

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY
AND
PRINCETON REVIEW.

NEW SERIES, No. 22.—JULY, 1877.

Art. I.—THE HIGHER LIFE AND CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.*

BY LYMAN H. ATWATER.

THAT the prevalent tone of Christian experience and holy living is quite below the level of scriptural standards and privileges; that there is an urgent call for the great body of Christians to rise to a much higher plane of inward piety and its visiblefruits; that none are so high that they should not make it their supreme endeavor to rise higher; that to struggle onward and upward through the strength, holiness and grace already attained to yet higher measures of them, so that receiving grace for grace, they may go from strength to strength toward the goal of sinless perfection whenever and wheresoever attainable; that so there is required the ceaseless effort to get free from sin and overcome indwelling corruption, are propositions which few will be found to dispute, unless, indeed, some Perfectionists dispute the last of them, claiming to have reached

* *The Higher Christian Life*, by Rev. W. E. Boardman.

Pioneer Experiences; or, the Gift of Power Received by Faith. Illustrated and Confirmed by the Testimony of Eighty Living Witnesses of Various Denominations.

By the author of "Way of Holiness," &c. Introduction by Rev. Bishop Janes.

The Rest of Faith, by Rev. Isaac M. See.

Autobiography of Rev. Charles G. Finney. Chapter xxvii.

Holiness the Birthright of God's Children, by the Rev. J. T. Crane, D. D.

The Old Paths; a Treatise on Sanctification. Scripture the Only Authority. By Rev. Thomas Mitchell.

Purity and Maturity, by Rev. J. A. Wood.

A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, by Rev. John Wesley.

(New Series, No. 22.)

Art. IX.—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America met in Farwell Hall, Chicago, Ill. on the 17th of May, 1877. It was organized by the election of the Rev. James Eells, D.D., of Oakland, California, as Moderator, whose prompt and wise rulings, firm and courteous bearing, greatly facilitated the dispatch of business and promoted the order of the body.

The time required for the judicious selection of committees and preparation of business is represented to have left the body with little to do the first three days of the session. The evils of such a state of things are so many and obvious that none will dispute the importance of devising a remedy. For this we have not far to seek. It can be had in two ways: 1. Arrangements may be made for proceeding forthwith with the reports from the boards of the church, although these must usually go to their appropriate committees, whose reports must come in, before the Assembly becomes ready finally to dispose of the questions that may arise. Still, we think arrangements might be made by which all matters pertaining to them, not involving debatable questions of policy, might be at once disposed of, such as hearing the reports, with the general statements and speeches of the secretaries and others. 2. Another way of occupying the first days of the meeting is to hear, discuss and dispose of reports of committees appointed by previous Assemblies to report to the next. There are always some such reports to be made, often on important subjects. In the Assembly at St. Louis, in 1874, the majority and minority reports of a committee on the consolidation of the boards were made at the very beginning of the session, and the time of the Assembly from the very first was fully occupied with the discussion and disposal of this subject, when not occupied with other matters. Thus full justice was done to this great question of that session, while other matters received their usual, but, in too many cases, inadequate attention; we say inadequate, because some crude deliverances, abstract and concrete, were hastily rushed through the body near its close. Many such would die before coming to their birth, if they could be properly dis-

cussed. Fortunately most of these lie dead upon the records, and are never heard of afterward. But some live to cause a sad amount of needless irritation and discord. We shall proceed to notice a few of the topics which engaged the attention of the Assembly.

REDUCED REPRESENTATION.

Both overtures sent down by the previous Assembly to the Presbyteries, for such a change in the basis of representation as will sufficiently reduce the size of the Assembly, were rejected by decisive majorities. This result disappointed no one. The report of the committee appointed by the last Assembly on the subject was also presented. Although this virtually advised acquiescence in the present basis for a time, with an enlargement of the minimum number of ministers requisite to institute a Presbytery, in order to mitigate the growing inequality in the basis of representation, and slightly check the increase of the Assembly, yet the sense of the evils of the present system is too keen and wide-spread to admit of any quietus not provided in their removal or abatement. It was forced upon the Assembly by the utter absence of invitations from any place for the next Assembly. No place wanted, or felt itself equal to, the task of entertaining so vast a body for two weeks. It has been quite a fashion to decry reference to the burden upon hospitality as a petty thing, very unworthy to come into the argument on this subject. This will do for romance and sentiment; and if these were the only elements in the case, it might safely be ignored. But excessive demands upon hospitality have their own way of compelling consideration. When no place can be found willing to undertake the burthen, it being too grievous to be borne, then it will have weight in the argument and policy adopted. The case of the annual conventions of the American Board, so often alleged for the purpose of showing that the entertainment of vast numbers of people may be easily accomplished, is not parallel. That is a meeting for only two or three days. Let it extend itself for a fortnight, and how many places would be found to welcome the convocation? The churches in the cities in which the Assembly has met since the reunion have, after exhausting the possibilities of private hospitality, been put to an expense of thousands of dollars for the enter-

tainment of the body. What conceivable justice is there in the whole church imposing such an assessment on the Presbyterians of a single city?

The subject, therefore, has not been and cannot be laid to rest. The Assembly referred the whole subject to a new committee, of which Dr. Van Dyke was Chairman. They renewed the recommendation of Synodical representation on the basis of two delegates, one Minister and one Elder for every fifty ministers or fractions thereof. The result was that after recommitment and amendment, following the most searching discussion, it was agreed by a nearly unanimous vote to send down the following alternative overtures to the Presbyteries :

Shall Chap. XII, Sec. 2, 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.

"The Commissioners shall be chosen by the Synod with due regard to the rights of its Presbyteries. If the Synod send three or more ministers or three or more Elders to the General Assembly, not more than one-third of its Commissioners, and if it send two ministers and two elders, not more than one-half of its Commissioners, in any year, shall be taken from the Presbytery, and in a series of years equal to the number of Presbyteries in any Synod. At each stated meeting of the Synod it shall be determined and announced which of the Presbyteries composing it are entitled to furnish Commissioners to the General Assembly to be held next to the one ensuing, and to how many Commissioners, ministers, or elders, or both, such Presbyteries are respectively entitled. And prior to each election of Commissioners by the Synod, the list of the Presbyteries entitled to furnish Commissioners at that time shall be read, and each such Presbytery shall be called on to nominate, through its representative or representatives, who shall have been designated by it for the purpose, as many Commissioners as it is entitled to furnish, and an equal number of alternates. If such nominations are not made, the Synod shall, nevertheless, proceed with the election; every Presbytery shall be represented by at least one minister and one elder."

Also, shall Chap. XXII., Sec. 1, be so amended as to read: "The Commissioners to the General Assembly shall always be appointed by the Synod from which they came 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 to appoint an alternate to each Commissioner to supply his place in case of his necessary absence"?

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

Your Committee recommend that the foregoing overture be transmitted by the Assembly to the Presbyteries for their action.

Your Committee also recommend that the following alternative overture be transmitted to the Presbyteries :

Shall Chap. XII., Sec. 2, of the Form of Government be amended so as to read : "The General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of Bishops and elders from each Presbytery in the following proportion, viz. : Each Presbytery consisting of not more than forty ministers actually engaged in ministerial work as pastors, co-pastors, pastors-elect, stated supplies, evangelists, missionaries, professors in theological seminaries, or those assigned to the work of the Church by the General Assembly, shall send one minister and one elder ; each Presbytery consisting of more than forty and less than eighty ministers, employed as above specified, shall send two ministers and two elders ; each Presbytery consisting of more than eighty and less than 120 ministers, employed as above specified, shall send three ministers and three elders in like proportion for each additional forty ministers actually engaged in ministerial work ; and these delegates so appointed shall be styled Commissioners to the General Assembly"?

It was also ordered that meanwhile, until a decided reduction of the Assembly can be accomplished, an assessment be made upon the churches of two cents per member, in addition to that now made for the mileage fund, to be paid to the Committee on Entertainment for each Assembly, so as to aid them in making provision for it. This is simply just. It lays upon the whole church, and not the Presbyterians of some single city, the burden of paying for that portion of the entertainment of Assemblies to which private hospitality is inadequate.

In regard to the overtures themselves, it is not unlikely that one will defeat the other. But together they voice and evince the almost unanimous judgment of our church that the As-

sembly ought to be reduced, and its readiness to work at the problem till some satisfactory solution is reached. In regard to the comparative merits of these overtures we have only to say that the Synodical method affords the easy and natural basis for a reduction of representation, which can be carried to any extent as the future growth of our church may require, and always preserve the nearest possible approach to a substantial equality of representation of the different portions of the church. We see no conceivable objection to it on principle. The Book, chap. xi: 1., defines the Synod thus: "As the Presbytery is a convention of the Bishops and Elders within a certain district, so a Synod is a convention of the bishops and elders within a larger district." It is only a larger Presbytery. But for reasons so well understood that they need not here be specified, there is a widely prevalent and deeply-rooted aversion to taking the power of election out of the hands of the Presbyteries. We and, so far as we know, all the advocates of reduction are desirous of still conserving this Presbyterian privilege so far as is possible without sacrificing other essential principles. Although we have favored the two previous overtures in favor of Synodical representation, yet in the failure of these we ourselves have also in committee recommended one much less to our taste, in the hope it might prove more acceptable. It counted as the basis mainly pastors and missionaries, and retained the present number, 24, as the unitary basis of representation of Presbyteries by one pastor and elder. It was rejected summarily, to say nothing more. The same has been true of every attempt at thorough reduction thus far made, by retaining Presbyterian and evading Synodical representation. In the overture now made for Synodical representation, provision is made to secure to each Presbytery of the Synod the nomination of its due proportion of delegates, in the hope of thus meeting the demand for Presbyterian, while adopting the method of Synodical representation. It remains to be seen whether it will be accepted and ratified as an adequate concession to that demand.

The alternative overture still retains the representation exclusively by Presbyteries. It makes 40 the unitary basis instead of 50, the number adopted in the overture of last year, which was objected to by an overwhelming majority. It

makes the disproportion between the representation of small and large Presbyteries less than that just rejected, but still, in our opinion, altogether too great. We can conceive of measures of the most vital importance under that system being carried or defeated by the representatives of a very decided minority of the church. We do not believe this to be right or salutary. It is to no purpose to adduce the case of the U. S. Senate, in which the smallest and largest States are equally represented. The House of Representatives, which is apportioned upon the basis of the population of the States, together with the Presidential veto, offsets the Senate and completely neutralizes the danger referred to. This, therefore, affords no parallel. Aside of this aspect and tendency of the overture, we would not complain of another feature, which rules out ourselves from any place in the basis of representation along with other editors of Presbyterian journals, and professors in Presbyterian colleges. We once ourselves, for the sake of accomplishing reduction, took part in preparing an overture having this feature. But who are those "assigned to the work of the church by the General Assembly"? Do they include the members and secretaries of the boards who are otherwise without ecclesiastical charge? We think the line thus attempted to be drawn somewhat arbitrary and undefined. But we do not object. It must be arbitrary, if drawn at all. For better or for worse, this plan is only a temporary palliative, not a permanent remedy for the evils under which we now labor. But this would be far better than nothing, were it not that it makes it possible for one group of 40 ministers to be the basis for several times as many votes in the Assembly as another 40 of equal capacity and fidelity to the true church. But whether either of these plans is sanctioned by the Presbyteries or not, we are sure that a way will soon be found for accomplishing what is so generally felt to be a necessity—a large reduction of the Assembly. The question of entertainment aside, so large a gathering is unfavorable to the proper maturing and due dispatch of business. The analogy sometimes claimed to exist between the present Assembly and the British House of Commons in this respect fails, simply because six hundred men sitting for prolonged periods of months and years may overcome difficulties arising from its own mag-

nitude which are insurmountable by a body of the same size, composed mostly of new and inexperienced members sitting only two weeks. Closely connected with this is the subject of a

FINAL COURT OF APPEALS,

brought up in a report from a committee appointed by the last Assembly, of which Dr. Musgrave was chairman. It was referred to another committee, who reported it back, somewhat amended, in the form of an overture to be sent down to the Presbyteries for sanction, as an amendment to the constitution. It was, however, referred to the next Assembly, being deemed as yet too crude and imperfect in form to be submitted to the Presbyteries. Some were for strangling it at once, denouncing the whole project as needless, and tending to a sort of star-chamber inquisition or despotism. The majority of the Assembly, however, appear to have been impressed with the necessity of seeking some plan of accomplishing the objects for which this tribunal is designed. It is quite clear that a body of six hundred men, crowded with more non-judicial business than it can well handle, is unfitted for any judicial business beyond the decision of questions of doctrine and order, pure and simple, to which, if reduced to half the number, it would be less unsuited; still it would remain seriously unfitted for the work, incapable of fairly digesting and issuing half the appeals and complaints that must inevitably reach it from the various parts of a communion so widely extended. This was felt and urged by Dr. Hodge and others thirty years ago, when the churches and assemblies were less than half the present size. The exigency is met partially at present by judicial committees and temporary judicial commissions, appointed by each Assembly *pro re nata*. The only question is, whether it shall be provided for in future by such temporary and casual expedients, or by a permanent tribunal, one-third of whose members shall have their terms of office expire each year, the vacancies thus arising to be filled by the General Assembly? We confess that this question seems to us not altogether one-sided. The advantages of a permanent tribunal, with its records, precedents, by-laws and growing experience in ecclesiastical litigation, are obvious. But then the possible tendency toward a set of rigid, cast-iron precedents,

whereby technicalities become petrified, so as to constrain the free actings of that eternal justice they were invented to support, is not to be overlooked or ignored.

THE SEWICKLEY CHURCH CASE—PUBLICATION OF SUNDAY NEWSPAPERS BY CHURCH MEMBERS.

The editor and publisher of the Pittsburgh *Leader*, which issues a Sunday edition, is a member of the church in Sewickley, which quick railroad connections make a virtual suburb of Pittsburgh. The session of that church has taken no steps to discipline him, although often urged to do so. The Presbytery of Allegheny, to which the Sewickley church belongs, enjoined the session to proceed to take action upon the case, and investigate the charges so loudly made by the tongue of common fame. The session appears to have been in doubt as to their duty, or for some reason determined to take no step until they could obtain a deliverance from the General Assembly touching the present interpretation and application to such cases of the law of the Sabbath as laid down in our standards. They accordingly referred the order of Presbytery to the Synod of Erie, which reaffirmed it in a very emphatic and decisive manner, and finally referred this action of Synod to the Assembly for its decision in the premises. The Assembly, after earnest and thorough discussion, with only three votes in the negative, adopted the following paper, reported from the Committee of Bills and Overtures :

First—This Assembly reaffirms the resolutions adopted by the Synod and Presbytery setting forth the binding obligation of the Fourth Commandment as expounded in the standards of the Presbyterian Church and in the repeated deliverances of the General Assembly; and also the declarations of Synod and Presbytery: That any voluntary and responsible participation in the publication and sale of a Sunday newspaper is inconsistent alike with the decree of the law of God and with membership in the Presbyterian Church.

Second—That it is entirely within the constitutional authority of a Presbytery to direct the sessions of a church under its care to proceed according to the Book of Discipline, and that it is competent for a Synod to reaffirm such instructions upon a reference of a case asking for its advice. That the session of the church of Sewickley were bound to

carry out the plain meaning of the instructions of the Presbytery of Allegheny, and that their reasons for declining to do so are insufficient.

Third—That the proper remedy for the Presbytery to apply to that session, if they continue to disobey the instructions of the Presbytery, is to put the session under discipline for contumacy.

The protest signed by Dr. Bettinger, Pastor of the Sewickley Church, and two others, in its fifth article brings to view the main issues on which the discussion turned, and is as follows :

5. We protest because the exception seems invidious, since, if its application is correct, it singles out one class of offenders—the publishers of Sunday papers—a very small class, while it passes over to the respective Sessions of our churches the thousands, if not tens of thousands, of similar offenders against the Fourth Commandment—all those violators of the Sabbath—who voluntarily continue employers or stockholders in the various Sabbath-breaking commercial and manufacturing agencies and establishments which a modern civilization has brought with it.

This is a leading case, and bids fair to be the precursor of others through which the mind of our Church will gradually unfold and define itself, not with reference to the sanctity of the Sabbath or the general law of its observance, but with reference to its judicial interpretation and application to parties implicated in what the protest calls “the various Sabbath-breaking commercial and manufacturing agencies which a modern civilization has brought with it.” The great question, indeed, is, which of them is or is not “Sabbath-breaking”? Nor is it possible to formulate the law of the Sabbath more than any other law, human or divine, so that all the varying cases and circumstances that may arise can be foreseen, or its application to them determined in advance. We deem the law of the Sabbath, as expressed in our standards and summarized in the *Shorter Catechism*, to be as accurately expressed as is possible in our language, and, as such, to be of perpetual obligation. “The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting on that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God’s worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.” It is obvious, however, that the words “worship,” “necessity” and “mercy” in this statement must be understood somewhat broadly, in

order to acquit vast numbers of Christians, who are of unchallenged piety, from the charge of Sabbath desecration. And it is no less obvious that, in its application to new cases and circumstances, everything depends upon the breadth or narrowness of construction we give to the terms "necessity and mercy." Is the "necessity" intended absolute, the contrary of which cannot be in the nature of things, or without the most palpable and demonstrable injury to the soul or body, the individual or society, the Church or the world, God or man? Or is it a relative necessity, a necessity only as it is judged to be beneficial in the slightest degree, to the health, the comfort, the welfare of ourselves or others? And of the things supposed to be, in this sense, necessary to man's highest good, who is the judge, or how far is it to be left to the judgment and conscience of the individual Christian, or the Church courts, or each for each, within its due sphere, and what are the bounds of that sphere? The same, too, of mercy. Mercy requires those services on our part which mitigate or prevent suffering, or danger to the life and health of man, and often of beast. But who shall undertake to say how much of the labor done on the Sabbath without scruple by most Christian people might be avoided without loss or harm of any sort to man or beast? Such queries show how much remains to be done before unmistakable lines of clear and sharp definition can be drawn in reference to the law of the Sabbath, in its applications.

By this, however, we do not mean that there is ordinarily any difficulty for the candid mind in determining what is, and what is not, a desecration of the Sabbath in any concrete case. But there is great difficulty in formulating definitions and phrasing detailed rules so that they will precisely include all actual cases of Sabbath desecration and exclude all others. It is commonly supposed that accurate definition is in fact, as it is logically, the first step in any science. But with respect to all but the formal sciences, all the sciences of actual being, accurate definition has been shown to be the last achievement. Nevertheless, people know objects from each other, though they cannot specify the marks of the difference. The most untutored know a man from an animal, and humanity from brutality, though they cannot accurately define the differentia, just as all can distinguish different faces and chirographies, although, on the witness-stand, a

lawyer might puzzle them out of their wits in trying to worm out of them the differential marks. So, by a sort of holy intuition, the great mass of God's people clearly discern whether given actions have or have not in them the Sabbath-breaking element, although they cannot give anything more than a confused or inadequate definition of this element in them. The larger part of the knowledge of men does not get beyond the first of three stages, severally noted by philosophers as Clear, Distinct and Adequate. Education, Science, Philosophy are ever struggling onward from the first toward the last stage of adequate, or relatively perfect knowledge. Now, in this light, we should think few would have any difficulty in adjudging the publication of a Sabbath newspaper, in ordinary times and circumstances, a violation of the Sabbath. It is a piece of secular work wrought on the Sabbath, not only demanded by neither "necessity," nor "mercy," but diverting the minds of vast numbers from the sanctities of divine worship to the secularities of this world. While the publication of bulletins of news in times of war, revolutions, or great public catastrophes, may fall under the category of works of necessity and mercy, as well as a thousand things done by the best of people without censure or question, this does not excuse the publication of a Sunday newspaper in ordinary times, whose only influence must be to divert and distract multitudes of people from the proper observance of the Sabbath.

Indeed, we do not understand the defenders of the Sewickley Session to dispute this. The protest of Dr. Bittinger, as above quoted, distinctly classes the Sunday newspaper with "Sabbath-breaking" agencies, and its owners and publishers among the "offenders against the Fourth Commandment," "violators of the Sabbath." But Dr. Bittinger raises the point that the definitions laid down by the Assembly do not clearly distinguish it from other "Sabbath-breaking agencies," which no one thinks of interfering with by church discipline, or otherwise than by leaving them to the discretion of church sessions. He said in the debate:

"Now, why was this case made an exception? That was what he complained of—if he had any ground for complaint at all. And why was it insisted that the church in question should not have further time? But, it would seem, it must be brought up step by step until the As-

sembly was supposed to stand against the recalcitrant session of the little church nestled among the hills. That church stood by the theoretical doctrine of the Sabbath, but did the Presbyterian Church, as a Church, consistently live up to that doctrine? What, then, would become of the great railroad corporations? Did Presbyterians hold any stock in them? What became of the Sabbath when street-cars were run in Chicago and all other great cities? Was this a work of necessity? Must the Fourth Commandment be broken in order that God's people might be religious? Why were the Sunday trains run, and why did ministers travel on them to preach the Gospel?"

We confess that, while it is no good reason for failing in the proper use of church discipline in this case, that it is omitted in others to which consistency would require its application, it is none the less true that the church should seek consistency in her action, and try so to enunciate her principles and laws that they will cohere and harmonize, not only with each other, but with her practice, and that her exercise of discipline also shall be self-consistent. And we do not quite see that she has reached a deliverance on the subject that squarely meets the queries above propounded. The minute adopted makes only that participation in the ownership and publication of a Sunday newspaper which is "voluntary and responsible" amenable to Church censure. But what participation, in the case of any who have control over their own property and faculties, can be otherwise than "voluntary and responsible"? And does, or does not, the same question apply equally to the ownership of stock in horse or steam railways, or steamers, or the use of cars and trains run on the Sabbath, even if they be Sunday or church trains? We confess that we were never more surprised than when spending a Sabbath in Pittsburg, at the consummation of the Reunion, to read and hear of "church trains" run to that Presbyterian centre from the neighboring villages. We remembered how a delegate from the General Association of Connecticut, at an Assembly meeting in that city before the disruption in 1837, told us, on his return, that it and the region around it were beginning to surpass New England in the all-pervasive hold which Christianity, with its institutions and manners, had of the people. He said that New England would soon be compelled to confess that the glory is departed to the West, which was coming to eclipse the East. Certainly

we have heard of no church trains on the railways of New England or the East. But we have seen a great decline in the standard of Sabbath-keeping in New England. We recently attended one of the leading orthodox churches in Massachusetts, famous for its long line of pastors of national fame, who had been among the foremost promoters of strict, puritanical Sabbath observance, and opposers of Sunday mails, *et id genus omne*. We saw the leading members of that congregation go directly from the morning service to get their mails at the post-office across the street. This appeared to be deemed as much a matter of course and beyond exception as walking or riding to church. And we fear that this is an index of the general relaxation of Sabbath observance which has stealthily overspread that land, until lately, beyond all countries except Scotland, celebrated for the strictness of its Sabbath observance. Nor is New England alone in this degeneracy, as the facts, not so much brought to view as recognized beyond dispute, in this Assembly discussion about the Sewickley case abundantly prove.

But, after all, are the "church trains" necessarily in violation of the Sabbath? Circumstances, it seems to us, must determine in each case. It may be. The presumption, where they are freely used by the Christian public, till the contrary is made to appear, is that they come under the condition of necessity and mercy, *i. e.*, that they enable more people to attend public worship with far less labor for man and beast than would otherwise be required. We suppose it must be for this reason that the ministers to whom Dr. Bittinger refers use them. Otherwise we are sure we must have heard some protest in the *Presbyterian Banner*, which is not apt to utter an uncertain sound. We judge that it is due to the same principle that in the large cities the running of street horse-cars on the Sabbath so largely prevails and continues, and that they are patronized by great multitudes of Christian people without scruple in going to public worship on the Sabbath, notwithstanding the earnest and persistent opposition which for a time they met from the Christian community—an opposition always justified, and often effective, where no such necessity prevails. In the immense growth of cities, largely due to steam and electricity, all the arrangements of life, and es-

pecially of residence and business, are determined at once by the necessities created and the conveniences afforded by the modern modes of cheap and expeditious public conveyance. Thus, homes are pushed more and more away from the seats of business, either in urban or suburban localities, these new means of recent and quick conveyance virtually bridging over the distance. The same is often true with reference to schools and churches, and other necessities of civilized and Christian life. And hence, while all ordinary transportation should cease on that day, the movement of some cars may be demanded by necessity and mercy, as involving far less of labor to discharge the necessary offices of life and religion than would result from their stoppage. They are in the methods of modern life, in such places as New York and its suburbs, much in the position of the East and North river ferries. They are in place of streets, roads and bridges, because by them alone can multitudes of people now use these roads in which these tracks are for purposes of necessary travel. To this it is due that, notwithstanding all protests to the contrary from ecclesiastical bodies in the earliest days of the practice, milk-trains continue to be run, as the only means of supplying the cities with that indispensable necessity of life, pure milk. Presbyterian communicants and elders of unquestioned repute for piety, after church on Sabbath, carry the milk of their dairies to these trains, often for delivery to and consumption by those other Presbyterian people who will use no other, because thus alone they judge that they get a pure article. All this neither justifies nor palliates any movement of railroad trains for business purely secular, for excursions of pleasure, or for any purposes not fairly within the domain of necessity or mercy. While much that is done on many railroads is clearly not within this description, there is undoubtedly a considerable border-land in which opinions of persons, equally pure and intelligent, might honestly differ, as almost always happens in casuistry, or the application of undisputed principles, to *cases* of disputed facts, or facts dubious in their inferential relations, if not *per se*. But still, a large residuum is left of Sunday work done by many railroads, which can be justified on no plausible plea of necessity or mercy, and must, therefore, go to the account of Sabbath desecration, pure and simple. We do not, then, regard

all the cases of Sunday railway travel referred to by Dr. Bittinger as in point, because some are not necessarily "Sabbath-breaking" in their nature. But take the case of those that are such beyond question. Their stock is owned by thousands of Christians, including elders and ministers, and held without scruple and without question. And inasmuch as it may be readily sold or transferred, can their participation in it be deemed less than "voluntary and responsible"? How, then, is Dr. Bittinger and those who agree with him, to be met when they allege this fact, as *pro tanto*, of the same moral quality as issuing Sunday newspapers?

The venerable Dr. McKinney, a member of the Sewickley congregation, a veteran ever "valiant for the truth," said:

If the gentleman came before the Session and said, "Though I am a stockholder of this concern, I don't approve of the Sunday paper; but I cannot control it," that was enough to satisfy the Session, he believed. He had heard members of it say so. That would be enough to satisfy the brethren. He knew that, because he was one of them. All that was asked was for the brother to say he did not do what he could prevent—the issue of the paper on Sunday. Just as men did who owned railroad shares, or stock in a gas company; when they had an opportunity to vote against working on Sunday they did so; and when they could elect officers they elected men who were opposed to running cars on the Sabbath—all that in them lay to prevent desecration; but they didn't feel bound to sell their stock; they were not personally engaged in it, or engaged in promoting it in any way, but in such a way that they yielded to it, and submitted to it, as they did to the Government, and the Sabbath mail. He put his letters in Saturday and took them out Monday. He was not concerned in the way they were carried. He had written against Sunday mails, and voted against them, and done everything in his power to prevent the opening of the Post-Office on Sunday, but he paid his taxes and was a good citizen. All they could ask, in the publication of a newspaper, was, "Hold your stock if you so please, but, as far as your influence is concerned, prevent its being published on the Sabbath day."

In some cases, undoubtedly, the conscience would be sufficiently cleared by such a protest without further steps to get rid of all participation in forbidden, anti-Scriptural occupations. But would it be so in reference to the gains of a gambling or betting association, or of a railway making its

chief gains from conveying multitudes to places of drunkenness and prostitution on the Sabbath? We trow not. And here, as in so many other cases, it is often hard to draw the line within which protest and opposition without withdrawal are sufficient, beyond which they are not. The cases also are innumerable in which we are to use the food and the conveniences of life provided for us without troubling ourselves with questions as to what Sabbath-breaking or other immoralities may have been implicated in their production or procurement, "asking no questions for conscience' sake," since, if we did, the ongoings of life would be impossible. We once knew a bright youth of morbidly scrupulous conscience who, for a time, became afraid to eat any but a few domestic esculents, in the production of which he felt sure that Sabbath desecration and slavery had no part. His friends became anxious lest he should be, in a similar way, set against eating the few articles which yet sustained life. It is plain that such scrupulosity would render life intolerable, if not impossible. But, on the other hand, can one well patronize a Sunday newspaper without knowing, encouraging and participating in whatever infraction of the Sabbath its publication has involved? Again, supposing all this settled, we are not yet free from questions of perplexing casuistry in the premises. Dr. Edson of Indianapolis said during the debate, by way of showing the necessity of a caution and parsimony in the Assembly's deliverances that would keep them from being a network of future entanglements :

"It would be impossible for any one to turn the General Assembly into a house that favored, in any sort of way, the desecration of the Sabbath. [Applause.] They were unanimous about that. But this was a most intricate and delicate question; and the statement of it needed to be so careful, with so little verbiage, and so little rhetoric, and so much of Scripture, and so much of formal deliverances of the Assembly, that they could stand upon it anywhere. . . . He had not heard that most interesting "personal explanation," but it appeared from that explanation that a gentleman quite distinguished upon the floor must either have borrowed or purchased a newspaper, which he (the speaker) supposed had no special reputation for piety, and possibly might be called a Sunday newspaper; and any voluntary participation in the publishing or reading of such a paper, he supposed, ought

not to be encouraged there. [Applause.] He wished to know if they were going to discipline a member of the Presbyterian Church who worked all day Saturday and sold his newspaper on Sunday, and let that brother go scot free who worked all day Sunday and sold his paper on Monday? [Applause.] He believed in putting the Sunday question squarely and fairly—opposing all desecration of the day—so that it would accord with the standards, the deliverances of the Assembly and the Scriptures.”

Dr. Briggs of Union Seminary believed

“That the publication of a Sabbath newspaper was unscriptural, but he was opposed to such an extreme measure as that contemplated by the resolutions, even as amended by the insertion of the word “responsible.” There were numerous questions of casuistry which must be left to the churches themselves, and which the Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies should not have brought before them, for if so, the work would be endless.”

If the case of those who labor through the Sabbath to prepare a Monday morning's newspaper, which church-members take without scruple, become none the less perplexing in view of the present action of the Assembly, what ought to be done with those who, in order to give their employés the rest of the Sabbath, issue their daily paper on Sunday but not on Monday mornings? Such a paper, a friend informs us, is published at Montgomery, Ga. It is evident that the strongest stand possible should be taken in arrest of the increasing desecration and relaxed observance of the Sabbath. But much close thinking is required in order to formulate deliverances which will stand so that they can be carried out in every exigency to which the principles of law they lay down will apply. And to enunciate such as, through incautious or inadequate statement, are in the end self-destroying, hurts more than it helps the cause they are designed to promote. We do not intend to intimate that the Assembly's deliverance could be improved, but we think it wise to look clearly at the possible cases to which it may apply, and see whether it requires any additions.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH, SOUTH.

The following communication was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, now in session at New Orleans, La. :

NEW ORLEANS, May 22, 1877.—The Committee of Correspondence recommend to the General Assembly the following as our Church's reply to the communication received at this session from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America :

Whereas, The General Assembly of this Church, in session at St. Louis in 1875, adopted a paper rendering "special thanks, in the name of the whole church, to our Committee of Conference at Baltimore for their diligence, fidelity and Christian prudence," and in particular approving and indorsing "as satisfactory to the Southern Church the condition precedent to fraternal relations suggested by our Committee," viz. : "If your Assembly could see its way clear to say in a few brief words to this effect, that these obnoxious things were said and done in times of great excitement, and are to be regretted, and that now, on a calm review, the imputations cast upon the Southern Church [of schism, heresy and blasphemy] are disapproved, that would end the difficulty at once" ; and,

Whereas, Our General Assembly, in session at Savannah in 1876, in response to a paper from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which met in Brooklyn, adopted the following paper, viz. :

"We are ready most cordially to enter on fraternal relations with your body on any terms honorable to both parties. This Assembly has already, in answer to an overture from our Presbytery of St. Louis spontaneously taken the following action :

"*Resolved*, That the action of the Baltimore Conference, approved by the Assembly at St. Louis, explains with sufficient clearness the position of your Church. But inasmuch as it is represented by the overture that misapprehension exists in the minds of some of our people as to the spirit of this action, in order to show our disposition to remove on our part all real or seeming hindrance to friendly feeling, the Assembly explicitly declares that, while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Northern General Assembly, no acts or deliverances of the Southern General Assemblies are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Northern General Assembly, or of the historical bodies of which it is the successor" ; and,

Whereas, The said General Assembly at Brooklyn, in response to the foregoing paper of our Assembly at Savannah, adopted the following, which has been communicated to us at our present meeting, viz. :

"The overture of this Assembly having been received by the General Assembly in the South with such a cordial expression of gratification, the Committee recommend that the same resolution, declarative of the

spirit in which this action is taken, be adopted by this Assembly, viz. : 'In order to show our disposition to remove on our part all real or seeming hindrance to friendly feeling, the Assembly explicitly declares that, while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Southern General Assembly, no acts or deliverances of the Northern Assembly, or of the historic bodies of which the present Assembly is the successor, are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Southern General Assembly, or of the historic body or bodies of which it is the successor,'"; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, By this Assembly, that we cannot regard this communication as satisfactory, because we can discover in it no reference whatever to the first and main part of the paper adopted by our Assembly at Savannah and communicated to the Brooklyn Assembly. This Assembly can add nothing on this subject to the action of the Assembly at St. Louis adopting the basis proposed by our Committee of Conference at Baltimore and reaffirmed by the Assembly at Savannah.

If our brethren of the Northern Church can meet us on these terms, which truth and righteousness seem to us to require, then we are ready to establish such relations with them during the present sessions of the Assemblies.

Adopted in General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in session at New Orleans, La., May 22, 1877.

C. A. STILLMAN, Moderator.

JOSEPH R. WILSON, Stated Clerk.

WILLIAM BROWN, Permanent Clerk.

To the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in session at Chicago, Ill.

This was referred to the Committee on Correspondence, which reported through its chairman, Dr. Marquis, in favor of the Assembly's passing resolutions expressing regret that the terms "heresy," "schism" and "blasphemy" had ever been applied to any proceedings or declarations of the Southern Church or Assembly by any body to which this Assembly is the successor. After long debate, this recommendation was rejected by the Assembly, which, by a large majority, adopted the following substitute :

Whereas, The General Assemblies of 1870 and 1873 have solemnly decreed that all the deliverances of the General Assemblies during the late war, so far as they impeach the Christian character and doctrinal soundness of the body known as the Southern Presbyterian Church, are null and void ; and

Whereas, Our last General Assembly, reiterating the action of former Assemblies, declared our confidence in the Christian character and doctrinal soundness of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and our desire to enter into fraternal correspondence with them upon terms of perfect equality and reciprocity, and cordially invited the Southern Assembly to send a corresponding delegate to this Assembly; therefore,

Resolved, That while we are sincerely desirous to be reunited in closer relations with the brethren from whom we have been separated, we do not deem it expedient at present to take any further action upon the subject except to repeat the declaration of the last Assembly, that we are ready cordially to receive a representative from the Southern Church, and to send a delegate to their Assembly whenever they may intimate a willingness to enter into fraternal relations upon such terms. But while this General Assembly is ready at any time to enter into fraternal relations with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, no further action in this matter on the part of this Assembly is called for at present.

The arguments which prevailed to lead the Assembly to this issue, forcibly presented by Drs. Van Dyke, Edson and others, were substantially that, having already declared the action complained of by the Southern Assembly null and void, it was going quite beyond our legitimate province to express regret or repentance for the doings of former Assemblies of churches now having no distinct, continued existence, and most of whose actors were no longer on the stage to speak for themselves; that fraternal relations would come much sooner by quietly waiting till things ripen for it than by attempting prematurely to force it while it yet remains unwelcome to our Southern brethren; and, above all, that to establish fraternal relations by humiliating confessions on our side, with no corresponding concessions on the other, was to betray moral and historical truth; to proclaim to the world by the most solemn acts possible that while we were at fault in the utterances of former Assemblies with respect to the Church South, they were no way at fault when they declared it the "mission of the Church to conserve slavery," and thus provoked the severe denunciation of which they complain; when they pronounced our Assembly a "prevaricating witness"; when they met our first courteous advances to them proposing fraternal correspondence with the following salutation, containing charges about as grave as could well be brought against any body pretending to be a Christian Church :

“1. Both the wings of the now united Assembly, during their separate existence before the fusion, did fatally complicate themselves with the State in political utterances deliberately uttered year after year; and which in our judgment were a sad betrayal of the cause and kingdom of our common Lord and Head. We believe it to be solely incumbent upon the Northern Presbyterian Church, not with reference to us, but before the Christian world, and before our Divine Master and King, to purge itself of this error, and by public proclamation of the truth to place the crown once more upon the head of Jesus Christ as the alone King of Zion. In default of which the Southern Presbyterian Church, which has already suffered much in maintaining the independence and spirituality of the Redeemer’s kingdom upon earth, feels constrained to bear public testimony against this defection of our late associates in the truth. Nor can we, by official correspondence even, consent to blunt the edge of this our testimony concerning the very nature and mission of the Church as a purely spiritual body among men.

“2. The union now consummated between the Old and New Assemblies, North, was accomplished by methods which, in our judgment, involved a total surrender of all the great testimonies of the Church for the fundamental doctrines of grace, and at a time when the victory of truth and error hung long in the balance. The United Assembly stands of necessity upon an allowed latitude of interpretation of the standards, and must come at length to embrace nearly all shades of doctrinal belief. Of those falling testimonies we are the sole surviving heirs, which we must lift from the dust and bear to the generations after us. It would be a serious compromise of this sacred trust to enter into public and official fellowship with those repudiating those testimonies; and to do this expressly upon the ground, as stated in the preamble to the overture before us, ‘that the terms of reunion between the two branches of the Presbyterian Church at the North, now happily consummated, present an auspicious opportunity for the adjustment of such relations.’ To found a correspondence professedly upon this idea would be to indorse that which we thoroughly disapprove.”

No special pleading can take out the offensiveness of such charges which were wrought up in individual speeches, even to the length of insisting that we were “chained to Cæsar’s car.” To make retractions and confessions ourselves while we require no withdrawal of, or regret for, such charges against ourselves, made by those to whom we tender our confessions, is virtually to admit their truth; an admission which our Southern brethren would be the last to respect, or to judge a good ground for establishing fraternal relations.

The fact remains that there can be no restoration of fraternal relations while humiliating conditions are demanded on either side, or any basis but that of perfect equality and reciprocity. And we see no reason to change the opinion we have entertained since the rough repulse of our advances in 1870, that the surest and shortest way to them is to remain quiet, and wait till some sign is given that our Southern brethren are ready to enter upon these relations on terms of mutual equality and reciprocity. Such appears to have been the judgment of the Assembly.

COMMUNION WINE—TEMPERANCE.

We regret to observe that an effort was made to commit the Assembly to the recommendation of the unfermented juice of the grape as the only drink fit for the communion. We do not see how such a movement can inure to the benefit of religion or temperance. We are very confident that it will be to the advantage of both not to complicate them with any principle having so slender a scriptural basis, or likely to gain so few adherents as the doctrine in question. We are glad the Assembly disposed of the matter by making the following wise deliverance:

That the control of this matter be left to the Sessions of the several churches, with the earnest recommendation that the purest wine attainable be used.

By other action the Assembly happily cast its whole influence in favor of the great temperance movement now in progress, and appointed delegates to the convention of representatives from Christian churches in furtherance of this cause, soon to be held. We trust that this convention will not fall under the lead of extremists who will repel the co-operation of earnest temperance men by a platform of fanatical extravagance on the one hand, or of those lukewarm supporters whose help consists more in applying brakes than in clearing the track.

THE MCCUNE CASE

came before the Assembly on no less than seven appeals and complaints. This number itself was appalling, and enough to tempt a body of six hundred men, preoccupied with other business quite sufficient to tax them to the utmost during the brief fortnight of their session, to shrink from undertaking to grapple with them. With the number now constituting the

Assembly, and in the absence of any regular judicial commission, it is almost a matter of course that all judicial business which is not deemed of absolute necessity, or which is not supposed to involve some point of doctrine or order that widely stirs the church, should be switched off on some ground, technical or substantial. And a judicial committee is deemed expert and efficient which succeeds in so disposing of matters before it as to consume the minimum of the Assembly's time. In regard to seven separate appeals or complaints, all virtually belonging to one controversy or issue, it was a forgone conclusion, therefore, that they should all, or nearly all, be dismissed or remanded to other tribunals. Such was the result in this case. They were all disposed of without actual trial by the Assembly; the reasons assigned, so far as we can see, being in some cases sufficient, in others of questionable validity.

On these cases the Judicial Committee reported as follows, and the Assembly adopted the report :

Judicial Case No. 5.—In the case of the appeal of Thomas H. Skinner and others from the Presbytery of Cincinnati, the Committee recommend that, inasmuch as the so-called appellants were not an original party, they were not entitled to an appeal (Book of Discipline, Chapter vii., Sections 3, 17), and that, therefore, the case be dismissed.

Judicial Cases Nos. 6, 7, 8, and 9.—In the case of the complaints of (1) Nathaniel West and Thomas H. Skinner against the Presbytery of Cincinnati, for alleged judgment against the said West; (2) the same against the same, for adopting a resolution of its Judicial Committee; (3) E. D. Ledyard and others against the same, for the same proceeding; (4) Thomas H. Skinner and others against the same, for not sustaining the charges against Rev. W. C. McCune, the Committee recommend that, as the reasons for direct complaint to the General Assembly as presented to the Committee, and in their hands, are deemed insufficient, and as the constitutional jurisdiction and rights of the Synod over its lower courts are to be sacredly respected, therefore these several complaints be referred to the Synod of Cincinnati.

Judicial Case No. 10.—In the case of the complaint of Nathaniel West and Thomas H. Skinner against the Synod of Cincinnati, in a case of review and control, the Committee recommend that, it being a question of mere review of records, a judicial complaint does not lie, and that the case be dismissed.

Judicial Case No. 11.—In the case of Thomas H. Skinner and others against the Synod of Cincinnati, for not taking up and issuing a complaint of Dr. Skinner against the Presbytery of Cincinnati in the

McCune case, then pending, the Committee recommend that, as there had been no judicial action of the Synod in the case against which a complaint could lie, but simply and only a postponement of action on a report of the Judicial Committee of the Synod, therefore the case be dismissed.

To this a long protest, too long for insertion here, was offered by several members, and received to record. So far as we are advised, no answer was made to it. That brings to view the ground of the dissatisfaction of the appellants and complainants with these several findings of the Assembly, and with its general attitude in thus ruling out the whole subject.

In regard to No. 5, they protest that by the term "original party" in our constitution is not meant merely a party to a strictly judicial trial, but a "party aggrieved" by any judgment of the Assembly, whether judicial or non-judicial. We cannot agree with the position either of the Assembly's minute or of the protest.

We think that the whole 3rd section of Chapter vii—in the Book of Discipline implies that the "original parties" were each and all of the parties litigant, and that this follows alike from the interior reason of the case, and from any consistent construction of the different parts of the section. A public prosecutor may certainly be "aggrieved" by the manner in which the judicatory has treated him and the cause, which he represents, and because in his judgment and those who agree with him, if there be no redress by appeal, "justice is fallen in the streets and equity cannot enter." One may suffer as much from a "lost cause," and more from what he deems the defeat of vital truths of religion, than from any mere personal injury; he may suffer as a member of Christ, wounded in the house of his friends. Moreover, the reasons for an appeal assigned (Sec. 3) with a single exception, may pertain as much to the prosecutor, even if he be a public prosecutor, as to the accused. The language of the book always speaks of "original parties" as plural, not single. "The original parties *and* all the members of the inferior judicatory shall withdraw."—*Id.* 9. All this reasoning applies in full force to a committee of prosecution appointed by the judicatory in a case in which common fame is the accuser. Such a committee has been expressly declared one of the original parties in a case involving that question before the O. S. Assembly, as the protest shows by a reference

to *Moore's Digest*, p. 563. Suppose a Presbytery, through prejudice or other perverting influence, utterly unfaithful or incompetent in its treatment of the committee of prosecution, their witnesses, proof and arguments, who are so well fitted as they to present their case in its strength to a higher tribunal?

The legal maxim *nemo bis vexari debet*, applies no more here than in any possible case of appeal, civil or ecclesiastical. An appeal does not repeat a trial otherwise complete. It renders it incomplete till perfected by a higher judicatory. Nor does the right of complaint furnish an adequate remedy in case of improper acquittal by the lower court upon the charge of heresy. For, although it may condemn the error, it leaves the errorist in unimpeached standing and free to propagate his errors, however fatal, as a minister of the Church.

But, then, as to other persons than the original parties litigant having the right of appeal, such in our view is not the meaning of our book, either express or by implication, or according to the drift of judicial decisions.—*Moore's Digest*, p. 592. A complaint to a higher court is the proper relief for all other aggrieved parties. Article 2 of Section III, Chap. 7, on which, as compared with Art. 1, so much stress is laid, we think is merely designed to put it beyond all doubt or peradventure that a defeated, and especially a convicted, party can always appeal, no matter who or what may be arrayed against the exercise of the privilege. The cases brought directly from Presbytery to the General Assembly, and by the Assembly referred back to Synod, were dealt with in accordance with the prevailing usage, from which the Assembly never departs, unless in extreme and exceptional cases, and for most stringent reasons. The reasons for any deviation from this usage should be at least, *prima facie*, strong and irresistible. But of their urgency the Assembly, in its wise discretion, must be the judge. We see no evidence that in this case it is obnoxious to just censure for such exercise of its judicial prerogative.

The dismissal of the complaint against the Synod of Cincinnati for the improper exercise of its power of review and control in its dealings with the records of the Presbytery of Cincinnati may have been right or wrong in view of the facts of the case. But from the exceptions taken by the Assembly to those records, there seems to have been at least *prima facie* ground of complaint. The reason assigned strikes us as inade-

quate, viz., that "being a question of mere review of records, a judicial complaint does not lie." If these records are records of a judicial proceeding by a lower court serving under the review of a higher, the approval or disapproval of them may be, in substance and effect, a judicial act, and if decidedly wrong, a just subject of complaint to, and call for revision by, a higher court. Moreover, in the actual practice of the Assembly, the "decision by an inferior judicatory, which in the opinion of the complainants has been irregularly and unjustly made," has been taken in its broadest sense to mean not only "judicial," but any "decision" which, in the judgment of complainants, is "irregularly and unjustly made." The questions thus brought up and issued by the Assembly on complaint are such as the propriety of one man being simultaneously elder in two churches; the mode of electing certain ruling elders; against a reference of a case to a higher court by a Presbytery; against a Synod for dissolving a Presbytery, etc., etc. Indeed, it does not appear how great wrongs by inferior judicatories can, in many cases, be presented to the higher courts for correction, if complaints must be confined to strictly judicial action, or if judicial records cannot be made a matter of "judicial complaint." Suppose these records omit the vital elements in a case; what then?

Into the original merits of the case as a whole, to which the above mentioned acts refer, we have neither time nor space to go. Even the matter of the complaints and appeals above referred to is not before us. We have touched only the reasons which the record presents for the Assembly's manner of dealing with them, and some of the objections of the protestants.

As all such decisions, or the expressed reasons for them, by the Assembly, tend to acquire authority and harden into precedents, especially when they pass unquestioned, we have deemed it worth while to discuss, not the decisions themselves, of the justice of which we have no means of judging, because we have no adequate authoritative knowledge of the facts, but the sufficiency of the reasons assigned for them. The literature of the case has already become so enormous as to be extremely difficult to collect and digest. Mr. McCune is now out of our Church, and we can hardly believe that a case that has issued in making our communion too uncomfortable for him and such as he, will afford permanent

encouragement to future impugnors of any part of our order within our Church.

We think Mr. McCune has abundantly shown that "he went out from us because he was not of us." As so often occurs in such cases, he turns against his protectors. His doctrine that no Christian Church has a right to maintain or make a condition of ministerial standing anything but that minimum of truth which is left after excluding what is peculiar to each Christian denomination, cannot be carried out without starting one more new sect and distracting existing churches. As a Presbyterian minister he undertook, without sanction of his Presbytery, to form a church which, in its very constitution, was a constant witness against Presbyterianism. What but confusion and disorder could ensue? His scheme is a chimera which cannot be realized this side the millennial or heavenly church, in which all see eye to eye, and know even as they are known. As long as we know only in part, different Christian denominations are a necessity.

Any criticism of the proceedings of the various parties judicial and litigant in this case would now be unprofitable and superfluous. The case seems to have been complicated by more or less mistakes and indiscretions, which tended to protract it. But we do not think the experiment out of which it all grew is likely often to be repeated by ministers of the Presbyterian Church.

We think that on these matters our Church will hold no uncertain attitude, and that whatever else may be true, the "rationalism and liberalism" which the last number of the *Southern Presbyterian Review* charges us with harboring, can be found, if at all, only in homeopathic drops of the millionth dilution.*

Other great subjects occupied the Assembly which we have no space to note. The questions of Chinese and German evangelization, of Sustentation, and other problems in the Home and Foreign Field, Education, and much more, were vigorously grappled and, in general, wisely concluded.

L. H. A.

* We have received, at the last moment, *The Process, Testimony and Opening Argument of the Prosecution, Note and Final Minutes of the Judicial Trial of Rev. W. C. McCune, by the Presbytery of Cincinnati, from March 6 to March 27, 1877.* A well-printed pamphlet of 180 pages, in which the substantial elements in the case, with the views of the Prosecution and the Court, are fully exhibited. It will be found convenient for reference. Cincinnati: Robt. Clark & Co.