

General Assembly  
ADDRESSES

DELIVERED AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

Presbyterian Church,

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# HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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THAT great clock of Time, which measures the march of man and the progress of Christ's kingdom, has struck the completion of another century in the history of Presbyterianism. This was not, by any means, its first century. There had been seventeen centuries before this—stretching back to the time when the Apostle Paul rocked its cradle, bearing this inscription,—“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the *Presbytery*.” Paul and his fellow-apostles gave it its two distinctive features—the parity of the ministry and the office of the Eldership. There was the *ovum* of a General Assembly in that convocation of Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, which sent out its deliverances to the Gentile brethren of Antioch and Syria. Five centuries later, Presbyterianism spake in the majestic voice of Augustine, who formulated and defended our chief doctrines of Grace. Later on, appear those two massive pillars in the Presbyterian structure, JOHN CALVIN and JOHN KNOX, the “Jachin” and “Boaz” whose joint names signify “He will establish it in strength.” In Switzerland and in Scotland Presbyterianism was the symbol and the synonym of Freedom. If it had not been for Scottish Covenanters, the tyrannic Charles the I might never have come to the scaffold; the heroic William III might never have come to the throne. Presbyterianism gave to Christendom the Westminster Confession, that unrivaled symbol of faith which emphasizes the sovereignty of Jehovah in the heavens, and the kingship of Jesus Christ in His Church. Its pulpits have echoed to the eloquence of Chalmers, the prince of ministers, and of Alexander Duff, the prince of missionaries. Of its polity the great President Edwards testified that “the Presbyterian *way* has ever appeared to me the most agreeable to the Word of God and to the reason and the nature of things.” It has shed its instructive and influential side-lights upon all sister denominations; and to-day the greatest of living preachers—Mr. Spurgeon—is constrained to govern the greatest of Christian congregations by a numerous Board of Elders. And so,

my dear brethren, has hard-headed, long-winded, stout-hearted Presbyterianism marched down through the centuries into these times "with cunning in its ten fingers and strength in its right arm."

Into the details of our ecclesiastical history during the period of our country's colonization, I have no time to enter now. There is a mist of uncertainty still hanging over the infancy of Presbyterianism in the American colonies. The Protestants from Holland, who settled New York, held many of the distinguishing features of our form of Church polity. There was also a Puritan type of Presbyterianism which planted a few churches on Long Island and in East Jersey, between 1641 and 1670. Rev. Matthew Hill (the correspondent of Richard Baxter) and Rev. Richard Denton were pioneers in these missionary churches. The Rev. William Traill, from the Irish Presbytery of Laggan, a friend of Francis Makemie, preached on the eastern shores of the Chesapeake Bay as early as 1683; but we have no definite record of any churches organized by him. Through the mist that overhangs that border-land, we can dimly discern two or three feeble churches sprouting into existence about the year of grace, 1684, on the banks of the Pocomoke river, in Eastern Maryland. One of the two first-born churches is at *Snow Hill* and the other at *Rehoboth*—a prophetic name which signifies "room," and those early pioneers might well say "now the Lord hath made *room* for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Through the fog we also discern the historic figure of the missionary-pastor FRANCIS MAKEMIE. He was born near Rathmelton, County Donegal, on the storm-swept north-western coast of Ireland; he has Scottish blood in his veins; was educated in a Scottish university on the Clyde, and his effectual calling was as a missionary of Jesus Christ to the wilds of America. A heroic figure is this stalwart Scotch-Irish Makemie, not afraid of wild beasts nor of the tyrannical bigots who imprisoned him in New York "as a strolling preacher" twenty years afterwards. He goes over to Britain to beat up volunteer missionaries for the colonies, and returns in time to take part in organizing the first Presbytery about the close of the year 1705. It bore the name of "Philadelphia;" and was probably organized in this goodly city. The seven ministers who composed it were Francis Makemie, George Macnish, John Hampton, Samuel Davis, John Wilson, Jedediah Andrews and Nathanael Taylor. Ten years later the first Synod was organized, consisting of three Presbyteries, with twenty-three ministers and about thirty churches.

In 1729 the Synod solemnly declare their agreement with the Westminster Confession and Catechism as "being in all

the essential articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine." That doctrinal basis, thus established, has stood like adamant for one hundred and sixty years; and it will continue to stand until it upholds many a millennial church in the times of the latter-day glory.

That a vigorous controversy should have arisen in the Synod was just what might have been expected. They would not have been strong-willed and warm-blooded Scotch-Irishmen if they had not come into collisions. And, as is frequently the case when Presbyterians quarrel, both sides were right! The "Old Side" were right in their intense loyalty to our symbols of faith, and in their demand for an educated ministry wherever it was possible. The "New Side"—which embraced the majority in number, and the preponderance in aggressive zeal—were right in maintaining that the great revivals under Whitefield and Tennent were from heaven and not from men. The one side were obstinately conservative; the other side were obstinately progressive; but neither side could long do without the other.

Signals of reunion were exchanged; and after a rehearsal of the same negotiations and the same ceremonies which were to be repeated one hundred years afterwards, the separated Synods became one. The reunited Synod contained ninety-four ministers—three-fourths of whom had worn the "New Side" badge.

The man whose portly commanding figure filled the Moderator's chair on that 29th of May, 1758, was the man whose tongue of flame had done most to cleave the denomination asunder; but his heart of flame had helped to melt and mould it again together. Gilbert Tennent was the most powerful member of the most powerful family in the Presbyterian Church of that era. His terrific and soul-searching style of preaching shook Boston as with a cyclone; it gave him the leadership of the revivals which then swept over the land. His Irish father, the celebrated William Tennent, brought him over from Ireland in his childhood, and took him to that rustic spot on the banks of the Neshaminy creek which has become classic in the history of our Church. There our Elisha planted our first school of the prophets. There William Tennent and his four sons—all to be faithful ministers of Christ—piled those rude logs which were to be as historic as the rails split by the rustic Abraham Lincoln in Illinois. Verily Tennent "buildded better than he knew." That log-college, twenty feet square and chinked with mud, contained in its rude husk the seeds of Princeton College, and Theological Seminary, and all the great training-schools of our Faith on the continent. To-day let us uncover our heads reverently

in honor of the Tennents; there is no nobler name in the early annals of American Presbyterianism.

Another man was in that Reunion Synod whose eloquence reached the high-water mark of pulpit oratory in that century. Samuel Davies, with Welsh iron in his blood, and the sweetness of Christ Jesus in his soul, stirred the heart of Virginia for the gospel of salvation as Patrick Henry stirred it afterwards for civil independence. Let us take honest pride in the fact that the first American preacher who conquered the admiration of the mother country was the Presbyterian Davies—a farmer's son and a pupil of the Fagg's Manor training-school. What he might have become if his life had reached its full ripeness we can only conjecture; but at the early age of thirty-seven he was laid beside his great predecessor Edwards in the hallowed mould of Princeton Cemetery.

One other figure in that first century of our Church looms so large that we cannot overlook him if we would. When Davies visited Scotland in 1754 he encountered a keen, satirical pamphlet aimed at the "Moderates," and ascribed to a certain young "Mr. Weatherspoon." The "canny" young man was a lineal descendant of John Knox, with his great ancestor's holy abhorrence of both priestcraft and tyranny. It was a sagacious act in Princeton College to choose him for its President; it "blazed the road" for another illustrious Scotch President in our day, whose white head is honored with loving reverence throughout the Republic. Witherspoon's two visits to Philadelphia made him immortal. The first one was to the Synod in 1775, when he aroused them to issue that pastoral letter for independence, which had in it the ring of a trumpet. His second visit was to a seat in the Continental Congress in July, 1776. He got there just in time to tell Congress that "the country was not only *ripe* for freedom, but would soon be *rotten* for the want of it." He got there in time to write the only name of a Presbyterian parson under the name of Hancock on the Declaration of Independence. Before he inscribed it, he uttered the manly words, "Although these gray hairs must descend soon into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they should descend thither by the hand of the public executioner than desert, at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country." The name of John Witherspoon is one of the brightest jewels in our coronal; it is the only name of a minister of Jesus Christ that is graven on the pedestal of a civic statue on the American soil.

During the protracted Revolutionary struggle our Church made little progress. The hand that wielded the sword was busier than the hand that wielded the trowel. Presbyterians, almost to a man, were rebels. Many of our ministers went

into the patriot-army as chaplains; some of them run their convictions into bullet-moulds and fired at the foe with Calvinistic precision. Some, like the heroic Caldwell, sealed their devotion with their blood. The end of the war saw church edifices desecrated or desolated, congregations scattered, the ministry impoverished, the National Synod so shattered that only fifteen ministers and four elders answered to the roll-call! The machinery of the Church of Christ was in a condition well nigh as chaotic as the civil machinery of the State. But out of this chaos there slowly emerged a twofold organic construction. Two sets of builders were busied at the same time, and completed their work at about the same time. It is a striking fact that the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America had a simultaneous birth. On the 17th of September, 1787, the framers of our Federal Constitution completed that instrument which the greatest of living men—Mr. Gladstone—has pronounced to be “the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.” Its adoption was consummated in 1788.

The first steps toward the formation of the Constitution of the American Presbyterian Church were taken by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia in May, 1785. The committee then appointed made a report the next year. Another committee was appointed, which met in the autumn of 1786 and digested a draft which was sent down to the Presbyteries for examination. The Presbyteries returned their opinions and suggestions during the year following; and on the 16th of May, 1788, the Synod adopted and ratified the “Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.” Let us render our hearty thanks to Almighty God for the wisdom vouchsafed to our fathers in constructing these twain Constitutions which were born together in this beautiful city, and which have dwelt together as the “*tutamen et decus*” of our civil and ecclesiastical organisms.

With the adoption of the Presbyterian Constitution came the organization of the first General Assembly—in May, 1788. It embraced four Synods, seventeen Presbyteries, 180 ministers and 419 congregations. During the next year the Assembly held its first annual meeting in this city—which has always been the peculiar *home* of Presbyterianism. There are gray-headed Philadelphians who still remember the plain brick edifice which stood at the corner of Arch and Third streets; its pulpit was on one side of the audience-room, after the old Scotch fashion. The church which worshiped there had been founded by Whitfield; its earliest minister was Gilbert Tennent; and you will pardon a bit of personal pride when I say

that a venerated kinsman, of my own name, was the pastor of that church for many years. In that simple austere edifice the first Assembly held its sessions. It might have been accommodated in a modern Pullman car; for it contained only thirty-four commissioners (twenty-three ministers and eleven ruling elders). Traveling in those times was slow and costly. The swiftest stage-wagons occupied two whole days in the transit from New York to Philadelphia. Good Moses Hoge—afterwards the President of “Hampden Sydney”—must have spent a round week in his horseback journey from the Presbytery of Lexington, in the heart of Virginia.

Of the proceedings of that first Assembly we have but brief records. Dr. John Witherspoon, in broad Scotch vernacular, delivered the opening discourse from the words, “I (Paul) have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” A psalm or two, in the musical version of Dr. Isaac Watts, were sung; and Dr. John Rodgers, adorned with his large white wig, ascended the Moderator’s chair. Rodgers was a native of Boston, first awakened under Whitfield, received his Doctorate of Divinity from the University of Edinburgh on the recommendation of Benjamin Franklin, and was the patriarch of Presbyterianism in the city of New York. Dr. George Duffield, of Philadelphia, the ancestor of a noble line of ministers, was chosen Stated Clerk. One of the earliest acts of the Assembly was the adoption of a congratulatory address to President Washington, whom they honor for “his amiable example of piety towards God, benevolence towards men, and his pure and virtuous patriotism.” The reply of *Pater Patriæ* was a model of modesty and dignity.

The sessions of that General Assembly occupied only five days. Their time was spent in consolidating their new national organization—in adopting measures to print and circulate faithful impressions of the Holy Scriptures, in delicate diplomacy towards some Presbyterians who had a strong Congregationalist leaning, in organizing Church extension and Home Mission work, and in welding together the new brotherhood of seventeen Presbyteries in the double tie of love for each other and of loyalty to their exalted Lord. And so our morning-stars sang together; and if they could have foreseen the splendid future that awaited them those sons of God would have shouted for joy!

American Presbyterianism may well be proud of its parentage. “Show me the blood and I will show you the man.” There was some admixture of the Huguenot in our ecclesiastical ancestry—small but precious. In the veins of many of our founders flowed some of the best blood of Scotland—the blood of the Covenanters and Cameronians, the blood of the



heroes who fought beside Douglass and Cargill in the Upper Clydesdale, and of the saints who were fed on the heavenly manna of Renwick and of Rutherford. From the Principality of Wales came the ancestors of Jonathan Edwards, Samuel Davies and other men of renown. The North of Ireland contributed the stalwarts who peopled the mountains of Pennsylvania and the valleys of Virginia—men of pluck and muscle who hewed down the trees which built their frontier churches, men who coveted no fine linen for their tables so that they had enough of corn bread and potatoes, and yet imbued with such a noble thirst for learning that they became the founders of many of our foremost schools and colleges. Puritan Non-conformity gave to us some of our ablest leaders, such as Dickinson, Green and Rodgers. The *physique* of those pioneers was as staunch as their theology. Many of them preached their half-century sermons to the same flock; some of them, at four score, could mount their horses for a ten-miles ride to their preaching-stations, or a thirty-miles ride to the Presbytery. Their discourses abounded in strong Bible doctrine, preached "without defalcation or discount." Ofttimes the solid Calvinistic metal was heated to an anthracite glow and melted the most rugged of their auditors. The libraries of those early apostles of Presbyterianism were to be *weighed* rather than counted; they contained a few volumes of savory meat, like Matthew Poole and Matthew Henry, Calvin and Turretine. A mighty Concordance, rebound by his own hands with sole-leather, is one of the relics of one of those Revolutionary parsons. As theological seminaries of the present style were not yet born, a large number of those early ministers were educated privately in the parsonages of older men who were skilled in divinity. Others were trained in the school at Fagg's Manor or in Tennent's Log-college; but the largest number brought with them their diplomas from the divinity-schools of Great Britain and Ireland.

In 1746 the College of New Jersey was chartered. Its infancy was spent in Elizabethtown, and ten years later it was removed to Princeton, whose name it has made classic around the globe. This greatest of our colleges owes its origin to the heart and brain of the greatest of our early Presbyterians, *Jonathan Dickinson*, who was born in Massachusetts exactly two hundred years ago. It was fitting that a man who was almost the peer of Jonathan Edwards in intellect should have been the first in the line of Princeton's College-Presidents; and, although he held the office but one year, he left upon the institution the impress of his power and his piety. Sixty-six years afterwards, in that same favored town, the first of our theological seminaries was planted. And on the 12th of August,

1812, that sunny-souled patriarch who combined the wisdom of a seer with the simplicity of a child, *Dr. Archibald Alexander*, was inducted into its chair of theology. Since that time colleges have multiplied, and Presbyterian schools of divinity have been established at Auburn, Allegheny, Columbia, Prince Edward, New York, Cincinnati, Danville, Chicago, Oxford, Dubuque, Newark, Charlotte and San Francisco. But on those foundation-stones laid by Dickinson and by Alexander have arisen those two magnificent strongholds of Christian culture and orthodox faith, on whose sacred walls the smile of God gleams like the light of the morning. "Stand fast, Crag Ellachie!" Oh, Princeton, Princeton! in the name of thy ten thousand grateful sons, "if we forget thee, may our right hands forget their cunning and may our tongues cleave to the roof of our mouths!"

As we review the history of the Presbyterian Church during the century just closed, certain prominent head-lands stand out so conspicuously as to challenge our attention. One of those was the "Great Revival" which began in 1800, and which swept like a prodigious gale over all the regions west of the Alleghanies, and extending southward into the Carolinas and Georgia. Nothing quite like it was ever witnessed before, or has ever been witnessed since, upon this continent. The peculiar characteristics of this spiritual awakening were—the introduction of camp-meetings, which were immense in numbers and intense in excitement; and, secondly, the prevalence of extraordinary bodily exercises, under which hundreds of men and women were prostrated to the ground in convulsions of agony or of ecstatic joy. The narrative of those scenes reads now almost like one of the weird visions of the Apocalypse. The same spiritual whirlwind which filled the air with seeming chaff, winnowed also a vast amount of precious wheat, which seeded the valley of the Mississippi, and saved the new West from the floods of prevailing infidelity. It saved the West for Jesus Christ.

The supply of preachers was inadequate for the emergency, especially in Kentucky, where the revival reached its acme of power. A large number of rough and ready lay-exhorters offered their services. Some of them were licensed, in opposition to the wishes and authority of a "Synodical Commission." Had Presbyterianism been as sagacious as Methodism in such matters, it might have harnessed the fiery enthusiasm of those frontiers-men into its chariot. Grant that those John Baptists in linsey-woolsey and leathern girdles were lacking in diplomas, and rather low in their Calvinism, and wild in some of their methods; yet Presbyterianism needed just such a corps of skirmishers and sharp-shooters for its frontier cam-

paign. A little more patient diplomacy of wisdom and love might have averted the Cumberland Schism of 1810. If a blunder is to be measured by the magnitude of its results, then the blunder which severed from us a Church which now contains 119 Presbyteries, 2540 congregations and 148,000 members, was simply *colossal*. They need us as much as we need them. And in the good time coming, when all our divisions are healed, that "Army of the Cumberland" will be welcomed back into the mighty host which bears the old blue banner across the continent.

In addition to the influence of the Great Revival, a powerful impetus was given to the Presbyterian Church by the adoption of the "Plan of Union" in 1802. Ten years before this, Dr. Ashbel Green had proposed a plan of intercourse with the Congregationalist Association of New England by correspondence and interchange of delegates. The "Plan of Union" originated at Schenectady in the warm hearts of Dr. John Blair Smith, of Virginia (then acting as President of Union College), and of young Eliphalet Nott, who was soon to be his celebrated successor. Under the beneficent influence of this "Plan," Presbyterians and Congregationalists joined hands in planting those new churches which soon made the wilderness of Western New York and Ohio to blossom as the rose. In spite of its serious defects this arrangement was productive of rich blessings through a whole generation—until it went to pieces in the controversial gale which sundered the Presbyterian Church in 1837. Brethren! Our *Union*-days with each other and with our neighbors have always been our best days, but over the days of unhappy controversies and of schisms, we would love to walk backward, and cast the charitable mantle of oblivion.

It would be pleasant, if the limits of our time allowed, to sketch the splendid progress which Presbyterianism made during the first third of this nineteenth century. During those golden years her roots were spread out to the waters, and the dews of heaven lay upon her widening branches. In 1802 the General Assembly appointed a committee to direct Home Missionary work, which was enlarged into a Board of Missions in 1816. The Temperance Reform, which had been pioneered by the scientific Dr. Rush and the eloquent Dr. Lyman Beecher, was heartily endorsed by the Assembly of 1812. Our pulpits were enjoined to preach against both the drinking usages and the dram shops. About that time strong protests were made by the Assembly against the traffic in negro slaves, and against neglecting the education of slaves. The fashionable practice of duelling was branded as murder. During those thirty-five years of progress, societies for the

education of ministers were organized; the "American Board of Foreign Missions" was born, with nearly all our churches as its auxiliaries. Our leading theological seminaries were founded. Wide-spread revivals followed the fervid labors of such ministers as Gallaber and Ross, Baker and James Hall, Finney and Nettleton.

It would be profitable also to halt and study some of the representative men of that era, the men who "had understanding of the times, and knew what Israel ought to do." Among those type-men was that Baxter-like spirit, James Patterson, who could conduct forty religious meetings in a week among the poor of Philadelphia, and whose ministry here was a perpetual Pentecost. His Southern counterpart in zeal was James Hall, a Scotch-Irish pupil of Witherspoon, a Herculean Boanerges in stature, whose thrilling eloquence and itinerant labors through the Carolinas renewed the memories of Whitefield. Another majestic giant in *physique* and pulpit power, was Edward Dorr Griffin, whose voice had the compass of an orchestra, and whose great discourse on "God exalted and man humbled by the Gospel" touched the high-water mark of sacred oratory. Before us rise the serene faces of Archibald Alexander and James Richards, the two wonderfully wise masters in Israel, whose voices have yet a thousand echoes in the ministers whom they trained. Beside them stand the saintly Nevins, the logical Skinner, the lovable John Holt Rice, the brilliant Larned, the busy-handed Cornelius, the impetuous Breckenridge, and the calm, scholarly Albert Barnes. To the closing years of that era belongs that fearless son of thunder, Charles G. Finney, the weight of whose spear was like a weaver's beam. During that progressive era there was a grand development of the lay-element in the eldership, in the councils and in the practical work of the churches. A noble army of consecrated laymen arose which found its consummate type of beauty in such characters as Harlan Page and William E. Dodge. That prosperous third of a century carried the Presbyterian Church to the dimensions of 21 Synods, 116 Presbyteries, 2500 congregations and 233,000 communicants.

But at the close of this halcyon period of prosperity, portentous clouds began to loom above the horizon. The ecclesiastical barometer betokened "foul weather." The ominous words "*Old School*" and "*New School*" began to be heard; and the ghosts of 1745, "clad in complete steel," began to "revisit the glimpses of the moon." The conflict was partly theological, and partly ecclesiastical. In theology it was High Calvinism *versus* Low Calvinism; both schools professing their loyalty to the Westminster standards. In ecclesi-

asties it was Denominational Boards *versus* Voluntary Societies with Congregationalist partnerships. For five long years the Euroclydon of controversy raged. For five years every session of the General Assembly was a storm-centre. During those five years the sun on the Presbyterian dial went backward, and the membership of the Church *decreased* by thirteen thousand members! At length disruption became inevitable; and the overstrained chain-cable snapped, hurling far and wide its shattered links which scarred many a venerable white head, and drew blood from many a wounded heart!

In May, 1838, *two* General Assemblies, very evenly balanced as to numbers, confronted each other in this city. Both bore the same name, both acted under the same Constitution and Confession of Faith. It has been often affirmed that beneath all the controversy about theology and Church polity, the secret cause of the disruption was negro slavery. But the sufficient answer to this assertion is that the cleavage did not follow any geographical line. Some of the most vehement Old School men were the Scotch-Irish Anti-Slavery men of Western Pennsylvania. Some of the most ardent partisans of the New School branch were slave-holders in Virginia, South Carolina and Alabama. In the successive Old School Assemblies the hot coal was handled very gingerly. In the New School Assemblies the topic was freely discussed; and at the termination of a protracted debate, in 1846, the uniquely eloquent Moderator, Dr. Samuel H. Cox, exclaimed, "Well, we have capped Vesuvius once more!" But in 1857 the cap blew off, and the Southern churches withdrew, and organized under the name of the "United Synod of the Presbyterian Church."

The Old School Assembly held together for four years longer. But their turn came in 1861, when the historic cannon-shot of Fort Sumpter, after piercing the Federal Union, *ricocheted* into the Old School organization and cleft it asunder. Within twenty-four years a single national Presbyterian body had been divided into *four bodies*; two of them in the North, and two of them in the South!

The deep bleeding wound created by the civil war has been most mercifully and beneficently healed. And the breach made by that conflict in the ranks of Presbyterianism will yet, in God's good time, *be healed also*, just as surely as an All-wise God reigns in heaven, and the spirit of brotherly love lives and throbs in the great Presbyterian heart. It is said that a fifty-pound iron weight, if flung into the foaming verge of Niagara, will not sink. It is swept on by the gigantic current as if it were a pine-shaving. Even so in the bright coming time, when all the present soluble difficulties shall have been *wisely* and *righteously* solved, it will be found that the

most stolid obstacles to reunion will be swept away in that mighty torrent of LOVE that pours down from the throne of Him who loved us all and gave Himself for us.

But let us revert from prophecy to history. After the disruption in 1838, the "New" and "Old" School wings of the Presbyterian Church pursued their respective ways—not in a spirit of mutual hostility, but of generous rivalry. For with the organic separation controversy ceased. Like two Christian neighbors closely related by blood, and dwelling in different houses, they exchanged calls, and whenever they met, they inquired kindly after each other's welfare. The separation lasted just one-third of a century, until, in the nature of things, it could not last any longer. As disruption had been inevitable, so reunion became still more inevitable. Each side had conquered the other. The Old School, who were the especial representatives of Orthodoxy and Order, had established the wisdom of Ecclesiastical Boards and of conducting the affairs of the Church without incongruous alliances. The New School, who were the especial representatives of Liberty and Progress, had vindicated the right of fraternal toleration within the bounds of loyalty to the common standards of Faith and Church government. Each side needed the other. Why not *consolidate* with the same Westminster bed-rock under their feet, and the same blue banner over their heads?

The first official movement towards reunion was made at St. Louis, in May, 1866. The two Assemblies were meeting there simultaneously, and both appointed influential committees to confer in regard to the practicability of reunion and to suggest measures for its accomplishment. Dr. Beatty was the chairman of the "Old School" committee; Dr. William Adams was the chairman of the "New." In 1868 the Joint Committee presented their plan of consolidation to the two Assemblies, and it was the subject of an overture sent down to the Presbyteries. In May, 1869, the two Assemblies convened in New York, joined in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and, with only nine dissenting voices out of 560 enrolled members, voted their hearty approval of the Joint Committee's Plan of Reunion! At the adjourned sessions of the Assemblies in the city of Pittsburgh, on the morning of November 12, 1869, the noble deed was nobly consummated. Amid shouts of joy and embraces of love, the two wings of the Presbyterian host marched together into the same temple of the living God, *and became ONE*.

That was the unparalleled love-feast in our history. The song of praise was in our hearts and we sang; the tears of joy were in our hearts and we wept. The voices of the eloquent William Adams and of the sagacious George

W. Musgrave—who had been the heaven-guided leaders of Reunion—blended together in that magnificent doxology which made the rafters roar! Nor did the holy ecstasies of the hour evaporate in empty breath; for it was decreed on the spot to raise five millions of dollars for the treasury of the Lord, as a special thank-offering for the consummation of our glorious nuptials. It actually amounted to \$7,883,000!

Pittsburgh witnessed the imposing ceremony of wedlock. But it was fitting that in this "City of Brotherly Love," where the first Assembly of 1789 had convened, the great reunited Assembly of 1870 should hold its sessions. Under the soft vernal skies that General Assembly came together, six hundred and forty strong, and representing fifty-one Synods, 259 Presbyteries, 4526 churches and 446,560 communicant members. The session of this memorable Assembly continued until the 4th of June. During that time the Synods were reconstructed, the Boards were consolidated, and the respective machineries of the former dualities were harmoniously blended into one. That beneficent reunion was unmistakably guided of God. It has been cemented by brotherly affection. It secured much *worth having*; it sacrificed nothing *worth keeping*. It was the blessed foretoken of that coming day when all the churches that bear the Presbyterian name shall compose a single glorious solidarity, on whose walls may be inscribed the grand old Scotch version of the 125th Psalm:

"Who sticketh to God in stable trust,  
As Zion's mount, he stands full just,  
Which moveth no whit, nor yet doth reel,  
But standeth forever as stiff as steel!"

As we look back over the century now closing, we discover much to excite devout thanksgiving. When the first General Assembly was organized in 1788 there were only 419 churches and not more than 20,000 members. Home Missions were in their feeble infancy. The Foreign Mission enterprise was not yet born. According to last year's statistics we now number 6436 churches and about 700,000 communicants. Our Board of Home Missions has 1465 missionaries upon a field that stretches from the Atlantic to the Indian settlements in far-away Alaska. Our Board of Foreign Missions maintains a force of 1543 men and women, embracing ministers, teachers, physicians and Bible-readers. Presbyterianism leads the van in China and feeds the brilliant electric-burner that flames over the Orient from the coast of Syria. A prodigious impetus has been given to missionary enterprise both at home and abroad by the enlistment of woman's busy hands and loving heart. While the Presbyterian Church has never ordained women to her public ministry of the Word, yet she has not been unmindful of the holy activities of womanhood in the New

Testament Churches, from the hour when Mary Magdalene was the first commissioned bearer of the good tidings of her Lord's resurrection to His disciples. So effective are our Women's Boards that they now furnish one-third of all the moneys contributed to the foreign field.

Within the last hundred years the Presbyterian Church has had a remarkable increase. In 1788 (as we have seen) there were only seventeen Presbyteries, 177 ministers, 419 churches and not over 20,000 communicants. To-day, if we combine the columns of both wings, Northern and Southern, there are 270 Presbyteries, 6770 ministers, 8672 churches, and 851,000 communicants. These figures may well provoke our gratitude, not unmingled with humiliation. By the blessing of God our growth has been very great; it would have been vastly greater if it had not been retarded by several adverse causes. The first of these has been the lamentably inadequate supply of ministers to organize and to "man" churches among the rapidly increasing new settlements. A second was an equally inadequate supply of funds to rear churches and to promote Domestic Missions. Only within the last dozen years has our Church begun to learn and to practice the grand principle of systematic beneficence. Wesleyan Methodism owed much of its rapid growth to John Wesley's favorite watchword, "Justification, sanctification and a penny a day!" If Presbyterianism increases her drafts on Christ's promises, she must increase her drafts on her own cheque books.

A third cause that has retarded our growth has been the painfully frequent controversies and divisions. An enormous amount of force that ought to have been spent in enlargement has been wasted in needless internal conflicts. Brethren! Over the morning dawn which ushers in a *new* century let us bend, like a Polar arch, this glorious motto, *Union in Christ for a World WITHOUT Christ!*

Alongside of sister denominations let us continue to labor on in true fraternity; but let us waste no time in idle flirtations with any self-styled "historic Episcopate." The men in yonder General Assembly who serve Paul's Lord and who preach Paul's doctrines are so far forth Paul's legitimate successors.

A retrospect of the century just gone with its account to heaven furnishes abundant cause for devout thanksgiving. We may well be thankful that the Presbyterian Church has so largely escaped the prevailing *malaria* of doubt and of dissatisfaction with the ancient faith delivered to the saints. From the old bed-rock we have taken no "new departures." It was the honest boast of the greatest of our theologians, Dr. Charles Hodge, that Presbyterianism has made no new discoveries in Bible theology. Her telescopes sweep no fields beyond the limits of Divine Revelation. This sound conservatism



never has been—it never must be stolid stagnation. The wise man's eyes are in the front of his head; he is ever discerning new lines of progress on old lines of truth.

Within the last hundred years our beloved Church has carved her influence in broad and beneficent characters on the history of the Republic. Her iron has entered into the nation's blood. During the arduous struggle for independence, the name *Presbyterian* almost included the name of *Patriot*. Her stiffly vertebrated theology has imparted backbone to the popular conscience. Presbyterianism has always stood for the sovereignty of Jehovah, the authority of conscience and the majesty of law. Her literature has enriched all libraries; her scholarship has linked the names of Edward Robinson, Schaff, Addison Alexander and many others with the sacred scholarship of Europe. Her money contributions towards the circulation of the Holy Scriptures and kindred objects of Christian charity have exceeded those of any other denomination. Her pulpits have exalted the sin-atonng Lamb of God; her Sabbath-schools have taught millions of infant voices to lisp His blessed Name; her pastors have fed nine successive generations with the bread of life, and led three millions of converts to the Master's table. Her record is on high in the multitudes of precious souls whom her teachings have guided to glory. Thank God! the *past* of American Presbyterianism is secure. As to the future, we may adopt the quaint words of Martin Luther, when he said, "We tell our Lord God plainly that if He will have His Church He must look after it Himself. We cannot sustain it; and if we could, we should be the proudest asses under heaven."

Fathers and brethren! Let us rejoice that we have witnessed this happy commemoration. As we listen to the stroke of that bell which sounds the exit of a century in our annals, let us answer it back with a heartfelt "*Hallelujah!*" The spirits of the mighty dead, whose achievements we have rehearsed, seem to hover around us, and to join in our songs of thanksgiving. For amidst the entrancing splendors of Paradise, they cannot have lost the memories of the Church to which they consecrated their earthly lives—or have lost their interest in its welfare. Nor shall we be forgetful of our spiritual lineage if, by the grace of God, we reach that "general assembly of the first-born" upon the glassy sea of crystal and of gold. Heaven destroys no identity, breaks no ties, dissolves no kinships. While we shall adore that ineffable and all-glorious NAME that is above every name, we shall not forget or disown that other dear old name by which we are called to-day; and as we meet and greet each other in that assembly, we shall not be ashamed to say, "*I was, and I am, a PRESBYTERIAN!*"