

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. THEOLOGY THE SCIENCE OF RELIGION.¹

THERE are some things relating to the supply of ministers of the gospel about which the leading Christian denominations are substantially agreed. It would be strange if any serious difference existed as to the first and great question of the source of the supply. It is written, "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Ministers are gifts to the church from her triumphant and ascended Lord. As the first verse cited from the Epistle to the Ephesians is a quotation from the sixty-eighth Psalm, the import of the statement of the apostle is that God has never left the church to its own resources in the matter of providing ministers, but has reserved to himself, under every dispensation, the prerogative of furnishing them. This divine arrangement keeps the church dependent on God in a matter upon which her very existence, as well as her growth and prosperity, depends; but it is a wise and gracious one, in that it secures with infallible certainty to the church, in answer to her prayers, an adequate supply of the right kind of ministers, and at the same time enables them to speak as the ambassadors of Christ. The second feature of the divine plan relates to the agency given to the church in the word

¹ Delivered as an inaugural address in Columbia Seminary, May, 1896.

ingly accomplished by departing from Bible teachings as interpreted by principles of common sense, and the evil bound to be evolved in the long run, requires of us the prescience of the All-wise. It is altogether better and safer to go by the law and the testimony; that is, by their natural, unforced meaning. We especially commend these thoughts to our Southern Presbyterians.

“Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed
Make enemies of nations who had else,
Like kindred dewdrops, mingled into one.”

Only the imaginary Mason and Dixon line once divided North and South, but our peculiar institution constituted no “narrow frith,” but “mountains interposed.” The mountain barrier has been levelled by the stroke of revolution; intercommunication and intertraffic, and interchange of visits, and even of populations, are bringing about interfusion of ideas in politics and religion. Now, as, according to our information, the institutional idea is spreading in the upper sections of our one country and the germinating theological ideas in which it probably has its origin and justification, it may not be amiss to ask our own people to follow, in regard to all reforms in church methods hailing from a northern latitude and traversing our traditional conceptions and practices, the Scripture rule: “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

New Orleans.

R. Q. MALLARD.

THE MEMPHIS ASSEMBLY.

The Assembly was aggressive from start to finish. The Presbyterian Church in the United States inherits a conservative temperament, dwells in a conservative section, breathes a conservative atmosphere, and is considered to be one of the most conservative ecclesiastical bodies in Christendom. The recent Assembly demonstrated that this pronounced conservatism does not prevent aggressive action along all the great lines of church effort.

The preceding Assembly at Dallas, Texas, had been characterized as “the declining Assembly,” because of the negative answer which it gave to much of the business presented for its consideration. There was evident an apprehension that the Memphis Assembly would follow in the footsteps of its predecessor, and many thought one of the commissioners had sounded the key-note of the court for 1896, when, on the second morning, he prefaced a report with the story of an old

man who upon his decease was eulogized by the officiating minister with the remark, "Our departed friend had few virtues—and those mostly of a negative character." Perhaps the Assembly's virtues were "few." It cannot, however, be charged that these were "mostly of a negative character."

A convenient phrase with church courts that are anxious to shirk responsibility, or avoid vexed and difficult problems, is, "The time has not yet arrived." Granted that the measure proposed is important and desirable, but "the time has not yet arrived." Before this masterly stroke of ecclesiastical forensic every argument bites the dust. The writer does not recall a single advocate of masterly inactivity in the recent Assembly; not once when the silence of the body was broken by the pleading voice of a commissioner, stirred with the conviction that "the time had not yet arrived." There was action, positive, aggressive action, on nearly every subject considered. The Secretaries and their Executive Committees had no difficulty in getting all they asked for. One good brother, whose benevolent countenance and patriarchal beard remind one of the pictures of Abraham, fairly beamed with joy over the speedy method with which he was launched upon another year of service, chuckling with a deep contentment which announced that, at last, he had reached a place

"Where the wicked cease from troubling,
And the weary are at rest."

Instances of the positive and aggressive spirit of the Assembly may be found in the practical election of a Sunday-School Secretary after the Presbyteries had voted largely in the negative; in the adoption of a new and vastly improved form for Sunday-school reports; in endorsing the contract between the Assembly's Home and School and the city council of Fredericksburg, Va.; in the instruction given to the Permanent Committee on the Sabbath to arrange for a monster petition to Congress in behalf of better Sabbath observance; in refusing to sustain the Presbytery of Charleston in rejecting a candidate for the ministry because he was a negro; and in the instruction given to the Publication Committee in behalf of the Young People's Societies.

Memphis, the city where the Assembly was entertained, has a population of 75,000 people, and a hospitality that is "ferocious." It is a splendid city of imposing business blocks, handsome residences, fine churches, lovely drives, and genial people. Church life is active. Presbyterianism, with ten ministers, ten churches, and 2,155 communicants, is a dominant influence in the city's life. One of the

largest and best-managed Sunday-schools in the South is that of the First Methodist Church, whose superintendent, Mr. J. R. Pepper, is almost as well known and beloved by Presbyterians as by the people of his own denomination. This First Methodist Church and the First Presbyterian Church, in which the Assembly met, are separated by an alley; but the line which divides their Christian sympathies and mutual esteem is even less. The handsome class-rooms and all the church appointments of our Methodist friends were placed at the disposal of the Assembly, and contributed no little to the comfortable despatch of the work assigned to the various committees. The arrangements at the First Presbyterian Church were faultless. Post-office, telephone and telegraph accommodations, correspondence rooms, lobby, &c, were had on the first floor. Never was there pleasanter or more indefatigable host than the pastor, Dr. E. A. Ramsey, and the committee at his back.

Among the delightful courtesies shown the commissioners were excursions by the railroads and street-car lines, and an organ recital and reception by the Second Church. Dr. Woods, the affable pastor of the Second Church, and his good people, surrendered themselves and their magnificent church building to the Assembly on Tuesday evening, May 26th. The splendor and beauty of the edifice was a revelation, to many, of the triumph of church architecture; the welcome of the people the perfection of cordial church hospitality.

Another equally delightful occasion was the "welcome night" in the First Church. This was on the evening of the first day of the session, and consisted of several brief speeches with appropriate rejoinders. Here a dramatic incident occurred. Among the speakers were Rev. R. D. Smart, D. D., pastor of the First Methodist Church of Memphis, and Rev. C. R. Hemphill, D. D., the retiring Moderator. Both these gentlemen are alumni of Columbia Seminary, and were personal friends before either had decided to study for the ministry. They were on the programme, each without the knowledge of the other, Dr. Smart to speak on "Fellowship," and Dr. Hemphill to respond. In his remarks Dr. Smart went back to earlier days, and related how he had been instrumental in leading his Presbyterian brother, Dr. Hemphill, to give up the law and enter the gospel ministry. The response from Dr. Hemphill was an eloquent and glowing tribute to the saintly professors who had taught the two men that stood there gazing earnestly into each other's faces, and then had sent them out from the walls of the same theological school, the one to fill the most important

pulpits of Southern Methodism, and the other to occupy the Moderator's chair of our own beloved Zion.

Dr. Hemphill's sermon in opening the Assembly was on "The Love of the Holy Ghost," a theme most appropriate, and preached with great power. It sounded the key-note of the Assembly.

In the selection of Moderator there was a departure, ostensibly in the interests of spirituality. It was determined to pray for the guidance of the Holy Ghost and to ballot without nominations, as though the Holy Ghost could not inspire a nomination as well as a secret vote. The result of the first ballot showed, to adopt the phrase of the jovial stated clerk, that "nearly every man had voted for himself"; but, according to the terms of the original motion, all names were dropped save the two receiving the highest number of votes. Three, however, had received this, two tying. The second ballot gave us an election, and Rev. R. Q. Mallard, D. D., of the Presbytery of New Orleans, took up the gavel. Perhaps no better compliment could be paid to Dr. Mallard's moderatorship than to say that he closed the Assembly, having won the loving esteem of every commissioner. There are better parliamentarians than Dr. Mallard, men firmer in their rulings, and swifter in the dispatch of business; but a kindlier-hearted, more courteous, Christian gentleman never occupied the Moderator's chair. His impromptu speeches were strikingly happy, and his rejoinders always graceful.

The Assembly was conspicuous for the presence of a large number of able and intelligent ruling elders, who took a prominent part in the discussions, and were influential to a marked degree in shaping the decisions of the court.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures were literally submerged by a tide of overtures; but, like cork, they bobbed up serenely, and, if I remember correctly, all of their reports went through without so much as the scratch of a pen, albeit they frequently provoked the hottest debate.

Some of the important measures adopted by the Assembly on the recommendation of this committee were the following: the *endorsement* of the "Peace" overture from Knoxville Presbytery; *provision* for annual reports from the churches of the work of Westminster Leagues, or Young People's Societies; an *opinion* that "it is competent for a Presbytery to choose as its commissioner to the General Assembly any ruling elder under its jurisdiction"; *instruction* to the stated clerk to make out a complete schedule of the collections ordered

by the Assembly, the time at which they are to be taken, the address of the treasurers to whom they are to be sent, and to publish the schedule each year in the Appendix to the *Minutes of the General Assembly*; an *opinion* that it is constitutional and regular that a session should be moderated by another than a minister, the church having a pastor who is at the time absent; an *opinion* that the provision of our *Book of Church Order* referring to extraordinary cases applies to ordination as well as to licensure; an *opinion* that a pastor can be installed only by a Presbytery, or by a commission of the Presbytery; an *opinion* that one elder does not constitute a session, and that the pastor, where there are no elders, does not constitute a session; an *opinion* that the charge of the temporal affairs of the church does not inhere in the office of the deacon, but may be committed to the deacons by the session.

Two judicial cases claimed the attention of the General Assembly.

The first came upon a complaint from Mr. J. A. Enslow, a ruling elder of Westminster Church, Charleston, S. C., against the action of the Synod of South Carolina for excepting to the minutes of Charleston Presbytery in refusing to receive Reuben James, a colored man, as a candidate for the gospel ministry. The only objection the Charleston Presbytery had to the candidate was his color. It was admitted on all sides that, had Reuben's skin been white instead of black, the case would never have come before the Assembly. The discussion was prolonged, impassioned, but never bitter. A technical point raised was as to whether the power of the church was autocratic or administrative. But the Assembly refused to be led into a metaphysical fog-bank, or to be befuddled by hair-splitting technicalities in the presence of the great principle involved. By a vote of 119 to 18 (nine voting to sustain in part) the Assembly declined to sustain Mr. Enslow's complaint; and decided that a man must not be shut out of the ministry of the Southern Presbyterian Church because he is a negro.

This action must not be interpreted as favoring amalgamation of any kind between whites and blacks. It is, however, an emphatic endorsement of our work for the negroes, and of our determination to take care of them within our own church lines until they become strong enough to be set off into ecclesiastical bodies of their own.

The other judicial case was on the complaint of Dr. E. M. Richardson and others against the Synod of Memphis. The point involved was as to whether the proceedings of a commission could be annulled or amended by the court appointing it, or whether it was a coördinate

court, reviewable only by the next higher court to that appointing. It was announced in the outset that this was merely "a friendly suit," entered for the purpose of securing an interpretation of the *Book of Church Order* on commissions. The case, however, turned the Assembly into a debating society, and ere the discussion closed one was reminded of Dr. Brown's story of the countryman, who, being asked to account for the gravity of his dog, replied: "Oh, sir! life is full of sairiousness to him—he can just never get enuech o' fechtin." The discussion was very grave, even to belligerency, of a strictly orthodox and ecclesiastical variety, no one being hurt, and all contestants coming together with a good-natured "howdy-do" at the close. By a vote of 75 to 19 the Assembly decided that the Presbytery has power to review and reverse the finding of a commission. The reasoning on which this decision is based may be stated in a syllogism, as follows:

The right of one court to review another presupposes the superiority of the court reviewing over the court reviewed. (Cf. *Book of Church Order*, Chap. XIII., Par. 1.) The Presbytery has the right to review a commission. (Cf. *Book of Church Order*, Chap. V., Sec. VII., Par. 1.) Therefore, the commission is not a coördinate, but an inferior court to the Presbytery.

As to what is meant by the "review" of an inferior by a superior court, the *Book* is plain, stating four kinds of review, at least three of which would seem to vindicate the Assembly's verdict. (Cf. *Book of Church Order*, Chap. XIII., Sect. I., Par. 2.)

The cause of Home Missions was given an evening, during which a number of short, pointed talks were made by specialists. A full-blooded Indian elder, Mr. Silas Bacon, and the Rev. Mr. Gibbons, told of the work in the Indian Territory. Rev. J. H. Zivley and Rev. S. J. McMurray described the work in Texas, dwelling especially on the need of Christian effort among the 80,000 to 100,000 Mexicans in Texas, who seem much more open to the gospel than their fellow-countrymen living on Mexican soil. The story of the church in Florida, where in twelve years our membership has increased 176 per cent., was told by Mr. F. W. Merrin. The Assembly asks the churches to contribute \$50,000 for this work during the current year.

No work came up to the Assembly in better shape than that presented in the annual report of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions. The past year has been one of evident blessing and decided progress. Instead of reporting a heavy debt, as is the case

with nearly all the other great foreign mission boards and committees, our committee closed the year with a balance in the treasury. The receipts were \$142,000, being an increase of \$10,000 over the previous year. Nineteen new missionaries have been sent out, and the cost of administering the office has been proportionately less than during any year in the entire history of the church. Among the many important recommendations adopted by the Assembly in behalf of this work, the following is of especial interest and importance:

"It is resolved by the Assembly that the Executive Committee be directed to withdraw the offer heretofore made of part of our property at Campinas to the Synod of Brazil, for the purposes of a theological seminary; and that the Executive Committee be instructed to consider the propriety of discontinuing, and are hereby authorized to discontinue, if it seem best to them, the professorship now maintained by us in the Theological Seminary of the Synod of Brazil, now located at Sao Paulo, until the need for such an institution shall become more apparent than at present, and until the question as to its permanent location shall be decided by the native church."

Dr. E. M. Richardson, the faithful Secretary of Education, and his committee at Memphis, still survive, despite the overtures praying that their work be transferred to the Publication Committee at Richmond, Va. The expenses of this office have been reduced to a minimum, amounting to only \$1,300 per annum, outside of expenses for travelling, printing, and postage. The contributions to Education for the past year were \$17,547.

In connection with the Publication work, the question of locating book depositories in the leading Southern cities came up. This is an old question, possessing wonderful longevity. It has been before every Assembly for the last dozen years, and yet its vigor is unimpaired and its natural force unabated. It threatens to be, in one respect at least, like the order of Melchizedek, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life." The opinion was ventured by one of the speakers that the real trouble was the location of the publication house so far from the centre of the church's territory. Locate it at some central point, such as Nashville, or Atlanta, easy of access to the entire church, and the cry for depositories will cease. To this the Secretary replied that perhaps 90 per cent. in number, not in value, of all orders sent out, went by mail, and therefore the question of location was of small importance. To a thoughtful mind, however, the inquiry would be raised as to whether the explanation of this

very small proportion of orders sent by express may not be found in the unfortunate location of the Publication House. Locate it centrally, and might not the number of "express orders" jump up to the number of orders mailed? The Assembly gave the answer of former years to the petition, viz., that it is not practicable at present.

Nothing in connection with the Publication work is more important than the action taken with regard to a Sunday School Secretary. The report adopted is as follows:

"Your committee, to whom was referred the matter of a 'Sunday School Secretary,' and the report of the *ad interim* committee appointed 'to prepare a series of graded lessons for use in our Sabbath-schools, which shall be supplemental to the International Lessons, and which shall develop more fully our denominational doctrines and principles of government,' would respectfully report:

"1. That we have examined the answers of the Presbyteries, as far as filed with us, and find that a majority of them have voted against having a Sunday School Secretary. Your committee would respectfully recommend:

"(1), That without setting aside or disturbing the International Lessons as used in our Sunday-schools, this General Assembly direct 'the *ad interim* committee,' appointed by the General Assembly at Dallas, to proceed at once to prepare a supplemental course of study for use in all the grades of our Sunday-schools, in which shall be developed more fully our denominational doctrines and principles of government, embracing the course of study outlined in their report.

"(2), That as soon as these lessons are prepared and issued, the Presbyteries encourage our young people in the study of said system of graded lessons, by giving a certificate to all who will finish this course and stand a satisfactory examination upon the same, and a diploma to those who complete a normal course, said diplomas and certificates to be given by the Presbyteries or church sessions as the former may prescribe.

"(3), That a home class department be established in connection with each Sabbath-school under our care.

"That in view of the importance of the Sunday-school as an agency in building up our church, the Committee of Publication be directed to give special attention to a fuller and more satisfactory exposition of the lesson for primary classes, and to cheapen the cost, if possible.

"2. That the Committee of Publication be directed to employ a suitable man, who shall devote his whole time to the pushing and de-

velopment of the Sunday-school and colportage work, especially as a missionary agency."

In order to meet the additional expense which this entails, a "rally-day" was ordered, with a special collection.

The Publication Committee were also ordered to prepare for the use of the Young People's societies "a series of topics adapted to the teaching and propagation of Presbyterian faith and practice."

Dr. Phillips had Saturday night for the presentation of the colored work. Addresses were made by the Secretary, and also by Revs. I. C. Chandler and L. L. Wells, two colored ministers, the latter of whom was present as a commissioner from Ethel Presbytery. The effort is making by the Executive Committee of Colored Evangelization to purchase the Ferguson-Williams College at Abbeville, South Carolina. This institution has an enrollment of one hundred and fifty-two, of whom forty-eight are boarding pupils, and six are promising young men who desire to study for the gospel ministry. Of the seven thousand dollars needed for the purchase, two thousand dollars has been pledged by the Synod of South Carolina, and the committee was instructed to raise the rest.

The experimental farm at Tuskaloosa having reverted to the former owners through the redemption of the mortgage, request was made for a farm of fifty or one hundred acres and suitable buildings, where the negro students can earn a portion of their support. Before the Assembly closed there were two responses to this request, one offering one hundred acres of land near New Orleans, the other offering a similar tract near Selma, Alabama.

The effort to organize an independent colored church during the past year failed, and the Assembly decided that the work is not sufficiently advanced for this departure. At present there are four colored Presbyteries, two of which are independent. Outside of these Presbyteries there are thirty-six colored churches widely scattered. The Assembly determined to raise fifteen thousand dollars for this work during the present year.

The customary fraternal greetings were sent out to sister Assemblies in session at the same time. An effort was made to decrease the number of delegates to the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance from thirty-two to ten, on the ground of expense, but it failed. The delegates, however, were instructed to see if the expenses of the Alliance could not be pro-rated on a less burdensome basis.

The following plan of coöperation was adopted:

"The Boards and Committees of Home Missions, Church Erection, Freedmen's Missions, and Sabbath-school Work of the American Churches in 'The Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian system,' both in the United States and Canada, recognizing with gratitude to God their substantial unity both in faith and polity, do agree upon the following principles of action for their guidance in their work, namely:

"1. That in the work of all these Boards, as related to each other, the authority of the church courts is to be recognized as final.

"2. That there shall be no interference with churches, missions, or Sabbath-schools at present existing, unless by voluntary agreement between the denominations directly concerned.

"3. That ordinarily no churches, missions, or Sabbath-schools shall be established in small communities where the field is fully occupied by other Presbyterian or Reformed Churches.

"4. That the supreme judicatories of the several churches recommend their church members, when moving into new communities in which there is no congregation of their own church, to unite for the time being with some other Presbyterian or Reformed Church, if such there be.

"5. That if cases of difference of opinion arise in connection with the work, they shall be referred for consideration and amicable adjustment to the missionary authorities of the denomination directly concerned."

The matter which occasioned, perhaps, the hottest fight in the Assembly was on "a contract" between the Assembly's Home and School and the city council of Fredericksburg, Virginia, by which the city voted the interest on ten thousand dollars' worth of bonds to the school on condition that tuition in the Collegiate Institute be given each year to ten of the proficient pupils from the city's public schools. The conditions were as follows: The Assembly's Home and School consists of three departments—a Bible Training School, a Church Home, and a Collegiate Institute. The first two are religious and denominational; the last is not, enrolling pupils from Jews and Catholics as well as Protestants. It is in this last that the city's pupils secure tuition. Desiring better educational facilities, not caring to go to the expense of establishing a high school, and anxious to increase the prosperity of the Assembly's Home and School, because of the annual expenditure of a large sum of money which it brought to the town, the city council entered into this contract. Enabling acts, both for the

school, which is an institution chartered by the State, and for the city council, were passed by the Legislature of Virginia. The contract gives neither any control over the other.

Those who opposed countenancing this contract held that it squinted toward the union of church and state, and that, whatever might be the various departments of the institution, the fact was that the entire school, in the end, was benefited by "the trade," and the practical effect was for the state to aid a sectarian enterprise. It was claimed that, if Roman Catholics instead of Protestants were the beneficiaries, there would be no hesitation in condemning it.

The other side admitted that the contract was advantageous to the institution, else it would never have become a party to it, but claimed that it was advantageous only because additional pupils were thus secured, in return for whose tuition-fees a *quid pro quo*, in the form of instruction, was given. It was shown that, if the doctrine of our church as to the separation of church and state was transgressed by this contract, it would be impossible for the church to sell the city a piece of ground, or to enter into any sort of compact which was mutually advantageous, without transgressing said doctrine. If this contract was to be annulled, the church must refuse to allow its property to be exempt from taxation. With regard to government aid for Catholic schools, it was claimed that the cases were in no sense parallel, inasmuch as the Catholic schools give sectarian instruction, and are established for the purpose of religious propagandism. After a full and free discussion of all that "the contract" involved, the Assembly, by a vote of 93 to 45, adopted the following:

"The committee to which was referred the overture from the Presbytery of St. Louis, praying that a certain contract between the mayor and commonalty of Fredericksburg, Va., on the one hand, and the Assembly's Home and School on the other, be annulled or re-adjusted, would report as follows:

"The Assembly would reaffirm the time-honored traditions and cardinal doctrine of our church, setting forth the teachings of sacred Scripture concerning the absolute separation of church and state.

"It would record its protest against any sort of compact between these two institutions by which either would gain control over the other.

"It would also express its emphatic disapproval of the use of the public state funds for purposes of sectarian education, religious propagandism, or in any such manner as to foster civil interference or ecclesiastical aggressiveness.

"At the same time the Assembly is constrained to answer the overture in the negative, and for the following reasons:

"1. It does not appear from 'the contract' that the \$10,000 in question is a gift. It is distinctly declared to be in payment for the tuition of ten students which the city may elect to send to the Collegiate Institute.

"2. It is not a violation of 'fundamental civil law,' as appears from the fact that the Legislature of Virginia has passed a special bill authorizing the compact here under discussion.

"3. It is not the 'repudiation of a distinctive' principle of our church, unless such distinctive principle denies to the church the right of contracting with the civil authorities, under any and all circumstances, when a *quid pro quo* is given and received.

"4. It does not commit the church to secular education in any sense other than that which obtained before said contract was made."

A protest, signed by a large number of those voting in the minority, was admitted. In answer to this protest, the Assembly deemed it sufficient to cite in full "the contract."

A request came from the Synod of Texas, asking that the Assembly encourage a monster petition to Congress and State Legislatures for laws to forbid the running of railroad trains on the Sabbath. On the introduction of this business, oratory became rampant. The eloquence of the Assembly, that had seemed to slumber, awoke, and "speechifying," that swept from states' rights to prohibition, electrified the body. One was reminded of the Fourth of July orator, who, about the time of the Mexican war, declared that this country was "bounded on the north by the Aurora Borealis, on the east by the rising sun, on the west by the horizon, and on the south by as far as you have a mind to go." After this pyrotechnical display of rhetorical sky-rockets had spent itself, the Assembly came excitedly to a vote, and by a goodly majority instructed the Permanent Committee on the Sabbath to get up the petition. All were agreed as to the desirability of stopping railroad traffic on the Sabbath. The doubt was as to whether a petition would accomplish anything in this direction, and as to whether this is the method by which the Lord would have the church make conquest of the kingdom of darkness.

The following action with regard to celebrating the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the standards of the Presbyterian Church was taken:

"The General Assembly commends to the Presbyteries and Synods

the propriety of observing the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the Westminster symbols of doctrine, and that order be taken by this Assembly to celebrate this event in connection with the sessions of the General Assembly of 1897. To carry this order into effect, it is recommended that the Assembly appoint an *ad interim* committee to prepare a programme of commemorative exercises, and to select speakers for the occasion."

A committee, consisting of Rev. J. Henry Smith, D. D., Rev. F. R. Beattie, D. D., Rev. W. M. McPheeters, D. D., Rev. T. C. Johnson, D. D., Rev. W. A. Alexander, D. D., and Rev. Jno. A. Preston, D. D., was appointed to prepare a programme and select speakers.

The Bible cause was eloquently presented by Dr. McLean, one of the Secretaries of the American Bible Society. He stated that 890,000 copies of the Bible had been distributed during the past year in foreign countries. The need of increased offerings for this work is seen in the fact that the expenditures for last year were \$80,000 in excess of the receipts.

The Rev. John Grisanti, formerly a Romish priest, but now a Presbyterian minister, and pastor of the Italian church in Memphis, presented the greetings of the Evangelical Church of Italy. This is the last-born child of the Presbyterian household, having recently celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of its existence. It now numbers twenty-nine churches, forty-two stations, eighteen ordained ministers, eight evangelists, one thousand eight hundred and forty-nine Sunday-school children, one thousand four hundred and fifty communicants, and a constituency of about five thousand. A number of the prominent men of Italy have been communicants of this church.

The reports from the Theological Seminaries showed sixty students at Union, sixty at Louisville, twenty-seven at Columbia, and thirty-three in the Divinity School of the Southwestern Presbyterian University.

At Union, Dr. Strickler has accepted the chair of Systematic Theology, and Mr. W. L. Lingle has been elected tutor in Hebrew and Greek.

At Louisville, the students are reported as active in city mission work. Lectures on the Sabbath-school will be a prominent feature in the next year's course.

At Columbia, Drs. Tadlock and Laws have been reelected to their chairs, subject to the approval of the controlling synods.

At the Southwestern Presbyterian University, lectures on Home Mission work, by men prominent therein, has been an especial feature of the last year's course.

Rev. R. E. Steele, in an earnest speech, presented the work of the Seamen's Bethel. Under the patronage of the "American Seamen's Friend Society," the work is now being pushed in New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, Norfolk, and elsewhere.

I have said nothing of the mistakes of the Assembly. If one cared to do so he might find something to criticise. For instance, it was, to say the least, an unfortunate inadvertence that created the incongruity in one of the judicial cases, by which one and the self-same man sat as Chairman of the Judicial Committee, acted as counsel for the respondent, voted as a member of the court deciding, and, as judge, formulated the court's decision.

An ignorance of parliamentary law and of the *Book of Church Order*, on the part of some of the commissioners, sometimes retarded business, and occasionally precipitated parliamentary chaos. But these were not serious blemishes; besides, criticism is such a cheap accomplishment. Dr. Johnson has somewhere declared it to be "a study by which men grow important and formidable at very small expense; . . . and he whom nature has made weak, and idleness keeps ignorant, may yet support his vanity by the name of critic."

The Assembly will not be renowned for any startlingly great thing it did. It will, however, go down in the annals of the church as a court which grappled in a determined and courageous way with the not few intricate questions that came before it, and which approached all the great departments of church effort with the uplook and the outlook. It came to its adjournment without having once marred its deliberations with personal rancor. As the good Moderator offered the closing prayer, he seemed to lead us into the very and beatific presence of the Great Head of the church; and as the great tide of congregational song rose in the words of "Blest be the tie that binds," eyes grew moist, and hearts beat with gratitude for the sweet fellowship that lives under the blue banner of our Presbyterian faith.

Nashville, Tenn.

JAMES I. VANCE.

DR. W. H. GREEN'S JUBILEE.

From the very nature of the case, jubilee occasions are rare. And yet within the last quarter-century Princeton Seminary has had the unusual distinction of celebrating two of them. Each was a memora-