

THE
SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. X.]

JULY, MDCCCLVII.

[NO. 2.

ART. I.—MIRACLES.

Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord. By RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, M. A., Vicar of Itchen Stoke, Hants; Professor of Divinity, King's College, London; Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Oxford; and late Hulsean Lecturer. Second ed. London: John W. Parker, West Strand. 1847. Pp. 467.

On Miracles. By RALPH WARDLAW, D. D. "What sign showest thou, then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?"—THE JEWS TO JESUS. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, No. 285 Broadway. 1853. Pp. 295.

An Inquiry into the Proofs, Nature, and Extent of Inspiration, and into the Authority of Scripture. By the Rev, SAMUEL HINDS, M. A., of Queen's College, and Vice-Principal of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford. Oxford: Printed by W. Baxter, for B. Fellowes, Ludgate Street, London; and J. Parker, Oxford. 1831.

ALL the departures from the ancient faith concerning the authority of the Scriptures, which have distinguished modern speculation, may be traced directly, whatever may be said of the perverseness of the heart as the ultimate cause, to an insuperable repugnance to the admission of miracles. The supernatural has been the stone of stumbling and the rock of offence. The antipathy to it has given rise to open infidelity, on the one hand, and to the various types of criticism, on the other, which, in consequence of their agreement in rejecting everything that transcends the ordinary agencies of nature, have been classed under the common name of Rationalism. If the immediate intervention of God, either in the world of matter or of mind, is assumed to be intrinsically incredible, nothing

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1857.

Now I go with gladness to our home,
 With gladness thou shalt come ;
 There I will wait
 To meet thee at Heaven's gate.
 Hallelujah !

Dearest ! what delight again to share
 Our sweet communion there !
 To walk among
 The holy ransomed throng.
 Hallelujah !

Here, in many a grief, our hearts were one,
 But there in joys alone ;
 Joy fading never,
 Increasing deepening ever.
 Hallelujah !

Not to mortal sight can it be given
 To know the bliss of Heaven ;
 But thou shalt be
 Soon there, and sing with me.
 Hallelujah !

Meet again ! yes, we shall meet again,
 Though now we part in pain !
 Together all
 His people Christ shall call.
 Hallelujah !

ART. IV.—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1857.

THE GENERAL Assembly which lately convened at Lexington, was said to be the most numerous assembly of our church that ever met. Many who have had large experience, also, pronounced it a very harmonious assembly. Its members were sent there by Presbyteries extending from Northern Indiana to Texas, from

California to Maryland ; and yet, while their discussions, on many points, were earnest and spirited, not an un-christian word was spoken, and not an unbrotherly sentiment expressed. It was likewise, if we mistake not, one of the least protracted of all our assemblies, for it adjourned on the tenth day. That a very harmonious body should be able to despatch its business with rapidity, is, of course, quite natural ; but that a very large assembly should be remarkable for harmony and despatch, is a little singular, and perhaps not very easy to be explained. Was there less business than is common ? Were there fewer cases than is common of *Cacoethes Loquendi* amongst the members of this assembly ? Had we a better Moderator than most of his predecessors ? The first question we would answer negatively, and the second affirmatively. As to the third, we say unhesitatingly, that while the best friend of Dr. Van Rensselaer would not claim that he had excelled all who ever moderated before him, yet, on the other hand, his worst enemy, (if such a man as he have any enemies at all) must admit that he presided with dignity, ability, impartiality, courtesy and firmness. We think it a very possible thing for a presiding officer to communicate his own spirit, in some measure, to the body. And yet why need we seek any other explanation of the matter than the power and influence of the good hand of our God upon us ? Our King and our Head is the God of all grace, to whose name be the glory of all the excellency or beauty that ever shines in his church !

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR.

There is one observation, however, which ought to be made regarding the election of Moderator in the last Assembly. This is believed to be the first time that nominations have been accompanied with argument. Judge Fine, in nominating Dr. Van Rensselaer, allowed himself to urge his election as the due reward of Dr. Van Rensselaer's long and faithful services ; and the Rev. Mr. McIlvaine, pleading the example which had just been set before him, detailed some of the important services of the venerable man whom he nominated,—in particular, his having been the father of the Board of Foreign Missions ; and earnestly enquired, “if it were not time he should be properly honored for all this ?” We suppose the venerable father has been, and is honored properly and truly by the church, though never elected Moderator of the Assembly. And we are sure the Master will reward him, of His infinite grace, for every service he has rendered. It is belittling to the services of Dr. Swift and Dr. Van Rensselaer, and it is dishonoring to the men themselves, to talk of their being *rewarded* by compliments or by offices. Still more it *demoralizes* the Assembly itself to have some of its

most respected members set up as candidates, whose friends are to make speeches of recommendation for them to the House.

ATTENDANCE OF RULING ELDERS.

The roll of the Assembly presents us 278 names. Of these, 152 were ministers, and 126 elders—that is, the elders were fewer than the ministers by only 26 names. Surely this looks like some progress and development of the idea that the Ruling Elder is the aboriginal Presbyterian. It is plain that not simply in the church at large, but also amongst the elders themselves, there is a conviction, now at length, of this aboriginal Presbyterian's having a higher end in attending her courts than simply (as Dr. Breckinridge says it used to be understood) that he might "let down the bars for the minister to pass through." Perhaps the time will come when they shall be of use in keeping up bars which ministers may be too willing to let down for themselves.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

In the appointment of the Standing Committees and the Committees on Synodical Records, we notice that the Moderator succeeded in distributing the duties to be performed amongst nearly all the members of the Assembly. We have found a few names of ministers on more than one committee, and a few names of elders on no committee at all. But to a greater extent than has been customary, as we suppose, the work to be done was divided out amongst all present at the beginning. We regard this a matter of importance. In addition to this, it is unquestionably very desirable that for several days, at the outset, the Assembly should hold no afternoon meeting. By dividing the whole work to be done amongst the whole body, and then giving time for the committees to meet and consider carefully what is referred to them, the business of the church might be done with despatch, and at the same time with due deliberation. We think, one reason why the house got to the end of the docket at Lexington in ten days, was, that, to a certain extent, it adopted this plan. But without doubt, every man present is aware that during the last three days, many things were too rapidly despatched.

A large part of the reports from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, were reports only from single individuals of that committee. After the third day, the Assembly refused to give up the afternoon to committees; whereupon the Committee on Bills and Overtures, unwilling to quit the Assembly during its regular meetings, divided what remained of their business amongst the individual men that composed it. Accordingly, instead of the well-considered judgment of a large and able committee upon the difficult and important matters committed to them, the Assembly had the individual judgment of one man; and accordingly, also,

the matters in question were either discussed by the whole house at a great sacrifice of time and patience, or else were very unceremoniously passed over.

OPENING SERMON.

In the absence of Dr. M'Farland, the last Moderator, Dr. Hoge preached to the Assembly a very edifying sermon from the text: "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world." Christ's presence always with His ministers and His church, was the subject of discourse, and it was handled with delightful simplicity, solemnity, and unction.

PLACE OF NEXT MEETING.

Cincinnati, Rochester, Philadelphia and New Orleans, were nominated. The chief contest lay between the two last named points. The advocates of New Orleans, besides the usefulness of our meeting there to the cause of the Presbyterian Church in the South West, seemed to urge nothing else except that it would not involve any real danger to the valuable lives and the precious health of the members of the Assembly. The speakers adverse to New Orleans, did not express any fear of carrying the Assembly thither, but the speakers for New Orleans seemed instinctively to harp upon this one point in her defence, as though they knew that that was considered to be the real point of weakness in their case. No doubt they remembered how, in Buffalo, the Assembly had preferred Nashville to New Orleans expressly on the ground of danger from Yellow Fever! At the same time in favour of Philadelphia, it was maintained to be peculiarly appropriate, that the Assembly should meet there next year, because it will be the hundredth anniversary of the union on that spot, of the Synods of New York and Philadelphia. "Thither (said the speaker) let us go, and there let us raise our Ebenezer, God having blessed us for these hundred years." "But," (it was replied,) "there is no special importance in celebrating that historical event in Philadelphia. If it would be pleasant and interesting to go to Philadelphia, where the church was born and cradled, for the celebration of that centenary, so, also, in another aspect, it would be striking and impressive to go out and celebrate it in those remote regions to which the church has since advanced. And after all that had been heard on that floor, it was of great importance to go to New Orleans, expressly that the Assembly might not again exhibit an unworthy timidity. - We encourage our Missionaries to go out into the dark and dangerous places of the earth, and it does not become the Assembly to suffer the fear of yellow fever to be continually hunting it like a ghost and frightening it from its propriety. Let us go down to New Orleans, and at that outpost celebrate the great things God has done

for us during these hundred years. We took flight first from Philadelphia; let us go and take a second flight from the far off regions of the South West!"

Upon taking the vote, New Orleans had a clear majority of nine over all the other nominations put together, and its friends testified their gratification by audible applause, which the Moderator very properly checked at once. We confess to a very decided feeling of satisfaction with the result, quite independent of any share we had personally in the discussion. We viewed it as a distinct deliverance of the house specifically to this effect, that we will hold the next General Assembly, God willing, at the Crescent City, all former fears about yellow fever to the contrary, notwithstanding. The question having come directly before the Assembly as a question of faith in God's providence, it would have been a sad thing, had the church said again, that she could not trust herself in New Orleans, in the month of May, which is just about two months before the fever ever begins there. We regret the change of the time of meeting, which was subsequently made, as being a small result of the same fears which on this occasion had been overcome. As to the matter of suffering from the heat of the weather in New Orleans so late in May, which we heard enlarged upon, in private, by the dwellers in the far North and North West, we opine it will be found to be true in the case of our brethren next spring, as it generally is, that persons from the North, in ordinary health, bear a first summer in the South, better than the Southern people themselves; just as it is a fact that persons from the South, in ordinary health, bear a first winter at the North better than the Northern people do themselves. If our country, our whole country, be, indeed, the field of the Old School Presbyterian Church, as is now more than ever her peculiar hope and rejoicing, let us accept the mission cheerfully; and let the General Assembly go from time to time, North and South, East and West, as Providence may direct.

" No burning heats by day
Nor blasts of evening air
Shall take our health away
If God be with us there.
We'll go and come
Nor fear to die, till from on high
He calls us home."

DELEGATES FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES.

The only delegate from New England to the Assembly, was the Rev. Mr. Butler, of Vermont. He read a respectful address to the body, expressing kindness and Christian love for us, and acknowledging that our church is "resting in glorious truths," "abounding in blessed examples of living piety," and "doing a

great work in the vast field we occupy." He hinted inoffensively at the subject of slavery, saying that if compelled now, as in the beginning, to differ in some things, the same charity which animated their fathers and ours ought to prevail betwixt us their sons. But he appeared to us, we confess, to employ a spice of something like arrogance and assumption when he said, Vermont has "no rich prairies for the golden harvest; no sunny land for the palmetto and magnolia; no deep waters for the ships of the sea and the commerce of the world, but only a cold climate and a rugged soil, and that her people are, almost by consequence, industrious, frugal, and moral, robust, enterprising, loyal and liberty-loving." Also that her "distinctive mission appears to be, to build school-houses and raise men." If their cold climate and rugged soil involve *almost as a consequence* their industry, morality, love of liberty, and other like moral qualities, of course the rich soil and the sunny sky which he ascribed to us, involved, about as consequentially, that we should be indolent and immoral and should hate liberty. In like manner, if their "distinctive mission" is to build school-houses and raise men, of course we can have no just claim to any education, unless we have imported it from Vermont, and must be all a race of bearded boys instead of men, except in so far as there may be found amongst us a sprinkling of Green Mountaineers. The Moderator evidently perceived this slight odour of arrogance, for, while very kind and courteous in his reply to Mr. Butler's address, returning the olive branch of peace for the evergreen, which Mr. Butler presented us, he yet said to him bluntly, "You tell us your mission is to raise men. Do not suppose you have the monopoly of that business; we, also, are trying to do something in the same line, and are glad to have you for fellow-workers. You tell us that you are a liberty-loving people. We also love liberty, and we appreciate in others that love of it which is loyal and conservative." Yes! Presbyterians do love liberty, and have always been foremost amongst its defenders. It was so in Geneva, and in Scotland, and in England, and it was so when these free and independent States were British colonies. And so must it be always, from the very nature of the principles of Presbyterians. And yet, is it equally true and manifest, that Presbyterians, the old and genuine school of them, are the greatest foes of Abolitionism in all this land. The explanation of the paradox is, that Presbyterians know that liberty is a good thing only in certain circumstances; and that oftentimes restraint is better for men than freedom. They know that liberty is not the right of all men, but, like property, is the right of those only who are born to it, or who have legally and honestly acquired it. The liberty loved by Presbyterians, is not that wild, radical, licentious thing, which levels down all to one equality of baseness, but it is that distinguishing and ennobling *inheritance* which

free sires hand down to free sons, or else that distinguishing and ennobling *acquisition* which God, in His good providence, enables and permits a virtuous and intelligent people to wrest from the tyrant's hand, who seeks to rob them of those rights which belong to them even under his oppressive rule. The liberty which Presbyterians love, is rational, regulated, constitutional freedom, the gift of God to but few of the nations, for which few of them are prepared, and which belongs, of right, therefore, but to those few. As for the Presbyterians of the South, the only Presbyterians who are connected with American slavery, the only ones who know it, and the only ones responsible for it, we will undertake to say for them, that in a certain sense, they love slavery as truly as they love liberty. If you take slavery to be the Synonyme of cruelty and oppression on the master's part, and of ignorance, licentiousness, suffering and misery on the part of the slave, of course they do not love nor admire it. But, regarding the term as expressive, simply, of the *relation* which subsists between the two races that occupy these Southern States; that relation, by which the one race governs and regulates, civilizes, elevates and improves the other; that relation, by which the combined skill and industry of the two races, by which their combined capital and labor is making the swamps of the South support the commerce and the manufactures of two continents and clothe the world; that relation, which makes of these two races, so dissimilar from each other, and yet in the inscrutable providence of the all-wise God so closely and so inseparably fastened together, one harmonious whole; that relation which constitutes the white man a kind protector and the black man his loyal and affectionate dependant; that relation, which makes these two races (unlike the free negro and the white hireling of the North) to have one interest, and to be not antagonists, but friends; we say, regarding slavery, in this, its real and true aspect, the liberty-loving Presbyterians of the South love slavery too. You may find individual cases of hardship under this relation; you may find abuses of the relation which ought to be reformed, but to fasten your eye on them is not to take a large, and just, and comprehensive view of the subject, in which view we are contemplating it, when we say the relation is good and not evil. As regards *abolition on the soil*; as regards this *alternative of slavery*, whether contemplated as a near or a distant event, whether to be effected by sudden or by gradual means, we think Southern Presbyterians all contemplate this with horror, as necessarily involving the destruction of one, and the injury of both races. Once made antagonists, there could be no more peace between the two. And woe to the negro race if once the stronger people should believe it necessary to exterminate them! A worse than the red men's fate must be the

doom of the black man; if ever, on this soil, put in opposition to the Anglo-Saxon.

At the time of the Rev. Mr. Butler's friendly and respectful address to the Assembly, with its compliments about "resting in glorious truths, and abounding in blessed examples of living piety," few, perhaps none, of the men whom he addressed, were aware that the body which sent him to us, had at their last meeting, adopted the following resolution, viz.: "That if the delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church,* has inferred from his courteous reception *here*, that in our judgment, slavery is less a wrong than polygamy, he has mistaken the sentiments of this body." Now, it is certainly a curious thing, for an ecclesiastical body to send us a delegate to tell our church about its "resting in glorious truths, and abounding in blessed examples of living piety," and for the same body at the same time to pass a resolution telling us, that if they had been civil to our delegate, we must please not to forget that we deserved the very contrary treatment; as though a gentleman should receive his guest with many expressions of friendship, but take a sly opportunity to whisper in his ear that he must remember how richly he deserved to be kicked out of doors! We cannot conceive, how any man with such a reception given him, as our delegate must have received, and without the subsequent sly insinuation dropped into his ear, could fail of making just the very "*mistake*" referred to in the resolution. The General Assembly seemed to regard this resolution of the Vermont Convention as, indeed, a very curious specimen of good manners, for there was evidently but one emotion in the whole house when the resolution was read; an emotion that showed itself in a universal smile. But is there not something more to be seen here, as we now have time to review the whole affair, than merely an original kind of politeness? Is this not also a singular specimen of consistency, of frankness, and of honesty? What! Receive with courtesy the visit of one, whom you feel you ought to turn out of doors, and then return his visit next day, and praise him to his face as a gentleman and a Christian! Is this Green Mountain candour? Is this Vermont Congregational truthfulness? And does Vermont claim it to be her peculiar mission to *raise men*? We would much rather allow, that she, like her sister, Connecticut, has a call to *raise nutmegs*.

This resolution of our Vermont friends, well illustrates to how great an extent, abolition is an unreal thing—a sham, a fiction, a manufactured sentiment, and not a true and genuine one. Here is a body of grave divines, resolving that they regard slavery just as they regard polygamy. Now if this were anything more than

The Rev. Dr. Bowman, of Georgia.

a mere *wooden nutmeg*, if it were designed for anything else than "Buncombe," what made them continue the correspondence with men who practise the abomination? Dr. Bowman, a well known slaveholder from Georgia, is sent to them, and they receive him courteously, yet afterwards they gently insinuate that they do really loathe him as they would a bigamist or a polygamist! It is not true! They try to think so, and to persuade others to think so, but they are manufacturing sentiment, not *feeling* it. Would they have courteously received a Mormon from Utah into their Convention? Do they really mean to say they would have entertained Brigham Young as they did Dr. Bowman? And that they are willing to send a delegate to a Mormon Council to tell them that they are "resting in glorious truths and abounding in blessed examples of living piety?"

We have seen many like illustrations of the unreality and fictitiousness of a large part of abolition, showing that after all, it is, to a great extent, simply a device, an *invention*, a means to an end, viz., sectional growth; and that end itself a means to another end, viz., the sway of the power of this government to lay taxes, raise revenue and distribute the same! But we will drop the subject, after presenting our readers with the calm and dignified report on the subject of Delegates to New England, which the Assembly adopted.

"The Committee recommend that no Delegate be sent for the present, to any of the Congregational bodies of New England. One of them has expressly informed us that the correspondence is discontinued by its own act. Others have so far entertained the same design as to refer the question of discontinuance to their district associations for ultimate decision; and none of them is, in fact, represented at this Assembly except the Evangelical Convention of Vermont. And although it is due to Rev. J. F. Butler, to record our great satisfaction with the eminent courtesy and the fraternal spirit, with which he has represented his Brethren here; yet the Committee have been grieved to find, in the published Minutes of that Consociation at their last meeting, a very offensive resolution, as well as proceedings of a secular and political bearing, which the sense of our Ecclesiastical Assemblies seeks to avoid."*

* Note. From the official Narrative of the same General Convention of Vermont, which passed the resolution aforesaid, we take the following paragraphs. The italics are ours:

"In adding up the statistics of the year, results stand before us which should move our souls. A few revivals have indeed been named and cause us joy; and some churches in most of the Associations have had a small increase; but in the aggregate our membership has been diminished 70. Nor should we forget that our number has been annually less, for ten years, with a single exception; and we now have in our churches about five thousand less than we had 20 years ago. Not a startling loss for any one year,

THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH.

From this much respected body of Presbyterian Brethren, the Assembly was favoured with a cordial and fraternal address by their delegate, the Rev. Dr. Abeel. He concluded his pleasant and eloquent speech with the hope, that as our church "covers the whole land, it might be the means of counteracting all unholy influences that tend to embitter different portions of the country against each other, and might serve to bind the whole together." Our Moderator, Dr. Van Rensselaer, himself of Dutch descent, pleasantly offered, on the part of our Assembly, "to smoke the pipe of peace" with Dr. Abeel and the Dutch Church. He also said, "We understand the subject to which you have alluded, and are glad that your church sees eye to eye with ours." The Rev. John Woodbridge was appointed Delegate to the Reformed Dutch Church Synod, and the Rev. J. H. Lepo his alternate.

THE ASSOCIATE REFORMED SYNOD OF THE SOUTH.

The Rev. N. M. Gordon, on behalf of this Synod, was introduced to the Assembly. If the body he represented were small, he hoped her fidelity to the truth was enough to commend her to the kind regards of the Assembly. She had sixty ministers, one hundred churches, a College, and a Theological Seminary, and is doing something both for Home and Foreign Missions. The Southern Synod had, of late years, been virtually excluded from the fellowship of her own Sister-Synods of the North and West by the action of these latter, on the subject of slavery. She had taken no new ground on that subject, but stood where she had always stood, and had been left alone to preach the gospel to masters and slaves. In regard to a union with the Presbyterian Church, some progress had been made in the way of removing difficulties. The Associate Reformed Church had always been jealous of every thing like unsound doctrine, and accordingly the position taken by the Presbyterian Church Old School, had commended her to the confidence of his Synod. He must say there ought not to be any insuperable bar to a union. But allow-

it being less than one and a half per year to a church, still, to go on thus for only about three-score years would blot us out!"

"What can arrest this course of declension, and diffuse prosperity throughout our bounds? What can expel worldliness from the churches, raise their tone of piety, and infuse new life into all their doings? What can roll back the tide of error, gather the young into the fold, and multiply candidates for the ministry? Nothing less than a general and thorough revival of religion!"

"The external and agitating questions of the age, important though they may be, have diverted us from attention to personal piety, from duty in our closets and families, and from direct individual efforts to save souls."

ance must be made for the convictions of each party, and mutual forbearance exercised with respect to their honest differences. The Synod would hold its next meeting in Old Providence Church, Augusta Co., Virginia, where they would be glad to see a delegate from the Assembly.

The Moderator answered with a cordial welcome to Mr. Gordon, on behalf of the Synod. "A church that holds the truth may be small, but cannot be insignificant. We hope some day to be one, but that whole subject must be left to the committee having it in charge. We are glad to hear that you are preaching to the colored people. There are not less than one hundred men on this floor who devote a portion of their time to this good work. Our church and yours agreeing on that subject as well as in doctrine, will be the better prepared to be united, if God, in His providence shall open the way. We hope and pray, that the union may be consummated. May the God of all grace bless you and the body which you represent. Carry to your Synod our cordial salutations and our best wishes."

In respect to the desired union, the Assembly adopted the following Report of the Committee on Foreign Correspondence:

"In relation to the report of the Rev. Edwin Oater from the Committee appointed by the last General Assembly to open a correspondence, and confer about a closer union with the Associated Reformed Synod of the South, we recommend that the same Committee be continued, with the assurance, that this General Assembly is gratified with the progress already made in their good work; and desires that even if a closer union with that evangelical body be not consummated, the interchange of delegates and expressions of fraternal love, so pleasantly begun, may be perpetual."

THE LETTER FROM THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

In respect to this matter, the Assembly adopted the following report from the Committee on Foreign Correspondence:

"In relation to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, from which a letter has been received, of remonstrance against our settled principles of discipline on the subject of slavery, the committee would remind the Assembly, that thirty years ago, that body declined to sanction the arrangement of any correspondence with the General Assembly; although unanimously agreed to by this body. And we do not deem it our duty, in this case, to send them a reply, especially as the position of our church, on the subject referred to, needs no further explanation.

But we fully reciprocate the expressions of fraternal regard and of confidence in our order, and the steadfastness of our faith which the letter conveys, and would rejoice to have the bonds of

Christian fellowship with that body made closer, if it could be done consistently with the claims of truth and peace."

BOARD OF DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

The Report of this Board showed that we have now in commission, 590 Domestic Missionaries, being an increase in the number of 24 over last year. The number of churches and stations supplied by the Missionaries, is 904. The receipts of the year, from all sources, were \$93,248.99; add the balance on hand at the beginning of the year, and the total resources of the Board during the year amounted to \$114,382.16. The amount paid out during the year, was \$95,121.76, leaving on hand, a balance of \$19,250.10. But the amount due to the Missionaries, is \$12,964.86, so that the real balance on hand, is \$6,295.64. The aggregate receipts from March 1st, 1856, to March 1st, 1857, have been *less* by nearly \$4,000, than the receipts of the year previous. At the same time, the appropriations have exceeded those of the previous year, by nearly \$9,000. The available balance on hand, March 1st, is considerable, but should not be misunderstood by the church. At the season of the year when the report is made, the balance on hand is always larger than at any other period. Without such a balance *then*, the operations of the Board could not be carried on through the rest of the year. The present unexpended balance, is, indeed, less than it was last year, and the appropriations being on a larger scale, enlarged contributions are indispensable, if the church would not leave the Board involved in debt.

Upon the subject of *Non-Contributing Churches*, we quote the precise language employed by the Board, and would recommend our readers to look at it with attention :

"In accordance with what seemed to be the general wish of the Church, the Board of Domestic Missions like the other Boards, of the Church, has been trying the experiment of what is called "*the Systematic Benevolence Plan*," and has dispensed with collecting agents altogether. We have no doubt that *if all the pastors themselves* would present the cause of Domestic Missions to their people, and all the churches would take up collections for the Board annually; and especially if arrangements were made in every congregation to procure subscriptions from every individual connected with them to be collected regularly and at stated periods, it would be the most economical and efficient plan that could be devised. Perhaps the experiment, thus far, has worked as well as could be reasonably expected, for, as stated by the last General Assembly, "It was not to be expected that so great a change in our benevolent operations, involving the change of habits which have obtained amongst us for so many years, could be made at once, and without difficulty." It is cer-

tainly encouraging to find that the number of contributing churches to the Board of Domestic Missions is increasing, though very slowly, from year to year. In 1855-6, the increase over the previous year was about 100, and last year, 1856-7, the increase over the former year was about 153.

This result, although encouraging, is far from being satisfactory, while the number of non-contributing churches continues to be so large. According to the Minutes of the General Assembly of 1856, the number of churches, connected with the Assembly, was 3,146. The number of churches which contributed to the Board, during the past year, was about 1503; thus showing that at least 1643 churches contributed nothing to the Board of Domestic Missions during the past fiscal year: we say, at least, because we have taken no account in this estimate of the churches which were organized during the year and which may considerably swell this number. No doubt a much larger number of churches than we have mentioned will report to the General Assembly that they have made contributions to *the cause* of Domestic Missions during the year: but none of their contributions came into our treasury, and the Board, as such, derived no pecuniary assistance from them.

If, then, *more than sixteen hundred* organized churches contributed nothing, during the past year, to the Board of Domestic Missions, ought there not to be continued and more earnest effort made to induce them to discharge their duty? Who are chiefly to blame for such delinquencies? Would not the greater part of those delinquent churches have contributed to the Board if their pastors or stated supplies had brought the cause before them and given them the opportunity of giving? We have no doubt they would, and fearful indeed is the responsibility of those ministers of the gospel who have not discharged this duty. "In the practical working of this system," said the last General Assembly, "we are persuaded that all failures are owing mainly to the neglect or timidity of the ministry, in not bringing the subject fairly and prominently before the churches; and hence they resolved, "That all our pastors and stated supplies be earnestly requested, for our Lord's sake, to give to every member of their churches the opportunity to contribute something for the glory of God, presenting the claims of the various objects ordered by the Assembly, publicly and prominently from the pulpit; and that the Presbyteries be earnestly requested to see that the same privilege is afforded to all their vacant churches, and that they report their action on this subject, and the success of it, to the next General Assembly."

The timidity of ministers in presenting the claims of the Board is to us surprising, not merely because, as the ministers of Christ, they are bound to discharge their duty, whether men will

hear, or whether they will forbear, but also because we have reason to believe that the people, with very few exceptions, are kindly disposed to give, and are gratified when the opportunity is afforded them of doing so. We have heard of a very few instances in which *church-sessions* have prevented pastors from taking up collections for the Board; but such cases are happily very rare, and they ought to be brought, by the pastors, to the notice of their Presbyteries, that they may discipline the elders who thus presumptuously and wickedly rebel, not only against the solemn injunctions of the superior ecclesiastical courts of the Church, but also against the supreme authority and plain precepts of Christ himself. There are, however, very few sessions that would not consent to the presentation of any object ordered by the General Assembly, so that the neglect of this duty is almost in every case justly chargeable to the pastor or stated supply."

Our readers will observe that the Board, in this extract, distinctly take the ground, that although a "much larger number of churches than 1643, will no doubt report to the Assembly, contributions made by them *to the cause* of Domestic Missions, yet, inasmuch as none of their contributions came into the Board's treasury, and the Board, as such, derived no pecuniary assistance from them, therefore these churches are delinquent churches, and the responsibility of their ministers is a fearful one, and also that church sessions who prevent pastors from taking up collections for the Board, ought to be brought to the Presbyteries, that they may discipline the elders who thus presumptuously and wickedly rebel, &c." The position officially taken by the Board, then, is that contributions to the cause of Domestic Missions, if not made through the treasury of the Board, do not shield a church from censure as *delinquent*, nor its pastor from *fearful responsibility*, nor its session from discipline as *presumptuously* and *wickedly rebellious!*

Our readers will also observe, that the resolution of the Assembly quoted by the Board, falls far short of sustaining it in this position. The Assembly in their call "for our Lord's sake upon all pastors and stated supplies, to give the churches the opportunity of contributing something for the glory of God," had been careful to use the expression *to the various objects*; and the reason was, that the Assembly well knew that many of its churches and Presbyteries prefer to dispense themselves their own funds for Domestic Missions. In the judgment of the Board of Domestic Missions, however, giving to the object of Domestic Missions is nothing, except it be done through their treasury!

When the standing committee on the report of this Board, came to make their report, the chairman, in presenting a series of resolutions, said: "While we meet here and exchange friendly

greetings, must not a feeling of shame arise, that so many of our churches have been delinquent in this great duty? It is not for want of intelligence, wealth or enterprise, but for want of deep piety, that 1600 of our churches have made no report during the past year." And one of the resolutions affirmed that a particular church, which does not "contribute regularly to the Boards, should be considered to have forfeited its good standing."

Will our readers consider it strange, that upon such a demonstration from the Board of Domestic Missions, the voice of warm and earnest remonstrance should have been raised in defense of the church from these objurgations of her own servants?

Dr. R. J. Breckenridge quoted the statement of the secretary, that in 1855-6, there was an increase of contributing churches to the number of 100, and in 1856-7 to the number of 153. Here was encouragement enough to render unseasonable the tone of censure which ran through the report. Besides, the ground taken is, that the failure of 1600 churches to contribute to this Board, is an evidence of a want of piety, and that they will hasten to perdition unless it be remedied. This is not true, and he would never sanction such a statement. Good-standing is a term dear to us, because it expresses all we hold valuable in the character of a church. He would not vote to say that every church lost its good standing, because it failed to make a contribution to each specified cause in a given year. "Take care, sir! (said he) take care how you criminate the church, the Lamb's wife! Take care how you make her sad whom He hath not made sad!"

The writer of this Review said, "The resolutions call on us to adopt the principle that every church is bound under pain of censure to contribute yearly to all the Boards. But it ought not to be ignored any longer by the Boards and their advocates, that a large and increasing body of Presbyteries and churches do not like and will not co-operate with the System of Boards, as it is attempted continually to be forced and fastened upon us. He would tell the Assembly of a Presbytery, which he considered a model, viz Harmony Presbytery in South Carolina, which supports two Domestic Missionaries in its own bounds and then sends its surplus funds of \$400 or \$500 annually to the Board. They do not go through the vain ceremony of sending funds to Philadelphia just to be sent back to them again; nor of applying to the Board to commission a man whom they know well, and the Board does not know, to labor in a field with which they are familiar, and the Board entire strangers to it. Harmony Presbytery looks upon its Presbyterian bounds, just as every particular Minister and Session look upon their Parochial bounds, as given to them to cultivate, and they are doing their own business in their own bounds, without the needless intervention of a Board away off at Philadelphia. Yet Harmony Presbytery just because it feels

its own responsibilities to its own field, and is earnest in meeting them, is enabled on that very account to have a surplus which it sends on to the Board. He then contrasted with Harmony Presbytery, the Presbytery of South Carolina which had become "auxiliary to the Board"—a strange expression indeed! The church becoming auxiliary to its own officers! The consequence is, as it is likely always to be from such arrangements, that the Presbytery leans on the Board, and depends on them to do the work. There is a Board in Philadelphia whose duty it is to carry on Domestic Missions, and so Presbytery being always hurried with other business, this great interest is overlooked. In this way our Machinery is seen to be cumbrous, and the whole arrangement of a Board at Philadelphia, to supervise the work of Domestic Missions in an established Presbytery, is evidently an illogical, an unnatural, and a monstrous thing.

Furthermore, the Report censures many of our best churches, because there are many such, whose doings for the cause of Domestic Missions are direct and the Board does not know any thing of them. When a church for the negroes costing \$7,000 was built in Charleston, it was done *directly*; and when a Brother Minister of ours annually receives \$2,000 for preaching to them it is done *directly*; and are we to censure such doings because not done indirectly through the Board?"

The report was re-committed, and upon amendment was adopted unanimously.

We desire to call the attention of our readers to the precise mode in which this discussion arose. The occasion was the effort by friends of the Board system, to procure a vote of censure from the Assembly upon every church which does not give its contribution for the cause of Domestic Missions through the channel of that Board. Our whole action on that subject must be by one great central wheel, and all the means and powers and influences of the body must be forced into a channel which shall move that wheel. Some will say, there must have been a misunderstanding of this matter by the committee which reported the objectionable resolution, and that they could not have designed, deliberately, to set forth the principle which the Assembly so decidedly repudiated, viz: that all contributions to Domestic Missions are to be reckoned as no contributions except when sent through the Board. But there stands the well-deliberated language of the Board's Report, showing exactly what is the doctrine of the powers that be upon this subject. "Many churches will no doubt report to the Assembly that they have contributed to the cause of Domestic Missions, but their contributions did not come into our Treasury, and more earnest efforts must be made to induce them to do their duty. These are delinquent churches. Pastors are under a fearful responsibility. Their sessions are presumptuous

and wicked rebels and deserved discipline." Such was the occasion which forced opposition upon those not altogether enamoured of the Boards. At Buffalo, and at Nashville, the measure urged on the minority was *increase of Boards*. At Lexington, the measure urged was *censure upon all* who would not employ the one big wheel. So that, now as before, the minority was still on the defensive against an ever aggressive majority. Instead of the "constant irritation of our public officers" and the "constant, underhand, stealthy stabbing of them," which a distinguished member of the Assembly at Nashville said, that "his soul loathes," there was witnessed at Lexington, as there had been witnessed before, nothing else but just the setting of this alternative before the minority, either to yield up their cherished principles, or else fairly and earnestly to oppose the measures of the Domestic Missionary Board.

If the Board have any body but themselves to blame for the misfortune which happened to them at Lexington, we judge it to be a certain very high authority, which reviewing the Assembly at Buffalo, not only pronounced the whole discussion to be about a "matter unworthy of debate," "a *jus divinum* theory in its dotage," a mere question of "splitting of hairs;" but also set it down for certain that the controversy could never be renewed. And which again reviewing the very next Assembly, when the controversy *was earnestly renewed*, again assumed "that this whole matter is set at rest." "Giants," indeed, had sought to give momentum to the matter, but the matter was nothing but a feather, and so, of course, the more vigorous the throw, the less was the effect." The giants had failed, "not from the want of strength, but from the inherent weakness of their cause." Was it any wonder that the Board should rely on these assurances, should believe the question settled, and ignoring the manifest difference of opinion which exists in the church should expect the Assembly to pass that vote of censure?

Gradually, we suppose, the Board and other influential parties in the church will come to understand that there are two sets of opinions amongst us on this whole subject. And Presbyterians being free men and independent men, it will probably be found a controlling consideration with our churches and presbyteries, if *they* think sufficient for them the objections to the existing system, whether the powers that be, regarded those objections as serious or as slight. With the highest respect for those who have pronounced these objections to be mere "cobwebs," we propose to state them distinctly, but briefly, once more, having great faith in the reiteration of a true testimony.

1. This machinery is not Presbyterian. It is a relic of our old congregational bondage. It presents us all the *paraphernalia* of the voluntary societies. It exhibits the committee of a church

court, in the singular attitude of electing presidents and vice presidents for itself, and selling the privilege of its membership for thirty, and its dictatorship for fifty dollars! Had we never been under New England influence, we had never had Boards, but single committees of the Assembly. Every one of our courts, like every organized body of men has an inherent right to commit the doing of certain things to committees. When it is necessary—when the thing to be done can not otherwise be accomplished, they may also, by inherent right, appoint a commission to do it. In matters like Domestic and Foreign Missions, nothing more is necessary than simple committees. A Board or Commission can do nothing in these matters, which the Assembly could not better do of itself. There being no necessity for a delegation of the powers of a Board or Commission of Domestic Missions to a portion of its members, the Assembly has no right to delegate them. Much less has it a right to transfer them to another body composed, perhaps, in no case, of its own members, but of gentlemen scattered all over the land. Least of all has it a right to delegate them to a body organized and constituted after a congregational and not a Presbyterian fashion. If the Assembly may delegate the conduct of these matters to other bodies than itself, then it may delegate the conduct of them to the Boston Board and to the Home Missionary Society. But the church is God's agent to do His work, not to see it done by other bodies. And He having given her a work to do herself, she is not to constitute herself His counsellor, nor is she to undertake to mend His plans with her opinion that she can better accomplish the work by delegating it to an organization devised by herself or borrowed from others. She has no such wide discretionary power as all this involves.

2. This machinery gives us not only an unlawful but an inefficient substitute for the direct action of the church. It is not only an unnatural and monstrous thing, a mongrel product of two different species, but it is also a weak thing and inoperative of any good. How can one hundred men, selected from all parts of this country, ever be expected to meet together? How can even one-fourth of their number ever be expected to assemble? Their control, therefore, of the business committed to them is nominal. The whole thing is a *sham*; and it is none the less a miserable one, because enacted by a great church; nor the less to be condemned because a substitution of an invention of man for God's divine workmanship.

3. This machinery is not only inefficient for good, but it is directly and positively injurious. The Boards have been described as a useful break-water in times of storm; as a needful intermediate body between the Executive Committee and the Assembly to protect the latter from possible impositions by the former.*

*See Bib. Repertory, for July 1854., p. 561.

This description of them is true, in so far as it calls them an "intermediate body between the Assembly and the committee; and in so far as it shows that they can and do keep the two apart. Protect the Assembly from the committee forsooth! And are they not, then, of equal force to protect the Committee from the Assembly? Yes! they are a separating wall between the church and her benevolent operations. They obstruct the flow of sympathy between the two. "The Assembly is the heart and centre of our church and the zeal there kindled passes to the extremities of the whole body, and makes the whole body one in sympathy and energy and aim." Of all things else with which it has to do, let us not choose to separate the Assembly from these works of the church's benevolence. Let it rule and direct in them with the most immediate and uninterrupted sway, so far as may be consistent with the highest efficiency of the Presbyteries in respect each to its own immediate field. Let not this "intermediate body," or as it was still better called in the Nashville Assembly, "this intermediate barrier," come in and check the flow of sympathy from the Missions of the church, whether at home or abroad, through the Committee directly to the Assembly, and then from the Assembly to every Presbytery and Session and Church!

But the damage which the church suffers from this machinery is not confined to its influence *upon the Assembly* and upon the church through the Assembly. It is also injurious to the church in its influence *upon the Presbyteries*. It is directly in the way of their doing their own proper work. It also affords them encouragement to neglect that work. If the Board could do this work of the Presbyteries, the evil would not be so great. But it is perfectly impossible for a company of brethren at any centre to carry forward the Missionary work of our church in the bounds of all our Presbyteries. Whether you have a Board or a simple committee at the centre they never can cultivate all these fields with efficiency. It is perfectly absurd to make the attempt. The sole use of any organization, whether complicated or simple, for Domestic Missions, is to operate in the frontier and destitute settlements, where either there is no Presbytery, or else a very feeble Presbytery. As soon as the Presbytery is self-sustaining, it ought to be left to manage its own field entirely by itself. In this way only can the energies of our system be developed. So long as it is understood to be the business of the Board to conduct the whole Domestic Missionary work of our church in the established Presbyteries as well as outside of them, there will be both a failure to do the work, and a failure to draw out the church's energies, and the greater the wheel at the centre—the more noise it makes; the more it is made to attract attention by the numerous D.D's. and other vain gewgaws and orna-

ments with which you bedeck it—the more will it be in the way of the earnest action of the Presbyteries, because they will rely all the more on it for the doing of their proper work. This is, in part, the explanation of the fact that many churches do nothing for Domestic Missions. The Board does not reach them; and the Presbytery does not reach them, because Domestic Missions is not the business of the Presbytery, but of the Board. And then another unpleasant consequence follows, as was witnessed in the last Assembly, viz: that the Board *objurgates*. The engineer labours in vain with many distressing contortions to strain up the machine a little tighter, and to make it grind out better results. The attempt is both disagreeable and dangerous. Better would it be to alter and to simplify. The machinery is badly arranged. The power is applied in the wrong place. One big wheel is employed, while the case demands the use of a number of smaller wheels.

4. There is at least one more objection to this system of Boards, viz: that it is a system of centralization, inconsistent with our principle of parity. *In the first place*, three of the four Boards have their centres in one point, and the whole power of each is actually and inevitably centred in the hands of a few of its members living at or near that one point. But, *in the second place*, there is, in the case of the Domestic Missionary Board, a vast centralization of power in the hands of one man. We now have nearly 600 Domestic Missionaries, all of whom receive their commissions, and in part their support from this Board, of which the whole power and influence is centred, to a very great degree, in the hands of its Secretary! This Secretary, it has been well said, is “less dangerous to the church than Dr. Peters was in 1837, only because he is a friend instead of an enemy—only because he is orthodox and not heretical!” His personal character is our only guaranty of safety! His position is, in itself, a dangerous one for the church. All power involves danger, but there is no case like this in our whole church. Every centre of power is a dangerous thing; but there is no centre of power in our church equal to this, and none where the existing power is not divided between several men. Our largest Seminary has not 150 Theological Students in it, and four Professors divide the influence amongst them. Our Foreign Board has only about 70 Missionaries, and three Secretaries divide the influence amongst them. But here are nearly 600 Missionaries and one Secretary to communicate with them all!

Abolish all the Boards and you get rid of all these difficulties, disadvantages and dangers at once. You secure at once the direct action of the church, and her direct action in connection with her schemes of charity and love and zeal and duty. You obtain her regular and lawful and efficient action. You cease enacting a humbug. Instead of all this “*Lumber*,” these cumbrous *Boards*, this awkward worthless machinery, you have central committees, conferring

no dangerous power upon one man, and only serving to equalize and distribute the resources of the church between the strong and the weak parts. And then, better still, you have the Presbyteries all doing their own work in their own fields. You encourage the healthy development of our boundless resources, and, by the grace of God, you get every church and every individual at work.

As to the *Agency system* (which Dr. Musgrave desired the Assembly would in some degree at least, resort to again, because as he "ventured to say, the new plan would not succeed unless there were some men to superintend the machine and get it fairly in operation,") we rejoice to believe it a dead thing, past galvanizing into life again. It never did reach any of our churches except the large and rich ones. The small and poor ones were not worth looking after by Agents, and so their benevolence and charity got no cultivation by that miserable system. We expect to see a very different operation from the influence of those grand principles of God's word (that "giving is a grace, and offerings of money for the support and propagation of the gospel, an act of worship") to which this Assembly on various occasions testified in reiteration of the testimony of the Assemblies at Buffalo and Nashville. But we confess to some little surprise that the Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions seems on all occasions to lose sight of the circumstance that these are *principles* and not *plans* nor *expedients*. Throughout his speech before the Assembly, as in the extract from the Board's Report quoted above, it was always "*your plan*," "*your new plan*," "*your systematic benevolence plan*." It was a "machine" which "if you did not have some men to superintend" there would be a complete disappointment of all our expectations from it! The Secretary's hands have been full of "*machinery*" for a long time. But has he not a head and a heart to see and to feel the power of *principles*? We call on him to take notice that what he calls "*your new plan*" is just a doctrine of God's word, a precept and a truth of the New Testament; one of those things which has an essential and an indestructible vitality, and the power of which depends, with the Holy Spirit's grace and blessing upon its being simply repeated in the ears of men.

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The following paper was presented from the Committee on this Board's Report.

"Our church, which numbers 2,320 ministers, and 233,755 members, now has, as her representatives in all the heathen world, only about seventy preachers of the everlasting Gospel. Our contributions for the support and propagation of Christianity among the heathen, amount, during the past year, to only about \$207,000, less \$41,000 received from the United States Government for the American Indians, that is only about \$166,000.

Our Board report a balance against their treasury of \$11,000. They also report a wide and effectual door opened for us in India, China, Siam, Africa, and our own Indian tribes. They report a pressing necessity for more money to support the work as it now stands, and more men and money to extend the work, as a good Providence is opening the way for it to be extended. And this Assembly is asked to adopt such measures as will place this great matter on a proper footing before our churches, not only relieving the Board from its present debt, but enabling it to enlarge its operations.

I. The Assembly would respond to this call by reiterating to, and before all our churches, the testimony of the Assembly at Buffalo, and the Assembly at Nashville, that liberality in giving for the support and propagation of the Gospel is a grace of the spirit; that it is a fruit, and an evidence, and a means of grace; also by reiterating the testimony of those Assemblies, that offerings of money for the services of the Lord, are acts of worship which ought to be systematically and solemnly performed in all our churches, and by every Christian.

II. The Assembly would also declare, (speaking to itself in the ministers and elders here present, and through them to each and every minister and elder in all our bounds,) that not only is it our individual duty to exercise this liberality and to make these offerings, but moreover, that it is the official duty of every one of us, to set forth this testimony in our several churches, until they all practically receive the same.

III. Applying these general principles to the particular matter of Foreign Missions, this Assembly would recommend the following, amongst other modes and ways of training our people in the grace of giving:

(a.) That our Sunday-schools be enlisted by pastors in the good work of contributing for Foreign Missions. The aggregation of many particles is always a mighty thing; and in this case, the many small streams would, by flowing together, make a great river. But far more than this, the children of the church would thus be receiving an education in benevolence and beneficence.

(b.) That our ministers preach systematically and frequently on the subject of Foreign Missions, teaching the people that it is their duty to give more and more money to this cause, in order that the work may grow and spread, and in proportion as it does grow and spread, because the knowledge of the Lord must fill the earth, even as the waters fill the sea; that our ministers also teach that it is needful to increase greatly the number of missionaries in heathen lands, and that, to this end, more of our young men must willingly offer themselves to this work, being thereto moved by the Holy Spirit, and therein honoured by the Great Head of the church; that our ministers also teach that it is the joyful privilege of pious parents, filled with faith and the Holy Ghost, to dedicate their children to this most glorious, exalted and happy service. Moreover, the first Sunday evening in every month or on other occasions, and from time to time let the people hear from their minister, detailed accounts of various Foreign Missions in succession, with a description of the religious condition of the people, and the beginning and progress of the church's work amongst them.

(c.) That, to this end, our Ministers take pains themselves carefully to read the *Home and Foreign Record* and *Foreign Missionary*, so as to

know what is being done by our missionaries ; and that they also further the circulation and encourage the reading of these publications in their congregations.

IV. With respect to the debt of \$11,000 which has been reported, this Assembly is perfectly well aware of the difficulty and embarrassment into which debt must always bring the Board. The credit of the Board and the progress, nay the very existence of the missions, we know, requires that the church, from year to year, should furnish all the means which the exigencies of our great Foreign enterprise demand. The church has manifestly not furnished this year all that some peculiar circumstances, and still more, the general and healthy growth of our missions made needful. But this Assembly in humble yet cheerful confidence in our Great Head and in His people, would solemnly bid the Board, in His name, go forward and enter every door which He sets before them. The work of Foreign propagation of the faith must not stop, nor be even checked, yet on the other hand the Assembly would call upon the churches, as they would deliver their agents, the Board, from the present difficulty, and from the certainty of yet greater embarrassments at the close of the current year, immediately and considerably to enlarge their gifts and offerings. Let those who have heretofore given, now, if possible, give twenty-five per cent. at least more, for it is a blessed thing to give—a more blessed thing to give than to receive. Let every minister aim to increase the contributions from his church, so that they shall amount to at least one dollar a year on the average for every church member. Let us bring all the tithes into store-houses and see if the Lord will not pour us out a blessing so that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The Secretary, Dr. Wilson, urged the propriety of the Assembly's giving to this subject a due share of attention. The Assembly (said he) will spend twelve or fourteen days in considering the spiritual interests of our single country, but as to this great World, compared with which, our own population is a handful, is it right that their claims should be dispatched in an hour? Ought not every Assembly to appropriate at least one day to this subject? Dr. Wilson's desire was gratified. The Assembly spent nearly the whole day of Monday in the consideration of this matter. It was a great privilege to be there. Dr. Wilson's speech was full of encouraging statements and moving appeals. More than 150 conversions of Heathen at our missionary stations during the past year were reported. Our churches have increased their contributions some \$6,000 or \$7,000. A Pastor of an important church has quit his charge and gone into the field as a missionary. A Ruling Elder of high standing, has gone and taken with him five members of his church; and from another church, in the same neighborhood, one Ruling Elder and two members have gone; and these churches have since been blessed as never before. The speeches made on this occasion brought out distinctly the ideas that the missionary work aims to subjugate the whole world to Christ, and that our present doings are but a

small beginning of it. This is a day of preparation for a brighter day that is soon to shine. We are to train the church, and very particularly *the children* of the church for a constant advance in this work. And the way to train the church to this duty is by instruction in the facts and in the principles of the case. Our people need to be preached to respecting the state of the heathen world, and the progress of the gospel amongst them. They need to be taught that *giving* is an evidence and means of grace as well as a fruit of it, and that this giving is worship acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. One of the evidences that the present is a time of preparation is that this work is now regarded by the church to a certain extent, in its true relation and just proportions. It is no longer on the one hand a romantic enterprise, something which we must be wrought up to engage in, by excitement. It is no longer on the other hand an enterprise only of the martyr spirit. It is no longer viewed as a great and dreadful privation, but a great honor and happiness to be a missionary. It is now looked upon as a part of the organized life of the church, and of the whole church. To feel no interest in Foreign Missions is now held to be as inconsistent in a Christian, as not to pray. It has come now to be a part of the worship of God. Whatever agency we exert in any work of benevolence, is homage paid to God. And when this Assembly, representing our whole church, is engaged in devising plans for the promotion of this work, it is one great act of worship, one grand doxology. Is it not a great revival when we no longer look upon Foreign Missions as something outside of the church, but something intrinsic and essential to her very life?

Another sign of preparation for great things, is the amazing concentrative interest awakened in all parts of the church, in regard to candidates for the ministry.

Another is, the revival of certain important principles long obscured, through the influence of which, God seems to be preparing the means of sustaining the men that He is raising up. The principle is laid down that giving is worship. And now how much are we to give? Two of the rules of political economy may be brought in to help us out with an answer, one is the law of demand and supply. A demand is never held to exist at all, until those who make the demand have desires, so intense as to make them willing to meet all the costs the supply of these desires may impose upon them. Now, this is true in the kingdom of God. There is no demand for an increase of labourers, unless we have such desires for them, as make us willing to meet all the expenses of a supply; the expenses of educating and supporting them, whether at home or abroad. Now just such a real demand God appears to be producing in our Zion. The other rule is that saving is a means of increasing capital. This is true in political

economy, and true also in the kingdom of God; but in order to try and also to increase our faith, there is connected with this rule in its application to God's spiritual kingdom, a natural improbability to contradict our natural convictions, and God tells us that not *the saving* but the *liberal* soul shall be made fat. But as God is Governor both of the natural and of the spiritual world, He arranges His dealings with us so that we shall find that our givings never do impoverish us.

With respect to the debt of \$11,000 reported by the Board, the Assembly passed a resolution calling on the churches for a special collection to remove it. And subsequently on motion of two of our most venerable fathers, a collection was taken up in the Assembly which yielded over \$1200.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

This Board reported 383 candidates for the Ministry on its roll, which is one more than last year. In funds, it reported a considerable increase over any previous year, and that, without any agents sent out to collect money. If we cannot agree with the officers of this Board in the views they still hold regarding secular education, we may congratulate them upon the increasing liberality of the church on behalf of their endeavors to educate faithful ministers of the Gospel. Without agents to beg for them, and without ob-jurgatory speeches or reports, the church, it appears, gives them every year more and more money. We join the Board in the prayer that God may increase a thousand fold the number of candidates for the Ministry, and of labourers in the field. We do not anticipate, however, any very large increase of the operations of this Board. The matter of supporting and of overlooking our young men who are candidates for licensure, is one which the Presbyteries, we feel sure, will more and more desire to keep in their own hands. They ought to keep it there. Each Presbytery owes this to itself and to its churches. The Presbytery takes the young men of its different churches *under its care* as candidates for licensure. Presbytery therefore ought, in all cases, to direct and superintend their course of study. As to the support of candidates, each Presbytery can far more easily raise the funds for its own candidates, than a Board or a central committee can do this for all the candidates of our whole church. And each Presbytery needs to retain in its own hands, this powerful lever of personal interest and of individual sympathy, in order therewith to draw forth the mighty energies of the whole church, which from the nature of things, no central committee and no Board can do.

THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

This Board reported the issue of 45 new books and 14 new tracts, in editions amounting to 73,000 of the former, and 27,000

of the latter; also reprints of former publications to the number of 677,500 copies besides 18,000 copies of selections from Rouse's Version of the Psalms. They have sold during the year past 193,578 volumes and 477,441 pages of tracts. This is an increase in the sale of volumes over the previous year, to the number of 22,062. In the department of Colportage there has been great enlargement and peculiar encouragement. In the receipts of the Board, also, there has been a very gratifying increase this year from every source.

CHURCH EXTENSION COMMITTEE.

This committee reported funds received to the amount of \$23,265.61—a large increase over the year previous, when they collected only \$9,751.31. The number of contributing churches has increased from 167 to 502. These results have been reached without any salaried, collecting agent. The appropriations made during the year ending April 1st, 1857, were to churches in nineteen States. Of these, Ohio and Iowa each has had *twelve* appropriations, Illinois *nine*, Pennsylvania *eight*, Wisconsin, Indiana and Missouri each *five*, and New York *six*. Eleven other States have received some *two* and some *one* appropriation. The other twelve States of this Union have received *none*.

The funds contributed have come from twenty-nine Synods. New York contributed \$8,518, Missouri 2,055, New Jersey \$760, Wheeling \$607; Albany, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburg, Chicago and Mississippi each over \$500; Ohio, Cincinnati and Virginia Synods each over \$400, and the remaining Synods little or nothing.

The history of this committee begins with the Assembly which met at Buffalo in 1854. The minority in that Assembly steadfastly refused to take any step towards the separation of this object from the general interests of the Domestic Missionary work. Apparently beaten by the majority, they did really gain the victory, as is the case so often with minorities. The subject was referred again to the Board of Domestic Missions, and all that the majority gained was a vote of instructions to that Board to enlarge their Committee of Church Extension—to appoint a Secretary for this department, if they should deem it necessary—to bring the matter before the churches in such way (that is, by such agencies) as the Board should deem it best to employ—and to report separately the receipts and disbursements of this fund. The Board deemed it best to do nothing upon this basis, showing that the victory so vaunted of, was thus confessed to be of no value.

In the next Assembly the subject again came up, and the result was still more significant as to the growing dislike of the system of Boards. Dr. Backus, Chairman of the Committee on the Domestic Board's Report, himself a strong Board man, moved

“the election of a Committee of Church Extension to consist of — ministers and elders and to be located at the city of ———,” and then gave reasons why a *Committee* was recommended rather than a *Board*. “If (said he) we had thought a Board would be more desirable, we would have reported a Board.” It was then moved to recommit with instructions to report a fifth Board. After a long debate that motion was lost, a large portion of the *warmest friends of the Boards voting against the measure for a new Board!**

Some desired to refer the whole matter to the several Synods. Others desired to transfer the existing committee, still being in connection with the Board, to St. Louis. And yet others preferred rather to transfer the Board itself to some other place than Philadelphia. Finally, the Assembly determined to have a *Committee* of Church Extension separate from the Board, and to locate it at St. Louis. Then it was endeavored to get this committee called a Board. But the Assembly was positive that it would neither have a fifth Board, nor give that name to this committee. Then the strenuous Board party sought to have the committee a large one, so as to be as much as possible like a Board, and successively the numbers 99, 85, 80, 65, &c. &c., were proposed and rejected, until they came down to 24, which the Assembly accepted—twelve ministers and twelve elders, elected by the Assembly, one-third every year.

The result reached was evidently a compromise between two opposite opinions. The Assembly distinctly refused a fifth Board, and even the name of Board; yet, under the name of Committee, created a Board on a small scale. It is still an intermediate body or barrier between the Assembly, and the work of building churches which he have undertaken. And it is constituted upon the same principle, as all the other Boards, viz: that of selecting for its members, not those who shall be able to meet and do its business, but prominent men from various parts of the country who never can assemble together! It is really pitiful to see our brethren, the lovers of Boards, clinging with such desperation to this poor device. Of the dozen of ministers who now compose this committee, Natchez, Baltimore, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Pittsburg and New York each furnish one. What is the sense, or the use of this kind of thing? The *real* members of the committee are those who reside at St. Louis? Why not let them be the only members of it? The Assembly resolved to locate a Committee of Church Extension at St. Louis. How can a committee be *located at St. Louis*, when two-thirds of its members are not, and probably never will be, there?

Of all the interests which our church seeks to promote, we

*See Biblical Repertory, for July 1855.

think this one of Church Extension, or rather church erection, is the one least adapted to be well managed by any central organization whatever. When a meeting-house shall be built, and where it shall be built, are just what no remote central committee can ever decide wisely. It is just in regard to this particular matter, of all others, that a great church like ours, in a great country like ours, will find one big wheel at the centre most fatally inefficient. The work of church-building is just that work, of all others, which must be left to the people themselves in every locality to carry forward in the best way they can. They must get their meeting-houses as they get their dwelling-houses. They must build first a log church if they can do no better, just as they build first a log house to dwell in, if they can do no better. Leave the whole business to them, and as they have always done the business somehow, so they will somehow do it still. And what they cannot do, none of your central committees can do for them. What does the Church Extension Committee expect to do for any one church? Only to give the people two or three hundred dollars, when they shall have collected themselves all the rest of the funds! And if they can secure all but that trifle, can they not secure that too? The best church-builders are good ministers. We have now about eight hundred more churches than ministers. And the ministers are not gaining on the churches, but the contrary; and this, (as it has been well said by Dr. Breckinridge,) whilst the increase of churches has been a spontaneous thing, but the increase of ministers a thing of the most earnest effort for a long time. The building of church edifices, is therefore not the great thing which needs fostering, except, indeed, it may be in one particular region of the church, the cold north-west, to which thousands of emigrants from the east are hurrying, and where without comfortable churches a congregation cannot assemble in the winter. And accordingly we find, as stated above, that Ohio, Iowa and Illinois have had the largest portion of all the funds appropriated.

Notwithstanding the encouragements in their work which this committee were able to report to the Assembly, it was nevertheless evident that they have begun to find that serious difficulties encompass the attempt to supervise by a central organization such a purely local concern as church erection. Hence their endeavor to induce the Assembly to pass a resolution approving a further condition to be annexed to all their appropriations, viz: that "churches aided should not directly or indirectly apply for aid to any church or member of our denomination outside of its own community without the consent of the committee." "The committee *will be crippled*," (said its chairman,) if incessant applications can be made to the very churches to which we must look for funds. Those Presbyteries which have rich churches will be worn out with applications. A New York pastor had lately

written them that he had had six applications in one week. These churches will not give to the committee unless we will pledge ourselves to keep off from them these constant applications." So the rich churches in New York wish to convert the Committee of Church Extension into a bull dog to keep off troublesome applications, and will, no doubt, pay them well for the service! The committee say in their report: "This difficulty was very forcibly set forth some years ago in a letter from a very liberal and distinguished pastor to the late Committee of the Board of Missions." He says: "To-day a brother *comes*, to-morrow another *writes*, perhaps and most probably for aid to build a church. The whole affair is getting oppressive. Can you do any thing at your office to relieve us?" And so to relieve the liberal and distinguished pastor who is ready to faint, because "the whole affair is getting to be oppressive," and still more to relieve his rich church, the committee must bark loudly and sharply at the poor churches, and the Assembly must be made to bark at them too! What for shall these poor churches not be allowed to apply directly or indirectly to those rich ones? The committee's answer is, because by their "going to those from whom the committee had reason to expect contributions, means will be turned away which would otherwise have flowed into our treasury." "If individual appeals should cease, the committee's income would rapidly approximate to the more pressing necessities of the work." Yet the committee expect only to give two or three hundred dollars to each church after it has raised perhaps its thousands. In each particular case, the committee has to raise a little and the poor church a great deal; and must the Assembly drive away the church from the full fountains just to let the committee drink? What help is it to the general cause, if those who have to raise fourteen-fifteenths of the cost of each meeting-house are to be kept from begging money, because their begging interferes with the success of others who have to raise only one-fifteenth of it?

In the debate upon this resolution Dr. Thornwell pointed out to the Committee of Church Extension the suicidal character of their effort to pass this resolution. Its inevitable result would be, that the feeble churches would make choice between individual applications and the committee, and would of course choose the former; and then the committee would soon find its occupation gone, and its treasury empty. Moreover, this resolution strikes a blow at the Communion of Saints, and it will also cut off the Church Extension Committee from sympathy. Your doctrine is, that giving is worship, and the churches will not consent to ask a St. Louis committee whether or not they shall exercise that privilege. As to the numerous and vexatious applications, just let the rich churches say that they already give through the committee. They have their remedy in their own hands.

The resolution was stricken out.

COMMITTEE ON SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

This is one of the Standing Committees of the Assembly. It presented the following report which, after a single amendment, was adopted. We mention the amendment, because it was one of the numerous indications made in this Assembly, of the progress of sound views amongst us. In Recommendation, No. 2, the report as presented called on the Presbyteries "*to provide as soon as possible an efficient superintendence within their bounds of this business, &c.*" It was objected, that this signified the appointment of some agent to set the machine in motion. Accordingly with the cordial assent of the Rev. S. S. Laws, Chairman, the Assembly amended the report so as to read "*to provide as soon as possible for the exercise of an efficient superintendence, &c.*"

"The Committee on Systematic Benevolence would respectfully report: That communications have been received from the stated clerks of the following twenty-four Presbyteries, viz: Londonderry, Troy, Albany, Mohawk, Ogdensburg, Green River, West Jersey, Raritan, Philadelphia, Newcastle, Northumberland, Alleghany, Beaver, Alleghany City, Columbus, Palestine, Logansport, Louisville, Transylvania, Greenbriar, Lexington, Fayetteville, Knoxville, and South Carolina.

These papers indicate: 1. That the practice of systematic benevolence is gradually spreading through our church. Only three of the Presbyteries heard from last year are reported this year; and the most of these new names appear as showing an increase in the number of Presbyteries which have taken action on this important subject. Whilst some of them heard from have not as yet adopted any plan of benevolence, on the other hand it is manifest that many Presbyteries have a system in operation, but have failed to send up any reports. And were the names preserved on record so that a comparison could be extended back for two years, it is believed that the result would only the more plainly show the growth of this cause, notwithstanding so few reports have been received. Moreover, it shows that the heaven is at work, when it is observed that the Presbyteries from which reports mostly favorable have been received, in the last two years, lie within the bounds of twenty-three Synods; and also, that although the action of the Assembly of 1854 specifically aimed to turn the attention of the Presbyteries to this subject, yet eleven Synods, viz: Wheeling, Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, Northern Indiana, Illinois, Chicago, Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri and Georgia, have adopted plans of systematic benevolence, embracing each of the several enterprises under the General Assembly; whilst several other Synods, as Pittsburg, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Virginia, and South Carolina, have severally agreed on definite times for raising funds for one or more objects. All these go to show that system in the matter of benevolence is gaining ground in the churches.

2. So far as the papers in the hands of the committee suggest an inference, it is likewise indicated that, whenever a plan of benevolence is adopted, it generally works well, securing increased contributions, and in some instances seeming to be the means of calling down the gracious

influences of the Spirit of God. Some Presbyteries and churches, it is stated, had plans prior to the action of this Assembly on the subject, and as the choice of the particular method to be adopted was left by that action to be determined by the exercise of a wise discretion, considerable diversity prevails, nor does absolute uniformity appear to be practicable. In this, however, as in other matters, the adoption of an imperfect plan or system is found to be better than no system, just as an imperfect government is better than none. Some of the papers speak of only partial trials of defective schemes having worked so well as even to induce special efforts to rectify and mature them. Experience and perseverance alone can reach perfections in a matter of this kind.

3. But it is likewise evident, from the fewness and contents of the papers placed in the hands of the committee, that there is great need of this whole subject of systematic benevolence being again earnestly and affectionately urged upon the attention of the Presbyteries, and kept before them until all of them take some definite action, and report the same as soon as possible to the General Assembly.

The principal thing now demanded in this very important department of the church's labor, appears to be, that such personal efforts be made by individuals, and measures devised and put into operation by Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions, as shall secure, as far as possible, the actual adoption of system in the matter of benevolence, and bring forth its legitimate fruits. And as means of carrying into prompt and full effect the original intention of the General Assembly on this subject :

1st. It is urged upon each stated clerk to see that *systematic benevolence* is placed on the docket of Presbyterial business every spring, and send, as his regular annual report to the General Assembly, an attested minute of the proceedings of the Presbytery on the subject. [See Minutes of the Assembly, 1855, p. 296, resolutions 2, 3.]

2d. It is recommended to the Presbyteries that have not already done so, to take action to provide as soon as possible for the exercise of an efficient superintendence, within their bounds of this business, so as to bring about a thorough inauguration and maintenance of some plan of benevolence in all their churches.

3d. The Secretaries of the Boards are again invited and urged to give increased aid by personal labors and correspondence, in realizing all that is contemplated in this movement of the church.

4th. That special attention be given by pastors, elders and others to the training of children and youth in the family, Sabbath-schools and other institutions of the church, to habits of cheerful and conscientious systematic benevolence.

5th. That in the appropriate exercise of discretion in the choice of any particular method, it be borne in mind how important it is in order to efficiency :

1st. That given objects of benevolence be definitely determined upon, especially the four Boards and the Church Extension Committee of this Assembly and the Bible cause.

2d. That at stated times, an opportunity be given to all the members of the churches and congregations to aid these several objects.

Thus will 'gatherings' be made of what may have been laid by in

store according to the apostolic injunction—' Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches in Galatia, so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him.'

6th. That the doctrine and duties of Divine stewardship be more distinctly and fully recognized, more frequently and earnestly inculcated, as underlying this whole subject. Glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirit, which are God's. In this, as in all cases, the blessing follows the performance of the duty. 'Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.' 'Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.'"

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

The forty-fifth annual report of Princeton Seminary was presented. Fifty new students had been received within the past year, of whom six are members of Baptist churches, two of the German Reformed, one of the Associate Reformed, one of the Associate church, and one of the Lutheran church. The whole number of students during the year was one hundred and ten. Twenty-six had received certificates of having completed the course of study. The funds are in a highly satisfactory condition. One gentleman has given lately \$10,000 to be used as a sustentation fund for students. The condition of the Institution is every way prosperous and flourishing.

The Western Theological Seminary reported thirty-one new students. The whole number on the roll was eighty-one. The Directors asked the Assembly to increase the number of that Board to *forty*, to be divided into four classes, one of which to go out every year.

The Danville Seminary reported the whole number of students to be thirty-six, of whom twelve graduated at the end of the session and received diplomas. The Professors suggested that all students should be required to put themselves under the care of some Presbytery at an early period, and to apply for licensure at the end of the second year in the Seminary; also to be present from the beginning of every session to its close. The Directors asked for a fourth Professor to be appointed by the Assembly. They reported funds to the amount of about \$11,000 and urge the completion of their endowment as soon as possible.

The Union Seminary, Virginia, reported twenty-five students, of whom ten were new students. The funds amount to \$82,300. They can accommodate about seventy students in their buildings. They have three scholarships endowed, and are endowing a fourth. They have increased the salary of the Professors.

The following is the report of the committee to whom all these documents were sent. The report was adopted at once, except the resolution concerning the Western Seminary which was docketed, and came up subsequently for debate.

1. *Resolved*, That the churches be urged to complete the endowment of those Seminaries that are not yet fully endowed, to increase the number of scholarships, and to furnish funds for the repair and erection of suitable buildings, and the enlargement of the libraries.

2. *Resolved*, That candidates should be required to put themselves under the care of Presbyteries as soon as possible, and receive careful supervision during their entire course, and that whatever arrangements the Presbyteries may deem expedient to facilitate their training, these arrangements should not be such as will tend to shorten the full term of study, or induce an absence from their classes, at either the opening or closing exercises of the Seminary's sessions.

3. *Resolved*, That the following persons be appointed Directors of the Princeton Theological Seminary, until May, 1860, viz: *Ministers*—J. N. Campbell, D.D., George Potts, D.D., John McDowell, D.D., D. V. McLean, D.D., William Neill, D.D., H. A. Wilson, D.D., John Thompson, D.D., *Ruling Elders*—John Fine, Ebenezer Platt, Ira C. Whitesides.

4. *Resolved*, That the Board of Directors of the Western Theological Seminary, at Allegheny, be enlarged to forty, and divided into four equal classes, one of which shall go out of office annually.

5. *Resolved*, That the following persons compose the class of Directors to serve for three years, viz: *Ministers*—Francis Herron, D.D., Elisha P. Swift, D.D., W. M. Paxton, W. B. McIlvaine, John Kerr, James Alexander, Cyrus Dickson. *Elders*—Luke Loomis, Alexander Johnston, James Carothers, M. D. To serve for four years, the following: *Ministers*—Thomas Creigh, D.D., James S. Woods, D.D., A. S. Hall, D.D., James Hodge, D.D., John P. Caldwell, James M. Platt, S. M. McClung. *Elders*—Lucas Flattery, Dr. H. A. True, A. Cameron.

6. *Resolved*, That in the matter of the will and legacy of about twenty thousand dollars, of the late Judge Henry P. Broadnax, of Kentucky, the Assembly judge that the proper disposition of the funds bequeathed by him to the Trustees of the Board of Education of the Presbyterian church, and by a codicil to his will, directed to be used at Danville, in Kentucky, in connection with the Theological Seminary there, is that the said funds ought to go into the hands of the Board of Trustees of said Seminary, to be appropriated by them under the discretion granted in the said will, according to the intentions of the generous testator; and that the Trustees of the Board of Education ought to perform any legal act, to which they are competent, and that may be necessary in affecting this disposition of the said funds. If the Board of Trustees of the Danville Seminary, in the exercise of their legal discretion, think proper to endow a Professorship with said funds, in that case the Professorship so endowed shall be the second on the list, and shall be called the Broadnax Professorship, of Biblical and Ecclesiastical history.

7. *Resolved*, That, considering the great liberality of Samuel Laird, Esq., of Kentucky, who has generously contributed to the funds belonging to the said Danville Seminary, the sum of twenty thousand dollars, it is here.

by directed that the first Professorship on the list shall be called the Laird Professorship of Exegetic and Polemic Theology.

8. *Resolved*, That, considering these two instances of munificent charity, by two members of the church under their care, which have been reported during our present sessions, as bestowed on an institution which this body is endeavoring to erect to the glory of God, and their satisfaction in such great proofs of the approbation of good men; and while we rejoice to be almoners of God's poor, in gratefully accepting and carefully using their humble contributions towards promoting every good work; upon which the Lord calls us to embark; we call earnestly upon those whom He has specially blessed with this world's goods, to remember that their charity should bear an exact proportion to His beneficence. How immense might be the impulse to every work of the church, if the conduct of Samuel Laird and H. P. Broadnax were the rule and not the exception, in the bestowment of charity, by the followers of the Lord of glory.

9. *Resolved*, That the following Directors of Danville Theological Seminary be appointed to serve until 1860, viz: *Ministers*—John T. Edgar, D.D., R. C. Grundy, D.D., John C. Young, D.D., I. W. Green, D.D., B. M. Hobson, James H. Brooks, John Montgomery, R. A. Lapsley, D.D., A. V. C. Schenck. *Ruling Elders*—William Richardson, John Watson, James S. Hopkins, John D. Thrope, O. Beatty, William Prather, Glass Marshall, James Barbour, John McKeage. To serve until May, 1859: Ezekiel Forman, in place of James Coe, deceased, and Ben Monroe, in place of T. E. West, deceased.

10. *Resolved*, That inasmuch as the charter of Danville Seminary (Section 6) confers upon the General Assembly the right, when meeting in Kentucky, to change one third of the Board of Trustees, and fill all vacancies then existing, it is expedient to exercise this right, that no advantage may ever accrue against it from non-use, and that the Board of Trustees of Danville Seminary be composed of the following persons, viz: John R. Ford, James S. Hopkins, John B. Temple, Mark Hardin, Robert A. Johnstone, R. J. Breckinridge, A. A. Hogue, W. L. Breckinridge, John Montgomery, J. T. Boyle, Charles Caldwell, W. J. Moberly, Stuart Robinson, J. P. Curtis, E. P. Humphrey, R. C. Grundy, W. M. Scott, James Barbour.

11. *Resolved*, That the Assembly elect a fourth Professor, in Danville Seminary, to fill the chair of Oriental and Biblical Literature, and that this election be the order of the day for Monday morning at eleven o'clock.

The Rev. Stephen Yerkes, Professor of ancient languages in the Transylvania University was subsequently elected to fill the fourth chair at Danville. For the chair in the Western Theological Seminary, the Rev. Samuel J. Wilson, was elected. Dr. Breckinridge, with a frankness and candor which, in his peculiar circumstances, we think, did him great honor, objected to this last nomination on the ground of Mr. Wilson's youth and inexperience in the *active duties of the ministry*. How could he be qualified to train men who are to be Pastors? He had not seen the truth pass through the souls of men. The logical faculty itself,

without this experience, is not competent to a Professor's task. He begged the brethren to look over our more than two thousand ministers, and see if there were not some experienced man who has had the cure of souls, that might be put into his place.

Upon the question of the Directors nominated for the Western Theological Seminary, Dr. Scott, of Cincinnati, suggested that there is an impropriety and a danger in going outside of the bounds heretofore understood as belonging to this institution. Heart-burnings and jealousies would be introduced and the various seminaries set to scrambling in all directions. He moved the recommitment of these nominations, with instructions to the committee, to confine themselves more within the territory of Allegheny.

The Rev. Messrs. McIlvaine and Hays suggested reasons for the nominations objected to, and disclaimed all idea of interfering with Princeton.

Dr. Scott's motion was laid on the table. The Rev. Dr. M'Gill then nominated four ministers, resident near to Allegheny, in place of the four who had been understood to be dwellers of the region beyond her territory. He urged, that there is injustice to Princeton in the contemplated election. Why should Western Pennsylvania go outside of herself for help, when she possessed the densest, strongest, staunchest set of Presbyterians in the United States, and perhaps in the world.

Dr. Moore, of Virginia, Chairman of the Committee on Seminaries, denied that Princeton was being invaded, and objected to the nominations of Dr. M'Gill, as too near to Allegheny. It was desirable to push out and create an interest elsewhere. He thought the policy of confining the Seminaries to territorial limits, as advocated by Dr. Scott, a very dangerous one, tending to sectionalism and other evils. On the other hand to mingle the friends of all the Seminaries is to cement and bind them all together.

Dr. Breckinridge considered this a matter of great importance and believed that discussions of this sort cannot help doing good. He could not appreciate the difficulties of gentlemen on either side. For his part, if it were thought desirable for either or both Allegheny and Princeton to have half a dozen directors each from Kentucky, we are just the men to furnish you with them, and he thought those seminaries could hardly do better than to try it. He was gratified to hear his excellent friend, Dr. Moore, deliver his mind so clearly against the principle of confining each seminary to a territory, inasmuch as the Synod of Virginia had last year passed a sharp resolution on the other side which seemed to him to be leveled at Danville, because we had stolen six of their students. He had nothing, however, to say against Virginia. He was himself a Virginian by descent—a Virginian as far as a Ken-

tuckian could be one—as far as an improved breed could be part of the original stock.

As to the question of territory, their experience at Danville is precisely against what the Allegheny brethren desire, i. e., the increase and the scattering of their directors. The true policy is to concentrate the directors within narrow limits, for otherwise they will not attend to their duty.

As to students we cannot restrain them from going to any seminary which they may think the best, no matter whether it is near them or far off; and he would never say anything else, even if it should leave Danville with nobody there except himself and the man that takes up the ashes. You ought to make all your seminaries just as good as possible, and then let your young men go where they please. He would not intentionally strengthen the natural tendency to localization.

On the other hand, if you begin to mix up your directors for purposes of electioneering you make trouble. He would consider it a great outrage for Princeton to ask a director from the city of Allegheny, or the Western Seminary one from the town of Princeton. That was an extreme case, but things might grow to that extreme, if this principle of elective affinity were encouraged.

Just here, he desired to deliver himself of the heresy, that it is no advantage to any seminary to have a large number of students. He would rather have fifty than one hundred. He never wanted to see more at Danville than he could become well acquainted with; and he supposed indeed there was no danger of there being a great number at Danville, so long as he was there. He wanted to be able to know all about every student that he ought to know, and to feel so free with the students that he could go to any one of them who should err, and lay his hand upon his shoulder and say to him, "my son you have done wrong." It is a great evil when a seminary has so many students that there is any coldness, distance or indifference between the students and the professors; and you would better multiply your seminaries than endure this evil. What the church wants most of all things in this world is a great deal better article of preachers than us old ones, and it may be a somewhat better article than you young ones. And she will give money liberally to that end whenever more seminaries are needed. He thought there should be a new seminary for every surplus of fifty students. And if South Carolina and Georgia Synods would only wheel into line and make theirs a seminary of the whole church, he would be willing, for his part, to give them any territory they might desire, except Kentucky.

Dr. M'Gill having withdrawn his nominations, the nominees of the committee for directors of the different seminaries were subsequently, on motion of Dr. Breckinridge, elected by acclamation.

RELATIVE POWERS OF DEACONS AND ELDERS.

This subject came up by overture from an individual in St. Louis, asking: "Has a church session any control over the funds in the hands of the deacons for the poor of the church? or, does the control belong to the deacons? or, what power has the session in the premises?" The committee on bills and overtures recommended that the first answer be in the negative; the second, in the affirmative; and that the third be, that the session may advise. The occasion of this overture was stated by Mr. Drake, ruling elder from St. Louis, to be as follows: The collections made at communion seasons in the 2d church of that city, for the poor, had accumulated until there was a surplus in the deacons' hands of \$350. The session ordered the deacons to transfer \$300 of this money from the poor fund to the support of some candidates for the ministry belonging to that church. The deacons promptly refused to do it; and this circumstance brought the question to the Assembly.

We doubt the propriety of seeking from the highest court a deliverance upon a general principle just to suit a particular case. It had been fairer and better every way, we think, for the issue to have been made before the Presbytery to which the session and the deacons belonged, as an open issue upon this particular case.

As to the principle involved in the question, Dr. M'Gill argued that the office of the deacon is one of *service*; that when money was sent to the poor of Judea, even after the appointment of deacons, it was sent to the *ruling elders*, and that, in the Second Book of Discipline of the Scotch Church, it is distinctly said, the deacons are to act *under the judgment of the eldership*.

Dr. Anderson, on the other hand, viewed this as an adjudicated case. He referred to the Digest, p. 38, where it is said the deacons have the distribution of the poor fund, but that their office gives them no control over any other funds. In some portions of the church the deacons are claiming the power to control the taking up and the use of all collections. He wished the Assembly to go further than the committee's answers, and define more fully the relative rights and powers of deacons and elders.

Dr. Breckinridge, Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, insisted that the question submitted to us is a very narrow one, as narrow as the edge of a sword. When funds are already in the hands of the deacons for the use of the poor, can the session then control their use? The committee say no! but that even then, the session may advise. If, however, the Assembly saw fit to go into the examination at large of the office of deacon, he was willing. The matter was becoming more and more important. That office was long lost in our church. Many

of our churches are still without deacons. He had even heard it argued in the Assembly that we do not need them ; that the ruling elders, or the ladies, or some body else can do their duties.

Mr. Drake contended that it is the right of the Eldership to exercise government and discipline, the former meaning, of course, something different from and more than the latter, and extending, within certain well defined limits, to every thing that concerns the well being of members of the church in all their relations, as such, to the church. On the other hand, deacons are no where recognized as part of the government of the church, but simply officers charged with certain defined and limited duties. Whether they were to be appointed at all in a particular church depended upon the order of the session ; and whether, when appointed, they shall have any funds to distribute, depends upon the session's order also. How then could they in the case supposed, set themselves above the very government that called them into being, and entrusted them with certain funds ? And Mr. Drake then related the circumstances above given, which had occasioned the overture.

Dr. Breckinridge thought it a poor sort of business for the Assembly to be legislating on individual grievances. But this very case proved that the committee's answers were the correct ones. He honored the deacons of the second church, St. Louis, for standing square up and saying "excuse us, we cannot give you up this money." The real object was to divert the poor funds to another use, which neither deacons nor elders had a right to do. And why could they not in the great city of St. Louis find poor people enough needing those three hundred dollars ? We are not to be confined to the poor of our own denomination. For their relief it had not been worth while to erect such an office as the deacon's. We have very few Presbyterian poor of any kind, and he had never in his life seen a soundly converted calvinistic Presbyterian beggar. The Lord Jesus Christ when he established his church appointed all necessary officers for it. He gave preachers to convert the nations, elders to govern and care for the flock, and deacons to relieve the temporal sorrows of men. And no one class of these when in the discharge of their proper duties are to be interfered with by the others. No one class is simply the servant of another. To be the servants of elders was not the object for which the deacons were set apart with the laying on of hands. If this were the object, then the session in Lexington might have a negro, and in St. Louis a Dutchman to do their deaconage. When you attempt to say the deacons can do nothing except as dictated to them by the session, you show that you have a wrong conception of our principles. Are not the deacons to speak words of consolation to the prisoner, to the widow, the orphan, the hungry, the houseless ? Are they just to dole out the alms of

their particular church to its particular poor, and that too as another body shall dictate to them? As to what the second Book of Discipline of the church of Scotland might say, it was but Andrew Melville's opinion. But he would undertake to show that that Book declares just what the report of your committee says. He had always been a friend of the ruling elders, had been one of them himself; and had stood up for their rights when all the ruling elders forsook him. But whilst he stood up for the rights of ruling elders, he would not agree that they should make a raid upon either the ministers or the deacons.

The committee's report was adopted.

PREACHING BY RULING ELDERS.

In connection with the question of the elders' power over the deacons we introduce the matter of their preaching. In the Assembly of 1856, (at New York,) the committee which examined the records of the Synod of Mississippi, report as follows :

On page 10, vol. iv. of these minutes, Synod takes exceptions to the minutes of the Louisiana Presbytery; because this Presbytery consider it not inconsistent with the principles of our church for ruling elders, in the absence of the pastor, to read the Scriptures and explain them, and endeavor to enforce the truth upon the conscience by suitable exhortations. The Assembly believe the Presbytery of Louisiana were right according to the xxi chapter of our Form of Government."

The Tombeckbee Presbytery sent up this year a protest against this action of the Assembly of 1856, but as a protest was not in order, Dr. Waddel, who had been entrusted with the document in the absence of their delegate, asked leave simply to read it as a request to the Assembly to reconsider the subject. Leave being granted, the writer of this article submitted the following minute for the adoption of the Assembly, but, on motion of Dr. Steele, the whole subject was laid on the table:

"Whereas the last Assembly, near the close of its meetings, and probably, therefore, with some degree of haste in adopting the report of their committee on the records of the Synod of Mississippi, did sanction the principle that a ruling elder, in the absence of the pastor, may read the Scriptures and explain them, and endeavor to enforce the truth by suitable exhortations; and whereas the notice of this body has been called to the subject by representations on the part of a Presbytery of that Synod: Therefore be it resolved by this Assembly, that explaining the Scriptures, and enforcing the truth by exhortation, form no part of the official duty of ruling elders as elders. At the same time it is earnestly recommended by this Assembly, in the language of the twenty-first chapter of our Form of Government, that every vacant congregation meet together, on the Lord's day, at one or more places, for the purposes of prayer, singing praises, and reading the Holy Scriptures, together with the works of such approved divines as the Presbytery, in whose bounds they are, may recommend, and

they may be able to procure; and that the elders or deacons be the persons who shall preside and select the portions of Scripture and of the other books to be read, and to see that the whole be conducted in a becoming and orderly way."

It will be observed, that the Presbytery of Louisiana and the Assembly at New York stand distinctly on the ground, that in the absence of the pastor, and, *therefore, as his substitute*, the ruling elder may expound the Scriptures and apply the truth by exhortation. This, it appears to us, is "*a raid upon the ministers.*" What more can the minister do in the very pulpit than explain the Scriptures and then apply the truth by exhortation? The Assembly of 1856 makes ministers, therefore, of all the ruling elders in the land? Without being taken on trials by any Presbytery for ordination to the work of the Gospel ministry, they may nevertheless do all that ministers can do! And they may do it all in the absence of the pastor, and as his substitute, on the Lord's day, in the great congregation!

The report adopted in manifest haste, by the Assembly of 1856, not only set forth an erroneous principle, but it made the curious blunder of referring, as the basis of its doctrine, to the xxi chapter of our Form of Government, which very distinctly and carefully limits the duty of elders (and deacons are joined with them in it) on occasions of the absence of pastors, to prayer, singing, and reading the Scriptures, and the works of divines approved by the Presbytery.

We confess that our own minute was also drawn up in some haste. It should have contained a clause guarding against any discouragement of ruling elders from doing all they legitimately can, for the advantage of their respective churches. We hold firmly and earnestly to the doctrine that the ruling elder is the aboriginal Presbyter; that the essence of the Presbyterate is *ruling*; and that, in the beginning, it often happened that amongst those ruling elders who were ordained in every city over the little flocks gathered first by the apostles, there was one or more whom God afterwards called to preach as well as to rule; and so it came to pass that the function of preaching was super-added then, as now, to a portion of the rulers of God's house. Accordingly, we admit that *practically* a certain degree of freedom is to be allowed to such a high officer in the church as the ruling elder; and that he ought to be *apt to teach*; and that being made by the Holy Ghost an overseer or bishop of the flock he must *feed* the church of God with sound doctrine. We suppose the eldership, generally, is in no need of being kept back from taking too much upon them in the way of public exhortation. We would they might assemble all our vacant churches and exhort and pray with them; in this way, and by reading approved sermons, we have known elders to minister greatly to the edification

and prosperity of vacant churches, and for a period of years to keep such churches and congregations together, until in God's mercy, they were again favoured with the authorized teacher of the Word. But all this being admitted, it is still proper that the resolutions and reports adopted by the Assembly should not contradict the express language of our book; and that when the Assembly is about to state articulately the true doctrine respecting the rights and duties of elders, it should not mix and confuse them with those of the minister of the Gospel. How are our own people—to say nothing about other people besides ours—ever to understand our system of church government, if the Assembly is made to mislead them with all manner of contradictions? And what hope is there of any other than hasty resolutions and confused reports, when one of the oldest and most venerable members of the body could move and influence them to lay upon the table, without a moment's discussion, a minute designed to correct a serious and palpable blunder!

ELDERS TO BE ELECTED FOR THREE YEARS.

In connection with these other questions about elders, we here introduce also the action of the body respecting this point. An overture was presented from the Rev. D. X. Junkin, D.D., asking that our form of government be so changed as to provide for "a system of rotation among the ruling elders and deacons so that they shall *serve three years and go out in classes.*" The Assembly declined to consider the proposed amendment to our constitution. When next brought up, we hope the proposition will, for consistency's sake, be made to include ministers also. Why should not they, as well as the elders and deacons, *serve three years and go out in classes?*

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

An overture from the Presbytery of Carlisle (desiring the Assembly to send down to the Presbyteries the question of altering the law of our book on this subject, for the reason, that "it is not executed by our sessions and Presbyteries,") was reported by the committee of bills and overtures without any expression of opinion. On motion the subject was laid on the table. This action was good, so far as it went. We should have preferred a vote of the Assembly, not to overture the Presbyteries for a change of the law, but to require them and the session to execute the law as it stands.

UNION WITH THE INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Dr. Leland stated to the Assembly that the Independent Presbyterians have three ministers and twelve or fourteen churches, most

of them in the bounds of Bethel Presbytery, S. C., and the rest in the bounds of Concord Presbytery, N. C. They originated with Rev. W. C. Davis nearly fifty years ago, who published a book called the Gospel Plan, for errors in which he was deposed. Being a popular preacher he formed a new denomination. Of late years most of their ministers and all their churches are anxious to be incorporated with our body, and this feeling is strongly reciprocated by Bethel Presbytery. The churches and the ministers adopt our standards, but the difficulty is, that the latter claim the right to retain their peculiar views.

Rev. Mr. McCormick, of Bethel Presbytery, regretted that any thing had been said of their past history. They do not acknowledge the teaching of Davis's Gospel Plan. Bethel Presbytery has entire confidence in the soundness of these brethren. The people of God in both denominations unanimously desire the union. The tenets of Mr. Davis were: "That the active obedience of Christ is no part of his satisfaction; that the forbidden fruit was the condition of the covenant of works; and that the first act of faith is not a holy act." But while the Independent Presbyterian ministers still claim the right to hold these views, they explain them away in a manner that is satisfactory to Presbytery, and they also engage not to make these views prominent in their preaching. If brethren are coming back to the old paths let us do nothing to deter them.

Dr. Thornwell said the course recommended, by the committee of bills and overtures, is the best that can be taken. We cannot receive into our ministry any who claim the right to teach doctrines not in our standards. This, those ministers do claim, although Bethel Presbytery says they are sound. These churches in the main are sound, but some parties in them retain their attachment to Mr. Davis's tenets. Our proposed action is just to say, we cannot receive you unless in good faith you adopt our standards. This is as much as we can do, or as ought to be asked. As to the ordination of their ministry that is a question our Assembly has adjudicated. It is not lay ordination.

The minute reported by the committee of bills and overtures was adopted unanimously, and is as follows:

"While the General Assembly is greatly gratified with the spirit of charity and brotherly love, which the overture indicates as subsisting between the Presbytery of Bethel, and the Independent Church, and would sincerely rejoice at the consummation of the proposed union, it yet cannot sanction the precise terms of the covenant which has actually been made. The privilege claimed by the Independent ministers of holding and teaching doctrines not in harmony with the confession of faith, is a privilege, which even if harmless in this particular case, might be abused as a precedent and lead in other quarters and relations to serious mischief. The Assembly expresses the desire that these ministers, may soon be able to embrace our standards

without reservation, and, in that case, the Presbytery of Bethel is hereby authorized to ratify the union without further application to this body, but in the event that the Independent ministers and churches cannot relinquish their peculiarities with a good conscience, this Assembly will cherish them in the bonds of Christian love, but cannot see its way clear to embrace them in the same denomination."

REVISION OF THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

This subject came up by an overture from the Presbytery of Philadelphia, asking for a revision of the constitution in regard to judicial proceedings in our church; and also by an overture from Dr. Breckinridge, proposing a change of our representation in the Assembly from Presbyterial to Synodical, and a reduction in the number of the delegates. The latter paper is as follows:

1. The General Assembly shall consist of not more than fifty ministers, and not more than fifty ruling elders. These shall be elected by the Synods respectively, at their last stated meeting, next preceding the annual meeting of the Assemblies.

2. The ten succeeding Assemblies, after the constitutional adoption of the change in the constitution now proposed, shall consist of one minister for every fifty ministers, and one ruling elder for every minister elected a commissioner. The tenth General Assembly, and every tenth General Assembly thereafter, shall re-assign the ratio of representation, and apportion the number of commissioners amongst the Synods.

3. Every Synod shall have a separate representation even when the number of its ministers may be less than the ratio.

Dr. Breckinridge said, our very prosperity as a church is the occasion of the practical difficulties which beset our Assemblies in their judicial proceedings. As our church increases, the numbers and the business of the Assembly both increase. But we should make no changes unless they are absolutely necessary, and unless they are certainly for the better. And before we undertake improvements, we should distinctly apprehend where we stand and what we can and cannot do. We cannot invent any new principles of government. Government is a strict science. This is especially true of Presbyterian government. We can make no new laws for Jesus Christ. Whither he leads, we must follow, and where he stops, we must stop. The church has no right to make new laws. We have no legislative, but only an expository and declarative power. Nine times out of ten, when you get an English or an American lawyer into a church court, he is lost. The reason is, that our discipline was made by Scotchmen, whose ideas of law were ideas of the Roman civil law, with a Scotch stamp upon them, and who mixed up their law ideas with their Scriptural and Presbyterial tenets. It has been suggested that we alter our judicial rules so that the lower courts

only should try all questions of fact and that appeals be taken to the highest court upon no questions but those of law and principle. But in the highest civil courts of the country, in the courts of equity which resemble our church courts in being courts of conscience, the law is never decided by any chancellor without knowing and considering all the facts of the case. No such alterations of our forms of proceeding will remedy the evil we are now considering.

The second overture strikes at the great difficulty which besets us, and that is the size of the body. You must reduce your number, which you can only do by a change of the representation from Presbyterial to Synodical. And then you must reduce your business by establishing commissions to try judicial cases.

Objection is made to transferring the representation from the Presbyteries to the Synods, but it is impossible we should much longer continue the plan of Presbyterial representation; impossible if the Master continue to bless and to increase us. We have a boundless territory to fill up, and our Presbyteries are destined, we hope, to an endless multiplication. And unless the representation be transferred, the Assembly which is now already very unwieldy, must ere long, be composed of some five or six hundred members! Now, for obvious reasons, you cannot remedy the evil by enlarging the ratio of representation as applied now to the Presbyteries. The only remedy is to transfer the representation to the Synods. As to the rightfulness of such a transfer, it is unquestionable. Every church court is a Presbytery. The session is a Presbytery, and so is the Synod, and so is this Assembly; all are the same thing, differing only in size. All are composed of the same constituent elements. And if the Synod is a Presbytery, then, without any sacrifice of general principles, we may transfer to them the representation in this the largest of all our Presbyteries, where we see the whole church met together in its two classes of officers who bear rule.

By this transfer of the representation, you will reduce the size of the body, and by the commission, you will reduce the amount of your business. A commission differs from a committee, in that the latter is appointed to examine and report, and the former is appointed to examine and conclude. He was opposed to any changes in our mode of judicial proceedings. The overture from Philadelphia does not go deep enough. It does not go to the root of the evil. He thought justice never could be secured in a judicial case before a large Assembly. Such an Assembly is necessarily compelled to conduct its judicial cases in scraps of time, by scraps of testimony, and with scraps of speeches; with other things coming in continually to interrupt them. For years past, he had refused to take any part in any judicial case, because he felt satisfied whatever the rest of the Assembly were able to do, he

was not competent to do justice to any case, upon any such plan of procedure as this. If put on trial himself, he would rather be led in blindfold, and take for his judges the first ten men he might happen to touch, than to take the whole three hundred of the Assembly. We are practically, a church without discipline, and we must make a great change, or be forsaken of God. He was in favour of appointing men in whom we have confidence to consider the whole matter, and report to a future Assembly.

The Rev. Dr. J. H. Jones said he was from the Presbytery which sent up the overture as to judicial proceedings. Dr. B. has expounded with great force the very difficulties his Presbytery had felt.

Dr. Scott was in favor of facilitating our methods. We should be able then to go on for a series of years, even though our church and this body should continue to grow. The constitution of the higher courts, the whole process of conducting judicial cases, and various other matters need to be re-examined and adjusted. Our discipline needs to be made harmonious with itself and with the fundamental principles of our form of Government. He moved that a committee be appointed to revise the Book of Discipline, and report to the next Assembly.

Judge Allen preferred a committee to enquire whether any and what things are necessary.

Dr. Hoge said, it is now nearly forty-years since any alteration of consequence has been made in the Book of Discipline or form of government. He would advocate no change of principle, but thought it would be well to put both these books into the hands of a suitable committee to report necessary amendments. He therefore moved to amend by inserting, also, the form of government.

The Rev. Dr. Swift would not object wholly to this proposal but would have it embrace only minor matters.

The Rev. Mr. McIlvaine was opposed to this whole thing. Let well enough alone.

Dr. Thornwell was opposed to including the form of government in the revision. The Book of Discipline had been discussed in the church at large, and we are, therefore, prepared perhaps to undertake some modifications of it. But, as to the form of government, there has not yet been sufficient attention given to the subject by the church generally, to warrant us in attempting to amend it. His own mind is clear that no revision of it will suffice, which does not fully embrace the principle of commissions. Yet the mind of the church is not settled about even that question. Let us begin with the Book of Discipline, and by the time we have finished that, we may be ready to go further. In church matters, even more than in state reforms, *festina lente* is a good maxim. Let us attain the ends of justice first. He thought Dr. Hoge's amendment premature.

The amendment was lost, and Dr. Scott's motion was then put and carried by 108 votes against 76.

On motion of Dr. McGill both the overtures discussed, were referred to the committee now to be appointed for revising the Book of Discipline. It was determined that the committee should consist of nine members. The following were appointed, Drs. Thornwell, Breckinridge, Hoge, Hodge, Swift, McGill and Judges Sharswood, Allen and Leavitt.

The subject is one of incalculable importance and the debate was, for the most part, of very great ability, and awakened the liveliest attention, even at the latest period of the meeting. The committee is a most able one. We fervently pray God to illuminate their minds by his grace. Nothing said or done by the Assembly exceeds in importance this action. But one other subject approached this one in the interest excited by it. We believe it quite impossible to secure the administration of justice in our Assembly and Synods; and nearly impossible in our Presbyteries. The latter are small bodies enough, but they are always in too much haste, and have too many other subjects before them, for the calm, uninterrupted, deliberate, just and wise adjudication of difficult, personal questions. We are not of those who complain much about the Book of Discipline, but if the committee can improve it, we shall rejoice. But most earnestly do we favor the use of commissions in judicial cases, and the reduction of the Assembly to one hundred members. Such a body would do more business in less time, and do it better than any Assembly of two hundred and fifty men can ever be expected to accomplish. The General Assembly is our highest court; we want it to be the highest possible in every attribute of wisdom, calmness, and efficiency. We want it to have all the moral weight and force of all our synods combined. Such a body as the General Assembly cannot afford to make blunders; it cannot afford to present a spectacle of over haste in the discharge of its high functions. We need to have for our highest court such a General Assembly as no man should expect to be sent to, who had not acquired great experience in ecclesiastical affairs and the utmost confidence of his brethren at home; and such as, whoever were sent to it, would feel himself so honoured by the choice of his Synod, that he would be perfectly willing to remain in the discharge of his duty as a member, not only two weeks, but if needful, four. And then for the adjudication of cases of discipline, we need a commission, whose stern justice, calm deliberation, and impartial wisdom, should become a proverb in the land, as much as we fear our superior judicatories are likely to become, for their haste and inconsideration, and their tendency to yield like all popular Assemblies to their feelings on the one side or on the other.

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Dr. Breckinridge presented the following overture without any expression of opinion by the committee in reference to it.

1. The American Bible Society has, by the terms of its constitution, no legitimate right to alter, in any way, the common and accepted standard English scriptures, as they stood at the creation of that society.

2. Concerning the said English Scriptures, the American Bible Society has full power to print and circulate them, and to collect and manage funds for those purposes. But it has no power to edit them—in any other sense than to keep them in the exact condition in which the standard English Bible stood at the formation of said society.

3. This General Assembly and the church it represents, are, and from the beginning have been, warm and unanimous supporters of the American Bible Society. And it is in this sense we feel called on to say that we neither do nor can allow, on our part, of any, even the smallest, departure from the original principle on which that society was founded; and to express the settled conviction that the continued support of that Society, by the Presbyterian church, depends upon the strict adherence of the society to those clear and simple principles.

4. The Board of Publication of the Presbyterian church will consider and report to the General Assembly a plan for the preparation and permanent publication, by it, of the common English Bible, in a form suitable for Pulpit use, with the standard text unchanged, and the usual accessories to the text commonly found in Pulpit English Bibles from 1611 to 1847.

Dr. B. said he had never performed any duty in his whole ecclesiastical life with more regret than the one he was now undertaking. His friends know well, that from the first, he had viewed the church of God as a different thing from what most people thought her. He had always believed she had power given her to carry on all her own proper work; and had always been jealous of the assumption by the voluntary societies of any of the powers of the church. These societies were a class of Christians whom he had looked on always as predestinated to mischief. But he had regarded the Bible Society as an exception. The work of publishing and circulating the Scriptures was peculiarly appropriate to an organization in which various denominations could unite. From the beginning and down to this day, he had been an earnest friend of that society. It was in his heart next to his own church. And if we shall be compelled to withdraw from this society, he did not see what we are to do next.

There are two ideas in the overture. It asserts that the society is the printer, and not the editor of the Bible; and it recommends a standard text of the English Bible, just as all governments keep standard weights and measures. We do not want to enter into any competition with the Bible Society. But when the Board of Publication was first organized, having then had some apprehensions respecting the Bible Society, he had offered and Dr. Alex-

ander had seconded, in the Assembly, a resolution that that Board should publish a Standard Bible, which, he believed, they had done something towards accomplishing.

The overture grants more power to the Bible Society than their own constitution grants. That specifies that the "sole object of the society is to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment." But we concede that circulating includes also printing, and what we deny is, that the society can lawfully do one earthly thing in editing the English text. The duty of an editor and the duty of a printer are widely diverse.

What is the standard text of the English Bible is a question as easily settled as any literary proposition whatever. It is near five hundred years since Wickliffe first translated the Bible into English. Various other translations were subsequently made. Under the reign of King James, fifty-four scholars were appointed by him to translate the Bible, or rather to collate those various English translations. It was done by them with great labour and care, and published in 1611. All we have to do now, is to get the text of 1611 and print it; and the British Bible Society not long since actually republished the Bible of 1611, to show that what they now publish is the genuine version. Again, in 1769, Dr. Blaney, under the authority of the Oxford and London authorized presses, brought out an edition that was adopted as the standard English text, and is the standard to this day. Now, all the Bible Society has to do, is just to take the Blaney Bible, or that of 1611, and publish it. These have been accepted by the English speaking people, and their Protestant Churches throughout the world.

How was the late movement of the American Bible Society originated? It came not from the church of God, from any public clamour, from thrones of kings, nor from the breasts of scholars. An unknown superintendent of printing spoke of some errors in the Bible to a secretary of the society, and he to the managers, six and thirty laymen in the city of New York; and the result was a Bible edited, printed and stereotyped, a new standard Bible! Here is a question of the *purity* of the English text, rising up in a society organized solely to *print and circulate the Bible!* Without any call from any church, or any call whatever from without, a question like this, which may rend Protestantdom in pieces, is taken up and carried through on the movement of a *nameless printer!* The Christian public knew not aught hereof until too late. True, it has been done for these five years past, and they have not yet spoken. But five years is a little while for the people over all this land to find out the nature and grounds of so great a matter. And yet it has been claimed that this step has been sanctioned by the churches, because they have been silent regarding the matter. They shall have that to say no longer. He would lift up his voice against it, though none here should concur with him;

and the Christian church should answer and say whether a voluntary society, on the suggestion of a printer, and under the control of one new school man, one old school man, and some other one man are to be justified in making all these alterations.

I love this society next to the church of God, but let them stand on the pedestal where they were placed. They have a sublime, glorious mission just there. The English Bible has been blest in saving more souls than the original Hebrew. It is a bold, but a true statement. Hence the great importance of the matter under consideration; much is at stake, for English is to be the language of the world. And the Bible is the greatest classic in the language. And in this aspect of the case, the society had no right to meddle with it. Would any printer, with three other men at his back, undertake to revise and change Shakspeare? Moreover, the English Bible is one of the strongest and most tender ties that bind together the English speaking people, and the two greatest nations of the earth. What do you gain by a few changes of capitals, italics, captions and spelling, (and these gentlemen say this is all they have done,) if you destroy the longer union of these Christians in this blessed book? Is there any advantage here that can justify this tinkering with the time-honored English Bible? This Bible, too, is the standard of our language. Who are this printer, preacher, and their colleagues, that they should take it upon themselves to amend this standard of our noble English tongue? We do not hold them competent for that work. If that work is to be done at all, we must go higher than they for the doers of it.

The matter derives some additional interest from the fact, that another society is declaiming all over the land against the English Bible, and calling for its revision; and when we object to their schemes, we are told that the American Bible Society is doing the very thing which we object to on their part.

What is the Bible? It is the gift of the Lamb to his wife. It is God's next greatest gift to His church, after that of the Saviour and the Spirit! And are we to stand by and see a voluntary society, a few private persons, establish the precedent that they may do what they think best with this blessed gift? Is that a power which ought to be committed to such a society? Never! But they say they have not done any thing. We say they have. They say they had power to do all they did. We say they had not. They never were organized for that. We never gave them our money for that. It establishes a precedent that the text is under their control, which we never can allow.

"Dr. B. then examined in detail the explanatory report of the society, contending that however unimportant some of these changes may be, these were not the men to make them, and that, at the same time, others of these changes do involve glosses and

comments, and are of importance, as the society itself admits. Many of the things done may be right enough in themselves, but it was not right for a society organized simply for *printing the Bible*, to make even these changes. That is not their vocation. It was simply a question of *power*, and he did not intend to discuss the merits of the changes made, but to deny their right to make any changes whatsoever.

The report admits their having done two things, first, changing *the text*, and, secondly, changing the *accessories of the text*. Under the *first head*, they admit having made changes in *words, orthography, particles of exclamation, proper names, compound words, capital letters, italics, punctuation, parenthesis, brackets.*

Under the *second head*, they admit having changed the *contents of chapters, the running heads of columns, the marginal references, &c., &c.*

Dr. B. considered that making changes under all these heads, involves every conceivable principle of editing, except the adding of notes and comments. They had changed some of the very *words* of the text. This is actual translating, and goes down deeper than even an editor can go. Then they had changed *the spelling* of the Bible. He had a great reverence for New England English, but we had a better English before New England was born, and he trusted we would still have it, when New England English was run out. Then they had changed *the italics* of the text, and that is a change of the Bible. If it was not a change, what was the use of making it? If it was a change they had no power to make it. Even their changes respecting *O* and *Oh*, involves commentary and translation by them, for they say they have printed it one way when the original signified *prayer*, and another way when the original signifies a simple vocative. *Punctuation* also affects the sense. The society itself says, they "believe" there are five cases in which they have altered the sense. If we could only know all the other changes in punctuation which they have made, perhaps we might "believe" the same was true of many more of them. One of their alterations they admit was never found in any edition before, it is bran, span new! As to *the headings of chapters*, it is true they are no part of the text, but is what the society puts in place of them, a part of the text? Why discard these captions which had been acquiesced in for two hundred years?

Dr. B. was firm in his conviction that this movement, if persisted in, will ruin the society in less than ten years. There is a wide, deep, subdued feeling of anxiety over all our land in regard to this matter. It is not a feeling in the breast of one man or of a few men, and it must spread. All that the society has to do is just to go back to where they were before. If they do not retract there will be a new Bible Society. This Assembly is a church of

God, and if we regard the Bible as in danger, we are bound to rise up in its defence.

The Rev. Mr. McNeile, one of the corresponding secretaries of the society, being present was, by resolution, allowed the privilege of replying to Dr. Breckinridge's speech. He sketched the great work done by the society in giving the Bible to our own country and the world; and then asked what has this society done, *which has done so much*, that it should now be arraigned? If it has done all that is charged, it has done wrong and he would pledge the board of managers to repentance. But it has not done all that has been charged upon it. It has not touched King James' version. It claims no right to do so. If you can prove that they have changed the sense of that version they will undo all they have done. He would be willing for himself to take either of the first three editions of King James, but they were printed in black letter, and would be very difficult to read now. The American Bible Society bound itself, by its constitution in 1816, *to print and circulate the version now in common use*. It did not bind itself to any one edition of that version, but only to the version. They were left by their constitution to get the best edition of that version which they could find. He contended that, in every case, they went according to the edition of 1611, except where it was a printer's error. All the changes which had been made in the text he could count upon the fingers of one hand. Every particular change made in words had been specified in the report, and he could count them all upon the fingers of one hand. There were four cases, he admitted, where they had corrected manifest errors. This may have been editing, but he thought not. They thought these must have been errors of the press, and that they had a right to correct them. This, however, had been recommitted to the committee with instructions to re-examine it more than a month since. He supposed the changes would be restored when the committee came to make their report. He then took up all the other changes the committee had made in regard to orthography, punctuation, &c., and defended them on the same general principles. He concluded by asserting, that the present edition of the American Bible Society, with the exception of the spelling, conforms more nearly in its text to the edition of 1611 than any other edition now extant. As to the accessories of the text, of course, that was a different affair. There was no sacredness about them. In fine, the few small changes made shall not stand in the way of the co-operation of this Assembly, or of any other Christian body. Do not, I beseech you, lay violent hands upon, or cripple, in any way, a society which is doing so much to spread the Word of God through the world.

Judge Fine moved that the overture be referred to a committee of five to report to the next General Assembly.

After various other speeches had been made, Dr. Breckinridge moved to lay the resolution, to refer, upon the table. There were 117 votes for laying it on the table, and 127 against. The vote was then taken upon referring the matter to the next Assembly. There were 128 votes for referring, and 114 against. So the matter was referred.

In the opening remarks of Rev. Mr. McNeile's speech, we find a singular statement of the argument from the past history of the society. The American Bible Society has done such and such great and good things, and shall this Society, which has laid the church and the country and the world under such great obligations, be now arraigned as a wrong doer? This was Mr. McN's argument. And this was the spirit of some of the speeches in the Assembly, and this has been the spirit of some of the letters, &c., written since the Assembly upon this subject. The society is, and has been, our benefactor and the world's benefactor. It is sacred and holy. You must not touch it. It has ever been published, that a "reproach would have fallen upon us even by a small minority voting to disapprove and condemn the proceedings of the committee," and that this caused the effort, made but too successfully, as we think, in the Assembly, to avoid a direct vote upon the merits of Dr. B's overture. It comes, then, to this, that the American Bible Society, a mere voluntary society, may tamper with the English Bible, but a church of God, in her delegates assembled together, may not, even a small minority of them, in defence of God's Word, venture to disapprove that society's proceedings without being covered with reproach and disgrace! The Word of God, and the Church of God, alike must bow at the feet of this voluntary society, and even if we disapprove their doings we must not speak out; must not speak out even for the sake of our Bible itself, lest we be overwhelmed with disgrace! But may we not be permitted, with all due reverence for the society, to enquire of Mr. McNeile, where it got the money for doing all it has done? Did not the churches and the people of this country furnish all the funds? If they even furnished at least some of them, so that they have not been absolutely indebted to the society for its gratuitous benevolence towards them; and still more if they furnished them all, we suppose those churches and people, and the old school General Assembly, as one of them, may, with a perfect recognition of the faithfulness of the society, as indeed their good old servant, point out to them, with all freedom, and in all kindness too, whatever faults we think they have committed.

The balance of the Rev. Mr. McNeile's speech was made up, as our readers will notice, of acknowledgments, in one breath, of the society's error, and, in the next breath, a partial or complete retraction of the acknowledgments. If they had done all that was charged they had done wrong, and he pledged them to repent-

ance. Well, the charges made against them, by Dr. Breckinridge, were simply that they had changed words, orthography, interjections, italics, punctuation, captions, &c., and all these charges are just the statements of their own report! Therefore, according to Mr. McNeile, they had done wrong and he pledged them to repentance; yet, immediately, he denies that they have touched King James' version. Then again he admits a few touches, as many as he could count upon the fingers of one hand. But they had done right, as they thought, in making these, for they were only corrections of printers' errors. Yet these four changes had been recommitted more than a month since, and he supposed they would restore the words changed when the committee should report!!

We regretted (with Dr. Breckinridge) to hear Mr. McNeile say the changes made by the society were few, when the report says they are specimens of many more. His zeal in defending the society led him much further, on this point, than the committee go themselves. He said he could count all the changes of words and meaning on his four fingers. The language of the report is: "The committee deem it important, in this connection, to lay before the Board *some specimens of the variations and discrepancies* in respect to which they have been called to decide, *and of the changes* which they have seen fit to adopt, both *in the text and its accessories.*" The italics in this quotation are made by us.

Mr. McNeile represented the committee better when he came to speak of the accessories of the text. He said there was no sacredness about them. And so, in effect, do the committee say in their report, p. 26. Our opinion is, that although they are at perfect liberty to print some editions of the English Bible with, and some without these accessories, yet they have no right to alter them. If they undertake to print them, they must give them to us as they stood when the society was formed in 1816. The arrogant and daring spirit which they display upon this subject increases our hostility to their tampering with the text. Had they exhibited a modesty which was unwilling to handle even the accessories of the text, we should have much more confidence in their reverence for the text itself. The committee needed to have much more of that "superstitious veneration (as we have heard it called) for the English Bible, which the best part of this nation feels. That Bible was good enough as it stood, with all the "twenty-four thousand variations and discrepancies solely in its text and punctuation" which the committee detected, but of which not one, they confess, mars the integrity of the text, or affects any doctrine or precept of the Bible." Why did they needlessly multiply these variations by their plan of collating with the original version of 1611, one American and four English copies of the Bible, all of which had been derived from Blaney's edition

of 1769? Why did they not collate Blaney alone with the original copy of 1611? Why did they not go to the fountain whence these five streams issued, and take water directly from the spring head itself, in order that we might have a fair sample of its qualities?

But we say, that any one of these six copies, which they found to have altogether twenty four thousand variations (all of them of no consequence); any one of these six, with its proportion of these unimportant variations, is good enough for us; and if that were the only alternative, we should prefer any one of them to be issued by the society, rather than to have the society tamper with the Bible and shake the confidence of this nation in its integrity. But what? Are we willing to have the word "*assuaged*" spelled in our English Bible "*aswaged*"? Can we bear such antiquated spelling as that? Yes! we have borne it all through our childhood and youth, and now we do not want to see even that spelling changed. And were any changes to be made, it is not a society of printers that we would allow to make them. That is a business only to be done, if done at all, by men appointed by the various churches expressly to do it. Does any author, fit to write a book, allow his printer to alter his manuscript in Spelling, in Punctuation, and in the Words themselves? And shall the churches allow a printing society to make alterations in so sacred a production as the English Bible? Shall we even allow them with a presumptuous and profane hand to change the accessories of the text? Suppose the Messrs. Harper, instead of the American Bible Society had contracted with the different churches, to print the English Bible, and they had undertaken without express leave, but by the aid of the very same sub-committee, to make these very changes; would the Christian public have tolerated it? So far as concerns the English Bible, we admit no difference between the American Bible Society and the Harpers, except that the Harpers would work for a profit and the society, of course, make no money by the business; and except that perhaps the six and thirty managers of the society may be all evangelical Christians, and perhaps the Messrs. Harper may not be Christians at all. It is quite possible, however, that the very opposite may be true, both of the six and thirty managers, and of those other gentlemen.

We admit, and so did Dr. Breckinridge admit distinctly and respectfully, the society's right to collate various editions of the English Bible with a view to giving us King James' version or Blaney's improvements of it. Mr. McNeile's statement we assent to heartily; "They are left by their constitution to get the best edition they could of that version." Of course Dr. B. does not mean any more than Mr. McNeile means, that they were to give us the black letter and the antiquated spelling of 1611. Neither of these is found in Blaney's Bible. Neither of these existed in

any editions of 1816. What the society ought to do is just to give us the text as it stood in 1816, and the accessories to the text just as they stood in 1816. If they say they cannot do these things, because they do not know what is the "*text as it stood in 1816*," we ask how have they then been doing it all along from 1816 to 1851? Any one of their editions that was an honest effort to give us the English Bible unaltered, is better, in our judgement, than their recent collation with its changes of words, orthography, italics, punctuation, &c., &c. If they still say, they are so puzzled by the thousand of variations, that they cannot give us the text as it stood in 1816, then let them call on the churches to appoint collators. Let them move this nation and the English nation to undertake the great and responsible work. We think they would get an answer that would send them back to do with quietness the work originally given them to do, or to resign it to other hands. Assuredly, they knew well, that if they should ask the great English-speaking people for leave to collate the Bible and do just what they have done, it never would be granted. And so they took the leave without the asking.

We all know very well that our English Bible is not a perfect translation. If we Presbyterians were translating the Bible, we would doubtless wish to see some things expressed differently. But so, of course, would the Episcopalians, and the Methodists, and the Baptists, and so would the Unitarians, &c., too, all like to make some changes. But the question for all Evangelical men who really believe in and love the Bible, is, whether it be not better to bear with some few imperfections in the version, having a learned ministry at hand to correct anything which any of us may dislike in the version, than to unsettle the foundation of all religion amongst us, by various conflicting translations. And if we would not unsettle these foundations even for the sake of some few important corrections, is it to be expected we should suffer a society, that we support, to unsettle these foundations, merely to gratify their little trifling ends of mere taste? If we should suffer these agents of ours to do this much unrebuked, who can tell what would be the end of this beginning?

There is but one course, therefore, for the American Bible Society to pursue, and that is to go right back to their former position respecting this whole matter. It is of little consequence to them that some very respectable persons, and some highly influential bodies of men should stand by them. Their prosperity demands the approval of all parties. Let some, let many approve heartily what they have done, and only wish they had gone much further in the way of amending the Bible! If those who now object to their course cannot be satisfied, another Bible Society, and then, perhaps, another and another will be the consequence. There is but one ground upon which this Society can stand, and

that is its old ground of being mere printers and circulators of the English Bible as it was in 1816.

We have offered these remarks in no spirit of unfriendliness to the Society. The writer and every member of his family have long been members of a Bible Society auxiliary to the American. He has given many years of his life to the work of the Bible Society in a foreign land, and has permanently impaired his eyesight in translating the Scriptures for them. He claims the right to speak with the greater freedom of their doings, because he cannot be regarded in any light but that of a sincere friend.

BIBLE UNION REVISION.

Two overtures were presented, one from Lake Presbytery, and the other from Central Mississippi, respecting a new translation of the Scriptures proposed by the Bible Union.

The committee recommended that the assembly distinctly disavow all manner of connection with the revision alluded to, and declare that they have no sympathy with it, but on the contrary an entire disapprobation of the whole movement.

SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY.

Of these we heard but two, those of Rev. Dr. Hunphrey and Rev. Stuart Robinson. The former was a very elaborate and finished discourse on Foreign Missions. We anticipate with impatience the opportunity of reading this elegant and thoughtful production. The other discourse was delivered upon occasion of the inauguration of Professor Robinson. Prayer was offered by Dr. Edgar, President of the Board of Directors of Danville Seminary, and then after the singing by a vast congregation of the 137th Psalm, he read the very solemn pledge which each professor is required to sign. We have, perhaps, never witnessed a more solemn ceremonial than the public subscription of his name to this pledge by the professor. The Assembly and the congregation sat and looked on in breathless silence, while this servant of the church took on him the vows which she was imposing. Dr. Edgar afterwards gave a brief and appropriate charge, and then the professor delivered his inaugural discourse. It was a vigorous and masterly exhibition of the doctrine of the church, as a Calvinistic theology, necessarily leads us to conceive of it. The central idea of the Calvinistic theology is the Eternal purpose of God, of which purpose all revelation is but a manifestation; and so the central idea in the true conception of the church is, that that Eternal purpose was to redeem, not myriads of isolated men, but a *body*, a kingdom, whose head is Christ. Accordingly, Mr. Robinson views Christ's kingly office as holding in the Scriptures, perhaps, the most prominent place. He is prophet and priest in order to his being king.

Thus the ἐκλεκτοί, chosen ones, of the Eternal purpose, became the κλητοί *called ones* in time. But as these are called both by the internal κλησις call, of the Spirit and the external κλησις of the Word, thence arises the external ἐκκλησία *church*. The ἐκκλησία then must begin as soon as the revelation of the purpose in time begins. And so does the Scripture actually hold it forth. It is the same church from beginning to end of the revelation, under the same Head, embodying in her ordinances the same theology, under the very same symbols, and administered by the very same officers, viz: *the elders*. And this it is which gives the Bible its wonderful unity of idea throughout.

This being the fundamental conception of the church, as gathered by Professor Robinson from the Scriptures, the doctrine of his discourse was treated under these heads:

1. The abstract principles which underlie the structure of the church visible, as a separate government on the earth.
2. The concrete form in which these principles embody themselves on the polity, attributes, functions and relations of the church.
3. The ordinances and agencies through which the life of the church manifests itself, and by which its great end is to be accomplished.

Among the inferences were these: 1. That all which pertains to government and ordinances in the church must be of Divine warrant.

2. That the order and ordinances established by Christ must be obligatory on every part of the church.

3. That in respect to ecclesiology, as in respect to theology, it is an open question how far departure from the truth may consist with being part of the true church. Nor does this view *unchurch*, any more than our claim of Divine warrant for the *doctrines* of theology.

Professor Robinson closed by declaring his purpose in teaching to go just where the Word of God goes, and to stop where it stops.

We congratulate the church on her securing, for the seminary at Danville, such a man as Stuart Robinson to be professor of church government. And we congratulate him, our beloved and honoured brother, in being called, in God's providence, to so noble a field of study and instruction as the doctrine of the church. It is in many respects the question of this age. May he be long spared to fill the chair into which we saw him inducted, and may God, in mercy to that portion of our church and country, send many students of theology to be trained by him and his colleagues!

CONCLUSION.

So far as we can learn, the impression made by our last Assembly has been both decided and happy all over the church and country. We deem it both an honour and a happiness to have been a member of that body. In our humble opinion all, or very nearly all the action taken, was in the right direction. There has evidently been within a few years past a very great progress of right opinions amongst us as was exhibited very plainly on various occasions in this Assembly. There is manifestly a growing confidence in our Divine system of government—in the sufficiency of what our king Himself has given us. We would thank God and take courage. The church is again upon her onward march. All who love her must make up their minds to follow on with her, or be left behind. Some of the things which have been clogs to her progress, she is preparing, so we judge, to cast aside. Let all concerned make ready for the coming change. Her last Assembly was one more upward step for our dear church in the sight of all men; one more powerful exhibition, not only of the steady advance of right views in her bosom, but of the manifest power and depth and completeness of the evangelical spirit which accompanies those views; one more evidence that God approves and blesses the aims and the spirit of the men who have, during so many years and amidst discouragements as well as encouragements, constantly and steadfastly laboured to reform the evils and to fortify the good things which have been so mixed up in the Presbyterian church. Some of them have gone to their reward, and some of them remain to this day. Of one of these, in particular, we feel impelled to say: May he never want faithful sons, nor faithful friends, nor faithful servants, who, whether as a son, or a friend, or a servant of the church, has always proved himself faithful! May his bow long abide in strength! Long may he live to assist in training that improved ministry the church so much needs! And distant far be that night of gloom from the many who love him so well, when his eloquent voice shall be hushed in death, and his fearless heart shall cease to beat!