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I. INSPIRATION.

A few years before his death, Theodore D. Woolsey, President of Yale University, was asked by a leading Quarterly to write an article for its pages on Inspiration. He declined to do so, on the ground that the time had not yet arrived for such a thing to be successfully done. President Woolsey died in 1889, and during these intervening years perhaps no biblical subject has had fuller discussion. Yet inspiration is still regarded by most biblical students as a *question*; notwithstanding this, inspiration is generally regarded as also a *fact*.

“The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”¹ To every believer in the truthfulness of the Bible, these words of the apostle reveal the fact of inspiration, declare that the Scriptures are, in some sense, the product of a divine influence brought to bear upon human writers. The process by which the Scriptures were formed has been long and gradual. “At sundry times and in divers manners”² has God spoken to us in times past. The Koran was given all at once. Full-grown it sprang from the shield of Mahomet, a prophet who not only had no forerunner, but who, as the professed bearer of divine revelation, had no successor. The Bible, however, has come to us through many prophets, each

¹2 Pet. 1:21.

²Heb. 1:1, 2.

V. THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY—NEW ORLEANS— 1898.

The General Assembly which sat in New Orleans last May was one of the best and most harmonious of our Assemblies. Twice before had the First Church of that city had the honor of entertaining the highest court of the Church: in 1858 and in 1877. Before noticing the Assembly of this year, let us sketch the character and work of these two former bodies.

In 1858, New Orleans was a frontier city. The larger part of the membership of the Old School Church was in the Northern States. Commissioners came from as far east as New Hampshire and as far west as California. A large portion of them came by boat down the Mississippi. Great revivals of religion had been experienced all over the Church. Political agitation was raging in the land. But the influence of the Assembly was for unity and peace. Brethren from the older parts of the Church were delighted to see the growth and sturdy vigor of Presbyterianism in this great metropolis of the South and center of Romish power. Dr. Scott, of San Francisco, a former pastor of the church in which the Assembly met, was moderator. Among the leading members were Van Rensselaer, W. J. Hoge, Howe, Palmer, and that most aggressive of leaders, R. J. Breckinridge. A feature of the Assembly was the centennial celebration of the reunion of the two mother synods of New York and Philadelphia and the healing of the Old and New Side breach. The Assembly threw itself against the tendency of the American Bible Society to introduce verbal changes in its publication of the Authorized version of the English Bible. It discussed Dr. Breckinridge's favorite scheme for the preparation of a distinctively Presbyterian commentary on the whole Bible by representatives to be chosen by the Church. The overtures of two Southwestern Synods for the establishment in New Orleans of a local com-

mittee of the Board of Domestic Missions elicited able advocacy from Dr. Palmer and spirited opposition from Dr. Musgrove, secretary of the Board. The ground of the application was the remoteness of the territory contemplated as the field for this committee's operations from New York, the home of the Board, and the conviction that the Board, pressed with claims in every direction, was in no position to judge of the urgency of local necessities. As a consequence, these and other synods were being driven more and more to work outside of the Board. The reply was a plea for economy and centralism. The establishment of branch Boards would tend to sectionalize the Church. The nationality of the Church, it was affirmed, was mainly due to its centralization through its various Boards. The matter went over to the next Assembly, and eventuated in the ultimate granting of the overtures and the establishing of that agency in New Orleans, under the leadership of Dr. Leyburn as secretary, which became later the nucleus of the Southern Assembly's earliest organized missionary efforts. The Assembly was stirred to its depths over the account of the great destruction of mission property in India, in the Sepoy revolt, and the bloody massacre of our missionaries and their families at Futtehgurh by the Mohammedan rebels. Other subjects of debate were organic union with Associate Reformed Synod of the South and the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church. Negotiations with the former body were continued. The proposition of this latter body that a committee be appointed to negotiate on the subject of union was rejected, because the declaration of principles adopted by the United Synod as instructions to its committee, and declared by it to be indispensable as terms of union, involved a condemnation of the Assembly and of its course in the very matters which led to the New School secession twenty years before. Five years later a union was effected between this honorable Synod and the Southern Assembly on the basis of their acceptance of the same doctrinal standards understood in the same sense by both of the contracting parties.

The Assembly of 1877 was one of the fullest and strongest of our Assemblies. Its unanimity in voting on all questions was declared by Dr. Adger to be "wonderful." Dr. Stillman was the moderator. The Church was in the throes of discussion over the Revised Book of Order. The revision of the Form of Government and the Book of Discipline, begun before the civil war, was resumed by the Assembly of 1861, and after repeated drafts made by successive committees of revision had been rejected by the presbyteries, this Assembly sent down a draft, with several alternative sections to be voted on separately. The result of this vote in the presbyteries was the rejection, by a majority of three presbyteries, of the proposed Book as it then stood. But such agreement was reached as to the alternative sections and amendments, that the next Assembly had no difficulty in constructing a new revision that was overwhelmingly adopted in 1879, and constitutes with a few subsequent changes the organic law under which we now live, and which the late Dr. A. T. McGill, of Princeton, declared to be the highest and truest expression of Scriptural Presbyterianism ever formulated. The Assembly declined to order collections for the American Bible Society in the churches, and that a column be added for that cause to our statistical tables, on the ground that the society was a voluntary society, not under our control, and that its contributions were made through other channels than the church. The Bible Society itself felt this difficulty and was even then seeking to meet it and remove it. In view of changes subsequently made in the plan and principles upon which this Society conducted its work, the Assembly thirteen years later adopted it as one of its agencies, placed this cause among the objects of beneficence, and recommended the churches to make annual collections for the society. Lively debates were had on the method of theological education, and on discipline in cases of card playing and dancing. On the subject of fraternal relations with the Northern Church, the Assembly insisted on the terms laid down in the Baltimore conference of 1875, and approved by

the Assembly of 1876, as its ultimatum. The whole subject of the Church's Publication work, in view of the disasters which had come upon the business through the mismanagement of the late secretary, came up for patient study. Looking back across a score of years, and contrasting the present prosperous state of our publishing interests with the condition of debt and discouragement then existing, we cannot but feel that Providence did, indeed, guide that Assembly in its resolve heroically to maintain the honor of the Church, continue confidence in its committee, and above all in selecting Dr. Hazen as its secretary. This year marked the definite organization of our present work for colored evangelization. Already a plan had been evolved, the outcome of which had been the opening of Tuscaloosa Institute under the conduct of that staunch friend of the colored people, the moderator of this Assembly. And now the Assembly gives permanency to the work by erecting for it an executive committee and designating a fixed day for collections to support it. This committee was continued as thus constituted until 1891, when its scope was widened to embrace the whole subject of colored evangelization.

This running review of two previous New Orleans Assemblies may help to show the trend of the Church's development and by comparison with its present state to estimate its progress.

The arrangements for the comfort and entertainment of the Assembly of 1898 were perfect, and not only reflected the characteristic hospitality of the New Orleans Presbyterians, but also the greatest forethought in the committee of arrangements. One evening was marked by a social entertainment in the spacious rooms of the Y. M. C. A., which was attended by overflowing crowds of citizens and commissioners. Later the tedium of business was relieved by a pleasure ride on the Father of Waters in a chartered steamer along the entire city front, and extending down as far as the Chalmette monument and the battlefield where Jackson achieved fame and the presidency. Much time was saved for business, and the social en-

joyment of the Assembly and its royal entertainers greatly promoted, by the arrangement for daily luncheon in the Washington Artillery Hall, distant less than two blocks from the First Church.

Four members of this Assembly had been members of the Assembly of 1877, to wit: Rev. J. W. Montgomery and Prof. E. H. Carter, of Texas, Rev. A. Cowan, of Tennessee, and Rev. G. W. Finley, D. D., of Virginia. Every presbytery was represented by its full complement of ministerial members, and only seven elders who were appointed to the Assembly failed to attend, making this the largest and fullest Assembly ever held. In its membership were an unusually large number of college presidents and professors, two theological professors, and three moderators of former Assemblies. The Assembly on the second ballot chose for its moderator the Rev. E. M. Green, D. D., of Danville, Ky., after a lively race, over Chancellor Fulton and Drs. Kerr, Finley and Boude. This selection proved to be a happy one. Dr. Green discharged his office with tact, dignity and great impartiality. No appeal was taken from any of his rulings. The best of temper prevailed among the members throughout the sittings, which continued through eight days devoted to unremitting work. No harsh notes were sounded and no divisive questions sprung to mar the harmony of the body. The debates were brief and eminently courteous. The Assembly developed no bore. The report of the committee on leave of absence showed that only twenty-three out of 187 commissioners obtained leave to depart before the final adjournment. Three of these were absent from only the last two hours of the Assembly, and thirteen for only the last day. The repeated injunction that only such men be appointed commissioners as can stay through the entire sessions is bearing fruit. In 1897, thirty-three were granted leave of absence, and in 1893, seventy-seven, before final adjournment. It should be borne in mind that the business of the last day or two of an Assembly is of much more importance than that of the first few days, which are devoted mainly to organization

and the reception of business. The Assembly was in everything conservative. There was no restlessness, no tinkering with machinery, no changing of plans and methods just for the sake of change. This meeting was marked by the election of two new secretaries, Rev. J. H. Lumpkin to succeed the lamented Dr. Richardson as secretary of the Executive Committee of Education for the Ministry, and Rev. D. C. Lilly as secretary of Colored Evangelization to succeed Dr. A. L. Phillips, who had resigned; also by the advent of a new stated clerk.

A solemn and spiritual meeting was that on Wednesday evening, when the Assembly sat down at the table of our Lord to observe the Supper that celebrates his death. More than one thousand communicants filled the spacious sanctuary. Drs. Farris and Hopkins dispensed the elements and four and twenty elders distributed them to the communicants. The sermon was preached by the venerable and best loved of all the members of the Assembly, Rev. B. M. Palmer, D. D., LL. D., pastor of the church in which the services were held. In a strong doctrinal sermon from Gen. 22 : 8, this prince of preachers and master of Assemblies unfolded the necessity for an atonement for sin, and a divine-human mediator, and with the deepest pathos and stirring eloquence appealed to the brethren of the Assembly to magnify their office as ambassadors of the gospel of reconciliation. This service was the feature of the Assembly, and the recollection of it will linger as a hallowed memory in the minds of every one of the assembled multitude present as long as life shall last, and will furnish a theme of contemplation in eternity itself. Many of the younger commissioners had never heard a sermon from this eminent leader in Zion. It was at their special request that this service was appointed and Dr. Palmer designated to preach. Their motive was not curiosity, but sprang from the affection felt for Dr. Palmer as a father in the Church, one of the few surviving formulators of its principles and policies in its day of organization and transition, and one of their ablest champions and expositors. These younger brethren have

drunk at the fountain of testimony the fathers of 1861 gave to the world, and have imbibed their faith. The Church has not swerved from the moorings where these sought to anchor her, and now, in perhaps the last Assembly in which this godly and gifted octogenarian may be privileged to sit, the representatives of the Church desired, as children sitting at the feet of an honored father, to hear a sweet gospel message from one who could speak with such authority and be heard with such confidence and love. It was a matter of wonder how marvelously this revered leader of the Assembly of 1898 has preserved his powers as a speaker and thinker. Darkness is creeping over his vision, but the music of his eloquence, the vigor of his mind and his force of expression are unabated. His sermon on that solemn night will compare with his best when his strength was unbroken. It was the prayer of every member present that Dr. Palmer may be spared yet many years to publish with his matchless power the message of life, and never will our Southern Zion cease to thank the great Head of the Church that among his richest ascension gifts, he gave us Dr. Palmer. It is needless to say that this brother's influence dominated the Assembly. Not that he sought to lead, for he never spoke save briefly, and then only to tersely state his convictions on the matter under discussion. His views prevailed because with lucid analysis he laid bare the principle that justified his position, and that principle was generally one that met a response in the judgment of the Assembly. And here we cannot but remark on the advantage to a church, and the great power and strength that result, from a pervading unity of conviction and principles. A homogeneous church is more powerful than one that is heterogeneous in its elements and divergent in its views and practices. To-day peace prevails throughout our borders. Our Church is rent by no divisive matters of doctrine, policy or sentiment. No disturbing questions agitate its bosom. Fraternal confidence, a community of ideas and unity of worship characterize its life and membership. It would mar its efficiency to have this happy state

of affairs disturbed by contentions arising within or by heterogeneous alliances without. This period of unity and quiet summons us to work. What we need is to brace ourselves more than ever to the support of all branches of our work as now organized and to move forward upon a new era of evangelization.

Dr. Palmer has been a member of thirteen General Assemblies, three of them of the original Old School Church. No branch of the Presbyterian Church has a moderator yet living whose year of service dates back to that in which this venerable father presided over the first Assembly in Augusta. Dr. J. C. Lowrie, moderator of Old School Assembly, North, in 1865, and Dr. S. M. Hopkins, of the New School Assembly, North, in 1866, yet survive. Rev. P. G. Rea, still living, was moderator of the Cumberland Assembly in 1862, while all his predecessors have passed away. It should be remarked, however, that we have still abiding with us two moderators of the United Synod, the highest judicatory of the New School Presbyterians of the South, which became an organic part of our Church in 1864, namely, Dr. C. H. Read, moderator at Knoxville in 1858, and Dr. C. M. Atkinson, moderator at Huntsville in 1860.

The conservatism of the Assembly was shown in that eighteen separate overtures making specific requests were, on recommendation of the Committee on Overtures, either refused or referred to existing laws and decisions; while only two such overtures were granted. The harmony of the body was shown in that only one final action drew out a protest, which was signed by but two members.

To a memorial from the Sabbath School department of the W. C. T. U. of the United States, requesting the appointment of the fourth Sabbath in November as an annual Temperance Day, the Assembly, while bearing testimony against intemperance, made a negative answer. This memorial was part of an effort to secure a union of all the churches of America in observing one such day annually, in accordance with the plan

of the London Sabbath School Union. But this day is not needed of us. 1. Because it would tend to injure as much as help the cause of temperance, by the temptation it would present for pressing upon the Church extreme views of a political and divisive nature on this subject. The Church must guard zealously lest she be drawn off into support of mere human schemes of reform. The door should not be opened that might lead to discussion of political measures in our pulpits and courts. 2. We must guard against the beginning even of a calendar of special and holy days. The appointment of annual days of prayer for colleges and of children's days has, in the opinion of some, begun to take on this stereotyped aspect. The observance of such days, becoming matters of annual routine, may grow into so much formalism and be continued when the spirit of the day is but little entered into.

Alike conservative was the adoption, in view of the war excitement, of a paper calling attention to the historic position of the Church on such matters, and while affirming our duty to pray for our rulers and our armies, yet urging on the ministry the duty of proclaiming from their pulpits at all times nothing but the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and on the people the duty of abstaining on the Sabbath from such reading and conversation as may be inconsistent with the proper observance of the day. While in the Assembly's devotional meetings constant prayer was offered for our army and navy, a righteous issue of the conflict and a speedy peace, yet there were no unseemly references to the war, no loud professions of patriotism, and no public meetings of a political nature. In view of the many subtle forms in which error exists around us, threatening the Church in her doctrine, polity and spirituality, an able committee was appointed to prepare and circulate a pastoral letter warning against these errors. In answer to an overture, the Committee on Young People's Societies presented an elaborate constitution, with by-laws, for such societies, as an amendment to the plan adopted in 1894. But it went too much into minutia, and by its very multiplicity of

details, would only have impeded the activity and usefulness of these societies. We should guard against making a church within the Church. The more imposing these organizations are made the more will they arrogate the functions of a church. There is a fascination for young people in such a parade of organization and activity, especially in their great interdenominational conventions, but our young people cannot always see where mischief lies.

The executive agencies of the Church have all had a good year and all show increase in receipts over the previous year, except in the case of the invalid fund, where a falling off of \$1,000 is reported. Here, to the shame of the Church be it said, a steady decline has been going on for years. The Committee of Foreign Missions had the largest receipts it ever had in any one year. Yet these were less by \$7,000 than the necessary disbursements, which was satisfactorily explained by the committee. Assembly Home Missions received \$10,000 more than last year. Both "The Missionary" and "The Children's Missionary" show increase of circulation. There was also an increase in the number of communicants added in the foreign field over last year. Eight new missionaries were sent out, making 155 now under commission as against 150 last year. In view of delay on part of many churches in sending on their contributions, the executive committee asked that the churches be recommended to appoint special treasurers for benevolent funds, so that these might be kept separate from collections for general church expenses, and so be more promptly transmitted. There may be cases where this plan would work well, but it would not in every case. Many churches take up weekly in one envelope the gifts of each contributor for both benevolent and congregational purposes, and distribute them from time to time as the delinquents are reached and the totals classified. Special treasurers would be no better than general ones, and would have to wait on the latter in many instances. The Assembly contented itself with directing the attention of the presbyteries to the suggestion,

and urging them to devise plans for remedying this evil of delay. Approval was given to the committee's determination to proceed at once to the building of the Congo boat. But now the word is that the progress of railroad building on the Congo, and the projection of new lines, make it doubtful whether after all the building of this boat will be so necessary to the comfort and safety of our missionaries as has been supposed. Of addresses before the Assembly should be noted that of Rev. G. E. Henderlite, bearing fraternal salutations from the Synod of Brazil; that of Commander A. L. Wadham, of the Navy, bearing testimony to the high character and courage of foreign missionaries, and the great value of their work as viewed by a civilian who has travelled largely in mission lands; and that of our secretary giving his observations on the work in Korea and the East. This latter address was declared by many to be the most effective missionary address they had ever heard, and produced as deep an impression on the Assembly as did that of the venerable secretary, the Hon. Walter Lowrie, in 1858, before the Assembly in the same church; in which, after referring to the fate of his own martyred missionary son whose bones lay rolling under the China Sea, where they fell ten years before by the hand of pirates, he pictured the sufferings of the native Christians in the fort of Allahabad and the martyrdom of Cawnpore. The Assembly authorized the founding of a mission in Cuba when the way is clear.

Dr. Craig's report told of prosperity in our frontier work among the Mexicans, nearly 700 pupils in our mission schools in Indian Territory, and made honorable mention of twenty or more churches which had sent boxes of clothing and other articles to our home missionaries and the schools. The situation in Florida resulting from the late freezes has been but little improved. Yet our Church in that State has grown nearly 250 per cent. in the past twenty-four years. In all the field aided by the committee ninety-two ministers conducted during the year 12,000 services, attended by 1,200 professions of faith,

while not less than twenty-five churches have been erected, repaired or freed from debt. While the population in these fields has doubled in the past eighteen years, our Church members have increased nearly five fold. In view of this good progress, showing the divine blessing on our frontier work as now conducted, we see no merit in the restless suggestions made from time to time, that we remand the whole work of home missions to the Synods, or otherwise modify the machinery of administration. One presbytery overtured the Assembly "to have its committee so constituted that every Synod of the Assembly shall be represented in said committee, in order that there may be a larger and more extended interest in the work; that the work may be more thoroughly overlooked and so prove more efficient; that the responsibility for the execution of the work may be shared by representatives of the various Synods and so give general satisfaction to those that contribute to this great object." This overture, proper enough as to its subject matter, yet bristles with insinuations in every line, and proposes in the interest of reform a ponderous, expensive and entirely impracticable mode of administration. The commissioners from the presbytery sending it uttered not a word in its advocacy, and without debate it was answered unanimously in the negative. But the report proposing this answer was so drawn as to embody in full the overture which it so summarily recommended for slaughter, and the overture lives on the Minutes of the Assembly as an unsanctioned reflection on the Executive Committee and the Assembly's plan of selecting and constituting its committees. It is sufficient to merely give the scope and purpose of such a paper, where it does not become the basis for affirmative action. In the Assembly's initial action in 1866, constituting this Executive Committee, the chairman of each presbyterial committee was made a corresponding member of the Central Committee, and it was made his duty to keep the Central Committee informed of the condition and wants of his presbytery, and also to see that all the churches in his presbytery take up regular col-

lections for the Central Committee, he acting at the same time as agent for the presbytery and the Central Committee. This adequately connects every part of the Church with the control of this work. It must be confessed, however, that in some of the older and stronger Synods this committee does not receive the support which as a missionary agency it should. We will have to guard lest the Assembly's missions suffer from the pressure of local missions.

An overture from Lexington Presbytery that the Assembly direct its Board of Trustees to appropriate, out of a legacy of \$5,000 left by Miss M. J. Baldwin, late of Staunton, Va., to the Assembly's Board of Trustees for the Domestic Mission work of the Southern Presbyterian Church, \$1,000 to the local Missions of the Presbytery of Lexington and \$500 to the Evangelistic work of the Synod of Virginia, brought on a general debate. A petition had previously been made by this presbytery to the trustees to appropriate a part of this legacy to it and the Synod's local work, fortified by an array of facts and arguments which indicated that the presbytery was much set upon getting a share of this liberal bequest, but which seemingly, under the plan of Home Missions in force when Miss Baldwin made her will and still in force, would, according to the terms of the will, have been expended in other more frontier and destitute Synods. The endorsement of the petition by the Synod of Virginia was first sought. Then argument was adduced to show that the donor must have intended the legacy to be expended according to the plan which went out of vogue some two years before the will was drawn, and which would have allowed the appropriation of a portion of it by the Atlanta Committee to the older and richer Synods, that formerly received aid from the central treasury. During the three years before her death, after the change in the plan of Home Missions had gone into effect, Miss Baldwin had been a liberal contributor to this cause of Assembly's Missions, doubling her gifts the second year, and almost trebling them the third, while curtailing considerably her gifts to the local

home work this last year. This is hardly compatible with the plea that a lady of such discriminating charity and marked intelligence understood that a gift to the Assembly's work was to be distributed also to the support of the local work of her presbytery, of whose separate existence she was aware, and to which she contributed with great liberality. Emphasis was also laid upon the pressing needs of the newly opened up mining and lumber regions of the Synod of Virginia. On these grounds the presbytery claimed that a substantial share of the legacy should go to it and its Synod. The trustees replied that they had no discretion as to the disbursement of moneys left to the different objects of the Church, and suggested that the equities in the case be laid before the Assembly. Thereupon the presbytery transferred its overture to the Assembly. It was advocated in a very able and adroit speech by Rev. A. M. Fraser, D. D., a commissioner from Lexington Presbytery. He had studied his case well. He seemed to feel that on its face, the case was against him. He fortified his ground by the opinion of able jurists. His aim was to create the presumption that Miss Baldwin was thinking of Virginia and not the border destitutions of the Church in drawing her will. A brother who heard this speech declared that it was one which in a civil court would have commanded a fee of five hundred dollars. The overture, however, was vigorously combated by Revs. A. W. Wilson and E. E. Bigger of Texas, who plead that the presbytery sought to set aside the will and that in its own interest, and against the interests of the far more destitute frontier; that it was scarcely generous in one of the largest, most compact and wealthy presbyteries to deprive the struggling West of what would afford so much relief to it and save much of its work from disaster. The question was asked by another whether in case the Assembly declined to direct that the thirty per cent. of the legacy asked for be set apart for the presbytery and Synod soliciting it, it would not be such a disappointment to their churches and contributors as would lead to a decline of liberality in support of the

Atlanta Committee on the part of many, and a tendency to concentrate more exclusively in support of local missions, on the ground that help being denied them by the Assembly, it behooved them to help themselves. Judge Hutton of Abingdon Presbytery declared that in his judgment it would have that effect, and this confession accomplished what Dr. Fraser's argument had not accomplished. It determined the Assembly to grant the overture. One brother of influence had prepared notes for a reply to Dr. Fraser, taking issue with him at every point, but when he heard this acknowledgment of the extent to which some back in the Virginias would take a defeat to heart, declined to make his speech and voted for the appropriation. It must be admitted that there is great need for sustentation and evangelistic activity in the more settled parts of our Church. The development of business enterprise is constantly opening up new territory, and creating new towns and cities, that call loudly for us to enter promptly and occupy. Nor is there anything to prevent the Central Committee from extending aid to these points as well as to the newer synods. Yet the claim that any section has a special claim on a general bequest, left to the Church at large to expend according to its own policy at any time in vogue, is one that is fraught with danger. The locality from which any legacy comes could at any time present as plausible a plea for the return to it of a larger share than should go to other sections, as that so ardently urged by Lexington Presbytery before the Assembly. There is no reason why Kentucky or Alabama should not have urged, that as Miss Baldwin, perhaps, did not fully understand that these States were not to share in her generous legacy, they, too, should have special legislation directing a liberal per cent. be set aside for their use. The granting of this overture has not directed the money where it will not be wisely and usefully expended, but a precedent has been set that is not good; and that is the writer's reason for dwelling on this case more than its importance might seem to warrant. His criticism is not on the Assembly for granting,

but on the presbytery for asking. We applaud the zeal of the Lexington brethren and expect to see them stand nobly by the Central Committee and its work, as they certainly will. It will be permitted the writer to say that he voted for the overture. He voted for it, because the Lexington brethren were earnest in wanting it. He felt with others, that to grant it would in the long run bring more money to the support of the frontier work than if the sum contended for should all be turned west of the Mississippi, and a portion of the Church left aggrieved.

The steady falling off in the invalid fund, it has been suggested, is due to the fact that the summer outing of people in our cities and towns are on the increase, so that in July, when the collections are taken, an increasingly large number of church members are absent, if in some instances the churches themselves are not closed during this month. If this be true, it calls for some reconstruction in the time or in the method of raising this noblest of all our benefactions.

The Assembly had the usual overture before it to unite the Executive Committees of Education and Publication. Those with whom such overtures originate forget that the members of the Executive Committees are overloaded pastors and busy laymen who give their services gratuitously, and cannot easily spare the time for the administration of more than one great cause.

The Committee of Education for the Ministry reported all appropriations to students paid. The Assembly ordered the committee to discontinue aid to academical students not in college classes. It discouraged attendance upon Colleges and Theological Seminaries other than our own by candidates receiving aid, but allowed that in extraordinary cases the matter of giving aid from the Assembly's funds to candidates attending outside institutions shall be left to the decision of the presbyterial committees, after consultation with the Assembly's Executive Committee.

The Committee of Publication reported increased sales, in-

creased issue of Sunday School periodicals and increased receipts from the churches for its colportage and benevolent work. No year in the history of the work has been marked by greater activity in the publishing department than this, fully 100,000 books and tracts having been issued from the press by it during the year. These include the memorial volume of the Westminster Assembly, which has had a gratifying sale, and a Supplement to the Assembly's Digest. The Assembly urged the Synods and Presbyteries to purchase copies of the Digest and place them in the hands of their stated clerks.

The work of Colored Evangelization presents peculiar complications at this time. The statistical tables show that \$12,383 were contributed to this cause this year, which is nearly \$2,000 more than in any previous year, and over \$3,000 more than last year. Of this only \$6,069 went into the general fund, which is \$360 less than the year previous. The remainder was given to the development or building fund for Stillman Institute, raised by the unremitting and unpaid labors of Rev. O. B. Wilson, or was expended privately. The committee has become through shortage of revenues burdened with a debt of unpaid appropriations to laborers in the field, and while progress has been made in reducing these debts, there yet remained, when its report was made, \$1,346 unpaid. The Assembly gave special approbation to the purpose of its committee to meet these obligations as speedily as possible. It has been for some time the conviction of the committee that it should expend a larger portion of its income in its evangelistic work than it has hitherto done, and less in the support of its educational work. Hence it has for several years studied to devise a plan to minimize this latter expense, and make the Institute as nearly self-sustaining as possible. The plan of a farm in connection with the Institute, where students could supplement their incomes by labor, was settled upon. Hitherto it has owned no property save a school building in Tuskalooza, valued at perhaps less than \$1,000. This is to be

sold and a farm of twenty acres, with a large two-story brick residence on it, adjoining Tuskalooza, has been bought for \$5,000, all of which but about \$1,666 has been paid out of the special development fund as it was received, and there are subscriptions for other sums. As a result of the efforts to thus change the method of operating the Institute and to discharge its contracts with laborers to whom arrearages were due, both the teaching force and the number of students supported in the Institute had to be reduced. Only the year before the Academic department of the Institute had to be closed because of financial stringency. The illiberality of the churches in their support of this work further compelled a double loss in the resignations of Dr. Phillips as secretary, and Rev. R. B. McAlpine as professor of theology, for want of means to sustain them. This was much to be deplored. No tributes were ever more richly deserved than those in which the Assembly expressed its appreciation of the faithful services of these two brethren. Whatever the future may have in store for the work among our colored population, it will never have connected with it any more self-sacrificing laborers than Brothers McAlpine and Phillips. In the direction of further economy the Assembly elected Rev. D. C. Lilly, pastor of the Tuskalooza church, as secretary, who it is understood tenders his services gratuitously, and the committee has elected Dr. John Little, of Tuskalooza, its treasurer in place of Mr. W. A. Powell, of Atlanta.

In the direction of carrying out the settled policy of the Church to aid in the establishment and development of a separate and self-sustaining Colored Presbyterian Church, the Assembly of 1891 appointed Rev. A. L. Phillips a commissioner to correspond with the various colored presbyteries, and gather information of their wishes, and to endeavor to secure from the Synods concerned such action as would permit the colored presbyteries, if they so desire, to form an independent Synod. This commissioner reported a year later that there were in our territory and aided by us five presbyteries composed

wholly of colored ministers and churches, besides a number of ministers and churches yet connected with white presbyteries. Three of these presbyteries were independent bodies. One, Ethel, was connected with the Synod of Mississippi. Another, Central Alabama, had till this time been a part of the Synod of Alabama, but now went into independency, in response to the recommendation of the Assembly, and in contemplation of the organization of the proposed Independent Synod. In 1895, however, it went back into the Synod of Alabama. He further reported great diversity of opinion among the colored brethren as to what was best for them to do, and though he had urged reasons why independent organization might now seem practicable, these two latter presbyteries voted not to enter the organization. Thereupon the Assembly reappointed this same commissioner to express to these churches its confident hope that the time will soon arrive when they can unanimously and cordially unite to form an Independent Church, and to assure them that the Assembly renews its pledge of financial and educational support, and its willingness to enter into correspondence with said Church. It further appointed a committee to call a convention of colored Presbyterian ministers in our bounds at Birmingham, to confer with them on this subject and any other matter pertaining to the interests of Presbyterianism among the colored people. The chairman of this committee having ascertained by correspondence that these brethren were not yet prepared for this step, did not call the convention. The matter came up again in 1895, on an overture from Charleston Presbytery asking for the immediate organization of the proposed Independent Colored Church. In response, the Assembly ordered a collection in the following August to defray the expenses connected with effecting the organization of the said Synod, and again referred the question to the presbyteries and Synods concerned, and appointed five commissioners to decide on the time and place for effecting the organization and to represent the Assembly on that occasion. But the presbyteries of Ethel and Central Alabama

again decided that they did not think the time had come for such a movement. The meeting, therefore, was not called, and the Assembly of 1896, feeling that the formation of this independent Synod should be the result of healthful and substantial growth, deferred further action. But next year, having expression from at least two-thirds of the fifty-five colored ministers that they were desirous of proceeding at once, and learning that the three independent presbyteries intended calling a meeting at an early day for the purpose of organizing, the Assembly again expressed its approbation of the movement and appointed commissioners to represent it in the event the convocation was held, and to convey to these brethren afresh the assurance of its help and co-operation. This convention was held in November last in Birmingham, with all five of the presbyteries represented. It expressed its conviction that the time had come when an efficient and stable colored Presbyterian Synod could be launched forth, and requested each presbytery to send two ministers and two ruling elders as commissioners to a meeting to be held in New Orleans, simultaneously with the Assembly, for the purpose of perfecting the organization. It did this under the conviction that to place the control of all the business of their churches in the hands of colored men would conduce to the progress of Presbyterianism among their race, at the same time throwing itself in all good faith and thankfulness upon the Assembly's repeated assurances of continued financial help and co-operation. This second convention met in the Berean Church in New Orleans, May 19th, and perfected the organization by adopting the standards of doctrine and polity of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and took the title, "Colored Presbyterian Synod of the United States and the Dominion of Canada," expressing the purpose of its constituent presbyteries to establish, when the way shall be clear, a separate Colored Presbyterian General Assembly. The new Synod constituted four executive committees as the agencies for its organized work. It would be a pleasure to know that the culmination of this movement

has the approbation of all our colored ministers and presbyteries. But we fear that this is not the case. They had not reached a general agreement as to the timeliness of immediate separation. Some hesitated because of the poverty of their people, the smallness of their numbers, and the great distances between their various centers of membership, which would make meetings of their highest court difficult and expensive. The advantages of review and control by a superior court were still desired. There might be some trouble about the titles to their church property. The chief difficulty was the lack of money. It is a matter of regret that some of these brethren felt constrained to protest to the Assembly against the action of the convention in setting up a government for itself. The Assembly directed its secretary of Colored Evangelization to visit the two presbyteries, Ethel and Central Alabama, in which the dissentients are found, at their next spring meeting, and express to them its earnest hope that all difficulties in the way of united action in this movement may be overcome by further careful consideration. The moderator of this new, independent Synod is Rev. E. W. Williams, of Abbeville, S. C.; its permanent clerk is Rev. A. E. Reed, of Chester, S. C. Its next meeting will be held in Chester. With this body our Assembly is now in fraternal correspondence, and by the most solemn and reiterated assurances we are committed to lend it the support of our contributions. With solicitude we will watch its course and unceasingly pray for its peace and enlargement.

The trustees of the Assembly's Home and School reported, that in accordance with the instructions given by the last Assembly, all connection between the Fredericksburg College and the Home and School had been severed, so that the Assembly was now entirely relieved of responsibility for the conduct and support of the College. The College property has been sold. The collections last December, ordered by the Assembly, together with private gifts, had sufficed to pay off about twenty per cent. of the old debts, and the cost of supporting the Home and School had been reduced to the lowest

point consistent with the proper care of the children gathered in it. All current expenses had been met and a further reduction of the indebtedness had been effected under the efficient management of the superintendent, Mr. S. W. Somerville. In the Home there have been thirty-five students. The Assembly authorized the trustees to employ a financial agent to raise funds to liquidate the debt, and directed the discontinuance of the department for training women missionaries.

A complaint from Rev. S. S. Laws, D. D., till this year a professor in the Columbia Seminary, against the Synod of South Carolina, was regarded as not technically a complaint but a memorial, and was considered as such. Two professors in this institution had failed to receive re-election to their respective chairs by the Board of Directors of the Seminary, at its annual meeting in May, the board having announced one year before that, under the operation of the age-rule in the Constitution of the Seminary, it would not continue them in their positions longer than this year. This age-rule declares that whenever a professor shall hereafter become seventy years of age he shall be retired at the close of that scholastic year, unless retained in office by an annual election in which he shall receive the votes of a majority of the board. Each of these professors were several years beyond the age when this rule became operative, and had been continued by annual re-election in their chairs, till in 1897 the board, acting under the Constitution, gave these professors due notice that their services would not be continued after the ensuing scholastic year. This action of the board was perfectly regular and constitutional, and was taken in no desire to reflect upon these venerable and esteemed professors, but as a faithful effort to discharge their duties under the charter and rules governing them. This rule was adopted more than a score of years ago as a protection to the institution against the recurrence of complications that had previously been a source of disquiet. Till this year it never had been found necessary to apply this rule. Dr. Laws overtured the controlling Synods to withdraw

its approval of this age-rule, as liable to misconstruction and to do more harm than good. The overture was accompanied with a printed argument, in which the rule was characterized as most obnoxious and unjust. The Synods of Alabama and Georgia voted for its repeal. The Synod of South Carolina by a small majority refused its consent to the repeal. No response was received from the Synod of Florida. As it requires the concurrent vote of three of the governing Synods to alter the Constitution, the overture was lost.

Dr. Laws complained against this action of the Synod of South Carolina. The matter was heard, however, by resolution and not in a judicial way. The Assembly has no control over the Seminary, save the right of general supervision which it retains over all educational institutions conducted within the Church, which right is distinctly recognized in the Constitution of the Seminary. The memorialist asked that the Assembly advise the Synods to repeal the age-rule in the Constitution of the Seminary. He declared that he regarded the action of the Board in his case as a finality, and that he was seeking no personal relief. Yet there was a feeling that this was a case that should not have been brought before the Assembly. The facts as to the working of the rule, its origin and the expediency of its retention, were fully before the governing Synods. Representatives from at least two of the Synods protested that this was a matter that could better be considered without the intervention of the Assembly with advice, and that such advice might lead to complications and embarrass the Synods, many of whose members thought the rule salutary and one that should be preserved. But after a vigorous presentation of the objections to the rule by Dr. Laws and an expression from Dr. Palmer that he regarded the rule as harmful to the Seminary and unjust to our older men, the Assembly granted the request and gave its advice to the Synods to abolish the rule. There was a feeling that the existence of this rule lends sanction to the pernicious practice in the churches of discounting the value and effect-

iveness of our older men, and of drawing a so-called dead line across the pathway of some of the most competent and useful ministers of the Church.

The committee appointed in 1897 to consider the subject of a Summer School of Theology, to be conducted by the joint faculties of our four Seminaries, recommended that such an enterprise be attempted, and suggested Monteagle, Tenn., as the place and the month of August annually as the time. An Executive Committee, of which Dr. Summey is chairman, was appointed to arrange details. The Assembly assumed no financial responsibility for the school. Doubt was expressed whether the enterprise was one that called for Assembly action. Let the project have a trial. It is to be hoped the results will justify the experiment.

The only judicial case heard by the Assembly was the complaint of Rev. Dr. W. M. McPheeters and others against an action of the Synod of South Carolina in addressing an official communication to the civil Commonwealth, to wit: a petition to the Postmaster General of the United States to forbid the transmission of mails on Sunday and order the closing of all post offices throughout the United States on that day. This action, the complainants alleged, was an error of judgment and a violation of the Church's Constitution, in its nature tending to produce effects prejudicial to the purity and peace of the Church. They specified: 1. Its tendency and effect will be to make void the testimony of our Church in reference to the doctrine of the spirituality of the Church. 2. It initiates a policy calculated to divert the thought and energies of the Church from her true mission, and to disqualify her to bring to human governments many blessings that would flow incidentally but inevitably from a vigorous prosecution upon her part of her proper work. 3. Its effect will be to weaken the hands of God's people and to encourage their enemies. 4. It is fraught with peculiar perils at this time, when the tendency of the Church is to forget her mission and to transcend her commission. 5. It tends to put the

whole matter of Sabbath observance and desecration in a false light by diverting men from their individual responsibility in patronizing Sabbath trains and post offices, and encouraging them to shift off upon the State their responsibility for their personal violations of the Sabbath. The complainants took the ground that Christ has not authorized his representatives in his spiritual kingdom to have any official intercourse, negotiations or relations whatever with the representatives of any human governments in their official character, neither has he authorized the Church to call human governments to her aid in securing reverence for and obedience to his law. The Church should employ no other forms of agency than those divinely appointed for her spiritual ends. As for the section of the Confession of Faith, which concedes the right of humble petition to the Commonwealth in cases extraordinary, the complainants took the ground that Sabbath violation by the State does not fall under the provision here signalized, and that the case the Synod had before it was in no true sense an extraordinary case. They went further and attacked that section of the Confession as not in harmony with Scripture or with other parts of the Confession and of the Form of Government, but in such radical opposition with them as either to nullify them or to be nullified by them, an anachronism, and a reminder of the times when the Church was fettered in its life by its union with the State. A constitution framed by men for the Church can confer no power which Christ has not conferred in his word. The Synod erred because it assumed a power which the Constitution does not and could never render legitimate, for the reason that it is a power which Christ in his word has not granted. The complainants held that we have here to deal exclusively with the Sabbath of the State, which is distinctly a civil institution, and that petition to the State for its regulation by a Church court is political action that the Church cannot take without intermeddling with what lies beyond her province.

Hon. W. F. Stevenson, of Cheraw, and Dr. C. W. Humphreys,

of Lancaster, appeared for the respondent. They claimed that such petition to the civil government by a Church court does not fall in the category of political action, that the right of such petition in cases extraordinary was not only granted in the Constitution and recognized by the Church in its Address to all the Churches of Christ throughout the Earth, in 1861, but had repeatedly and is being constantly exercised by our courts. This very question of Sabbath observance by the State has been on repeated occasions the subject of memorial by our highest court to the civil government, as was shown by citations from the digests. We are not here dealing with a mere civil institution, but with the Christian Sabbath. The State has gone out of its sphere and invaded that of the Church, and is obstructing her in her rightful observance of the Sabbath. Such petition was warranted on the ground of self-protection. It was but the Church asking the State to recede from its invasion of her orbit. This right of self-protection, even in the absence of any rule for extraordinary cases, sufficiently guarantees this right of petition. The enormity of the evil protested against certainly constitutes this an extraordinary case. The extreme contention of the complainants, that all official communication whatever between Church and State should be excluded, was vigorously combatted. The Church could not appear by representatives before the officers of the State to secure a charter or act of incorporation. It could not defend its property rights, ask the upholding of a will or contend for a legacy left to it, or ask the State's protection for its missionaries in time of peril, if this doctrine obtained.

The Assembly voted nineteen to sustain, six to sustain in part, and 145 not to sustain, and in its minute, expressing its verdict, declared that the action of the Synod was based on chapter 31, section 4, of the Confession of Faith. The complainants, taking the ground that the Synod's action was unconstitutional, attempted to sustain it by declaring that the Constitution, in conceding the right of petition in any case, is out of harmony with itself and with the Word of God. But

the cause had to be judged by the Constitution as it stands. To appeal from the standards to the Bible is not permitted to ground a judicial case, since the standards are the Church's understanding of what the Bible teaches. If the former contains anachronisms, they should be amended. It may not be contended that the Constitution is itself unconstitutional. Yet the complainants were right in holding that this "extraordinary clause" opens the door to many abuses and is a serious temptation to our Church courts to transcend their province. Every important case will be looked at by some as extraordinary, and this clause can be stretched to any latitude. The Constitution is not carefully drawn here and could be bettered by amendment, more carefully guarding the nature of the relations the Church may sustain to the civil government. Dr. McPheeters lost his case, but in the emphasis he gave to the doctrine of the Church's exclusively spiritual functions, and the necessity of guarding well against departures from her exclusively spiritual mission, he did great good and wrested a substantial victory out of defeat. The petition of the Synod was utterly useless. It could and would obtain no hearing. Again and again has the Church been rebuffed and ignored by the State when she has approached it with humble petitions. The action of the Synod was not necessary as a testimony, and had the issue at New Orleans been whether the Synod acted judiciously, instead of whether a constitutional act was unconstitutional because the Constitution itself was not perfect, the vote would have been overwhelmingly against the folly of this appeal to Cæsar. The Assembly itself was asked to join in this very same petition and declined to do so. By delivering faithful testimony from the pulpit the Church can best promote the observance of the Sabbath. As Christian citizens and not as Church courts should we bring pressure to bear on the State when it is needful to invoke its power.

We cannot forbear two criticisms. There was not submitted to the Assembly such a "record of the cause" in this case as is contemplated in Par. 189 of the Rules of Discipline.

Instead there was put into the clerk's hands a copy of the complaint, in which the reasons were blended with twenty printed pages of argument, and a full copy of the minutes of the session of the Synod at which the action complained against was taken. When the clerk of the Assembly was called on to read the record in the case, he knew not what or how much of the fifty pages of matter put in his hands to read, and the parties in the case had to be called on to select out and read such parts as they judged to be pertinent to the cause, the whole perhaps not more than a page. This is not the only instance in which such imperfect preparation of the papers in a judicial case has been known in our Assemblies. Our second criticism is on the inadequate way in which this, together with the greater part of the judicial cases passed on by former Assemblies, has been recorded in the Assembly's minutes. The committee to prepare the verdict expressive of the sense of the court should be required to embody in its paper such a full statement of the facts, history of the case in its various stages, grounds of appeal and complaint, as will make a full and clear record of what has been under consideration and what has been decided. We defy any one to ascertain from the minutes of 1898 what was the issue or what was decided. Who were the "others" associated with Dr. McPheeters is no where to be found. The complaint of E. M. Richardson and others in 1896 was decided adversely to the complainants, but the minutes are sealed even as to the subject matter of the complaint. There was merit in that part of the memorial of Revs. W. H. Workman and J. R. Riley which asked that our law be so changed as to require that the record be placed in the hands of the committee appointed to formulate the judgment of the court, which committee shall state clearly the errors found to exist in the court or courts below, to which shall be added such explanatory matter as may be deemed advisable, all of which shall be entered in the record of the case. Other needless features in this memorial caused it to receive scant considera-

tion, but the Assembly without any constitutional requirement should see that its records are full and complete. Our criticism has no bearing on the manner in which the permanent clerk has done his work.

The Assembly appointed an able committee to prepare a new Hymn and Tune Book for the use of our churches, and adopted a body of rules for the committee's guidance. This committee is not to do its work hastily, yet it is contemplated that its work shall be complete by 1903, when, it was understood, all arrangements of our publishers for the sale of other hymn books will have expired. But in compliance with an authorization of the Assembly, the Committee of Publication has, since the Assembly adjourned, bought from the owner of "The Hymns of the Ages" the copyright and plates of the work, and his entire stock of books on hand, so that the expiration of the ten year contract for the handling of this book in 1903 need now cut no figure in the committee's work. The completion of a new hymn book, adapted to present needs and the product of our Church's own life and effort, will be hailed with delight. The demand for it was evinced by the fact that nine overtures from different presbyteries and Synods, covering one-third of the Church, asked that this work be inaugurated. The use of a uniform book in all our congregations has long been desired. But the requirements of our churches, rural, village and city, are so diverse that we doubt if such practical uniformity can be attained—many will continue to use the books they now have. Yet we believe that the book whose preparation is now so auspiciously undertaken will, if the work is well done, come nearer to securing the desired uniformity than any of those now in use. The Assembly has reposed great confidence in its committee and granted it large powers. It has not expressly reserved to itself the right of inspecting and approving the work, though this reservation exists inherently. It empowered the committee to fill any vacancies that may occur in its membership.

Called on to interpret section 6, chapter 24, of the Confes-

sion, the Assembly declared that wilful desertion which can in no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, as a sufficient cause for divorce, applies in a case where both husband and wife are believers, and that where parties have been divorced by the civil law, if the divorce has been correctly granted, the innocent party has the right to marry again.

To the question whether it is agreeable to our order to hold an entertainment in a church building, it was replied that the affairs of the local church are under the control of the session. This was as far as the Assembly needed to go. To thus use our churches is ordinarily if not invariably wrong. But the Assembly is not, by this decision, liable to the criticism of a protest that was made, that by failing to give a categorical answer, it was indirectly sanctioning these practices. The onus of government should be thrown on the proper court, and the Assembly should not decide too many things.

The Assembly appointed a committee, of which Rev. F. B. Webb, D. D., is chairman, to confer with the Associate Reformed Synod of the South with reference to organic union, and to request the appointment of a similar committee of conference by that Church. Here take a retrospect. More than forty years ago negotiations were opened between this Synod and the Synod of South Carolina with reference to union. But these two bodies were not co-ordinate and could not treat with each other. The matter was therefore taken up by the Old School Assembly and committees of conference were appointed by the two bodies. Nothing came of this conference. At an informal convention of ministers and elders of the respective churches, held in Columbia, S. C., in March, 1858, to find out on what terms the two bodies might be brought together, it was ascertained that the chief if not only bar to this union was the practice of the two bodies on the subject of psalmody. The Associate brethren, in common with all bodies of Presbyterians in other lands speaking the English tongue, using Rouse's version of the Psalms, and they as a Church making it a matter of conscience to use in divine worship only

what had been divinely authorized, and therefore insisting heretofore that the Psalms are to be used alone, and in a version as nearly literal as the laws of meter will admit. The brethren of the Synod proposed that a new version of the Psalms should be made by translation or collation, and when approved by both bodies to be employed by each denomination, not on the principle of accommodation but as authorized by the Head of the Church and by the Church itself. While they did not feel at liberty to use anything else as songs but the Psalms, yet they believed many persons in their body for the sake of union would be willing to forbear with their Presbyterian brethren in the use of uninspired songs. The Presbyterians replied that if the Associate brethren meant that a praise book shall be prepared in which there *shall* be a literal version of the Psalms, and in which there *may* be a collection of hymns and spiritual songs, and if this version was not designed to supersede the book of hymns and Watts' imitation of the Psalms in use throughout the Assembly, they could not see anything to hinder an immediate union of the two bodies. They were prepared to concede to their Associate brethren the exclusive use of their version of the Psalms and to take steps for having it incorporated in the Presbyterian book. But if these brethren meant to exclude from our churches the songs of praise then in use by us and their new version to supersede our hymns in our congregations, the Presbyterians replied that this would be asking us to abandon our whole doctrine on the subject of psalmody. This convention came to no further results than to ascertain these facts and to part with fraternal regards, and perhaps with a conviction that things were not yet ripe for union.

Our Assembly in 1861 reopened the question of union with the A. R. Synod. The hymn book at that time in use among us contained fifty-two of the Psalms used by the Associate brethren, and the Assembly proposed that when another edition was published, to put the entire 150 Psalms at the beginning of the book, if so desired. After four years the

negotiations were terminated by the Synod. But this action gave dissatisfaction in some parts of the Synod. Its Presbytery of Alabama expressed its dissent from that action and its determination to persevere in the fear of God to final accomplishment of the union. On learning these facts the Assembly of 1866 authorized the Synod of Alabama to receive that body into union with itself, conceding to its members the right to use the old psalmody and to protect its ministers and churches in such continued use. Similar instructions were given to the Synod of Kentucky with reference to the A. R. Presbytery of Kentucky in 1870, and the Committee of Publication was instructed to insert Rouse's version of the Psalms in the book of praise, as a part of the authorized psalmody of the Church. Later, in 1896, the Assembly declined to co-operate in a movement of the U. P. General Assembly, looking to an improved metrical version of the Psalms. The Associate Synod numbers 101 ministers and more than 11,000 members. Its greatest strength is in the Carolinas. Its total contributions last year amounted to \$55,000. Its College and Theological Seminary are in Due West, S. C. Its stated clerk is Rev. James Boyce, Huntersville, N. C. Its ninety-fifth session will be held in Chester, S. C., November 10th, 1898. It co-operates with the U. P. Church in Home Missions, and efforts have been made in the past to formally unite these two bodies. We greatly hope the time has come when these estimable brethren, so heartily at one with us in doctrine and polity, may become one with us in organic life and work. The fact that we were about to undertake the preparation of a new hymn book was suggested in the overture from Columbia Presbytery, which proposed the conference, as making this an auspicious time for reopening negotiations. If we are one, let us unite. Unions should never be forced. Organic unity should ground on genuine unity.

The amendment to chapter 13, section 4, of the Rules of Discipline, designed to conform the law to the principle that the courts are not parties in cases of process, obtained the

sanction of a majority of the presbyteries and was enacted into law. Two amendments to the Constitution were sent down to be voted on. The first proposes to so change the baptismal formula in the Directory for Worship as to restore the original form: "I baptize thee *in* the name, &c.," instead of "*into* the name," that the formula may be in harmony with all other parts of the Standards in which the sentence occurs. The draft for a Directory of Worship as submitted by the committee of revision in 1893 contained the old formula, but it was changed by the Assembly so as to read "into" instead of "in," on the ground that this more nearly translates the original Greek of the New Testament. This is true, yet it is doubtful if its incorporation in the Directory can ever make the use of the new formula general. The standards elsewhere use the other expression. If the use of "in the name of" conveys the impression of "by the authority of," which is not its meaning, the use of "into," to one not accustomed to classical construction, who does not grasp the symbolical relations signified, conveys no meaning whatever. The difficulty to plain minds is in the word "name." One is baptized in, or into, the *name* of the Father, &c. Now the name of Christ stands for Christ. To believe on the name of the Son is to believe on the Son. To call on the name of the Lord is to call on the Lord. What we do is to baptize into the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Baptism signifies our engrafting into Christ, our union with him by the Spirit, and so our entrance into the family of God. It symbolically effects this union. It does not do this literally. The problem of interpretation here is solved, if we bear in mind that common principle by which the sacraments and other symbolical acts are spoken of as doing that which they only picture and represent to our faith. As the formula needs explanation in either case, it were best to change it back to the old familiar word.

The second amendment sent down was to so modify the law governing installations as more clearly to recognize the right, if it exists, or to confer the right, if it does not exist,

upon ruling elders to deliver one of the charges in the installation of a pastor. There is evident confusion in the law on this point, due to the fact that the book provides specifically for an installation only when it immediately follows an ordination to the pastoral office. Ordination is primarily by a presbytery, but may be by a commission after the requisite examinations have been held before the presbytery, which commission shall consist of a quorum of the presbytery. Now when one already ordained is to be installed, we have to eliminate such parts of the section prescribing its conduct as pertain exclusively to the ordination service. And as such installations are seldom conducted by the presbytery itself, but by special brethren deputed for that purpose, the law, by reason of this complication of two separable things in one, might seem to require that this commission also shall consist of a quorum of the presbytery. And many presbyteries always appoint in installations three ministers and one ruling elder. Furthermore, when the Assembly went through the book some years ago to reduce its features into harmony with the newly formulated law sanctioning the elder-moderatorship of presbytery and the higher courts, by oversight the section on installation and ordination was, at least in one clause, left unconformed, as contemplating a minister as presbytery's moderator presiding in the ordination, and ergo in the installation. And when the installation is had, without the accompanying ordination, then the old, superseded feature requiring (if it be a presbytery) a minister to preside, stands before us in the un-reconstructed law. The installation must be by the presbytery, and by defect in the uncured law, a minister must preside. After the sermon come the two charges. If these three duties are divided among the three ministers, what, it is asked, is the duty of the elder on the commission? We might ask further, what is the duty of the third or even the second minister, since the book requires that both charges shall be by the same person, and even provides that this duty may devolve on him who preaches the sermon. Plainly their duty,

if their presence is necessary, is to make the quorum of the presbytery. But the law of commissions does not declare that a quorum of presbytery is necessary to an installation. We eliminate from section 119 all that is peculiar to ordination when we proceed to install one already ordained, and this sweeps away the requirement that the commission effecting the installation shall consist of a quorum of the court, and abrogates the necessity for the presence of a ruling elder, if he is debarred from presiding and delivering the charges. It abrogates the necessity for a third, or even a second minister. Now the Assembly of 1894 had made a ruling that an elder may not deliver either charge in an installation. This deliverance we believe was wrong. It gave dissatisfaction throughout the Church. It interfered with a practice that was quite general. Hence, when the Committee on Overtures this year reported on the inquiry of the Presbytery of Central Texas, renewing the question as to the constitutionality of thus employing the elder, and asking, if he may not deliver a charge, what is his duty when appointed on such commission, a laugh went up from the entire Assembly when Hon. W. F. Stevenson, having respect to the ruling of 1894, moved as a substitute for the answer proposed this reply: "It is his duty to be there." According to the tight construction, this answer was not only correct but exhaustive of his onerous and honorary functions on that occasion. The climax of absurdity was thus shown in that line of construction which requires the elder to be there and do nothing. The Assembly, we think wisely, relieved the elder of this embarrassing situation by adopting the substitute of Dr. J. Albert Wallace, that an elder may deliver the charge. The "some other" in section 119 may mean some other person, or presbyter. It is an indefinite pronoun. That this construction is easily admissible may be shown in that, in the first part of the section, the parallel and synonymous expression is "some other member." Here we were content to rest. But the action did not give satisfaction. Dr. Finley gave notice of a protest against this answer as

violative of the Constitution, and it gained many influential signatures. Evidently here is a point in our law which is anything but clear, on which one Assembly reverses another. What is needed is not deliverances of doubtful validity, but a clearing up of the law itself by amending away its ambiguity. Private conference among brethren representing the opposing views revealed that there was no difference of opinion as to the inherent propriety of an elder delivering the charge, but only as to whether as the law now stands such action is lawful. To cure the Church of this distraction and reach a result that would harmonize the Assembly, it was proposed that the Assembly reconsider its action, that the advocates of that action concede for the time the correctness of the decision of 1894, that the elder is debarred from the charges, and that both sides unite in proposing such a change in the law as would make it legitimate for the presbytery to lay this duty upon competent elders whenever it should seem expedient. This was done with great unanimity, and the notice of protest was withdrawn. We believe this is a wise result. Conflicting interpretations of a law generate confusion. All recognize that at times this duty can admirably and appropriately be discharged by our gifted and godly elders, that in the sparser parts of the Church, especially where one is to be installed over several churches, it is often feasible to get a suitable elder for this work when it is difficult to secure a minister, and that often there is an eminent propriety growing out of local and personal relations in the appointment of an elder to this work. Many would ask for no change in the law to make this legitimate. Even if it infringes the letter, it is in one of those points which involve no vital principle, one of those circumstantial features of the law, departure from which is no more serious than many which are constantly tolerated without censure; certainly no more serious an infringement than the appointment of two ministers to deliver charges, one to the pastor and one to the people, when the law provides for only one to deliver both charges. Every year we read of presbyteries being opened

“by request” with a sermon by some one else than the moderating minister, which is without warrant in the law. Brethren who stand in peculiar relations to the pastor or the church, are brought from other presbyteries to preach the sermon or deliver the charge, which the law contemplates shall be only by members of the presbytery effecting the relation. When Dr. Palmer went recently to Athens Presbytery to assist in the installation of a friend; when Dr. Price went to Little Rock to take part in the service, where the minister was his son-in-law, or to Trenton, where the pastor-elect was a former pupil; when Dr. Beattie performed a similar service out of his presbytery, in Anchorage,—these brethren in one sense transgressed the law; and yet they did not, for the law is not thus to be judged. The employment of an elder, in the extremist view of it, is no worse than these and others that we lend sanction to. A prudent latitude makes for flexibility, and can be productive of no harm. The circumstantial features of a law cannot be lifted into co-ordinate importance with its fundamental principles.

But as others, not opposed to the thing itself, do not regard the delivery of a charge by an elder as an infraction of the law, let us change the law and conserve a practice that is widespread and useful. We have heard one or two declare that this is intruding the elder into a work that, as it involves a teaching element, should be reserved exclusively to ministers. This is a strange criticism to hear in a Church that exalts the eldership as does the Southern Presbyterian Church. The ruling elder has also a teaching function. Over and over have our higher courts urged the elders in vacant churches to gather the congregation on the Sabbath and preach to them, to exhort and teach in the prayer meetings and on other occasions. But bear in mind after all, that the pastoral relation is determined and ordered by presbytery, which judges of the conditions, and that the function of the commission is largely declarative. The bearer of the charge is but the messenger of the court sending him. An elder may, in the name of the

presbytery, counsel a church and admonish to faithfulness, without arrogating the office of a minister.

The amendment proposes to authorize the presbytery to employ an elder in delivering only the charge to the people. It is presumed that no installation will likely occur at which there is not at least one minister present, appointed to preach. If no other is sent, this one can be required to deliver the charge to the pastor. This much amendment will secure sufficient flexibility. Yet the overture might have gone farther, with no impropriety and expressly empowered the elder to deliver either charge. But in its present shape it is a compromise, a solution proposed by the General Assembly for the correction of divergent views and practices under the present law. If it is adopted and works well, the question may sometime in the future be considered of further amending the law.

At this Assembly its venerable stated clerk, Rev. Joseph R. Wilson, D. D., LL. D., constrained by growing feebleness and the weight of years, tendered his resignation of the office which he had held for a third of a century, and in which he had achieved great usefulness. Prior to his election to the stated clerkship, he had served the Assembly for four years as its permanent clerk. He entered upon this work in the prime of his young manhood, and from no one of our thirty-eight Assemblies has he been absent. His commanding figure, his rich and mellow voice, his overflowing fund of humor, his acknowledged ability and wide acquaintance with ecclesiastical affairs, made him a marked personage in our General Assemblies, in which he so long wielded a powerful and conservative influence. In parting with its aged servant the Assembly by a unanimous resolution bore testimony to his distinguished and appreciated services, and invoked upon him during all the remaining years of his life the blessing of Almighty God.

Clarksville, Tenn.

W. A. ALEXANDER.