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Art. I.—THE MODERN THEORY OF FORCES.

II.

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IN a former article, we examined the modern theory of forces in the light of its own definitions, its consequences, and its confessions. We found the definitions to be confused and contradictory; we cited, from Spencer and Bastian and others, confessions of inconclusiveness and invalidity, and pursued the theory to some of its inevitable consequences of materialism and fatalism. In the present article, we purpose to consider this theory in reference to life and mind, and examine it in the light of consciousness, reason, and revelation. First, in reference to mind.

In this higher field of observation the subject is *psychical*, not physical, else it were the same field still, language itself were false, consciousness itself deceptive, and the term correlation meaningless, and all measurement impracticable (for matter cannot measure itself), and all knowledge impossible, for there would be nothing that could know, perhaps nothing that could be known. Who, at least, could say that there would be anything that could be known? This alternative would prove more disastrous to the supporters of this theory than to admit the existence of mind. In this higher field, then, the subject is

in our land, and the source of incalculable mischief: viz., of every man thinking to make an expenditure, or show of expenditure, which is a token of equality in material resources with those utterly beyond his reach. Waiting-maids now often outdo their mistresses in dress, while the standard of fashion for all has reached a pitch of extravagance which would be ridiculous if it were not ruinous. All this more degrades than exalts those who practice it.

Whatever any lay up on earth, let them first of all lay up treasures in heaven, which they shall have at the resurrection of the just; which are imperishable and unalienable; which no moth nor rust can corrupt nor thieves break through and steal. So doing, let them learn the divine wisdom "in whatsoever state they are, therewith to be content;" since, at the worst, "these light afflictions shall work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while they look not at the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things that are not seen and are eternal." So, even if poor for this world, shall they be rich, as the heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to an immortal inheritance. Yea, "as poor, yet making many rich"—rich in faith, rich towards God, rich in the treasure which awaits them in eternity.

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#### Art. IX.—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States met in the First Presbyterian Church of Cleveland, Ohio, on May 17, 1875, at 11 A. M.

The Rev. E. D. Morris, D.D., of Cincinnati, Professor of Theology in Lane Theological Seminary, was chosen Moderator, and filled his office so wisely and well, as greatly to promote the harmony of its deliberations and the movement of its business to a speedy and happy issue. Fortunately, too, for this Assembly, most of the great questions of polity growing out of the

re-union and the methods of church work to be inaugurated as a consequence of it, had already been debated and brought to an issue by previous Assemblies. The overture to the Presbyteries for giving to the limited-term eldership a constitutional sanction, was found to have been sustained by a large majority, and is consequently now declared by the Assembly to be a part of our constitution. A larger than usual attention was given to the reports of the various boards of the church. The International Council of Presbyterian Churches, to be held in London in July, was approved, and the three last Moderators of the Assembly were appointed delegates to it, with power to add to their number. Strong deliverances were made against sectarian schools, also against cruelty to animals. We have no occasion, if we had the space, to notice specially more than a very few of the other matters which engaged the attention of the body.

#### THE ISSUE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

On this subject the Assembly wisely, in our judgment, adopted the following minute in reference to the report of its committee which urged further present advances on our part:

*Resolved,* That this Assembly deeply regrets that the negotiations in reference to fraternal correspondence between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (popularly known as the Presbyterian Church South) have failed; that the Assembly deems it inexpedient to press the question of fraternal relations at present by further negotiations, through the appointment of another committee; at the same time the Assembly avails itself of this opportunity to affirm unequivocally its confidence in the integrity and Christian character of our brethren of the Southern Church, and to declare that all the acts and deliverances of the Northern Assemblies of which they complain are wholly null and void, and of no binding efficacy as judgments of the Church we represent, or as rules of proceeding for its Presbyteries and Church Sessions, and that in so far as they, or any of them, can be supposed to import any injurious imputations upon the present character and standing of the churches and members of the Southern Assembly as Christians and Presbyterians, such an application of them would be unjust to them and would be disapproved and regretted by us; and further to reaffirm explicitly, in harmony with the repeated and emphatic deliverances of former Assemblies, our hearty willingness and our earnest and sincere desire for the re-establishment of fraternal relations between the two bodies on terms and conditions which shall be mutually honorable and in the spirit of Christian charity, forbear-

ance, and brotherly love, and that we await, in charity and hope, the early coming of the day when we shall again mingle with our brethren of the Southern Church in Christian fellowship and co-operation.

.. This is the precise attitude on this subject which we have constantly advocated since learning the result of the first overtures to the Southern Assembly. We believe that all attempts on our side to reopen it, before our Southern brethren see their way, directly or indirectly, to take the initiative, lead more to widen than to heal the breach, because they tend inevitably to the hunting up and parading of every offensive or extreme phrase used in the ecclesiastical votes or documents of Northern and Southern Presbyterians—to crimination and re-crimination. This opens but does not heal old wounds. So far as the past action of Northern Assemblies establishes any terms of communion or modes of church action, in reference to parties implicated in slavery and the rebellion, and measures growing out of them, these are unquestionably done away by the “concurrent declarations,” which formed the basis of re-union, abundantly confirmed as they are by such repeated express declarations on this particular subject as the foregoing minute contains. If this were otherwise, if any rules and regulations made in exciting times were now in force which had any offensive bearing upon our Southern brethren and their churches, we should urge their immediate abrogation. But they are already abrogated.

All that remains is declarations of sentiment by past Assemblies, Old and New School, in reference to slavery and the rebellion, and their surroundings and consequents. Undoubtedly, some intense language was used, in some instances beyond our own taste and judgment, both then and now. But this was largely called forth by language used in Southern bodies—as abundantly shown by Dr. Nichols in his able speech before the Assembly—still more repugnant to our taste and convictions, and those of our whole Church. Now it seems, at first sight, very plausible, to say that, surely it would be very Christian-like for our Assembly simply to “express regret” for some of these harsh expressions used in those exceptional and exciting times.

But we think this for the present out of place. 1. Because, if there be any, such expressions of regret, they should be mutual. Otherwise, we should both stultify ourselves before

the world, and do a great injury to truth. For, by this course, we should virtually proclaim that the deliverances of the Northern Church against slavery and the rebellion were wrong and ought to be repented of, while those of the Southern Church in their favor were so essentially right as to call for no retraction or regret, *e. g.*, that to say that the mission of the Church is "to conserve the institution of slavery," is what need not, while the condemnation of that sentiment must needs be, repented of. We can assume no such attitude, greatly as we desire more fraternal relations with the Southern Church. 2. Then it is *ultra vires* for our present Assembly to be expressing regrets, virtually condemnatory in their import, over the sayings and doings of past Assemblies, particularly those separate bodies since blended by the reunion. We can properly do what is needful for the right ordering of the Church, now and hereafter. This may, and often does, involve the annulment or modification of past orders or deliverances. But to express regret over the solemn and deliberate declarations of former bodies, the chief actors in which are in heaven, at any rate, not now present to defend them, or show the circumstances and reason of their adoption, is unwarranted and extraordinary, if not unprecedented. Are we thus to treat the acts and words of Spring, Breckenridge, Barnes, Duffield, Wood, Gurley?

However this might be in other circumstances, it is utterly out of the question for the reunited Assembly to enter on a course of reviewing and making expressions of regret and repentance for the doings and deliverances of either or both bodies during the period of their separate existence. Such a process once began would end we know not where. But we do know that it would reopen former strifes and jealousies, and prove every way divisive and disastrous. We are quite clear, therefore, that it is worse than useless for us to attempt any closer relations with the Southern Church till they are willing to let bygones be bygones.

The above had gone to the printer before our attention was called to the telegram of Dr. Stuart Robinson to the Moderator of our Assembly at Cincinnati. Whether a due understanding of that, and the extent to which it represents the mind of the Southern Church, would modify the judgment expressed above, we cannot say till we are better informed about it.

## REPRESENTATION IN THE ASSEMBLY, AND REDUCTION OF ITS SIZE.

The urgent necessity of reducing the size of the Assembly, admitted on all hands, in order to bring it within the compass of any reasonable hospitality and fitness for its office as a high deliberative body, led to the appointment of a committee in 1874, to consider the subject, and report to the late Assembly at Cleveland a plan for this purpose. This committee found the problem before them very perplexing. They did not undertake to report a plan in their own judgment intrinsically best, provided the Presbyteries could be induced to sanction it, but the best which seemed, according to the best light before them, to have any reasonable chance of obtaining the Presbyterian sanction required by the Constitution. This excluded from consideration the plan of Synodical representation, which had already been proved to be, so far as they could judge, generally unacceptable. They therefore recommended to the Assembly what seemed to them the next best, having, according to the judgment of those of their number best informed in such matters, any reasonable chance of adoption, viz.: that, without altering the present numerical basis of representation, this basis should be limited by counting in for the purpose only pastors and missionaries in active service. This, though not reducing the Assembly as much as could be desired, would, for the present at least, bring it within endurable limits. This Report, together with other papers on the same subject, was referred to an able committee of nine, Dr. R. W. Patterson, Chairman, which unanimously made a very strong report in favor of Synodical representation, on the basis of one minister and one elder for each fifty ministers, or fraction of fifty, in each Synod. The result was that the Assembly by a decided majority, but not without a decided negative vote, agreed to send down to the Presbyteries an overture for a corresponding change in the Constitution, as follows:

“ Shall chapter XII, section II, of the Form of Government be so amended as to read, “The General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each Synod, in the following proportions, viz: Each Synod consisting of not more than fifty ministers shall send one minister and one elder; and each Synod consisting of more than fifty ministers shall send two ministers and two elders; and in the like proportion for any

fifty ministers in any Synod; and these delegates so appointed shall be styled, *Commissioners to the General Assembly.*"

Also, shall Chapter XXII, Section I, be so amended as to read, "The Commissioners to the General Assembly shall always be appointed by the Synod from which they come, at the meeting next preceding the meeting of the General Assembly. And as much as possible to prevent all failure in the representation of the Synods, arising from unforeseen accidents to those first appointed, it may be expedient for each Synod, in the room of each Commissioner, to appoint also an alternate Commissioner, to supply his place in case of necessary absence?"

And, in Section II, shall the word "Presbytery," wherever it occurs, be changed to the word "Synod?"

We shall be content if this overture be approved by a majority of the Presbyteries. We entirely concur, as we always have done, with the views so ably presented by Dr. Patterson as to its intrinsic superiority to every other scheme yet proposed, and, as we are inclined to think, that can be proposed. We joined in proposing that for which it is substituted, not as preferring it on its merits, but because we were advised that there was some chance for its success, and none for the Synodical system. If the latter can procure adoption, we shall be satisfied.

We earnestly hope that a point may soon be reached in which not every plan that can be devised for reducing the Assembly will be as a matter of course defeated, unless it gives a preponderance in the supreme judicatory of the church to a slender minority of its ministers and members. This must be the case in every system of reduction which still continues to the smallest Presbyteries a delegation of one minister and one elder. If no alternative remains but to have either a body overgrown and becoming more and more so, or the enormous inequality of representation resulting from the retention of two representatives by the smallest Presbyteries, the system will work its own cure in the only way in that case practicable, if not so delightful or edifying. At length it will be impossible to find places willing and able to entertain so immense an Assembly, and the great Presbyteries will fail to sustain a commissioners' fund, which in its turn sustains such prodigious injustice to themselves. Commissioners to the Assembly will then be obliged to go at their own charges, or those of their Presbyteries. Cannot this result be averted by a measure of reduction at once reasonable and timely?

Before leaving this subject we deem it only just to ourselves and the committee with which we had the honor to be associated in proposing to the Assembly the plan which gave place to that now overtured to the Presbyteries, to say a word in regard to a chief form of attacking it, which seems to us to have more sound than sense. It has been said that, to count in only pastors and missionaries in actual service in forming the basis of Assembly representations is making a discrimination "arbitrary," "destructive of the parity of the ministry," and working even the "disfranchisement" of many able and venerable ministers not included in the above classes. That the line thus drawn is in some respects "arbitrary" is conceded. But this is and must be true of every such line on any system of representation whatever, and in all analogous human affairs. On our present system, a Presbytery of 25 ministers is entitled to two additional delegates, a minister and elder, for the one minister in excess of 24. It is entitled to no more if it have 48 ministers; that is, it may, and constantly does happen, that one or two ministers, perhaps wholly retired or secularized, may have as much weight as a basis of representation in the General Assembly, as 24 active and efficient preachers or pastors of churches. If we adopt the synodical plan now proposed, in the same way one minister in one synod may tell as much on the representation in the Assembly as 50 in another. In this simple aspect, can anything be more "arbitrary"? But then something like this in various ways happens in all political representation. The line too which divides minority from majority in age must be drawn somewhere. How often does it exclude from the polls persons qualified to vote, who must thus give place to the ignorant and debased? Yet, though such lines are arbitrary in one view, they are adopted as, on the whole, the best practical means of carrying out certain great principles. What these are in the other cases we need not explain. But in this case it was designed, 1. to secure a convenient and easily ascertainable basis of reduced representation: 2. to do it in such a way that the delegates would go in largest proportion from the heart of the living church and its great working fields.

As to its effecting any privation or invasion of the full equality and franchises of ministers not pastors or missionaries, what is this objection but the purest fiction, when they remain as

now, voters in Presbytery, eligible to the General Assembly, yea, even to the Moderatorship of the same, and to every office in the church except that of ruling elder, as now. Far more plausibly might it be said that two vacant congregations or their sessions become disfranchised if they join in having a common pastor over both, according to our Form of Government, chap. x: 4, 5. But we will not dwell on such atomic objections further than to say a word as to Presbyterian practice elsewhere.

In Scotland and Ireland, not ministers, but churches only count as the basis of representation. Are the ministers therefore disfranchised? Ministers without charge, except theological professors, there are neither eligible as, if they can ever vote for, delegates to the Assembly in their simple capacity as ministers. Yet they do not lose their franchises, as authorized to preach, administer the sacraments, and do all other ministerial work. They are, however, eligible to the office of ruling elder in the congregations of which they are members, and if chosen elders, eligible to the General Assembly and its supreme office. Dr. McCosh, after having been sixteen years pastor of the church in Brechin, Scotland, became a very active ruling elder of the church to which he belonged in Belfast, while Professor in Queen's College. Did he thus suffer any degradation? How many of our churches would be thrice blest if they could choose some of the ministers in their congregations to the eldership? And how much oftener would the latter find their way to the General Assembly as elders, than now as ministers. We have not yet heard of insuperable difficulties in the way of such methods of utilizing a great power in our church, aside of the indisposition on the part of the church itself to such a modification of its constitution and habits. Perhaps such objections exist. We throw out this in the hope that it may awaken attention and excite a discussion that shall give us more light on the subject.

#### SUSTENTATION AND HOME MISSIONS.

The committee on the report of the Home Mission Board, Dr. James I. Brownson, chairman, stated:

That they "are convinced that at this time the attention of the Assembly is called to the inherent difficulties connected with the management of Home

Missions and Sustentation on the same general field, under the different and conflicting rules hitherto applied to them respectively.

Your Committee therefore respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolutions, viz. :

I. That a committee of four Ministers and three Ruling Elders be appointed by this Assembly, whose duty it shall be to meet in New York, and after a thorough examination of the whole subject, with full access to the records pertaining to Home Missions and Sustentation, and availing themselves of the information to be derived from all other sources, especially the actual working of the two schemes, report to the next Assembly, if possible a plan by which they can be brought to unity and efficiency of operation.

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III. That the same management shall continue for the next year which has operated during the year that is past, and that the churches be urged to contribute as heretofore to the cause of Sustentation."

The Assembly adopted these resolutions, and the Moderator appointed the following committee thereupon, viz. :

Rev. Dr. James I. Brownson, Rev. H. A. Nelson, Rev. J. Addison Henry, and Rev. H. C. Haydn, and Elders W. W. Spence of Baltimore, W. R. Vermilye of New York, and Louis Chapin of Rochester.

We hope so able and judicious a committee can find some way to a solution of the alleged conflict, or as some say, incompatibility between Home Missions and Sustentation without sacrificing or jeopardizing either. Of course some friction or temporary collision is always likely to attend the early experimental workings of new and untried schemes, from causes unforeseen, and therefore incapable of being guarded against till they are revealed by experience. The Sustentation scheme encounters difficulties here in our immense and ever expanding missionary field, not experienced in the compact communities and settled social and ecclesiastical conditions of the old world.

But none the less do we think it would prove an irreparable loss, if we should suffer the *principle* of sustentation to perish out of our church schemes. Its aim in brief is this: 1. The lifting up of the minimum salary of our pastors to \$1,000. 2. To do this in a way which stimulates and constrains the members of their churches to the utmost increase of their own contributions for the purpose. 3. To bring them up to a state of self-support, and independence of church boards at the earliest possible moment. 4. To promote the establishment of the pastoral relation and the allied permanency of Christian institutions and ordinances it implies. 5. To lift the mission

churches towards this position of having permanent pastors with adequate support as soon as practicable. 6. To thus give our churches in new settlements, alongside of other new and weak churches, that great advantage for attracting to themselves the miscellaneous population, which arises from the understanding that they are under a system which will soon put them in a position of strength to give a respectable support to respectable pastors, and become strong congregations. We hope that these and the like advantages will not be given up, on account of some seeming awkwardness, some real or apparent inequality here or there. Some device can surely be found by this Committee, aided by our excellent Home Mission Secretaries, for obviating all this, and leaving as little friction in the end as pertains to the best administered human affairs for remedying incidental evils, and keeping intact the great and beneficent principle itself. "Destroy it not, for there is a blessing in it." As we now write, a pastor of a small church, operated on this principle, says to us, few have any idea of its stimulating power. In his charge it had the effect forthwith to raise the annual contributions of the people for self-support from \$300 to \$700.

#### THE CHURCH CLINGS TO THE CONFESSION AS IT IS.

Nothing more significant or important occurred than that portion of the Moderator's admirable reply to the Foreign Delegates, in which he said :

"As to this Church, which I have the honor for the hour, the crowning honor of my life, to represent, permit me to say, Brethren, first of all, that we are an orthodox people. We believe that we have a creed sanctioned by the whole historic life and reflection of the Reformation, born as perhaps not only the last, but even the most consummate flower in that long succession of creeds in which the Protestant Church crystallized its common faith. That Confession has stood for more than two centuries as the basis and the test, and the standard of our belief. No man in all this broad Church would dare to touch it. No man in all this broad Church has any purpose in his inmost heart to change or alter it. We purpose to stand by it, and on it, while we stand at all. It has been suggested of late that the orthodoxy of this great Church of ours had strangely during recent years suffered some dilution and deterioration. Let me assure you that there is no foundation for such suggestions, and that every intimation of that sort is just as generously repudiated by every Old School man in the denomination, as it is almost indignantly repelled by every New School man who understands and

who respects himself. [Great applause.] We are an orthodox people, and we stand together on the foundation of this old Confession, carrying it with us as the Israelites carried the ark with all its sacred contents, as our joy and our strength, and the symbols of God's presence and grace with us through the centuries."

This was received with an enthusiastic outburst of applause, such as rarely takes place in our General Assembly. Never in the entire history of our Assembly was a more hearty endorsement given to a sentiment by the entire body.

We cordially adopt for ourselves Dr. Morris' wise and timely words. And as there are some excellent brethren who feel that our Confession needs to be revised in order to accommodate it to the scruples of those, who, though essentially orthodox and Calvinistic, cannot assent to all and each of its words and phrases, we deem the occasion opportune for stating what most deem some insuperable objections to such an undertaking in present circumstances. It is perfectly clear at the outset that it would absorb the energies of the church for a generation in interminable controversy, which needs to be spent in aggressive, evangelistic and missionary work, and in advancing church-growth inwardly and outwardly. But while this is enough, other objections are conclusive.

1. It is wholly unnecessary. The only reason urged for such revision is that our Confession and Catechisms are so extended and minute, or have such occasional antiquated expressions, that some few of their details ought not to be enforced; nay, cannot be, without unjustly burdening the consciences of some, and excluding others from our communion that ought not to be debarred from it. But first, the acceptance of it is not made a condition of private membership, or admission to the communion. For this only a credible profession of faith is requisite. It is imposed only on the teachers and rulers of the Church. Nor are they required to assent to all and singular of its words and phrases. They only accept it "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." The "system" here meant is undoubtedly the Calvinistic. It is for the church courts to judge and determine whether the dissent from any expressions in the Confession, avowed by any minister or candidate for the ministry under examination, does or does not put him without this "system" as a whole. And herein he is under covenant to "be subject to his brethren in

the Lord." In other words, the prerogative of interpreting, applying and enforcing the Confession, belongs to the living church through its proper tribunals. Until it shows itself unfit to be trusted with this prerogative by its frequently unreasonable and oppressive use or abuse of it, what present need exists of any paring down of the standards to obviate any apprehended grievance?

2. The end aimed at, even if desirable, is impracticable. This end is to bring the Confession into such a shape and compass that it shall contain no expression unacceptable to any one who ought himself to be accepted as a teacher or ruler in the Presbyterian Church. But even those seeking this, differ, and cannot but differ, as to what the extent of the revision and reduction should be. Some would have it so modified as to contain no phrase to which any minister of any School of Calvinists, Old or New, Scotch, Continental, or New England, would object. Others would have the Calvinism entirely eliminated, and retain nothing to repel Arminians. Others, like the Oberlin Congregational Council, would require assent simply to the doctrines, known as "Evangelical," without defining them, whatever those may be. Others still, including some foremost advocates of revision, would insist on having only the Apostles' Creed. But in either case, they only plunge into the same sort of difficulties, out of which they seek to escape. For even with the minimum of a creed, the questions will constantly arise in concrete cases, what is fairly within or without the various schemes of Calvinism, the Arminianism, the "Evangelical" system, or the Apostles' Creed, set forth and insisted on? Our Congregational brethren are now sorely exercised as to whether the Annihilationism, or Restorationism, which have for some time found advocates among a few of their younger ministers, put those who hold them outside the "Evangelical" system. And what differences might arise as to the sense in which any clause of the Apostles' Creed might be taken? *e. g.*, "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church," by which some mean that external corporation known as the Romish Church, anathematizing all without it; others, the Anglican Church, unchurching all without it; others, the invisible and true church, comprising the saints of all ages and nations. Turn and twist the matter as we will, pare down our creeds to the

infinitesimal standard, still it remains true, that questions of construction, of application, of the essential and non-essential in them to be enforced or not enforced, will always arise to be disposed of by the wisdom, charity, and faithfulness of the living church. And no creed, as all history proves, can have any higher vitality than the church imposing it. It will be binding in the sense intended by the church so administering it—*i. e.*, according to the *animus imponentis*. A motion made in our late Assembly, in answer to a request from our Board of Publication for instruction on the subject, to omit the words “he descended into hell,” from this creed, on the ground that it conveys a wrong impression, was tabled by a nearly unanimous vote. This shows, not that this phrase, in its present most obvious signification, conveys the exactest truth, or that the Assembly thought so; but that this creed, as well as the longest and most minute, requires interpretation and application by the living church to avoid error; and that after the reduction of our Confession, even to this minimum, there would be as much scope as now for heated polemics and vain disputation.

3. The present time is peculiarly inopportune for such a movement, for various reasons. The Re-union was effected on the basis of our common standards as they are, free of every qualifying condition. Every attempt to insert such conditions as that they should be interpreted in any particular way, according to traditions and usages, or the teachings of any divine of either branch, only made it evident that the Re-union could not be effected subject to any such trammels. The animus of the transaction was simply and purely this, that keeping the standards intact, each body was willing to trust the united church to interpret and administer them unaltered. Any serious attempt to reconstruct them thus early, must go far to undo the welding process which has thus far gone so happily forward.

It would be, moreover, while divisive as among ourselves, a fatal hindrance to such union with other Presbyterian bodies as has been fervently desired and hoped. It puts an insuperable barrier between us and the United, the Reformed, and the Southern Presbyterians, which would surely outlive the present generation. But all steps towards our broader union

with other bodies must begin with the comprehension of other Presbyterian churches, which the proposed measure would render hopeless. Proposed therefore in the interest of unification, it can only frustrate it, and tend to increasing divisions.

Besides, the Assembly of 1874, in response to the overture of Dr. Brookes and others, formerly of the Declaration and Testimony Synod, unanimously voted, with solemn and almost unexampled jubilation, that they "cordially accept this overture, as exhibiting the principles of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." This included "a firm adherence to our Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Form of Government, and Book of Discipline." Now that Dr. Brookes and others have joined us on this assurance, are we forthwith to disturb it?

4. Such an alteration of our Confession will forfeit the moral, and probably the legal, right to a great amount of property given to and held by the church, its congregations, and institutions for sacred uses. Large portions of such funds have been given on the express condition of being forfeited in case of any failure to adhere to our Confession of Faith; and when no such condition is expressed, it is often implied. The funds have been given for the purpose of advancing Christianity, as defined by the standards of our church. There is a breach of trust if they are administered on any other platform. What our present "terms of" subscription require is the Calvinistic or Augustinian system. It is a wrong to the donors to pervert their benevolent funds to the support of any contrary system.

5. It is said that creeds are human compositions. They cannot therefore be infallible, or beyond revision, as the church gains new light. This is conceded, provided the church is sure that the supposed new light in her be not darkness. But the abstract right to adopt a measure is one thing; the expediency and Christian wisdom of attempting it at any particular time, another. It has long been conceded that our excellent English translation of the Bible is faulty in some places, not, however, so as to mislead in anything important; yet it is extremely desirable that it should be in all points accurate. But so great have been the difficulties and perils connected with any attempt to correct and perfect the authorized version, that

it is only very lately that any steps have been taken towards affecting a revision which could have any prospect of commanding the respect of Biblical scholars, or of superseding the common version in general use. Stronger reasons make any present attempt at the revision of our Confession inexpedient.

We think a far better work for the present, and a most needful preparation for that of revision, should it be undertaken in the future, is the more thorough and comprehensive study throughout the church, of the Confession and Catechisms themselves in all their parts separately; also, as mutually related and explanatory. Such a study, the longer it is pursued, will probably reveal the fact that the framers of these wonderful documents had more solid reasons for nearly all that they have said than our "philosophy has ever dreamt of;" that the more they are pondered, the more they are seen to merit the encomium lately passed upon them, not only by Professor Morris, but by the Methodist, Dr. Curry (he excepting, of course, those parts relating to predestination), of being the most perfect formularies of Christian doctrine in existence; and that there is very little that could be dropped out of them without loss in the fulness, clearness, and power of some precious Christian truth, which they exhibit and define.

Even if they are encumbered with a few obsolete phrases, or expressions alien or contrary to modern thought, these, under the administration of a living church, create no difficulty which, as we have already seen, would not remain after their expurgation. And in view of the evils and dangers which overhang proposed attempts of this nature, were it not far wiser for those who cannot quite digest it to try to grow to the comprehension and measure of the Confession, than to contract it to the measure of our own present insight? There is no man whose soul will not be stronger for taking in and digesting that incomparable human formulary of doctrine, line upon line, so as to understand it fully. All that upon prayerful and protracted study will then be rejected as distasteful and innutritious, because deemed untrue, will probably be found less than the small dust of the balance.

L. H. A.