Scripture and reason ; it is the old doctrine of the church ;” when the challenge may be safely made to show what branch of the church, in any age of the world, ever held the sentiments, concerning slavery, set forth by the Southern Church and its leading men, until they were proclaimed by them within a very few years immediately preceding the war. We challenge any one to show that the doctrine, that slavery is an “ ordinance of God ” was “ the old doctrine of the church.” More particularly, whoever taught that the negro slavery of the South was “ a school of virtue,” until Dr. Thornwell preached it in his Fast-day sermon, Nov. 21, 1860? Who ever put that system into “ the same category with marriage and civil government,” before the publication of Dr. Ross in 1857? Following Dr. Ross, who ever put it so pointedly that “ these four great relations of human life (the civil, matrimonial, parental, and servile) stand side by side, equally approved of God, and equally rightful among men,” and that “ the Saviour himself, apostles, saints,” etc., “ all accepted slavery as being equally of God with civil government, marriage, or the parental relation,” as Dr. Stuart Robinson, in the *True Presbyterian*, published in Louisville, Ky., during the war? Who ever preached from the pulpit, that to “ preserve and transmit ” the system to posterity was a “ divine trust ” committed to the Southern people, till Dr. Palmer made the remarkable discovery in his sermon of Nov. 29, 1860? Where ever was the doctrine proclaimed, following the lead of Dr. Palmer, that “ it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery,” until the Southern Assembly uttered it in 1864? Who ever published a defense of slavery, declaring that the reader “ will at once recognize in these provisions of the Mosaic law, the same fun-

damental provisions which characterize the slave codes of the Southern States," except Dr. Stuart Robinson, and as late as 1865?*" What church court under heaven ever unanimously, or by any vote, declared of the system, that "God sanctions it in the first table of the decalogue," previous to "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America," in Dec. 1861? And, finally, who ever became so infatuated with negro slavery, as to say of the system, "It might have existed in Paradise, and may continue through the millennium," until Dr. Stuart Robinson published this in his *True Presbyterian*, and until Dr. Joseph R. Wilson preached the millennial phase of it from his pulpit in Georgia, in January, 1861?

We may see, from these intimations, what the sentiments are on this subject, which characterize the leaders and courts of the Southern Church, and which they still hold and propose to carry on "to the judgment;" and we may see, also, how well founded the claim is, that these salient points, or, indeed, any of them, exhibit "the old doctrine of the church."

In this review of the disruption of 1861, and its consequences, it appears very evident that, although slavery is dead, and although its menacing power may never again threaten the integrity of the State, or dismember the church, yet the same principles which gave it such potent sway during the palmy days of its existence, are still cherished in the Southern Church, as a sacred deposit of truth of perpetual obligation. However inconsistent the leaders in that church have been, and still are, in applying these principles to the government of their own conduct, in the pulpit, and in the church courts, they think they should be faithfully observed by the church of the North. Even as late as the meeting of the Baltimore Conference Committees, the Southern Committee, in a passage already quoted, deem a departure from these principles in what they term "political action," as a "serious hindrance to establishing fraternal relations." If the question were union, "this serious hindrance" would become an insurmountable obstacle. This Southern Committee, in illustration of their point, and for condemnation, cite the action of the New School Assembly of 1865, where the Assembly declares "the right of suffrage" to be "but a simple dictate of justice" to

"the colored man in this country." This, at most, is but expressing an opinion upon an incident in the condition of a freeman. Perhaps the opinion should have been withheld. But the Address of 1861, which, upon all these themes, is the Confession of Faith of the Southern Church, goes to the very root of its "philosophy of human rights," when it contradicts the doctrine "that slavery is inconsistent with human rights," and places the slave in his natural "lot, at the bottom of the line" in the scale of humanity, and makes slavery his "normal condition," with no hope of release.

The same peculiarity of view, which so frequently appears in the instances already cited, possesses the Southern Church, whenever its eye turns upon what the Northern Church has said of its opinions and conduct touching slavery and the war. It not only seems utterly oblivious to the fact, that many of its own deliverances, during the war, were intensely "political," in its sense of the term, but equally unaware that it ever cast any disparaging imputations upon the Northern Church. The fact, however, is quite otherwise. Two instances, for illustration, shall close this paper. One is taken from its earliest, and the other from its latest, action; and, singular to observe, these two instances constitute the Southern Church both the earliest and the latest offender in the special matter of "aspersions upon character," the theme which has been the burden of Southern complaint for the last fifteen years. When speaking of the ground held by the Northern Church upon slavery, the Address of 1861 says: "It occupies the position of a prevaricating witness, whom neither party will trust." When the full meaning of such a declaration is weighed, it will be difficult to find in anything uttered by either Northern Assembly during the war, a more deep and sweeping aspersion upon the character or conduct of the Northern Church. This was declared when nothing more had been done by the Northern Assembly than to pass "the Spring resolutions" upon the state of the country. These resolutions declared the duty of loyalty, but cast no personal imputations upon any one. But a "prevaricating witness" is a type of the most unworthy of men. It thus appears that the first General Assembly of the Southern Church which ever met, cast this unpro-

voked imputation upon the whole body of Northern Presbyterians. So, also, in the very latest action of the Southern Church—the sentiments of the Baltimore Committee, passed upon by the General Assembly of 1875—do we find imputations of a similar character. The Committee declare: “We do not hesitate to say, that a church (especially in this country, where separation from the State is, at least, theoretically complete, and still more, a Presbyterian Church, which, holding its noble standards, ought to know better), might so cover itself with disgrace by defiling its garments with things it is forbidden to touch; or, might, also, in matters purely ecclesiastical, so deplorably subvert its own fundamental principles, as to forbid any intercourse whatever. It is the right of every church to judge of each case by itself; and it is especially our right to do this now, and no cause of offense, when invited to a conference, which must, of necessity, bring such considerations under review.” If it be said that the case here put is hypothetical, the reply is, that it would be utterly without pertinence, unless it were intended to make the impression, in the absence of any disclaimer, that it presents a close parallel with the position of the Northern Church as viewed by the Southern. It is what the lawyers call “a legal innuendo.”

We here leave the subject. It gives us no pleasure to make these exhibitions. Truth and justice alone have constrained them. They speak for themselves, and the times demand that they should be gravely pondered; for it is the boast of the leaders of the Southern Church, that they stand to-day where they have stood for the last twenty years, and will stand, there until the grand assize of the world shall sit.