

# THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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## ARTICLE I.

### AN EXAMINATION OF THE LEADING POINTS OF THE SYSTEM OF ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

I. Mr. Campbell proposed, as his main enterprise, to remove the evils of "sects," by gathering a Christian communion without any creed of human construction, with no other bonds save faith on Jesus Christ as Saviour, and obedience to his laws. That is, every one must be admitted, were this basis laid down consistently, not only as member, but teacher, who *says* that he believes and obeys the Scriptures. Mr. Campbell, misapplying the words of John xvii. 20, 21, says that only two conditions are necessary for the conversion of the world: *Truth and Union*. He deems that the reason why Truth has not done its work is to be found in the divisions of professed Christians. Of these he regards human creeds as causes, instead of results. He strictly requires us to show a divine command or authority for their composition, and for the exaction of subscription to them; and he charges that, failing in this, if we exact such subscription, we are guilty of most criminal usurpation and will-worship. He urges that, to add a human creed to God's word, as a test of correct doctrinal opinion, is virtually to make the impudent assertion that the uninspired creed-makers can be more perspicuous than the Holy Ghost. But on the contrary, since men uninspired are

## ARTICLE VII.

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1880.

We have no hesitation in saying that the Assembly of 1880 has deserved well of the Church. In the excellent qualities of patience, good temper, and conservatism, it was surpassed by none of its predecessors whose sessions we have had opportunity to witness. The choleric brother seems to have staid at home, where his virtues doubtless shine more to edification than in our Church parliaments. There was no choking down debate, no application of "gag-law," and every one who had the right to speak was heard, in some instances at a considerable cost of time and comfort. Much of the good work done by the Assembly was due largely to the efficiency of the Standing Committees. The Moderator was for the most part fortunate in his lists, and the Assembly very wise in giving ample time for them to prepare their reports thoroughly. For several days the house receded from its regular business at 2 p. m., that the committees might have the afternoons and evenings for work. The seeming inaction of the earlier sessions began after a while to excite the fears of some. Allusions were occasionally made, half playful, half earnest, to the charms of Charlestonian hospitality and the soothing effects of our excellent dinners. But to the experienced, this delay augured well for the harmony of the body and the ultimate dispatch of business. The Moderator filled his place ably and gracefully; and if embarrassed by any consciousness of the want of complete familiarity with the Assembly's methods of procedure, as he modestly intimated upon taking his seat, his uniform courtesy and tact answered very well instead of experience.

## WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES.

Each of these committees reports some improvement on the last year's showing. The country is slowly rising from the prostration which culminated in the "panic" of 1873, and Church finances feel the bouyant movement of the returning tide. Whether much more than this can be claimed, may perhaps be

doubted. We are inclined to the opinion that our present system has about attained its development, and will henceforth only grow as the Church expands. This surmise seems to be sustained by a reference to older Churches having substantially the same modes of work.

The Executive Committee of Education at Memphis reports a gain over last year's income of \$954.69. And when due allowance is made for the marked reduction in the running expenses, by scaling down the Secretary's salary from \$1,500 to \$600, it is gratifying to observe that a similar success for the current year will yield nearly \$2,000 additional net dividends for our candidates, who sorely need it. The Secretary was enabled to state on the floor that funds are now in hand to liquidate the last remnant of the burdensome debt bequeathed to the present Committee by its predecessor at Richmond. Ninety-five names of candidates from forty Presbyteries were placed on the Committee's list; but of these eighty-seven only received aid, and one of them proving unworthy was stricken off.

This item naturally suggests one of the chief obstacles to our satisfactory solution of the problem of Beneficiary Education—the sinful carelessness of Presbyteries in taking up youths as candidates into whose antecedents no proper scrutiny is made. For this there is no remedy outside of the Presbytery. The Executive Committee has no discretion, but must in all cases receive candidates when officially recommended. Our Book seems to require this control to be vested absolutely in the Presbytery. And this is pleaded very forcibly as an argument for requiring Presbyteries to raise, except in extraordinary cases, the funds for their own candidates. The argument is that in general men will be more careful in drawing on their domestic treasury than upon one a thousand miles off. Human nature seems to move along some such line as this. An illustration in point was repeated to us within the past few days by an original witness: Young Mr. — appeared before the Presbytery of — to be received as a candidate and placed on the beneficiary fund. He was wearing the well known dress of a certain school, the principal of which, a Presbyterian, was present, though not a

member of the court. It was taken for granted that all was just as it should be. The usual questions were propounded as to his motives, etc., and the young man was received, sixty dollars being voted to him. The facts were that the youth was no longer a pupil in — school; he was notoriously lazy, extravagant, and addicted to lying! Of the money he received, five dollars was promptly paid over in advance to the barber who was to shave the prospective whiskers and apply pomade to the ambrosial locks of our candidate. And after he had, like a certain gay youth of Scripture, “spent all,” he dropped out of ranks, and is probably doing service now as the “Beau Brummel” of his rustic neighborhood!

The proposal made by four Presbyteries to have this Committee placed in Nashville created some discussion which verged closely upon personal feeling. The decisive rejection of the proposal was based, we think, upon two solid reasons: (1) The zeal, fidelity, and economy of the present Committee, the objection that Memphis is liable to epidemics not having been shown to work any real injury to Education; (2) the belief which created a good deal of comment outside of the house that too much of the advocacy employed was moved by personal considerations.

The Report on Foreign Missions exhibits two favorable features: (1) an increase over last year of \$2,251.23; and (2) better still, a larger number of hopeful conversions than ever before presented. Of the \$48,485.98 of receipts, the large proportion of \$10,031.36 was given by “Ladies’ Associations.” We may be in error—we shall certainly seem ungracious in the exception—but candor requires us to say that we do not approve of this plan of raising funds. We know the guards which our beloved and venerable Secretary has sought to interpose. But to our poor mind the logical outcome of it all is just the “Women’s Boards,” and the “L. C. T. U.,” etc., which figure so largely in higher latitudes. Better wait on the clearly revealed methods, we think. Better abide by “the pattern showed in the mount” than set schemes in motion whose remote consequences we cannot control. Let the Lord’s work be done in the Lord’s well-known way. We are responsible only so far as this. Of the disturbances and un-

happy divisions in the Campinas Mission little is known outside of the Committee. This is right. Judicial inquiry instituted in Presbytery is the only way to take up such matters; we cannot say whether or not this is necessary. From all that we can learn, Mr. Morton's withdrawal, whether right or wrong, and his establishing a school only thirty miles distant from Campinas Institute, has inflicted great injury on the Mission. The Committee at Baltimore are wise and good men. We can only unite with them in the prayer that God will overrule it all for good.

The fourteenth annual Report on Home Missions presents, in a clear and lucid shape, many items that deserve careful consideration by our presbyters. Progress is announced in each of the several departments of the work. A total gain of \$6,274.58 is reported over last year. About eighty-five per cent. of our ministers who devote their whole time to the work are reported as receiving a maintenance termed "adequate," when measured by local standards. The "Invalid Fund" does not receive that response from the churches that one would naturally expect for a cause which so tenderly and peculiarly appeals to the Christian heart. Appropriations have been painfully inadequate, and yet a deficiency of nearly \$2,000 existed on March 31st.

The debate on the motion to remove Home Missions to St. Louis excited the interest of the body. As is well known to many, when the Committee on Foreign Missions was sent to Baltimore in 1875 by the St. Louis Assembly, that on Home Missions was expressly retained in Columbia, S. C. But near to the end of the sessions of that Assembly, it was declared to be necessary on account of certain financial complications in the Treasurer's office, that Home Missions should be sent also. Many members had gone home, the body was thoroughly weary with heat and work. But, chiefly through the personal influence of Dr. Robinson, (as we remember it,) a reconsideration was had, and Home Missions was sent to Baltimore by a mere majority in a very small vote. It was done avowedly as a temporary measure, and to satisfy the mind of the Treasurer. When this suddenly discovered emergency should be past, the Home Missions should be sent to St. Louis or some other point. We favored the

removal at Charleston because we deprecate the concentration of so much power and patronage in the north-eastern corner of our territory. Our brethren there are as worthy of our love and confidence as any in the world, but they are *only* men—men of like passions with us. The effects of centralisation are not confined to conscious efforts after power. We had other reasons, too, which need not now be named. The removal was resisted, (1) On the ground of letting “well enough alone”; (2) Removal involving increased expense; (3) Dr. McIlwaine’s assistance being necessary to the senior Secretary. The Assembly seemed very evenly divided. Our opinion is that the motion would have prevailed but for an impression made by casual remarks interposed by Dr. Wilson, that he was opposed to the removal. This was probably not intended, but we know that votes were decided by that belief.

Dr. Hazen’s Report on Publication gave us great pleasure. The great “floating” debt has been reduced to \$10,870, with assets available to bring it down to \$9,000. The excellent Secretary has the thanks of all the Church for his energy and skill in their service. The condition of our affairs was enough to appal a stout heart. He has taken us out of the vain effort to compete against the immense business capital invested by the publishing houses of the country. We can now avail ourselves of the world’s market in purchasing for our missionary operations. The recommendation of the Church will generally secure the publication of any book. We are getting some returns on our costly investments in the shape of “royalties.” Our Sunday-school Lessons, are, we believe, giving deserved satisfaction. One thing only we regretted to see pressed by the Committee—the repeal of the order of a former Assembly that the “Publishing House,” which ought never to have been bought, and still has a separate debt of more than \$30,000 hanging over it, we believe, be sold with all the despatch that the interests of the Church will allow. The Committee at Richmond and its Secretary know what a burden that indebtedness is to many in the Church. They will not receive all the contributions they need until this matter is settled. We hope the delay will not be protracted.

## RETRENCHMENT AND REFORM.

The Committee of Nine appointed at the last Assembly to make a full report on this subject have shown commendable diligence, and we were glad that the result of their labors is ordered to be furnished in the Appendix of the Assembly's Minutes. The matter has exercised the thoughts of many for years. Opportunity is now offered to examine and compare opposing views, that all may be thoroughly informed who are willing to take the slight trouble.

The Committee presented majority and minority reports, the former signed, with one slight exception, by seven, and the latter by two members of the Committee, Dr. Lane naming several points in which he was not prepared to agree with Mr. Martin. The majority report advocates the present mode of conducting our work by five Executive Committees. They give as their reasons, (1) The concurrent Presbyterian practice in this country based upon a century of successful experience; (2) The demands of each branch of our work indicating a separate agency for each; (3) Our secretaries, not merely financial agents, but "watchmen on the walls" to care for and advocate this or that branch of work; (4) Salaries not extravagant, being about the same paid by Southern bodies and from \$500 to \$1,000 less than those allowed in the North. These are confessedly weighty considerations, and express the mind of a majority in the Church.

The minority report, drafted by Mr. Martin, may be expressed in six points, which we insert from a newspaper report:

"1. Appoint one treasurer, a deacon (not minister), a bonded officer, a thorough business man, to hold *all* the contributions of our churches.

"2. Abolish all paid secretaries, and commit the general control of each department to its Executive Committee.

"3. Diminish the machinery by remanding the educating of candidates to the Presbyteries, requiring each Presbytery to manage its own funds, and calling on them to send a percentage or surplus to a central committee.

"4. Manage Home Missions in a similar manner. In the Foreign Mission department, unite the *Missionary* and *Earnest Worker*. In Publication, engage editors instead of paying a secretary.

"5. Abolish the Tuskaloosa Institute, and let colored candidates be trained by their own pastors.

"6. Make the Assembly meetings triennial instead of annual."

This programme is too extensive and the proposed changes too radical for our conservative Presbyterian Church. But our brother has no doubt been moved by loyal devotion to the Church and to her Lord. On the floor of Assemblies he has proved himself an accomplished presbyter, in debate as keen as he is courteous. Personalities have not been permitted to mar his arguments. He asks nothing for himself but to labor as a self-denying missionary in the mountains of North Carolina.

We agree with Dr. Lane in wishing to retain the Tuskaloosa Institute. It has not as yet accomplished what the Church designed. But our circumstances are exceptional. Our relations to the negroes and the problem of their future destiny suggests special efforts on their behalf. Fifteen hundred dollars is not an extravagant sum to spend in training, even partially, thirteen colored men to labor in the great field that lies around our very doors. And if only five of them happen to be Presbyterians, we may indulge the hope that all are the Lord's. The whole question of our relations to this people calls for prayerful consideration, if not for humiliation. Obstacles are doubtless in our way—the greater facilities allowed by other creeds and forms of worship to ignorant, excitable, half-civilised people, as well as influences of a social and political nature. But we cannot afford to allow strangers, if not enemies, to gain the gratitude and confidence of our former bondmen. Strangers do not comprehend them. They do not really feel for them as we ought to feel and do feel for them. Let us be found ready and waiting to enter the door when it pleases the Lord to open it. The time may be at hand. The Presbyterianism of Paul is suited to all branches of our fallen race. Human devices may conform to passing phases and fancies. God's plan is for all men and for all time.

Upon some other matters connected with these reports on Retrenchment and Reform we venture a few suggestions:

1. *First*, as regards the century of Presbyterian *experience*. Are our brethren so sure after all that this demonstrates the gen-



eral success of our present plan? We confess that our observation, not very extensive it is true, does not accord with their views. Our information shows that debt and frequently serious contentions mark the history of this system. The delegate of the Reformed (Dutch) Church, to whose operations special attention is called by way of precedent in the majority report, told us at Charleston that his Church is now in debt to the amount of some \$110,000. This certainly is not very encouraging. Readers of their organ (the *Christian Intelligencer*) have long ago discovered that they have not been sailing over untroubled seas.

2. *Secondly*, the majority suggest that our present system is fundamentally the same as the old system of Boards. This certainly is not a correct statement. Dr. Thornwell's great objection to the Boards in his speech at Rochester was that they were coördinate bodies unlawfully appointed by the Church to do the work God had appointed her to do. The Board was an *organism* and not an *organ*. It was a complete body to which the General Assembly had intrusted a department of the work committed to itself. It was a complete whole; all the parts of a separate, self-acting organisation belonged to it. It had head, body, limbs, hands, tongue. It had a President for its head with a body of perhaps one hundred members scattered over the land, who could never come together to attend to their duty. It had an Executive Committee for its hands. And at Rochester they were proposing, by appointing a "travelling" Secretary, to give it feet to travel over all the Church. Now wherein (said Dr. Thornwell) does this body, so organised and equipped, differ from a church court. It was no mere *organ*. It was as completely a moral person, with rights and powers to all intents and purposes, thorough and definite, as any court in the Presbyterian Church. It stood up alongside of the General Assembly itself, as fully organised, as completely officered, and even more perpetual in its existence, so far as regarded its component members. Who gave you the power (said Dr. Thornwell) to make such coördinate courts? Who authorised you to appoint *vicars* of the Assembly to act in the Assembly's place? The opposite to all this for which Dr. Thornwell contended, was the direct action of the Church

and its General Assembly. He wanted the Assembly to act immediately through its own Executive Committees. The Board he held was a missionary society beyond the Church, outside of the Church, a distinct organism, and the Executive Committee under that plan was not the hand of the Assembly, but the hand of this outside society, and reported to it. He wanted an Executive Committee which should be the hand of the Assembly and directly responsible to the Assembly.

Now the Assembly at Rochester, the last where Northern and Southern commissioners met, rejected Dr. Thornwell's views by an overwhelming vote. But in this debate, as in so many others, the real victors were the overwhelmed minority. For after the separation of the South, when the union of elements which now constitute the Northern body took place, the organic changes urged by Dr. Thornwell were substantially adopted in the constitution of their new Boards. They still use the name *Boards*; but if we are not altogether mistaken, their Boards are the same as our Executive Committees, consisting of twelve or fifteen members, attending themselves directly to the business committed to them and reporting directly to the Assembly and not to any intermediate body. They constitute the *hand* for which he argued at Rochester instead of the separate coördinate body. And so he carried his point.

And yet it may be said that the Executive Committee instead of the cumbersome and unpresbyterian Board, which would have satisfied Dr. Thornwell at Rochester, was not his ideal of Church action. He was no extremist—no Utopian dreamer, but eminently practical and moderate in his views and characteristically submissive to his brethren. He found the Church in 1860 still, in general, wedded to Congregational methods in reference to Missions and other like undertakings. He regarded what the Nashville Assembly did in reference to Church Extension (where he got a Committee appointed instead of a Board) as “one step towards the simpler and directer organisation” which he advocated; and so at Rochester he would have been thankful to have secured the great organic changes in the Boards for which he spoke. In like manner it may be said that the Executive Com-

mittees which he assisted in organising at our first General Assembly in Augusta in 1861 were not *his ideal* of Church action. Let the reader examine those great discussions on *Church operations* in the fourth volume of his Collected Writings and see how Thornwell's mind turned to the *Diaconate* as the financial office appointed in the Word. Let the reader look especially at pages 155 and 199-202, where he maintains the position that our Book does not limit the Diaconate to a single congregation, and that the Scriptures authorise a bench of deacons acting for each of our courts as its financial agent.

It is our conviction, in common with many other brethren, that some of Thornwell's objections to the old Boards hold in some measure against the Executive Committees as constituted in our Church. One of the chiefest of his objections, urged both by him and by Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, was the tendency of the system to "cast all power into a few central hands," and that the Boards are "so located and filled that in truth the Presbyterian Church is managed through these contrivances by about two or three dozen persons in all its great practical operations. There are in effect residing in Philadelphia about one dozen persons, ministers and laymen, who are the *real* Board of Missions, Board of Publication, and Board of Education, and who have the official power to be largely all the rest if they please." So far Dr. Breckinridge. And Dr. Thornwell said: "The fact is unquestionable that the various officers of our Boards are invested with a control over their brethren and a power in the Church just as real and just as dangerous as the authority of a prelate." Now these things cannot all be said in all their extent of *our* committees, and yet it can be said that these committees are in danger of becoming the predominating, ruling power in the Church. Take the one point of the location of these committees. There is widespread and growing dissatisfaction with it in some respects. Who does not see that the objections urged at St. Louis to the mere temporary arrangement by which our two most important committees were placed in one Presbytery in our extreme northeast, which committees handle and dispense not less than \$80,000 of our Church's annual collections, which is far the larger portion

of them all, and which committees wield so great a share of her influence and power, yes, and which committees nominally two are really just one—who does not see, we ask, that every year the opposition to this condition of things increases, as this temporary arrangement is threatening, as the years roll on successively, to become our permanent policy? Again Dr. Thornwell's objection that the old Boards tended necessarily to devitalise our Presbyteries by performing for them their appropriate functions, applies to at least one of our Executive Committees—that of Education. To raise funds for the support of candidates whom *they know*, to inspect the conduct of those young candidates, and to let their personal worth operate to secure amongst each Presbytery's churches the raising of the funds necessary for their support, to control and direct the individual ministry even in this its incipient and formative stage—this is one great end for which, according to the doctrine of Thornwell, our Presbyteries exist. To transfer this duty and this power to a committee of the General Assembly both centralises power and devitalises the Presbyteries where the power ought to lodge. Because power disused is slowly but surely transformed into impotency. And then again Dr. Thornwell urged that the old Boards subverted Presbyterianism by the transfer to them of powers, whether temporal or spiritual, which, according to our system, belong to our church courts and church officers. We have just referred to the transfer to an Assembly's Executive Committee of power properly belonging to the Presbyteries. But the pecuniary affairs of our Church are taken out of the hands of deacons to whom they belong, and our ordained ministers and elders, to whom they do not belong, are made to take charge of them. Dr. Thornwell spoke what certainly does apply to our Assembly and its Executive Committees in some respects when he said: "By intrusting all pecuniary matters into the hands of men ordained under solemn sanctions for the purpose, our spiritual courts would soon cease to be what they are to an alarming extent at present—mere corporations for secular business. If all our Boards were converted into mere benches of deacons, commissioned only to disburse funds under the direction of the spiritual courts, there would be no serious ground

of objection to them; but in their present form they are lords and masters of the whole Church. They are virtually the head of the Church; their will is law, their authority irresistible, and they combine what God has separated—the *purse* and the *keys*."

But we cannot close this long *excursus* into which, by their substantial identification of our present system with that of the old Boards, the Majority Report on Retrenchment has led us, without repeating that any such statement is and must be incorrect. Our committees may not be, are not in all their operations and influence, just what we want. But they are not the old vicious system of coördinate bodies standing up alongside of a General Assembly with somewhat equal powers and more permanent life. Dr. Thornwell himself fully admits—as how could he deny?—the legitimacy of an Executive Committee of the Assembly to do the Assembly's proper work. No, our Committees are not the old Boards—they have no ecclesiastical power conferred on them by our Constitution. If they employ any, it is an unconstitutional assumption. Our Sustentation Committee is simply a central agency to divide out funds according to rules given. It can undertake no work within the bounds of any Presbytery. It can undertake to make no appropriations concerning any Presbytery's territory except upon the application of that Presbytery. And it can commission no minister to go and preach within the bounds of any Presbytery. In all these and other similar particulars, our Committees are shorn of the powers given to the old Boards. And yet we must also repeat that our Committees themselves, simple as they are compared with the old Boards and directly as they act for the Assembly, do yet wield an enormous influence and are in danger of becoming predominant in our Church. We shall never forget how strongly this was impressed on the mind of one of the wisest men in our whole communion, a ruling elder who sat for the first time in the General Assembly at St. Louis, a well-instructed, thorough, sound Presbyterian, and a man of wide and large reading and observation. He returned to his Presbytery absolutely shocked and alarmed at the extent to which the power in our Church is centralised and the manner

in which from a few of the Assembly's own institutes comes the influence that rules the Assembly.

#### DEMISSION OF THE ELDERSHIP AND DIACONATE.

The discussion on this topic was quite animated and instructive. The matter was introduced by an overture from the Presbytery of Florida asking: "Can the office of ruling elder and deacon, as well as that of minister, be demitted?" The three citations from our Book given by the Committee on Bills and Overtures as bearing on this point are the following, which for convenience and brevity we give entire:

Rules of Discipline. Chap. 12, Sec. 3, page 77. *Of cases without process.*—"A minister of the gospel, against whom there are no charges, if fully satisfied in his own conscience that God has not called him to the ministry, or if he has satisfactory evidence of his inability to serve the Church with acceptance, may report these facts at a stated meeting. At the next stated meeting, if after full deliberation the Presbytery shall concur with him in judgment, it may divest him of his office without censure, and shall assign him membership in some particular church."

Form of Government, Chap. 6, Sec. 4, Par. 3, on pages 35 and 36: "The offices of ruling elder and deacon are perpetual; nor can they be laid aside at pleasure; nor can any person be degraded from either office but by deposition after regular trial. Yet a ruling elder or deacon may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character to a majority of the church which he serves. In such a case, it is competent for the session, upon application either from the officer or from the church, to dissolve the relation. But no such application from either party shall be granted without affording to the other party full opportunity for stating objections."

Rules of Discipline, Chap. 8, Sec. 10, page 65. *Process against a minister.*—"Whenever a minister of the gospel shall habitually fail to be engaged in the regular discharge of his official functions, it shall be the duty of the Presbytery, at a stated meeting, to inquire into the cause of such dereliction, and, if necessary, to institute judicial proceedings against him for breach of his covenant engagement. If it shall appear that his neglect proceeds only from his want of acceptance to the church, Presbytery may, upon the same principle upon which it withdraws license from a probationer for want of evidence of the divine call, divest him of his office without censure, even against his will, a majority of two-thirds being necessary for this purpose. In such a case, the clerk shall, under the order of the Presbytery, forthwith deliver to the individual concerned a written notice that at the next stated meeting the question of his being so dealt

with is to be considered. This notice shall distinctly state the grounds for this proceeding. The party thus notified shall be heard in his own defence; and if the decision pass against him, he may appeal, as if he had been tried by the usual forms. This principle may apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to ruling elders and deacons."

It will be seen at a glance that *one case* of divesting a minister of office is expressly applied to the elder and deacon. Now, the question was, Have we authority to go beyond this one specified case, using analogy as our guide in applying the rules of "cases without process" to elders and deacons? The temptation to do so is confessedly tantalising. The omission in the revision is palpable. The minority were for using analogy, and making the application. But the majority held, and we think wisely, with the Committee, that the only sure rule is "good and necessary inference" when we undertake to construe law. "If," as Dr. Girardeau argued, "there is an omission, we must amend the law; not attempt to cure it by interpretation." The argument from analogy is not to be pressed so far." The "strict construction" of the Committee prevailed, therefore, as expressed in the following recommendations:

"The Committee report: First. The word 'demit' does not occur in our standards, and its use produces confusion. A minister of the gospel cannot demit his office; he can be divested of his office only by act of Presbytery. Second. The rules for divesting a minister of his office without censure do not in all cases apply to the ruling elders and deacons. For instance, the provisions of the Rules of Discipline, Chapter 12, Section 3, has application only to a minister of the gospel, and the provisions of the Form of Government, Chapter 6, Sections 3, 4, 6, and Rules of Discipline, Chapter 8, Sections 6 and 10, while applying to the elders and deacons, are expressly restricted to the case where the officer is unacceptable to the church."

The way now clearly lies open to an amendment of this defect in our existing law.

#### UNITARIANISM—DIVISION AMONG PRESBYTERIANS IN CHARLESTON.

Two matters involving local issues of a perplexing and annoying kind incidentally came before the Charleston Assembly. One of these came up in the report of the Committee on Devotional

Exercises, making an appointment in the Unitarian church for one of the Assembly's members on Sabbath. Before the paper was acted upon, Dr. Woodrow called attention to the appointment, saying: "If the action proposed is to '*approve*' that report, I shall be compelled to give my reasons for voting against it. But if we are only to receive it as information, I shall not feel inclined to go any further." Mr. Penick, of Orange, was not satisfied to let this course be taken. He would strike out the recommendation of the Committee. He cited the example of Dr. Thornwell, who, under embarrassing circumstances, declined to worship with Unitarians, on the ground that he and they did not worship the same God. There was force in Mr. Penick's position. The Committee was the Assembly's servant, and recommended its appointments as a part of the regular business. But the Assembly was evidently embarrassed by social considerations, and perhaps Dr. Woodrow's plan reached the end aimed at. The brother filled the appointment, but none was made, we believe, for the succeeding Sabbath.

The other local question was brought up in a letter from Rev. Dr. Dana, of the Central Presbyterian church, Charleston, rehearsing the circumstances which led to the withdrawal of himself and others from the Presbytery of Charleston and to the formation of an independent body, known as the "Charleston Union Presbytery." The action complained of by Dr. Dana was, it seems, the exception taken by the Presbytery of Charleston about ten years ago to several of its members continuing indefinitely to supply the pulpits of churches not connected with the Presbytery. Dr. Dana did not say what further steps the Presbytery had taken, if any, to terminate these relations. As a matter of fact, we believe none were undertaken; we doubt whether any were devised. Dr. Dana and his friends seem to have withdrawn when the Synod sustained the Presbytery in its expression of discontent that such relations should be perpetual. The object of the memorial was to ascertain whether the Assembly held that a Presbytery has the right to dissolve "pastoral relations" between its ministers and congregations without the consent or against the consent of either or of both parties. To this, of



course, there was but one reply, and the Assembly in courteous terms made it. The right, they said, is given in the Constitution, but is to be exercised with great caution. From such judicial action the way would be open, of course, for appeal or complaint to the Synod and thence to the Assembly. But, obviously, the question arises, Are such relations to churches beyond our bounds the "*pastoral relations*" contemplated in our Book? In our opinion, they are not. They are not instituted by Presbytery at all, nor can it enter into such congregations as umpire or judge. The *man* only is under Presbyterial oversight. The question, then, is, Whether, in objecting to such relations *ad libitum*, a Presbytery would be violating those rights which are guaranteed to a minister in our Constitution? It not easy to see how the affirmative can be proved, and in case of failure by complainant, the discretionary power of the Court must be allowed. We learn through the press that Dr. Dana was pleased with the tone of the Assembly's answer, and sees in its reference to the Constitution ample reason for preferring an independent position.

#### ARE WOMEN TO PREACH?

This question came up in an overture from the Synod of Texas, and the Assembly on recommendation of the Committee of Bills and Overtures made this reply: "Inasmuch as the public preaching of the gospel is a branch of the ministerial office, to the authorisation of which ordination or licensure is essential; and inasmuch as inspired Scripture, as interpreted by our standards, nowhere in the case of women sanctions such a solemnity, but on the contrary does clearly prohibit it, this Assembly does therefore declare the assumption of this sacred office by women to be opposed to the advancement of true piety and to the promotion of the peace of the Church, and this to such an extent as to make the introduction of women into our pulpits for the purpose of publicly expounding God's word an irregularity not to be tolerated."

After a very lively discussion, which made it evident that the Assembly was of one mind as to the right of a woman to preach publicly and officially, and with a change of *seems* for *does* in the middle of the answer, the Committee's report was adopted.

## THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

The Report on the Tuscaloosa Institute has been sufficiently commented on. The Report from Union Seminary presents features of prosperity in the main. The failure of Virginia to provide for the payment of accrued interest on bonds amounting to \$116,995 causes embarrassment which we must believe to be temporary. The public conscience in that noble commonwealth will not tolerate the sacrifice of public faith. The report of fifty-one students for the scholastic year suggests the statement here that we had in both Seminaries this year seventy-six students. From such copies of the Minutes as are at hand we compile this defective table: In 1875 both Seminaries report 115; in 1876, 99; in 1878, 90; in 1879, 84; in 1880, 76. From this imperfect statement it will be seen how timely the resolution of the Assembly is calling upon the people to lay this matter to heart and pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers.

The Columbia Seminary appears once more as a cause for anxiety to the Assembly. Let us hope that this is the last occasion when the complicated details of such an institution will be proposed to a popular body, which from the nature of the case must be peculiarly unsuited to deal with them. Sir Wm. Hamilton's theory of the government of such institutions has been fully vindicated in our painful experience. Of all our church courts a General Assembly, meeting but once a year for a few days and under a heavy pressure all the time, is the very least adapted to such work. We trust that the Synods will promptly resume their guardianship over the Seminary.

The following is the report of the Board of Directors of Columbia Theological Seminary:

"The past year has been one of anxiety, perplexity, and distress. Our financial embarrassments have been great, and the Angel of Death has entered the ranks of our students and also of the Board. One of the senior class, Mr. John F. Mayne, died in the Seminary last February, the first instance of death there for nineteen years; and the oldest member of the Board, the Rev. John Douglas, has gone from grace to glory. The vacancy caused by his death has been filled in the *interim* by the election of Rev. W. E. Boggs, D. D., of the Synod of Georgia.

"The number of students in attendance during the year has been twenty—  
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six, which is less by three than last year. It is still more discouraging to state that while one year ago the number in the middle and junior classes was twenty-three, now it is only eleven. The students have manifested diligence and proficiency in their studies, and there has been a deeper state of religious feeling and a greater interest in the subject of Foreign Missions among them than for some years past.

"The financial condition has been gloomy. It was found necessary last September (*before* the failure of James Adger & Company) to decrease the salaries of the professors from \$2,500 to \$2,000. The Board first attempted to meet the financial embarrassment by requesting one of the professors, instead of imparting instruction in the Seminary during the past year, to visit churches and individuals in order to solicit funds. But he declined to do so.

"We then made special appeals to the three Synods of South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. They responded liberally, thus enabling us to close the year almost free from increase of debt. But the Synod of South Carolina, from which the greater part of all the help came, coupled their liberal effort with the statement that 'it is the sense of this Synod that, inasmuch as the Seminary at Columbia is the property of the General Assembly, and therefore under its control, the burden of sustaining the same properly devolves upon the *whole* Church; and that while this Synod is willing *in the present emergency* to exert itself to meet the wants of the institution as heretofore for the current year, it cannot see its way clear to undertake, in connexion with the Synods of Georgia and Alabama alone, to bear this burden in the future so long as the Seminary retains its present relations to the General Assembly.'

"The financial condition of the Seminary is not as good as it was last spring, but better than it was last fall. The improvement since last fall results partly from gifts to the Endowment Fund, amounting to about \$3,500, partly from the payments on their indebtedness by James Adger & Company, amounting to \$7,560, and partly by the appreciation of the securities held by the Seminary. These things, however, have not greatly increased the income of the Endowment, owing to a reduction of interest on some of the investments.

"The Board expected to try to continue the exercises of the Seminary during the year 1880-81, though it would have been a hard struggle, requiring a contribution from the churches for the current expenses of \$3,700, for the expected income from the Endowment would be only \$5,100, while the expenses were estimated at \$8,800.

"The unexpected resignation of Rev. Dr. Girardeau, as Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology, completely changed our plans. He having insisted upon the acceptance of his resignation after the Board had earnestly urged upon him to withdraw it, we were compelled to reluctantly accept it, to take effect October 1, 1880.

"This left the Seminary in a dismantled condition, for two of its important chairs are vacant, viz., that of 'Didactic and Polemic Theology,' and that of 'Ecclesiastical History and Church Polity.' These vacancies in the faculty, the decreasing numbers, the insufficient income of the institution, the unpaid indebtedness, the solemnly expressed unwillingness of the large and liberal Synod of South Carolina to give during the coming year as during the past, and other things, made the temporary closing of the Seminary a painful necessity.

"To attempt to carry on the institution in the face of these difficulties would be wrong, and could only result in disaster. Hence with reluctance and in sorrow the Board were compelled to close the Seminary until a professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology could be secured. The election of such professor requires time, so that it may be done only after earnest prayer and careful consideration; for to place in that important chair one unsuited to its duties would be worse than keeping the institution closed. Besides, if a proper man is elected, it is very doubtful about his coming; for how can we hope that such a man will come to a Seminary burdened with so many difficulties, when we cannot offer a sufficient salary, nor even be sure of the prompt payment of the small one which we would offer?

"During the period of suspension, the Rev. Geo. Howe, D. D., who has for nearly fifty years been a professor here, will have charge of the 'buildings, grounds, and library,' with a salary of \$1,500 per annum. During this period the salary of Rev. James Woodrow, D. D., who has been a professor here for over twenty years, and who has been performing the duties of two chairs for the past few years without any extra compensation, will be discontinued. The Rev. W. S. Plumer, D. D., who has been a professor here for over thirteen years, who has long since passed his 'three-score years and ten' and who is nearing his 'four-score years,' was made a professor *emeritus* with a salary of \$1,000 per annum.

"There has been a large and valuable addition to the library by the bequest of the late Rev. John Douglas, who gave to the Seminary his own library, containing 1,372 volumes, and a large number of pamphlets. The whole library now numbers 20,295 volumes, and steps have been taken to put it in the most available condition by binding the pamphlets, by rebinding the worn-out volumes, and by having a catalogue of subjects as well as authors."

This Report was referred to the Committee on Theological Seminaries.

After several days of earnest consideration and full conference with Dr. Plumer and other brethren, the Committee on Theological Seminaries presented its report on the Columbia Seminary, through the Chairman, Dr. J. L. Kirkpatrick, recommending,—

"1. That the Report of the Directors be approved and their action confirmed.

"2. In view of the urgent importance of reopening the Seminary at an early day, we recommend that the General Assembly instruct the Board of Directors to proceed with no more delay than can be avoided to the election of Professors to the vacant chairs, or to such of them as are indispensable to a complete course of theological instruction, and that the Board proceed also with all prudent expedition to set in operation the most efficient means they can employ for raising funds for the current expenses of the Seminary, and for its permanent endowment.

"3. Recognising the unqualified right of the Board of Directors, under the constitution of the Seminary, to elect all its professors, their action being subject only to the veto of the Assembly, your Committee yet recommend to the General Assembly an expression of its earnest desire that the Rev. Dr. J. L. Girardeau should, if possible, be induced to resume his charge of the chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology, for which he has evinced, by years of actual trial, his eminent qualifications, as it respects alike his learning, the soundness of his doctrines, and his aptness to teach. It is confidently believed that his continuance in the Seminary would not only be highly gratifying to his friends and the Church at large, but also contribute greatly to the success of the efforts that may be made for its enlarged usefulness.

"4. In the Report of the Board of Directors, we find the following extract from the Minutes of the Synod of South Carolina, viz.: 'That it is the sense of this Synod that, inasmuch as the Seminary at Columbia is the property of the General Assembly, and therefore under its control, the burden of sustaining the same properly devolves on the whole Church, and that while this Synod is willing *in the present emergency* to exert itself to meet the wants of the institution as heretofore, for the current year, it cannot see the way clear to undertake in connexion with the Synods of Georgia and Alabama alone to bear this burden in the future, so long as the Seminary retains its present relations to the General Assembly.' We construe this declaration as implying a wish on the part of the Synod of South Carolina that the Seminary should be restored to its former relations to the three Synods named. At a meeting of the Alumni, called by a published notice, and held in this city on Tuesday last, as we have been officially informed, a resolution was adopted, with but one dissenting voice out of about thirty concurring, advising the re-transfer of the institution to the above Synods. We recommend that the General Assembly inform those Synods of its readiness to restore the Seminary to their ownership and control whenever they, the Synods above-named, shall indicate their desire to receive it.

"5. The persons named below are nominated to the General Assembly as Directors for three years from this time, viz.: Rev. Messrs.

J. B. Mack, D. D., W. E. Boggs, D. D., Col. J. J. Gresham, and H. Muller, Esq."

Rev. L. B. Johnson made a minority report:

"I desire to enter a dissent to the action of the majority of the Committee on Theological Seminaries in approving the action of the Board of Trustees of Columbia Seminary, by which Rev. W. S. Plumer was retired and made an *emeritus* professor.

"I cannot see that the Board had a constitutional right thus to *translate* Dr. Plumer *without his consent* from an active to an honorary connexion with the Seminary, holding, as I do, that this action of theirs comes properly under Article 5 of the Constitution of the Seminary, and not under Article 11, as is held by the Board."

A letter from Dr. Plumer was read, asking that, as he was elected by the Assembly, and is under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, he be allowed a hearing in this matter.

The report came up for consideration on Saturday, the 29th of May, when Mr. Johnson moved that Dr. Plumer be allowed to address the Assembly. Mr. Clisby moved to amend by inserting a clause giving permission to Dr. Boggs to reply in behalf of the Board. Adopted. On motion, the addresses were limited to one hour each, but upon Dr. Plumer declaring the time insufficient, this limitation was removed, and he proceeded to address the Assembly. We copy from the columns of *The Christian Observer* an outline of his speech:

"DR. PLUMER—I come before you with some disadvantages. Every kind of influence has been used outside to injure me. It has been said that I came into this State to oppose the theology of Dr. Thornwell. By no means; I have been in full accord with him. I deny that I made a promise (as has been asserted) at the Knoxville Assembly, to resign in twelve months. I deny the statement that I was *compelled* to resign my position as professor of *Didactic* Theology at the St. Louis Assembly. But I requested a transfer to the chair of *Pastoral* Theology of my own motion. I refused to make the change in the form of pressure. (At this point he had a letter from Dr. Lefevre read, saying that the change would not have been recommended to the Assembly but for his own urgency. Also from Rev. J. L. Wilson, D. D., also written at the St. Louis Assembly to the same effect. Also one from Rev. W. E. Boggs, D. D., which Dr. Plumer asked Dr. Boggs himself to come forward and read. Also letters from Dr.

Brown, Dr. Bullock, Dr. McIlwaine, and Dr. Hoge, saying that Dr. Plumer has pursued such a disinterested and generous course, and has so endeared himself, that he will never be disturbed in his chair.) Dr. Plumer said that the inference from these letters was that the controversy was ended. I was reading the other day how a curse came from God upon Israel, because Saul had broken faith even with the Gibeonites. That is a warning to us.

"The resolution of the Board, making Dr. Plumer an *emeritus* professor, was then read, at Dr. Plumer's request, and he continued: That resolution is without the slightest authority from either the old or the new constitution. They cannot set me aside without any accusation of unfaithfulness, but merely of age and infirmities. There is an express clause in the constitution protecting me as a professor elected by the Assembly from being transferred to another chair without my consent. I secured the insertion of that clause in the new constitution, and Dr. Woodrow wrote it.

"They have removed me without notice to me, without any expression of commendation. At my election at the Memphis Assembly, I had no notice of my nomination, no intimation of it, and my election was made unanimous. After entering my office, my old church at Pottsville, Pa., wanted to call me back to their pulpit, but the Directors, with a resolution of great confidence (here read by the clerk), objected to my returning to Pottsville. My salary was fixed at \$3,000 a year and a house. In sixteen months there was a deficiency of \$1,000 to me. My colleagues and I agreed to remit it, and I proposed a reduction to \$2,500. A year or two ago I received a letter, asking me to agree to a reduction of all the salaries except Dr. Girardeau's. I agreed, but the others did not. Afterwards all agreed to a general reduction of salary.

"But I am told that I am retired 'because of age.' Why, Gladstone is only six months younger than I, and Von Moltke nine years older. I am satisfied that when a man of active habits ceases from active duties, he is apt to become imbecile, and I do not want to become imbecile. He referred to letters from Dr. Alexander and Dr. Miller, of Princeton, to himself, published in the memoirs of these men, as to the duty of an old man about retiring, and the danger therefrom.

"But they retire me 'because of infirmities.' Infirmities do not disqualify a man from work, and my infirmities have not prevented my travelling 12,500 miles on the work of the Seminary (and at my own charges), and preaching ninety-seven times during the last year. I have met every appointment except five in the

Seminary. I have attended the conferences and corrected the manuscripts of the students, and have written twenty-nine religious tracts during this year.

"I have not asked to be made *emeritus*, and there is no power on earth, not even this Assembly itself, that can do so without my consent.

"In the afternoon he continued: I have endeavored to show that hoary hairs ought to be respected when they are crowned with righteousness and good works. (He called on the clerk to read a eulogistic remark about him from the *North American Review*.) Remarks have been made on the streets that Dr. Plumer is an incubus on the Seminary. I have piles of letters from former students, letters from every student of the Seminary, written when this action of the Directors became known, expressing their conviction that they had learned much from me. I have raised more money and saved more money for that Seminary than I have ever received. My books have lately been translated into the Chinese and the modern Greek, and for the Brazilian work. Brethren, I am making a fool of myself, but you have compelled me; I am *not* a burden to the Seminary. Here is the paper expressing the thanks of the Directors to Dr. Plumer for his assistance to the Seminary.

"Now, here is Dr. Girardeau. What do I think of him? He is a man, a gentleman, a Christian gentleman. And the Directors the other day accepted his resignation in twenty-four hours in the face of the rule that a professor must give six months' notice of an intention to resign.

"Next, there is Dr. Howe. He has been appointed, like Rizpah, to watch over the dead body of the Seminary. And I have a letter here saying that Dr. Howe must soon be laid on the shelf. But when you say to that old man, 'Go up, thou bald head,' something worse than bears will catch you.

"As to Dr. Woodrow, he is thrown over the fence—but I cannot speak for him.

"There is no need to close the Seminary. Not because of funds, for the funds of the Seminary are now \$20,000 better than they were twelve months ago. For want of students? There is a dearth, but it affects Union Seminary also. If we have but four students in the junior class, Union has but eight. The difficulty lies in your refusal to give aid to students for the ministry before they are ready to enter college.

"It has been said that we live like cat and dog at Columbia Seminary. Why, there has not been a jarring word among the professors of the Seminary since it was reorganised.



"And there is strength in the Church. There are now in the Southern Church more churches than there were in the whole United States in 1826; more members and only five less ministers than in that year, in all the land.

"And if you suspend the Seminary, you kill it. In *Græca Minora* there is a chapter on *Scholastikos*. It means a fool, a learned fool. And when his father wrote to know how he was getting along at school, he answered, 'Very well. I am now selling my books and living on the money.' And that is what you are now doing at the Seminary.

"Again, there is no power in the Directors, or anybody else, to close that Seminary. By the constitution the trust is a sacred one to keep the Seminary *open*. Were these funds given to found a Seminary that should be kept closed for a term of years? Were they given to pay an *emeritus* professor who was willing to work? It is cruel!

"Suspend the Seminary, and it is dead. I once saw a man suspended for seventeen minutes; afterwards they galvanised him and made his muscles jerk and jump, but he did not come to life again.

"To close that institution is a fraud. The catalogue calls for bequests. Will you take the money given to train young men for the ministry, and hoard it up idly and uselessly? Close the institution, and in twelve months you will be shingled all over with suits to recover the endowment. One of these would have been begun already but for moral and personal considerations. Close it, and you are only in the beginning of troubles.

"An old sailor on the *Bellerophon* was asked how Napoleon looked. He answered, 'He looks as if he had twelve campaigns in him yet.' I have served you thirteen campaigns and a half in this Seminary, and now I am turned off without one word of thanks, with the expression, 'by reason of age and infirmities.' I do not ask you for money: I ask you to give me back my honor, my life. God bless you all; God bless the Seminary; I pray for you every day."

Dr. Boggs replied, setting forth the views of the Board and the law under which they acted. He began by stating the kind relations between himself and Dr. Plumer's family, whose pastor he had been for some years. His reverence for Dr. Plumer's age and distinguished services to the Church made it trying for him to advocate measures to which Dr. Plumer objects. He then explained briefly the occasion of the letter which Dr. Plumer had

asked him to read. An impression, he said, had been made on the minds of certain eminent brethren, friends of the Seminary, that Dr. Plumer's gifts did not suit the chair of Didactic Theology. They felt that he was injuring the Seminary and wished him to resign it. Brethren now present, he was sure, recalled the intense excitement which pervaded the St. Louis Assembly in 1875 as to this very matter, and what relief was felt when Dr. Plumer announced his purpose to vacate that chair to assume that of Pastoral Theology. Dr. Boggs happened to be present at an interview between Drs. Palmer and Hoge, in which the latter promised to be a mediator, so that a peaceable solution might be attained. Dr. Plumer agreed to concede the point, and there was great joy in the Assembly. The peace of the Church and the honor of religion had been saved. The next day Dr. Plumer approached the speaker and requested him to write the letter to his daughter. "I was happy," said Dr. Boggs, "at our merciful escape from bitter contention. I believed it, that in spite of powerful opposition Dr. Plumer would probably have been able to retain the chair for a while longer, if he had so decided, and I was grateful to him for saving us as he did. I wrote the letter in all sincerity, and am not ashamed of it."

The speaker then alluded to the impression on the minds of some members of the Assembly, that the action of the Board really grew out of past differences; that the whole thing was a programme agreed upon beforehand for the express purpose of getting rid of Dr. Plumer. He took this occasion to affirm solemnly in the presence of the Assembly and of God that there is no ground for this suspicion. There was no plot, no secret understanding of any kind, no letters passing from one to another. All came to the meeting, supposing that the exercises for another year would be continued as a matter of course. All were surprised and perplexed by the sudden resignation of Dr. Girardeau, and our subsequent action in closing the Seminary grew out of the condition in which we were left thereby. The words, "because of old age and infirmities," in that part of our action which pertains to Dr. Plumer, were inserted as an amendment, and the attention of the Board was pointedly called to their sig-

nificance, so that no honorable man could have voted for the resolution unless he really had believed them to be true.

"The question of law has been raised" as to the acceptance of Dr. Girardeau's resignation without requiring him to wait six months. In Section III., Article 9, the constitution does say, "Any Professor intending to resign his office shall give six months' notice of his intention to the Board." The rule falls under the head, "Professors and Faculty," being plainly intended for their government and for the protection of the Board and Seminary against sudden withdrawals. Dr. Girardeau cited this rule and complied with it. He was willing, if the Board required, to remain and teach for the few weeks in September and October, which would make out his six months. But we did not think it best for him to do so, thus disappointing the students by losing him ere they had well entered upon the term. The Board did not consider that it is bound by the six months' rule, but only the Professors. It was not classed among rules pertaining to the Board, which are found in Section II. And as Dr. Girardeau, seeing the embarrassment sure to result from insisting on six months of delay, proposed that we dispense with it, we did so under the general powers conceded to us in Section II., Article 13, which says: "The Board shall further make all rules and regulations, and generally do whatever they deem for the welfare of the Seminary," etc. In so doing, Dr. Boggs said he was reminded that they followed the course of the Assembly of 1874, which accepted without any delay the resignations of Drs. Adger and Wilson.

"The next item is the closing of the Seminary until a suitable man can be found for the chair and the money to maintain him. The same wide law above cited, authorising the Board 'to do generally whatever they deem for the welfare of the Seminary,' seems to cover this act completely. We could hope for no students with the chair of Didactic Theology vacant. We were not prepared to name the man. We could not expect him to come for such salary as we could promise. We could not say even, We will certainly pay you the \$2,000. The Board was cooler, more dispassionate, than Dr. Plumer in deciding what to do."

"The next step is scaling down Dr. Howe's salary to \$1,500 and discontinuing Dr. Woodrow's during the suspension. This action falls under Sec. 2, Art. V., of the Constitution—'All Professors of the Seminary shall be elected by the Board and their salaries fixed by the same . . . provided also that none of the powers given to the Board in this article shall be exercised so as to affect any one who is at the time of the adoption of this Constitution a Professor of the Seminary, except with such Professor's full consent.' Well, sir, we acted under this law in taking away \$500 from Dr. Howe's salary and all of Dr. Woodrow's, but we have their consent to the act. They are here to object, if I misrepresent them. We had important work for Dr. Howe. He had for years been our librarian. We wished him to superintend certain repairs necessary in order to preserve from total decay volumes of great value. We also needed a thorough catalogue of the Library made out by the authors' names as well as by subjects treated of. No one is so well qualified as he to do this work. Besides, we must have some one to take charge of our grounds and buildings. These duties we laid on Dr. Howe and gave him \$500 more. The pay is small for the work. Dr. Plumer considers the \$1,000 given him to be a small annuity. I wish from my heart it were twice or three times as large. But the Seminary is poor and in debt. We give him a fifth of our entire income.

"The next thing is the retirement of Dr. Plumer from active duty *because of age and infirmities*. Dr. Plumer thinks, and the minority report of Mr. Johnston agrees with him, that this action falls under the same Rule, and that inasmuch as he does not consent, the action is therefore null and void as to him. I call attention to the fact that a Professor's consent is only necessary in two contingencies—(1) change in his salary; (2) his translation from one chair to another. If Dr. Plumer's retirement does not fall under one or the other of these heads, his case is not covered by the proviso, his consent is not necessary. I think Brother Johnston fails to understand the terms *Professor Emeritus*. If it were a chair in the Seminary, he would be right, and our act be incomplete without Dr. Plumer's consent. But *Professor*

*Emeritus* is not a chair. It is an honorary title only, and an honorable one too. We did not translate from one chair to another, but removed altogether. We considered ourselves as acting under Art. XI., and not Art. V. The matter was definitely mentioned in the conference of the Board. The exact bearing of Articles V. and XI. was noted. We considered ourselves to be acting under Art. XI.—“The Board of Directors shall have power to remove from his office any Professor who shall be found unfaithful in his trust, or incompetent to the discharge of his duties.” The last clause gave us authority to retire Dr. Plumer. We acted under it. The fact is delicately stated in our Minutes, but with sufficient plainness. Every member of this house understands the language, I imagine—*‘made Professor Emeritus because of age and infirmities’* is just *‘removed because of inefficiency’* mildly put. We had abundant evidence in the examinations of his classes. We really judged them to show his incompetency. Dr. Plumer differs with us in this judgment. We thought the evidence sufficient to justify the conclusion. The older members of the Board had been growing into that conviction for years. He may have the best qualifications as a preacher or a writer of tracts, but we had to decide on his ability to instruct students in theology. I am grieved that Dr. Plumer feels touched in his honor. I have passed sleepless hours in sympathy with him. But we are not to be governed by our sympathies, but by the sacred duty of training preachers of the everlasting gospel. We have acted in kindness. You must decide between us.

“So much for the law of the case. Now as to its expediency and prudence, I can only refer you to the facts recited in the report of the Board. These statements of fact come as their testimony, and their action is their united judgment. Here they are: the chair of Theology vacant; only eleven undergraduates left in the Seminary, and some of them not expected to return; a debt of \$3,000 unpaid; a deficiency of nearly \$4,000, and the chief source of supplying this deficiency (the Synod of South Carolina) expressing unwillingness to continue unless changes be made over which we have no power. Think of all this, and say what else could the Board have done? We do not consider, as Dr. Plumer

does, that we are violating trusts and exposing the endowments. We thought, and now think, that we are protecting the endowments. To incur debt is to make them liable in law. We have been sustained in every point save one by your Committee, with Dr. Kirkpatrick at their head, experienced as he is in educational matters. As to one point, one of your Committee only differs with us in judgment. If you agree with your Committee and with us, you will sustain; but if you are clear that we are wrong, say so."

Mr. Collins—I move the adoption of the majority report and the approval of the report of the Board of Directors.

Rev. L. B. Johnston made a brief explanation.

Mr. W. S. Primrose offered the following amendment:

"That in view of the action of the Board of Directors, reported to this General Assembly, in making the Rev. W. S. Plumer, D. D., a Professor *Emeritus*, the General Assembly takes this opportunity of expressing to this venerable and respected brother their cordial and hearty appreciation of his past services in relation to his connexion with Columbia Theological Seminary, and hereby convey to him their respect, veneration, and kind Christian sentiments of regard, with the prayer that God's richest blessings may abide with him now and always."

It was carried, and the report as amended was adopted.

On Monday, Rev. Mr. Bryson entered his dissent to the action of the Assembly declaring Dr. Plumer incapacitated by age and infirmity to give adequate instruction in his chair, when the same action closes the Seminary for an indefinite period. Rev. Mr. Briggs and Rev. Mr. Milner united in the dissent.

Rev. L. B. Johnston asked that the minority report be entered upon the Minutes as his protest against this action. These dissents were entered without answer.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE DIACONATE.

Dr. Girardeau stated that the Committee was not ready to report, and asked that it might be continued, which was granted.

#### THE REVISED DIRECTORY OF WORSHIP.

Dr. Adger reported that the Committee, not being able to meet all together, had nevertheless accomplished their work to a

considerable extent by correspondence. Dr. Armstrong and himself had elaborated together a complete Revision, and he had sent a copy of the same to every member of the Committee and obtained their views in detail. Then Dr. Armstrong, with Dr. Palmer, Dr. Woodrow, and himself, met in Charleston during the early days of the Assembly and had carefully revised the Revision. It was now ready to be submitted to the Assembly, but he suggested that it might be difficult for a single hasty reading of it to put the Assembly adequately into possession of its contents, and that it might be well for the body to accept the report and order the Revision published at the Assembly's expense, one copy to be sent to each minister and two to the Stated Clerk of each Presbytery, with a view to the thorough examination and criticism of the work in all our Presbyteries, the results of such criticism to be reported to the next Assembly.

The report was made the special order for ten o'clock the next day.

On that occasion, after debate, the following substitute for the Committee's suggestion was adopted, on motion of Mr. Collins of Ebenezer Presbytery:

*"Resolved, That the report of the Committee on the Revision of the Directory of Worship be accepted and recommitted to the same Committee, with permission to have a sufficient number of copies printed at the expense of the General Assembly, and a copy of the same be forwarded to each minister of this Church and two copies to each Session; also two copies to each Stated Clerk of Presbyteries, with a request that the same be critically examined by each Presbytery, and the result of such examination and criticism be forwarded to the Chairman of said Committee on Revision for their use in making a report to the next General Assembly."*

ASSEMBLY REPORTER.

The Rev. Mr. Wolfe resigned his office. On motion of Dr. Woodrow, the Rev. W. P. Jacobs of Enoree Presbytery was appointed to fill the office, at a salary of one hundred dollars and his travelling expenses. It is no extravagance to say that this office is of like importance with that of the Stated and Permanent Clerks of the Assembly, and we hope Mr. Jacobs will accept and may live long to discharge its high duties. If it is necessary to

have so many commissioners assemble at such great expense, it is surely desirable to put into trustworthy records what was said to their Assembly.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE EVANGELIST'S OFFICE.

This Committee, consisting of Drs. J. A. Lefevre, J. L. Wilson, Thomas E. Peck, and Jno. B. Adger reported, through Dr. Adger, that they had made progress in the work committed to them, but asked for further time, and that Drs. Palmer, Woodrow, and Stuart Robinson be added to their number, Dr. Palmer to be chairman of the Committee in the room of Dr. Lefevre, whose health is feeble. The report was accepted and the request granted.

#### APPEAL OF REV. J. EVANS WHITE.

This was an appeal against the Synod of South Carolina for dismissing an appeal which Mr. White brought before it against Bethel Presbytery as *out of order*. As the case came before the Assembly, Mr. White assigned only one ground for his appeal to them, namely, that Synod had assigned no specific reason for not entertaining his appeal. The Assembly at Charleston by their vote of 71 to 2 not to sustain Mr. White's appeal, seemed to think that Synod gave a sufficiently specific reason for not entertaining his appeal when they declared it was *out of order*.

The Assembly was regularly constituted as a court for judicial business by the usual warning from the Moderator which the Book requires. Mr. White was then heard at length. He said the only question was a very simple one: Has an appellant a right to be heard? He asked for a hearing before the courts of the Church—only that and nothing more. All he wanted was for the Assembly to order the Synod to reverse its action and hear his case upon its merits.

Dr. Mack, one of the Committee appointed by the Synod to defend it before the Assembly's bar, explained that Mr. White had appealed to the Synod against Bethel Presbytery, not from any judgment it had rendered or from any cause it had decided



(as must always form the ground of appeal according to our Book), but because at a certain meeting it had just *done nothing*. A *pro re nata* meeting was called by two ministers and two elders to reopen Mr. White's case, which had been decided at a previous meeting *when he made no appeal*. At this *pro re nata* meeting neither of the parties calling the meeting appeared. No motion to reopen the case was made. Nothing was done. Then Mr. White gave notice that he would appeal to Synod. This was the appeal which Synod decided to be *out of order*.

Dr. Adger (the other member of Synod's Committee) said the Presbyterian Church had always held to the strict construction of law. The appellant in this case has forfeited all his rights under the law by not making his appeal at the right time and in the right way. He was sure the Assembly would not go out of its way to reopen this old difficulty which has harassed the Church for years. Every attempt to restore Mr. White by extra-constitutional methods must do evil. You have no right to require the Synod of South Carolina to take up this case again. There is just one thing for Mr. White to do, and that is by proper steps on his part to settle this matter for himself with his Presbytery.

Mr. White was heard again in reply to the Committee, and then the Assembly voted not to sustain his appeal.

#### A MORE EXPLICIT DELIVERANCE ON DANCING.

On the overture from the Presbytery of Athens, asking the Assembly to make a more full and explicit deliverance on the subject of dancing and worldly amusements, the Committee on Bills and Overtures made the following report:

This Assembly declines attempting any such deliverance—

1st. Because the deliverances of former Assemblies on this subject are as full and specific as the nature of the case allows.

2d. Because the evils referred to are to be met, not by resort to deliverances of the Assembly, but rather by care on the part of the courts of original jurisdiction.

The report of the Committee was adopted.

## CONCLUSION.

We have thus noticed in review the chief matters of interest in the proceedings of the Assembly at Charleston, excepting one, which was, indeed, of especial importance. We have chosen to say nothing on that subject, knowing it was the purpose of one of the Editors of this journal to present a full report and review of that able discussion. And so we make an end.

## ARTICLE VIII.

## DELIVERANCES OF CHURCH COURTS.

We have been at pains to secure for permanent record abstracts of the chief speeches in our last Assembly touching its *in thesi* deliverances, from the speakers themselves. The feeble health of one of these preventing him from complying with our request for a long period, has necessarily delayed the appearance of this number of our work.

The question came up on an overture from the Synod of South Carolina as follows:

The Synod of South Carolina hereby overtures the General Assembly, respectfully praying that it will consider and repeal, or at least seriously modify, so much of the deliverance of the last Assembly, at Louisville, in relation to Worldly Amusements, as declares that all deliverances of the General Assembly, and by necessary implication, of the other courts of the Church, which are not made by them in a strictly judicial capacity, but are deliverances *in thesi*, can be considered as only didactic, advisory, and monitory. (See Printed Minutes, 1879, p. 24.) The Synod admits—

1. That the General Assembly cannot add to the Constitution or make any constitutional rule.
2. That it has no power to commence process against individuals.
3. That in the exercise of the constitutional power of review and control, it can reach *directly* only the court next below, and the other courts only *mediately* through it.
4. That it is precluded from deliverances *in thesi* which may prejudice a judicial case likely to come before it.