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ART. I.—*Synopsis of the Books of the Bible.* By J. N. DARBY. Four vols. London: G. Morrish. 1862.

*The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament.* By THOMAS DEHANY BARNARD, M. A. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1867.

*Introduction to the Study of the Gospels.* With Historical and Explanatory Notes. By BROOKE FOSS WESTCOTT, M. A., etc. With an Introduction, by HORATIO B. HACKETT, D.D., etc. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1866.

THE history of the Bible is one continued record of marvels. Sometimes an accident, often a trifle, has, in the ordainings of Providence, and through coöperation with some prevailing tendency of human thought or drift of human events, decided the way in which the great mass of men were to regard the Divine word for centuries to come. The mechanical division of its separate books into chapters and verses may be looked upon as one of these apparently trifling incidents, which has nevertheless exerted a vast influence upon the views which have been taken of the connections of the Scriptures, from the time that the printed Bible first began to find a place in the Christian home until the present day. The work was done in a way and at a time to give it the greatest possible influence in hiding the structural harmony and unity of the Sacred

for their stables, until growing even too vicious and indolent for energetic sacrilege, they will earn a precarious livelihood by the plunder of their tombs, and shed each other's blood for the privilege of peddling their forefathers' bones. As he stands, awe-stricken and confounded, in the presence of these desolations of nations, over which the Great Pyramid rears its mournful majesty, a solemn voice thrills his soul, saying: "Choose thy portion, sceptic! The Pyramid or the Pentateuch! The desolate tomb of mummied Egypt, or the life-giving church of the living God!"

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ART. V.—*The Men and Times of the Reunion of 1758.* By Rev. E. H. GILLETT, D.D. An article in the *American Presbyterian and Theological Review*, for July 1868, p. 414.

THE design of Dr. Gillett's article is to show that in the Adopting Act of 1729, and the reunion of 1758, the fathers of our church planted themselves on the "liberal principles," as to subscription of the doctrinal standards, for which our New-school brethren so strenuously contend.

By these Acts, he says, the Synod "gave permanent shaping to the policy and spirit of the American Presbyterian Church, and entitled it, at the same time, to the epithets, Calvinistic, and liberal. Equally removed from bigotry on the one hand, and laxity on the other, it has left behind it a history which we need not blush to record."

If this be true, in the sense intended, we of the Old-school must confess our position to be an innovation on the established principles of our church; and recognize in the latitudinarian policy which is now so earnestly pressed upon us, a title to respect which we have not heretofore accorded.

When the General Presbytery, from which our General Assembly has grown, was organized in Philadelphia, about the

year 1705, no formal constitution was adopted by the body, the members, in fact, regarding themselves as belonging to the Church of Scotland, and bound by its standards. After some years, as the body grew, the necessity of a formally recognized standard of doctrine and order became evident. All the members held the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, to which they had been respectively pledged at their ordination. An overture was therefore introduced by the Rev. John Thomson, in 1727, for the adoption of those standards as the public constitution of the church. In the meantime, the Presbytery had subdivided itself into subordinate Presbyteries, and taken the name of Synod. Of this body, the Presbyteries of Philadelphia and New Castle were located in Pennsylvania, and the region southward, and, with rare exceptions, were all Scotch-Irish. The Presbytery of New York, including the churches in New Jersey and northward, was largely made up of English, Welsh, and New England people, and ministers from New England and Wales. The mutual intercourse of these two sections was comparatively limited, and their personal knowledge of each other, slight. When, therefore, the proposal for the adoption of the Confession was made and urged by the Scotch-Irish, it excited apprehensions on the part of the others, that the object might be to get rid of them, or to accomplish some other covert design. The overture was, therefore, postponed. In 1728, it was again introduced, and was referred to the next Synod, which was appointed to be "a full Synod." It sometimes met by delegation. Notice of the question then to be decided was directed to be given to all absentees.

In the spring of the next year, Dickinson published "Remarks on a Discourse entitled 'An Overture,'" &c. In this paper, which was evidently a hasty and ill-considered production, the doctrines of which he soon and entirely abandoned, Dickinson opposed himself strenuously against enforcing subscription to any human composition as a test of orthodoxy; as this was making it a standard of faith, an honour due only to the word of God; and as an invasion of the royalty of Christ. His position has been confounded with that of the Irish non-subscribers. But, while some of his arguments were identical, the difference was fundamental, in the fact that their

arguments were urged in the interest of a false theology; whilst Dickinson pursued what he thought to be the best means to maintain the purity of the church. To his "Remarks" no reply seems to have been made.

Thomson's overture presented the following specific propositions to the Synod. 1. That the Westminster Confession, Catechisms, &c., be adopted "for the public confession of our faith, as we are a particular organized church." 2. That every candidate and incoming minister be required to subscribe the said Confession, &c., and promise not to teach or preach contrary thereto. 3. That "if any minister within our bounds shall take upon him to teach or preach anything contrary to any of the said Articles [of the Confession] unless, first, he propose the said point to the Presbytery or Synod, to be by them discussed, he shall be censured, so and so."

When the Synod met, in 1729, the Overture was referred to a committee, a majority of which were of the Scotch-Irish, and of which Thomson the author, and Dickinson the opposer of the overture, were members.

This committee, although in the mean time occupied with other business referred to it, was prepared, at the opening of the sessions the next morning, to report a paper, which was unanimously adopted by the Synod, "after long discussion," says the record. But the discussion closed and the vote was taken before the noon adjournment. The paper thus adopted was afterward, by the Synod, designated as the "First or Preliminary Act," and was cited by that name in subsequent discussions by the members. From the promptitude with which it was reported, its perfect congruity in style and matter with the overture, and the propriety of the thing itself, we would infer the Act to have been prepared by Mr. Thomson, with a view to conciliate the opposition, as far as was possible in consistency with maintaining the principles and duty involved. That it was admirably adapted to this purpose a glance at its contents will show.\* After repudiating the claim to any authority to impose their faith on other men's consciences, and declaring their willingness to admit to fellowship in sacred

\* See the Act in Baird's *Digest*, p. 30; Moore's *New Digest*, p. 18.

ordinances all true believers, the authors of the Preliminary Act assert the duty of the church to transmit the faith pure and uncorrupt to posterity. To this purpose it was therefore agreed that all the ministers of the Synod, and that should afterward be admitted, "shall declare their agreement in, and approbation of, the Confession of Faith," &c., "as being, in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine; and do also adopt the said Confession and Catechisms as the confession of our faith." It also provided that if any minister or candidate "shall have any scruple with respect to any article or articles of said Confession or Catechisms, he shall, at the time of his making the said declaration, declare his sentiments to the Presbytery or Synod, who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise of the ministry within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his scruple or mistake to be about articles not essential and necessary in doctrine, worship, or government." Otherwise, he was to be rejected.

In the provisions thus adopted, the Preliminary Act, in one respect, exceeded the strictness of the Overture itself. The latter only proposed to apply its requirements to new members; but the Act laid hold of those who were already on the roll of the Synod, and required them all to "declare" their adoption of the Confession. This rule was carried into effect on the afternoon of the same day, by a proceeding which was distinctively designated by the Synod as the Adopting Act. The roll was called, that each member might declare his sentiments respecting the Confession. Record was thereupon made that the members by name, except one, who afterward complied, "after proposing all the scruples that any of them had to make against any articles and expressions in the Confession of Faith," &c., "have unanimously agreed in the solution of these scruples, and in declaring the said Confession and Catechisms to be the confession of their faith; excepting only some clauses in the twentieth and twenty-third chapters; concerning which clauses the Synod do unanimously declare, that they do not receive those articles in any such sense as to suppose the civil magistrate hath a controlling power over Synods, with

respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority; or power to persecute any for their religion; or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain." The clauses to which exception was thus taken have since been altered by our church.

Having thus individually and as a body erected the Westminster Confession as the standard of their faith, the Synod unanimously declared the Directory "to be agreeable *in substance* to the word of God, and founded thereupon," and therefore recommended its observance to the members.

In these transactions one point was left unexpressed. It came up next year, and was unanimously decided, that the design of the Acts of 1729, was to oblige intrants and candidates "to receive and adopt the Confession and Catechisms at their admission, in the same manner and as fully as the members of Synod did that were then present."

Such was the history of the Adopting Act, the interpretation of which would seem to be very plain. In fact, for more than a century the church rested in calm unconsciousness of the possibility of question on the subject. It was not until the case of Mr. Barnes was pending under Dr. Junkin's charges, that the Rev. Dr. Luther Halsey announced it as a great discovery, that "we differ from other Presbyterian churches, in so adopting these formulas that only *the essential or fundamental doctrines* shall be the test of ministerial and Christian fellowship. This was formally avowed in the Adopting Act of 1729." This discovery Dr. Halsey published for the purpose, as he declared, of correcting "a practical mistake" on the subject, and of influencing the General Assembly in its action on Mr. Barnes's case. From the date of this publication appeal has been constantly made by our New-school brethren to the Adopting Act for the purpose of vindicating the position so clearly stated by Dr. Halsey. The latest and the most specious publication of this kind is the article of Dr. Gillett, now under consideration. We will examine the Adopting Act, in connection with his arguments, and see whether it admits of the conclusions which he deduces.

It is a minor matter, but not unimportant to our author's conclusions, that he asserts that in the transactions connected

with the Adopting Act, Dickinson maintained his consistency throughout. "We may be sure," says he, "that his carefully considered and well-matured views had not changed. *He had given them in print to the world, and he never recalled them.*" This is a very remarkable statement for a writer familiar with the history.

What are the facts? In April, Dickinson published his "Remarks," in which he took the ground that "a subscription to any human composure, as the test of orthodoxy," gives it "the honour due only to the word of God;" and that imposing subscription on others, is an invasion of the royalty of Christ. Yet, within five months, in September, Dickinson joined in declaring the necessity of taking care "that the faith once delivered to the saints be kept pure and incorrupt;" and in, "*therefore,*" enforcing on "all the ministers of this Synod, or that shall hereafter be admitted into this Synod," a declaration of their "agreement in opinion with all the essential and necessary articles of said Confession," &c. He further joined in asserting the right of the church-courts to decide in every case, which were, and which were not, essential and necessary articles, and in personally adopting the Confession and Catechisms, every article and clause of them, as the confession of his faith; excepting only the repudiated sense of the articles in chapters twenty and twenty-three. And yet, says Dr. Gillett, Dickinson's "well-matured" views had not changed. "He never recalled them." We may surely dismiss, without further remark, any inference deduced from these assertions of Dickinson's consistency.

There is, however, another, and much more important point, upon which our author is equally unfaithful to the facts of the history. In common with all the writers of the New-school, with whom we are conversant, he constantly, we will not say, studiously, confounds the distinction between the Preliminary and the Adopting Act, and ignores the latter altogether. The distinction between these two acts is very clear in itself. The distinctive appellations were given them by the Synod. They are familiarly used by Blair, in 1741, as recognized designations of discrimination, respecting which he complains of Craighead for the very same error of which the New-school are now

guilty. In his "Animadversions," he says, "Mr. Craighead, to prove what he supposes, [the charge of laxity in the faith,] dwells much on what is called the Synod's Preliminary Act about the Confession of Faith, made in 1729. But let that Act be thought insufficient as it can possibly admit, . . . that is no argument, but the Confession of Faith has been sufficiently received by other Acts. And so, indeed, it has been in the Synod's Act for the purpose;" and he proceeds to recite the Adopting Act.

The manner in which our New-school brethren are in the habit of dealing with this subject, deserves here particular notice. Of this, Moore's "*New Digest*," is an illustration. This work, prepared under the direction of the Committee of Publication, has been compiled from Baird's *Digest*, by striking out a large amount of matter of a date subsequent to the division, together with the editorial notes, rearranging, to some extent, the chapters, occasionally transferring a section from one chapter to another, modifying the phraseology of the headings, and adding the materials found in the New-school *Minutes* since the division. With these modifications, and such as we are about to illustrate, the work is a transcript of Baird's *Digest*.\* This is evident at a glance with respect to the first chapter of the former work, which has been copied from the first edition of the latter. In it, however, is contained the Adopting Act, which, in the two works, receives very different treatment. In Baird, the two documents are presented separately, with their proper titles. "§ 7. Act Preliminary to the Adopting Act." "§ 8. The Adopting Act." In Moore, they are run together as one section, under the title,—“2. The Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly adopted.” It is evident that this confounding of these two Acts is, under the circumstances, not inadvertent, but designed and deliberate.

Precisely similar is the course adopted by the New-school Assembly of 1839 and Dr. Gillett on this subject. The Assem-

\* The latter may be regarded as having stood the *experimentum crucis*, in the fact that from the records of one hundred and thirty-two years, which preceded the division, not a citation is found in the *New Digest*, which is not referred to in Baird.



bly in a solemn "Declaration setting forth the Present Position of our beloved Zion, and the Causes which have brought us into our peculiar position," (*Moore*, p. 549,) recites the Preliminary Act, of which it speaks as "the Adopting Act of 1729, which was a return to the liberal principles of 1691, upon which the Presbyterian church in America was based." But the Adopting Act itself is not alluded to in the most distant manner. Dr. Gillett, also, in his *History*, spreads before us the entire Preliminary Act, and ever afterwards designates it as the Adopting Act, while the Adopting Act itself is *concealed* under a statement without quotations, that "the ministers of the Synod then present, with the exception of Mr. Elmer, who declared himself not prepared, after proposing all the scruples that any of them had against any articles and expressions in the Confession and Catechisms, unanimously agreed in the solution of those scruples, and in declaring the Confession and Catechisms to be their confession of faith. The only exception made was those articles of the Form of Government which related to the civil magistrate."

By such a statement as this is the Adopting Act slurred over, its formal character and documentary record ignored, and the nature and extent of the obligations taken misapprehended and concealed. The language of this statement, "declaring the Confession and Catechisms to be their confession of faith," with what follows, is anything but a correct rendering of the words of the record, "declaring the said Confession and Catechisms to be the *confession of their faith, excepting only some clauses,*" &c. In this statement it is a comparatively trivial blunder which represents the excepted clauses as found in the Form of Government. But such is the account with which the historian finally dismisses the genuine Adopting Act from his own and the reader's thoughts ever after, appropriating its name on the pages of his *History* to the Preliminary Act. The same is the course taken in the *Review* article now under consideration. In its pages the reader will search in vain for a trace of the consciousness of knowledge that such a transaction as was the real Adopting Act ever took place, or was to be found of record. We do not attempt to account for these phenomena. But it is necessary to emphasize the fact,

that writers who thus deal with history cannot be trusted as safe guides, whether as to facts or inferences. Whether they be blinded by prejudice, or mistaken through inadvertence or negligence, or incapable of making the necessary discriminations, or however else the facts be explained, the effect is the same.

In another respect these writers, and especially our author, misconceive the Act of which they make so much account in their writings. They assume that the Act indicates a discrimination between "necessary and essential *doctrines*" of the Confession and those which are not so. Nothing of the kind is there to be found. In Thomson's overture it was proposed that if any minister teach "contrary to any of said *Articles*," without first submitting the question to the proper judicatory, he shall be censured. The Act shows its paternity by the use of the same phraseology. "The essential and necessary *Articles*" of the Confession are the subjects of its distinctions; the phrase unvaried in form occurring no less than five times in the Act; and it is not until the last sentence, which has every appearance of being an extemporaneous addition to the document, that we find the phraseology slide into "these extra essential and not-necessary points of doctrine."

In the Adopting Act itself the consistency of the style is in this respect maintained. The members agreed in solving all scruples "against any *Articles* or expressions in the Confession," and in the exception made as to "certain *clauses* in the twentieth and twenty-third chapters."

The significance of the phraseology thus employed is manifest. Evidently, the authors of these papers had in their minds something more specific and more worthy than to make indefinite provision for liberty of departure from the doctrines of the standards. Had this been their object they would have talked of essential and necessary *doctrines*, and not *Articles*. They had in view the fact that among the one hundred and seventy-two *Articles* of the Confession there were certain of them, treating of the relations of church and state, in which were ambiguous statements susceptible of an interpretation which the Synod would have repudiated unanimously. With a view to these *Articles* of the doctrinal standards, especially,

were the cautionary provisions of the Preliminary Act adopted, whilst, in making them, the same principle was extended to the Directory for Worship and Government, in which were some things never strictly followed by our church. Such is the interpretation of the Preliminary Act, which grows out of a simple inspection of its own terms, taken in connection with the language of the Overture and the Adopting Act.

But apart from the evidently specific design of the distinction made in the Preliminary Act, a moment's candid reflection will satisfy the reader that the use to which the Act is applied by our New-school brethren is unjustifiable upon any sound principles of interpretation. The Act makes no provision for the allowance of mistake or error, great or small, upon the essential Articles. It does not take any concern as to the *extent of the error*, but is *wholly occupied with the subject* of it. Presbytery may admit an errorist, if it "shall judge his scruple or mistake to be only about Articles not essential or necessary." But will any one pretend that those Articles, for example, which treat of sin and the atonement, are to be counted unessential in the Confession; or that they would have been so classified by the Synod? Let us suppose, then, a party found to differ from the Confession, no matter to what extent, on the atonement. How, then, would operate the requirement,—“if erroneous in essential and necessary Articles of faith, the Synod or Presbytery shall declare them incapable of communion with us.” In a word, the fathers were no bigots as to matters not involved in the doctrines of faith. But they cherished a just and irrepressible repugnance to tampering with any of those doctrines, and would give place to it,—no, not for a moment, as the history of both Old-side and New most unequivocally illustrates. The Articles respecting the civil government, and the Directory for the details of Divine worship, and the organization and government of the church might admit of innocent difference of opinion—as we shall hereafter see Wither-  
spoon and a committee of Synod explain; but the Articles of faith were sacred in their eyes, and guarded with jealous vigilance against the first beginnings of error.

In the Westminster standards, as adopted in 1729, besides the doctrinal Articles and the Catechisms, there were “The

humble Advice of the Assembly, concerning Church Government," and "a Directory for the Public Worship of God." Respecting them all, the Preliminary Act determined four points:—1st. That neither "in doctrine, worship, nor government," were all the articles essential and necessary. 2d. That in every case, parties must bring their scruples, in the first place, to the proper judicatory, and abide by its judgment respecting them. 3d. That divergence from the teachings of the book in the "not-necessary" articles, would not, of necessity forfeit ministerial communion. 4th. That error, in essential and necessary articles of faith, involved the exclusion of the party.

In the Adopting Act itself, these principles were strictly applied. The members were individually called upon, and each one—the non-subscriber Dickinson not excepted—stated his scruples as to any articles and expressions in the Confession and Catechisms, and declared them to be the confession of his faith; excepting only the specified clauses. Every article and expression, with these exceptions, was by the members thus unreservedly adopted, no man scrupling one word to anything in the doctrinal statements. Says the Rev. Samuel Blair, "There never was any scruple that ever I heard of, made by any member of the Synod, about any part of the Confession of Faith; but only about some particular clauses in the twentieth and twenty-third chapters; and these clauses were excepted against in the Synod's Act receiving the Confession of Faith, only in such a sense; which, for my part, I believe the reverend composers never intended in them, but which might, notwithstanding, be readily put upon them."

The Directory for worship and government was treated in a different manner. To it,—but to it alone,—was applied the "substance of doctrine" principle. It was pronounced "agreeable *in substance* to the word of God," and as such commended to prudent and discriminating use.

Such was the mode and extent of the adoption of the Confession by the members of the Synod, in 1729. Needing no indulgence for themselves, and adopting the book, man by man, in the full and unreserved manner here shown, it would certainly have been very extraordinary had they designed or pro-

vided for giving to others greater liberty than they claimed for themselves. Nor did they. At the time of making the Adopting Act, this point was left to implication. But the next year, report coming up of apprehensions caused in the churches respecting it, the Synod unanimously declared, as already stated, that the design of the Acts of 1729, was to enforce on intrants the adoption of the standards "in the same manner, and as fully as the members of Synod did, that were then present."

This minute of 1730 has been utterly ignored by New-school writers, and for a very manifest reason. If the minute be true, all their statements as to the design of the Adopting Act, and arguments thence deduced, must go by the board. And yet this minute was unanimously passed, at a "full meeting" of the Synod. Of the eighteen members present in 1729, twelve were now present; and of the seventeen who were unanimous in the adoption of this minute, but seven could be classified with the Scotch.

These men certainly knew what they meant in the proceedings of 1729. They declare them to have been designed to enforce adoption upon intrants, "in the same manner, and as fully as the members of Synod did." Those members adopted without reservation, every article and expression, except the repudiated sense of the articles on the magistrate. The whole issue, therefore, between us and our New-school brethren is palpably one as to the veracity of the Synod in this unanimous action. If the position of our New-school brethren be correct, the fathers in this Synod deliberately conspired to utter and place on permanent record a wilful untruth. If the Synod told the truth, our brethren are inexcusable for the account which they insist upon giving of the matter. That the question is one involving the truth of our fathers, Dr. Gillett distinctly admits, as we shall presently see.

In 1734, the solicitude of the Synod on this subject was indicated by a rule requiring that, at each annual meeting, inquiry should be made as to the adoption of the Confession by intrants, "according to the Acts of the Synod, made some years since, for that purpose,"—the Acts of 1729 and 1730.

In 1736, the Synod passed an explanatory Act, which has been the occasion of no little displeasure to Dr. Gillett and others. By some means, probably through the agency of an enemy, the Preliminary Act had been published, without the Adopting Act. To obviate the misconceptions and uneasiness thus induced, the Synod formally and without a dissenting voice, declared that it had adopted, and still adhered to the Westminster standards, "without the least variation or alteration, and without regard to the said distinctions" of the Preliminary Act. "And we do further declare that this was our meaning and true intent, in our first adopting of said Confession, as may particularly appear by our Adopting Act," which they then recite in full, as evidence to the people "of our firm attachment to our good old received doctrines contained in our Confession, without the least variation or alteration."

The reader will bear in mind the statement of Blair, as to the clauses in the Confession which were excepted to in the Adopting Act, "only in such a sense; *which, for my part I believe the reverend composers never intended* in them." Here is the key to the harmony between the exceptions made in the Adopting Act, and the unreserved terms of this explanatory minute and of many subsequent documents.

This minute entirely exhausts the patience of Dr. Gillett. In his *History*, he exclaims,—“As a matter of fact, this was not true; as a matter of right, it was a gross injustice, to attempt to change the constitutional basis,” &c. In the *Review* article now before us, he is rather more modest in his language; but the matter is left in the same predicament. If we admit Dr. Gillett’s assumptions, we must believe that the explanatory Act of 1736 was a deliberate falsehood, concocted by the wicked Scotch, to the injury of the rest, and unanimously adopted by the Synod; English and Welsh, Irish, Scotch, and New Englanders, all concurring; whilst not a man was found then, or afterward, until our historian arose, to impeach it of falsehood, or charge it with injustice.

The New-school “Declaration,” of 1839, treats this matter in a somewhat different, but equally remarkable manner. Having, in its account of the Synod of 1729, given the Preliminary Act in full, under the name of the Adopting Act, and

suppressed all allusion to the latter, it not only pursues the same policy in its account of the minute of 1736, by ignoring the Act; as transcribed therein, but actually asserts of the minute, that by its adoption the Synod "established the power of the civil magistrate to control synods and persecute the church," although that was the point so expressly and carefully guarded by the Adopting Act, which was transcribed into the minute, as a part of it.

That the declaration of 1736 did truly represent the Adopting Act is manifest. Every member then present had, as a matter of fact, adopted the entire Confession, repudiating only what they considered an illegitimate interpretation of certain clauses. Every member, subsequently admitted, had been required by the rule of 1730 to do the same. All the action on the subject, from first to last, was consistent and unanimous; and, at least down to the schism of 1741, no man was admitted as a member of the ministry without the fact of his adoption in accordance with these Acts, being made the subject of formal inquiry and record, on the minutes of Synod.

The schism of 1741 was immediately consequent upon the extreme and irregular action of the signers of the Protestation of that year. Its ultimate cause was the disorderly and fanatical course of the New-side revivalists intruding into Presbyteries and churches, denouncing their opposers as unconverted men, treating with contempt their ministerial and pastoral rights, and disregarding and trampling upon every regulation of the Synod which tended to restrain their irregularities. They were also charged by the Old-side with propagating grievous doctrinal errors. The principal errors thus charged were such as, "that every true Christian is sure of his own conversion; every adult person, when he is converted, must be able to tell the time, place, and manner of his conversion; that no adult person is converted without first undergoing an high degree of legal, ungracious, preparatory convictions and terrors," and such like.

It was in view of these "points of doctrine," and the connected disorders, that the Old-side, in 1741, protested, among other things, that no person "should be allowed to sit and vote in this Synod who hath not received, adopted, or sub-

scribed the Confession, &c., as our Presbyteries respectively do, according to our last explication of the Adopting Act; or who is either accused or convicted, or may be convicted, before this Synod or any of our Presbyteries, of holding or maintaining any doctrine, or who act and persist in any practice contrary to any of those doctrines, or the rules contained in said Directory, or contrary to any known rights of Presbytery, or orders made or agreed to by this Synod."

It will be noticed that whilst the protesters here assert the obligation of the Acts of 1729, they also testify that the Presbyteries respectively were faithful in enforcing subscription "according to our last explication of the Adopting Act." The point of the protestation is aimed at the doctrinal aberrations and the disorders before mentioned. Touching the meaning of the Act and the truth of the explanatory declaration, there appears, as yet, no diversity of sentiment. Respecting this matter, however, Dr. Gillett in his *History* thus speaks:

"It will be observed, that 'the last explication of the Adopting Act was that of 1736. The majority of the Synod, therefore, demanded as a condition of membership a principle fundamentally different from that of the Adopting Act. They demanded, in short, an *ipsissima verba* subscription. And because of the refusal to yield to this demand, among others, they proceeded to what was a virtual excision, and what they did not hesitate to characterize as such, in their subsequent documents. . . . The *systematic*, in contradistinction from the *ipsissima verba* subscription, was reëstablished at the reunion of 1758."

Of these statements as to the Acts of 1729 and 1736, the reader is now competent to judge. If anything more had been necessary to show how much this writer relies upon his fancy for his facts, it would be found in the assertion that one cause of the excision was the refusal of the New-side to consent to the explication of 1736. Let us hear them on the subject.

The Protestation was a formal impeachment of them. Their reply was immediate. No sooner did the division take place than they met and adopted the following minute: "Inasmuch as the ministers who have protested against our being of their communion, do at least insinuate false reflections against us,



endeavouring to make people suspect that we are receding from Presbyterian principles, . . . we think it fit unanimously to declare that we do adhere as closely and fully to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Directory, *as ever the Synod of Philadelphia did*, in any of their public acts or statements about it."

Shortly afterward they issued a "Declaration" of their views and principles. In it they proceed, in the first place, to declare their adoption of the standards, in the precise manner of the Adopting Act, and with its exception to the obnoxious interpretation as to the civil government. (See Baird's *Digest*, p. 32.) Neither of these papers is held entitled to a place in the *New Digest*. Nor does Dr. Gillett think them worthy of recognition. Their significance the reader will appreciate, and their bearing upon the Doctor's assertion as to the reasons for the proto-excision.

But our author finds new evidence of "liberal" sentiments in the New York Synod's constitution, when organized in 1745. The first article declared their agreement "that the Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, be the public confession of their faith, in such manner as was agreed unto by the Synod of Philadelphia in the year 1729. "This language," says Dr. Gillett, "is as distinct a repudiation" of the position taken by the signers of the Protestation, on subscription, "as anything can be by means of implication." This assertion might possibly be sustained were the Adopting Act blotted out of existence and the Preliminary Act surrendered to Dr. Gillett's interpretation. But, as the facts stand,—the language of the Preliminary Act applying its distinctions, not to the doctrines but to the Articles of the Confession; its perfect congruity with Thomson's overture, on the one hand, and the Adopting Act on the other; the full and comprehensive terms of the latter; the interpretations of 1730 and 1736; the absence of all dissent, complaint, or dissatisfaction with these measures; the unanimous enforcement given them by Old-side and New, both before and after the division; in a word, the active concurrence of all parties for fourteen years, which had now elapsed since the passage of the Adopting Act, forbid us to accept the forced interpretation put by

Dr. Gillett upon the basis of 1743; or to admit that thus suddenly and silently, without motive or warning, the New-side stultified themselves and repudiated the ground so firmly taken by them immediately after the division.

On this subject it is significant that, while we hear not a word of the Old-side having impeached them of adopting lax principles of subscription, we do hear of complaints from their own members, on account of their strictness on the subject. To these complaints the Synod replied with a touch of indignant sternness, that "by adopting the Westminster Confession, we only intend receiving it as a test of orthodoxy in our church; and it is the order of this Synod, that all who are licensed to preach the gospel, or become members of any Presbytery in our bounds, shall receive the same as the confession of their faith, according to our constituting Act, which we see no reason to repeal." (Baird's *Digest*, p. 33.) The reader will look in vain to find this minute in the *New Digest*, or in the pages of Dr. Gillett. But here is no appeal to the much-abused distinctions of the Preliminary Act; no intimation that the memorialists, to whom this is a reply, misconceived as to the strictness of the subscription enforced upon intrants; no talk of liberality, or exposition of the difference between the essential and the unessential doctrines of the Confession; not one word in the line which our New-school brethren would so promptly have followed. On the contrary, the Synod replied to the cavils of its dissatisfied members, that, in condescension to their weakness, it will inform them that by adopting the Confession, they "*only* intend receiving it as a test of orthodoxy;" and that they see no occasion to rescind the rule enforcing it upon intrants! To see the full significance of this reply, it is to be remembered that it was this very idea of receiving the standards "as a test of orthodoxy," which excited the opposition of Dickinson and the New England members, when Thomson brought in his overture at first. "Our countrymen," said Andrews, "are willing to join in a vote to make it the Confession of our church; but to agree to making it a test of orthodoxy and term of ministerial communion, they will not."

The conclusion is inevitable. The liberal sentiments which Dr. Gillett accredits to the Synod of New York, were alto-

gether foreign to the principles of that body. It received the standards in the same manner, and as fully as did the Synod of Philadelphia. Of this, in addition to all the other evidence, one fact is conclusive; the entire silence of the latter Synod on that point. Our historian attempts to create a different impression. But, how unjustly, we shall presently see. In fact, the Church of Scotland itself was the proclaimed model of the New York Synod in this respect. "Her young daughter," the Synod claimed to be; and for the information of her Reformed Dutch neighbours, she declared that she enjoyed the sympathy and confidence of that church; and that the Westminster standards adopted by it "are, in like manner adopted by us." (Baird's *Digest*, p. 33.) Of all this, however, the reader will learn nothing from the pages of Dr. Gillett, or the *New Digest*.

The Reunion of 1758 is represented by our historian as the final and permanent establishment of the liberal policy which he so much admires. In his *History*, he represents the progress of events in the growth of the two Synods, as having reduced the obstacles to reunion "to the mode of subscription, and the Protest itself," of 1741. In his present essay, he does not assert this in express terms. But it is implied and assumed in all his statements and arguments. And yet, in the correspondence for reunion, there is not a trace of one word of discussion or difficulty, with respect to the mode of subscription. There was no diversity of sentiment, nor of practice, on the subject, and therefore, no room for discussion. As our writer brings an array of quotations from the records, which, as he presents them, seem to sustain his assertion, it is necessary to examine their real meaning, and the question touching which they were in fact written.

One article of the Protestation of 1741, was in these words:—"We protest that all our protesting brethren have at present no right to sit and vote as members of this Synod, having forfeited their right of being accounted members of it for many reasons, a few of which we shall mention afterwards." Here "our protesting brethren," were the New-side, who had protested against and disregarded the Synod's acts respecting intrusions and education. The grounds of the forfeiture thus

charged upon them, were in general, the errors of doctrine which have been already illustrated, and the disorders and disregard of Synodical authority and rules of which they were guilty. The signers of the Protestation took the ground that by these things the New-side men had, *ipso facto*, separated themselves from the Synod and forfeited all rights therein; and it was by the Synod's acquiescence in this assumption that their actual exclusion was effected, without any vote or formal act of exclusion.

Upon the propriety of this course of procedure, the New York brethren joined issue with the Old-side. They admitted that no person could rightfully remain in connection with the Synod, whilst rejecting its authority, and violating its decisions. But they denied that it was consistent with Presbyterian principles to attempt the exclusion of such persons without judicial process, by mere protest, and removal of their names. In accordance with these views, they proposed in the overture for reunion, that, in the united church, all the members should be required to actively concur, or passively submit to all decisions of the courts of the church; or, if they can do neither, then to withdraw, peaceably, without attempting to excite controversy or create division. Here arose the point made use of by Dr. Gillett. Shall this rule to submit to the decisions of the courts or withdraw, apply to all cases, without exception; or only to those which may concern essential questions. If, for example, Mr. Andrews cannot consent to comply with the rule of the Synod in favour of a morning expository discourse, after the Scotch method, must he withdraw? The Synod of New York insisted that the obligation be limited to necessary cases; whilst that of Philadelphia, at first, urged that it be universal.

The first overture of the New York Synod for reunion proposed an article in these terms: "That every member promise, that after any question has been determined by the major vote, he will actively concur or passively submit to the judgment of the body; but if his conscience permit him to do neither of these, that then he shall be obliged peaceably to withdraw from our Synodical communion, without any attempt to make a division among us. Yet *this is not intended to*

*extend to any cases but those which the Synod judges essential in matters of doctrine and discipline."*

This is that famous "paragraph about essentials," which Dr. Gillett constantly treats as if it had respect to the mode of subscription to the Confession, and to the distinctions of the Preliminary Act, with which it has nothing in common, except the fact that the word "essential" occurs in both. The sole question here debated was, whether the members might with impunity trample on the authority of the supreme court of the church, as the New Brunswick brethren had done in their proceedings prior to the division. On this point, the seeming difference between the two Synods was, in fact, a mere question of words; for, a decision which the Synod should pronounce to be not essential, would be thereby stripped of the authority of a Synodical ordinance, and become a mere recommendation, appealing to the discretion of the members. Practically, the result would have been the same, whether the New York or Philadelphia phraseology were adopted. The latter proposed to insert, instead of the clause above italicised, the following: "always reserving him a liberty to sue for a review, and to lay his grievances before the body, in a Christian manner."

When all other points of difference had been removed out of the way, it was evident that the "paragraph about essentials" could create no embarrassment. Without pausing to decide this point, therefore, the Synod of Philadelphia proposed, and the New York Synod consented to the appointment of a joint committee, to digest details for reunion. The result was a report of Articles of Union. These were unanimously accepted by the two Synods, which thereupon coalesced as one body in 1758. The first and second articles of this basis were as follows:

"I. Both Synods having always approved and received the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as an orthodox and excellent system of Christian doctrine, founded on the word of God, we do still receive the same as the confession of our faith, and also adhere to the plan of worship, government, and discipline, contained in the Westminster Directory, *strictly enjoining it* on all our mem-

bers and probationers for the ministry, that they preach and teach according to the form of sound words in said Confession and Catechisms, and *avoid and oppose all errors contrary thereto.*"

"II. That when any matter is determined by a major vote, every member shall, either actively concur with, or passively submit to such determination; or, if his conscience permit him to do neither, he shall, after sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate, peaceably withdraw from our communion, without attempting to make any schism. Provided, always, that this shall be understood to extend only to such determinations as the body shall judge indispensable, in doctrine and Presbyterian government."

Here, it will be perceived that the whole question of subscription is decided by the first Article; and decided in a way which utterly ignores the Preliminary Act as interpreted by Dr. Gillett, and harmonizes perfectly with the Adopting Act and the whole subsequent tenor of action on the subject. It will also be noticed that the second Article has reference, wholly, to the question of the authority of determinations of every kind, made by church courts; and that, in it, the Philadelphia and New York propositions are combined in perfect and recognized harmony. The former allows that dissentients shall first have "sufficient liberty modestly to reason and remonstrate," before withdrawing; and the latter provides that unless, thereupon, the court shall allow the determination in question to be dispensed with, the party must withdraw.

What then shall we say to the commentary of our historian upon this transaction. In his essay he omits any allusion to the first of the above articles, recites the second, and proceeds in the following style:

"Thus the New-side had secured the *thing*, while less scrupulous about the form. They had acted in consistency with themselves throughout. They made the Adopting Act, *as received in 1729*," (the reader will remember that Dr. Gillett refers to the Preliminary Act,) "the fundamental position which they resolved to occupy. They allowed a latitude in what they accounted non-essentials. . . . His [Gellatly's] charges of laxity were based on inference, and not on facts, and

may therefore readily be set aside; but he was not mistaken in his view of the importance the New-side attached to the paragraph about essentials. With them it was a vital matter; it was a point which, even for union's sake, they would not and did not surrender."

He goes on through several pages to descant upon this idea; leading his readers, all the time, to suppose that the question involved in the second article was that of subscription for substance, and leaving them in utter ignorance of the fact that, already and unequivocally, that question had been concluded by the first article; and that the only subject handled in the second article, was the authority of church courts to bind the members by decisions, whether doctrinal or administrative.

Davies is appealed to by our author as attempting to conciliate English non-subscribers by telling them of the liberty allowed in the Preliminary Act. Davies truly stated the distinctions of that Act. But he did not give his English friends the key to those distinctions, in the terms of the Adopting Act, and the subsequent deliverances and practice of the church. The statement of Davies appears, indeed, on the face of it, to have been a weak concession to the latitudinarian spirit by which he was surrounded, and of which, in his account of the matter, he so bitterly complains. In fact, the association of ideas on this subject, in connection with the English churches, is not flattering to the friends of "liberal principles."

Twenty-one years after the reunion of 1758, the Rev. Jacob Green, the father of the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, claimed the privilege of withdrawing from the Synod. His reasons were found in the two Articles of the basis of union above cited. He complained, that the Confession, "without any liberty of explanation in any Article, was enjoined upon all the ministers, who are to teach and preach accordingly;" and that the Synod assumed authority, after the Scotch method, to enact regulations and enforce them on inferior courts and ministers.

We might have supposed that such a practical exposition of the reunion basis, founded as it was upon the very words of that document, would stagger our author as to the correctness of his theory of the transaction. But he is entirely proof against the force of the argument. He tells us in his *History*

that a large amount of Mr. Green's repugnance "might have been overcome, if he had known or remembered that provision had been made for the 'scruples' of the candidate, and that he was to be admitted by the Synod or Presbytery, unless his scruple or mistake concerned some essential and necessary doctrine." (Gillett's *History*, vol. i. p. 209.) He had all the liberty he wanted, if he had but known it!

The *simplicity* of this remark disarms all criticism. The reader, however, will reflect, that Mr. Green was a member of the New York Presbytery, which, in the Synod of New York, led that whole movement for reunion, in which, we are told, the principles of the Preliminary Act had been held so vital, and, therefore, carefully incorporated into the basis of reunion. Yet, it seems, neither that Presbytery in the kind expostulations which the historian tells us it urged upon him, nor Mr. Green himself, who had been for thirty-four years connected with the Presbytery and Synod, and familiar with their history and policy through all that time, "knew or remembered" how liberal in fact were the principles of subscription maintained by them! This much, at least, results from the suggestion of our author, that in the time of Mr. Green, the distinctions of the Preliminary Act had become obsolete and forgotten. That generation was as ignorant on the subject as was that of 1836, till informed by Dr. Halsey.

One additional fact will close this review. In 1786, a committee of the General Synod met in convention with similar committees of the Reformed Dutch and Associate Reformed Churches. The committee consisted of the Rev. Drs. Witherspoon, Rodgers, McWhorter, Smith, Kerr, and Woodhull. To the convention this committee communicated the following statement:

"The Synod of New York and Philadelphia adopt, according to the known and established meaning of the terms, the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the confession of their faith; save that every candidate for the gospel ministry is permitted to except against so much of the twenty-third chapter as gives authority to civil magistrates in matters of religion. . . . The Synod also receives the Directory for public worship and the Form of Church Government, recommended by the Westmin-



ster Assembly, as, *in substance*, agreeable to the institutions of the New Testament. This mode of adoption we use, because we believe the general platform of our government to be agreeable to the sacred Scriptures; but we do not believe that God has been pleased so to reveal and enjoin every minute circumstance of ecclesiastical government and discipline, as not to leave room for orthodox churches of Christ, in these minutiae, to differ, with charity from one another."

Thus, fifty-seven years after the first passage of the Adopting Act, it remained in all its original comprehensiveness and strictness, whilst the exposition here given, of the reason of adopting the Directory, *for substance*, is most significant as to the different principle applied to the doctrinal standards.

We will not annoy the reader by tracing the mode in which, in his *History*, Dr. Gillett tries to evade the force of this conclusive fact. It is enough that we have the testimony of these witnesses, as to the mode of subscription then actually in use; that their report, including this statement, was expressly approved by the Synod; and that in its deliberations and decisions on the questions which came before it from the convention, it passes this subject by as being already concluded; and the action of the Synod, which Dr. Gillett cites as an implied censure of the committee, is altogether misapprehended by him, and had reference wholly to the questions which were still pending in the deliberations of the convention. In a word, the Synod's committee in the above cited paper, under circumstances of peculiar solemnity and responsibility, made a formal and explicit statement of facts. That statement was false, or else the historian's exceptions to it are worthless.

We confess that in this discussion, we have continually realized a feeling akin to that with which we should labour to prove that the sun shines in the heavens. The conclusions to which the facts bring us, are, that the general distinction between the Articles of the Confession, which was recognized in the Preliminary Act, was made in view of the precise Articles excepted to in the Adopting Act; that the latter defined and determined the meaning of that distinction, and that thenceforward, the Adopting Act, proper, with all its comprehensive strictness, and its specific exceptions, became, and was

always recognized as the model and rule of subscription enforced upon all who entered the ministry, until the revision of the standards in 1788 rendered the exceptions of 1729 inapplicable.

The "liberal principles" of Dr. Gillett find no shadow of countenance in the Adopting Act of 1729, nor the reunion of 1758, nor anywhere else in the history of our fathers.