

A COLLECTION
OF THE
ACTS, DELIVERANCES, AND TESTIMONIES
OF THE
Supreme Judicatory
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FROM ITS ORIGIN IN AMERICA TO THE PRESENT TIME.

WITH
NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

EXPLANATORY AND HISTORICAL:

CONSTITUTING A COMPLETE ILLUSTRATION OF HER POLITY, FAITH, AND HISTORY.

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the whole world about us, that we judged this hint sufficient at present, to declare our serious and deliberate judgment in the matter; and as we profess ourselves to be resolvedly against principles and practice of both anarchy and schism, so we hope that God, whom we desire to serve and obey, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose Ministers we are, will both direct and enable us to conduct ourselves in these trying times, so as our consciences shall not reproach us as long as we live. Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered, and let them that hate him fly before him, but let the righteous be glad, yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. And may the Spirit of life and comfort revive and comfort this poor swooning and fainting Church, quicken her to spiritual life, and restore her to the exercise of true charity, peace and order.

Although we can freely, and from the bottom of our hearts, justify the divine proceedings against us, in suffering us to fall into these confusions for our sins, and particularly for the great decay of the life and power of godliness among all ranks, both Ministers and people, yet we think it to be our present duty to bear testimony against these prevailing disorders, judging that to give way to the breaking down the hedge of discipline and government from about Christ's vineyard, is far from being the proper method of causing his tender plants to grow in grace and fruitfulness.

As it is our duty in our station, without delay, to set about a reformation of the evils whereby we have provoked God against ourselves, so we judge the strict observation of his laws of government and order, and not the breaking of them, to be one necessary mean and method of this necessary and much to be desired reformation. And we doubt not, but when our God sees us duly humbled and penitent for our sins, he will yet return to us in mercy, and cause us to flourish in spiritual life, love, unity, and order, though perhaps we may not live to see it, yet this testimony that we now bear, may be of some good use to our children yet unborn, when God shall arise and have mercy on Zion.

Ministers—Robert Cross, John Thomson, Francis Alison, Robert Cathcart, Richard Zanchy, John Elder, John Craig, Samuel Caven, Samuel Thomson, Adam Boyd, James Martin, Robert Jamison.

Elders—Robert Porter, Robert McKnight, William McCulloch, John McEwen, Robert Rowland, Robert Craig, James Kerr, Alexander McKnight."

§ 15. *The New Brunswick party withdraw.*

"Upon this it was canvassed by the former protesting brethren, whether they or we were to be looked upon as the Synod. We maintained that they had no right to sit whether they were the major or minor number. Then they motioned that we should examine this point, and that the major number was the Synod. They were found to be the minor party, and upon this they withdrew. After this the Synod proceeded to business."—*Minutes*, 1741, p. 158.

§ 16. *The Synod re-adopts the Westminster Standards.*

"*Overtured*, That every member of this Synod, whether Minister or Elder, do sincerely and heartily receive, own, acknowledge, or subscribe, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as the confession of his faith, and the Directory, as far as circumstances will allow and admit in this infant Church, for the rule of Church order. *Ordered*, That every Session do oblige their Elders at their admission to do the same. This was readily approved, *nemine contradicente*."—*Minutes*, 1741, p. 159.

CHAPTER III.

NEGOTIATIONS OF THE NEW YORK BRETHREN.

§ 17. *Measures proposed.*

"Upon a motion made by the Moderator,* that our Synod should hold a conference with the Brunswick brethren that they rejected last year, in order to accommodate the difference and make up that unhappy breach, it

* Mr. Dickinson.

is agreed, that Messrs. Dickinson, Pemberton, Pierson, Cross, Andrews, Thomson, Cathcart, David Evans, and Alison, meet with these brethren, and try all methods consistent with gospel truth, to prepare the way for healing the said breach. Agreed that the conference be held at the usual place of the Synod's meeting, at three in the afternoon, and that the Synod adjourn till nine o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Ordered, That the Synod be resolved into an *interloquitur* of Ministers and Elders, to manage the conference with the ejected brethren, who are allowed if they see cause, to bring with them the Ministers that they ordained, that were never allowed to be Ministers of this Synod, and all their respective Elders.

"After a great deal of time spent to no purpose, the interloquitur found that all attempts for a coalition were vain and fruitless, and therefore it is agreed to adjourn till three o'clock, afternoon. Concluded with prayer."

"The Synod entered upon the affair complained of by the ejected members, and the question put for the managing said affair was, who should be the judges of the case? The ejected members would submit the business to the consideration of none as judges, but such as had not signed the protest last year. And the protesting brethren answered to the point: That they, with the members that had adhered to them, after ejecting said members, were the Synod, and acted as such in the rejection, and in so doing they only cast out such members as they judged had rendered themselves unworthy of membership, by openly maintaining and practising things subversive of their constitution, and therefore would not be called to account by absent members, or by any judicature on earth, but were willing to give the reasons of their conduct to their absent brethren, and to the public to consider or review it.—*Minutes*, 1742, p. 162.

§ 18. *Protest of the New York members.*

[After renewed ineffectual efforts by way of interloquitur,]

"A protest was given in by some members of our Synod, which is as follows, viz.

"To the Reverend Synod now sitting in Philadelphia: We the subscribers, in our own and in the name of all that shall see meet to join with us, look upon ourselves obliged in the most public manner, to declare our opinions with respect to the division made in our Synod the last year, by a protest that was delivered in by several of our members.

"First. We declare against the excluding the Presbytery of New Brunswick and their adherents, from the communion of the Synod by a protest, without giving them a previous trial, as an illegal and unprecedented procedure, contrary to the rules of the gospel and subversive of our excellent constitution.

"Secondly. We declare and protest against the conduct of our brethren, the last year's protestors, in refusing to have the legality of their said protest tried by the present Synod.

"Thirdly. We therefore declare and protest, that these members of the New Brunswick Presbytery, and their adherents, that were excluded by the last year's protest, are to be owned and esteemed as members of this Synod, until they are excluded by a regular and impartial process against them, according to the methods prescribed in sacred Scripture, and practised by the Churches of the Presbyterian persuasion.

"Fourthly. We protest against all passages in any of the pamphlets which have been lately published in these parts, which seem to reflect upon the work of divine power and grace, which has been carrying on in so wonderful a manner in many of our Congregations, and declare to all the world, that

we look upon it to be the indispensable duty of all our Ministers to encourage that glorious work with their most faithful and diligent endeavours. And in like manner, we protest and declare against all divisive and irregular methods and practises, by which the peace and good order of our Churches have been broken in upon.

“This is what our duty to God, and our regard to the peace and prosperity of his Church oblige us to protest and declare, and we desire it may be recorded in the Minutes of the Synod *in perpetuam rei memoriam*.

JONATHAN DICKINSON,	AZARIAH HORTON,
JOHN PIERSON,	NATHANIEL HAZARD,
EBENEZER PEMBERTON,	DAVID WHITEHEAD,
SIMON HORTON,	SILAS LEONARD,
DANIEL ELMER,	TIMOTHY WHITEHEAD.

Philadelphia, May 29, 1742.—*Minutes 1742, p. 163.*

§ 19. *Abortive negotiations.*

“An overture was brought by the Presbytery of New York, which was ordered to be read, and was as followeth, viz.

“*At a Presbytery convened at Newark, May 15, 1743.*

“An overture from the Presbytery of New York, to be proposed to the Synod of Philadelphia, at their next meeting.

“The Presbytery taking into consideration the melancholy divisions that have of late obtained in the Synod, to the great dishonour of God, the scandal of our holy profession, the prejudice of our religious interests, and the too great encouragement of those dangerous errors and delusions which are making such a progress amongst us; think it our duty to contribute all we can towards healing these breaches, and promoting the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, and do therefore propose:

“1. That inasmuch as the Presbytery cannot see how the excluding the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and those other Ministers that join with them by a protestation, without a particular hearing, and deliberate vote of the Synod, formed upon such a distinct hearing of the case, can be agreeable to the laws of Christ, or any rules of discipline that have ever been known among any churches of our profession: We therefore propose that the said protestation be withdrawn, and those members peaceably take their place in the Synod as formerly.

“2. Whereas it is of greatest necessity that the education of our candidates for the ministry be well regulated, and that our former difference upon that subject be healed, we propose that all such, who for the future shall be privately educated with a design for improvement in the ministry of the gospel, shall submit to the former agreement of the Synod in that case, or else sent to one of the colleges in New England, and accept of such a station there as they are found qualified for, and that they continue there at least one year, and obtain their degree of bachelor of arts; and in case there should be any pious and promising youths that are privately educated for the ministry, who cannot well bear the charge of continuing so long at the college, they shall, upon the commendation of their respective Presbyteries, and the approbation of the Synod, or commission of the Synod, have such allowances from the Synod for their support at the college, as the Synod or their commission shall think proper, and so much of the income of the fund as is sufficient, shall be appropriated to that purpose.

“3. Whereas there have been differences among us with respect to itinerant preaching, with the consequences of it, we propose that there be an united agreement of the Synod, that all our pulpits be open to those Ministers that are in our communion, and we unanimously resolve to invite each

other to preach in our respective parishes as occasion offers. And for any Minister to refuse another Minister the use of his pulpit when regularly applied to, and to continue in that refusal from time to time, shall be looked upon as an unbrotherly practice, tending to division and separation among us. Provided always, that the Minister refusing his pulpit as aforesaid, has not such reason for his conduct as shall be approved by the Presbytery, or Synod, or commission of the Synod; and that there may be no schism or confusion maintained in our Congregations, it be proposed that all our Ministers shall be obliged, that they will not for the future promote or encourage any divisions or separations, neither by setting up separate meetings in any of our Congregations, nor by any methods whatsoever endeavouring to alienate the affections of the people from their Minister; but that every one of us shall do what we can to assist one another, and strengthen each other's hands in the work of the Lord; and every contravention of this article shall be looked upon as just matter of censure either by Presbytery or Synod.

"4. It is also proposed that, if any of our Ministers either really have, or suppose they have, just matter of complaint against any of their brethren in the ministry within our bounds, with respect either to his doctrine, manner of preaching, diligence in his discharge of the more public or private parts of his ministerial duties, or with respect to his conduct or conversation, such Minister shall first, in a kind, tender, and affectionate manner, particularly make known the matter of his complaint to such of his brethren in a private conference; and if these endeavours fail of desired success, he shall put into his hands a written copy of his complaints, with a citation to answer them before his Presbytery, or before the Synod, or commission of the Synod, as the complainant shall think fit.

"5. It is also proposed that all former matters of difference and debate in the Synod, be now entirely buried in oblivion, and that each Minister of the Synod do from this time treat one another with the same intimate love, kindness, and respect, as if such differences had never been. This article not being to be understood as excluding any of our Ministers from reasoning either publicly or privately in a brotherly, or a Christian manner, against any point of doctrine which they suppose erroneous or dangerous.

"6. The Presbytery considering the absolute necessity of union and good agreement in a religious society, since a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, do earnestly pray, that this or some other plan of accommodation be come into at this meeting of the Synod. But if our hopes in that matter should prove abortive, and no methods can be obtained, it is proposed that this Synod do unitedly agree that another Synod be erected, by the name of the Synod of New York, and that any of our members shall have liberty to join themselves to which of the two Synods they shall think fit; and in order to our communion one with another, and to consult the general interest of religion in these parts, it is proposed that there be two correspondents sent yearly from each Synod to the other.

EBENEZER PEMBERTON, *Moderator.*"

—*Minutes*, 1743, p. 166.

§ 20.

"Some remarks upon the above overture were read; and after some consideration, it was put to vote, whether this overture was to be accepted as a plan of accommodation or not, and it was unanimously voted in the negative.

"A paper was upon this given in by Mr. Jonathan Dickinson, in his own name, and in the names of Messrs. Ebenezer Pemberton, John Pierson, and Aaron Burr, having previously declared that they complain of no