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ART. I.—*Tholuck's View of the Right Way of Preaching.\**

ALTHOUGH it is true that of late the churches are here and there somewhat better filled than formerly, especially where zealous preachers proclaim the Word, yet in many places we find them more and more deserted. The services of Sunday afternoon, and of the week day have been given up for want of hearers. Of entire classes, such as public officers, military and professional men, there is often seen only a single individual, like some relic of antiquity in the old cathedrals.

In numerous cities and villages, church attendance is almost wholly confined to the middle and lower classes. And even among these, many think it sufficient if they do not forbid the attendance of their wives and children. Unless there is a change, it will soon be the case in some sections of the country, that in our places of worship we shall find, as indeed on Sunday afternoons we now frequently do, only women and children, as was the case during the second century in the temples of Rome.

\* This article is a translation, by an accomplished American lady, of *Counsels to the modern German Preacher*, being Dr. Tholuck's Preface to his second series of Sermons.

ART. VII.—*The Delegation to the Southern General Assembly.*

VERY early in the recent session of the General Assembly Dr. Adams moved the following resolutions, and advocated their adoption in a few remarks breathing the warmest Christian love toward all parties concerned. They were adopted at once, cordially and unanimously, by the Assembly. As the proceedings and results thus far consequent on this action are of great historical and ecclesiastical significance, and pregnant with momentous future consequences, we have concluded to gather up into a distinct article the more important documents involved, and the few comments we propose to make upon them, both for convenience of future reference and the better comprehension of their import. We begin with the original resolutions of our Assembly:—

“*Whereas*, This General Assembly, believing that the interests of the kingdom of our Lord throughout our entire country will be greatly promoted by healing all unnecessary divisions; and

“*Whereas*, This General Assembly desires the speedy establishment of cordial fraternal relations with the body known as the ‘Southern Presbyterian Church,’ upon terms of mutual confidence, respect, and Christian honor and love; and

“*Whereas*, We believe that the terms of re-union between the two branches of the Presbyterian Church at the North, now so happily consummated, present an auspicious opportunity for the adjustment of such relations; therefore be it

“*Resolved*, 1. That a committee of five ministers and four elders be appointed by this Assembly to confer with a similar committee, if it shall be appointed by the Assembly now in session in the city of Louisville, in respect to opening a friendly correspondence between the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches, and that the result of such conference be reported to the General Assembly of 1871.

“*Resolved*, 2. That with a view to the furtherance of the object contemplated in the appointment of said committee, this Assembly hereby reaffirms the ‘Concurrent Declaration’ of the two Assemblies which met in the city of New York last year, viz. :—

“‘That no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies shall be of any authority in the re-united body, except in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon.’

“*Resolved*, 3. That one minister and one elder of this committee, appointed by this Assembly, be designated as delegates to convey to the Assembly now in session at Louisville a copy of these resolutions, with our Christian salutation.”

Pursuant to these resolutions, the following gentlemen were appointed this committee: W. Adams, D. D., Chancellor H. W. Green, Charles C. Beatty, D. D., William E. Dodge, P. H. Fowler, D. D.; James Brown, H. J. Van Dyck, D. D., Governor D. Haines, J. C. Backus, D. D.

Drs. H. J. Van Dyck, J. C. Backus, and Hon. William E. Dodge were appointed a sub-committee to proceed forthwith to Louisville and communicate these proceedings to the Assembly in session there. This mission they immediately executed. They telegraphed their coming in advance to the Louisville Assembly. On their arrival they were received with a courtesy and dignity, and with extensive manifestations of warmth from individuals, which indicated a cordial welcome. They were called by the Moderator upon the stage, and their words of Christian love and tenderness were heard with attention and eagerness by the Assembly, and called forth a fraternal response from the Moderator. The whole subject was then referred to the committee on Foreign Correspondence. This committee soon made a report which was adopted by a vote of some five-sixths of the body as its formal and official answer to the peaceful and conciliatory overture of our Assembly. This report was drafted by Dr. B. M. Pahner, of New Orleans. A single member offered a minority report proposing the appointment of the committee requested without the impracticable conditions and offensive charges contained in the paper actually sent to our Assembly as a response to its overture. This paper is in the words following:—

“The Committee on Foreign Correspondence, to whom were referred the overture for re-union from the Old School General Assembly North, of 1869, at its sessions in the city of New York; and also the proposition from the United Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church, now sitting in Philadelphia, conveyed to us by a special delegation, respectfully report:—

“That the former of these documents is virtually superseded by the latter; because the body by whom it was adopted has since been merged into the United Assembly, from which emanates a new and fresh proposal reflecting the views of the larger constituency. To this proposition, then, ‘that a committee of five ministers and four elders be appointed by this Assembly to confer with a similar committee of their Assembly, in respect to opening a friendly correspondence between the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Church’—your committee recommend the following answer to be returned:—

“Whatever obstructions may exist in the way of cordial intercourse between the two bodies above named, are entirely of a public nature, and involve grave and fundamental principles. The Southern Presbyterian Church can confidently appeal to all the acts and declarations of all their Assemblies, that no attitude of aggression or hostility has been, or is now, assumed by it toward the Northern church. And this General Assembly distinctly avows (as it has always believed and declared) that no grievances experienced by us, however real, would justify us in acts of aggression or a spirit of malice or retaliation against any branch of Christ's visible kingdom. We are prepared, therefore, in advance of all discussion, to exercise toward the General Assembly North and the churches represented therein, such amity as fidelity to our principles could, under any possible circumstances, permit. Under this view the appointment of a committee of conference might seem wholly unnecessary; but, in order to exhibit before the Christian world the spirit of conciliation and kindness to the last degree, this Assembly agrees to appoint a committee of conference to meet a similar committee already appointed by the Northern Assembly, with instructions to the same that the difficulties which lie in the way of cordial correspondence between the two bodies must be distinctly met and removed, and which may be comprehensively stated in the following particulars:—

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

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

"3. Some of the members of our own body were, but a short time since, violently and unconstitutionally expelled from the communion of our branch of the now United Northern Assembly, under ecclesiastical charges which, if true, render them utterly infamous before the church and the world. It is to the last degree unsatisfactory to construe this offensive legislation obsolete by the mere fusion of that body with another, or through the operation of a faint declaration which was not intended, originally, to cover this case. This is no mere 'rule' or 'precedent,' but a solemn sentence of outlawry against what is now an important and constituent part of our own body. Every principle of honor and of good faith compels us to say that an unequivocal repudiation of that interpretation of the law under which these men were condemned must be a condition precedent to any official correspondence on our part.

"4. It is well known that similar injurious accusations were preferred against the whole Southern Presbyterian Church, with which the ear of the whole world has been filled. Extending, as these charges do, to heresy and blasphemy, they cannot be quietly ignored by an indirection of any sort. If true, we are not worthy of the 'confidence, respect, Christian honor, and love' which are tendered to us in this overture. If untrue, 'Christian honor and love,' manliness and truth, require them to be openly and squarely withdrawn. So long as they remain upon record they are an impassable barrier to official intercourse."

After this document had been laid before our Assembly, Dr. Adams submitted the following paper from the committee appointed to confer with the Southern church:—

*"Resolutions in regard to Southern Assembly.*

"Whereas, this General Assembly, at an early period of its sessions declared its desire to establish cordial fraternal relations with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, commonly known as the Southern Assembly, upon the basis of Christian honor, confidence, and love; and with a view to the attainment of this end appointed a committee of five ministers and four elders to confer with a similar committee, if it should be appointed by the Assembly then in session at Louisville, 'in relation to the amicable settlement of all existing difficulties, and the opening of a friendly correspondence between the Northern and Southern churches,' and for the furtherance of the objects contemplated in the appointment of said committee, and with a view to remove the obstacles which might prevent the acceptance of our proposals by our Southern brethren, reaffirmed the concurrent declaration of the two Assemblies which met in New York last year, to the effect that 'no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both the bodies shall be of any authority in the re-united body, except so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon;' and as a further pledge of our sincerity in this movement sent a copy of our resolutions together with our Christian salutation to the Assembly at Louisville, by the hands of delegates chosen for that purpose;

And whereas the Southern Assembly, while receiving our delegates with marked courtesy, and formally complying with our proposition for the appointment of a committee of conference, has nevertheless accompanied that appointment with declarations and conditions which we cannot consistently accept,

because they involve a virtual pre-judgment of the very difficulties concerning which we invited the conference; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That the further consideration of the subject be postponed and the committee be discharged. At the same time we cannot forbear to express our profound regret that a measure designed, and, as we believe, eminently fitted, to promote the establishment of peace and the advancement of our Redeemer’s kingdom in every part of our country, has apparently failed to accomplish its object. We earnestly hope that the negotiations thus suspended may soon be resumed under happier auspices, and hereby declare our readiness to renew our proposals for a friendly correspondence whenever our Southern brethren shall signify their readiness to accept in the form and spirit in which it has been offered.”

This report, after some discussion, chiefly consisting of a speech by Rev. Dr. Henry J. Van Dyck, was adopted.

The action of our own Assembly speaks for itself, and is its own vindication before all Christendom. In the kindly but considerate and cautious original proposition to the Southern Assembly, in the character of the committee deputed to bear it, in the acceptable presentation of the matter to that body by this committee, and in the final disposal of the subject responsive to the reply given to its proposal, our body has made an admirable exhibition of Christian charity, magnanimity, and forbearance, nor has it uttered a word to close or obstruct the way to future negotiations, whenever the Southern church shall be willing to open them on terms of equality. They have refrained, as they could so well afford to do, from every word of self-defence or retaliatory accusation, which might embitter old antagonisms, or cause fresh exasperations. The following extract from Dr. Van Dyck’s speech, every word of which is a credit to him (and for a permanent record of the whole of which we wish we had room), is quite conclusive, and we think will command the assent not only of the whole Northern church, but of the whole Christian world, outside of our former slave States:—

“And now, sir, I wish to express my profound mortification and regret at the temporary and apparent failure of this effort to make peace. It has failed. The terms and conditions which you have just heard read are manifestly impracticable. How can your committee meet their committee with this terrible indictment flung across the threshold of our conference? If it were all true, there is no propriety in putting it there. The things complained of and decided in the paper adopted by the Southern Assembly, are among the very questions concerning which we proffered the conference. When men enter into negotiations for the settlement of existing difficulties, it is not for either party to prejudice the case

according to their convictions, and demand that their decisions shall be conditions precedent to the settlement.

But, sir, I cannot stop here. I think it due to you, to this Assembly, to that Assembly, and to myself, to say the imputation laid there is not true in the form in which it is laid. (Applause.) Mr. Moderator, there are some at least in this Assembly who firmly believe that during the heat of passions excited under civil war, the Assembly with which I was formerly connected did pass acts and make deliverances inconsistent with the headship of Christ and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church. Our votes, our protests, are on record on that subject, and I am not here to take back one word in regard to them; but, sir, that this Assembly, that the Christian men and women with whom God has cast my lot, have taken the crown from the head of Jesus Christ, and chained his bride to Cæsar's chariot wheels; that these two Assemblies, by their re-union, have totally cast aside all their former testimonies for the doctrines of grace; that this reunited Assembly stands necessarily upon an allowed latitude in the interpretation of the standards of the church, such as must ultimately result in bringing in all forms of doctrinal error—this I strenuously deny. (Applause.) And I say frankly, affectionately, and sadly to you—and, if it shall reach their ears, to our Southern brethren—if they wait for us to stultify ourselves by admitting such things as these before we enter into negotiations, we shall all have to wait for the settlement of these difficulties until we get to the General Assembly of the first-born in heaven." (Applause.)

We quite agree, too, with Dr. Beatty, Dr. Van Dyck, and others, who hold that this labor of love will not be lost, and that, as "kind words never die," so, in due time, the kindly attitude of our church will be most appreciated where now it is least reciprocated.

We cannot dismiss the subject without expressing our amazement, as well as grief, at the charges brought and the humiliating demands made by our Southern brethren, as conditions, *sine qua non*, of conference through committees. The deliverances or declarations of any Assembly not ratified by the Presbyteries are no part of the constitution of the church. They are simply the recorded opinions of that Assembly. The idea of undertaking to erase from the records of past Assemblies all that is offensive to us or to others with whom we may have friendly relations is impracticable and absurd. Have our Southern brethren, claiming to be "the sole surviving heirs of the failing testimonies" of our church, expunged or abrogated the testimony of 1818 on the subject of slavery, which affirms that it "creates a paradox in the moral system," and that "the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another is a gross violation of the most precious

and sacred rights of human nature, utterly inconsistent with the law of God?"

Moreover, was not every pretext for such a plea removed by the express and emphatic assertion of our Assembly that no "rule or precedent," such as the special action to which our brethren object is now of force? With what desperate and infatuated ingenuity do they try to neutralize this, and to embarrass the removal of what they esteem barriers to renewed fellowship? But who are they that stigmatize us as having "taken the crown from the head of Jesus Christ and chained his bride to Cæsar's chariot wheels," and, under the lead and by the pen of Dr. Palmer, charge us with a "sad betrayal of the cause and kingdom of our common Lord and Head," and summon us "to place the crown once more upon the head of Jesus, as the alone King of Zion?" Is not their leader the same Dr. Palmer whose great sermon in advocacy of secession for the conservation and expansion of slavery, more than any one immediate exciting cause, "fired the Southern heart" for that fatal plunge which precipitated the country into a war that exterminated slavery, drowning it in seas of blood? What of the Synod of South Carolina bestowing its benediction upon the legislature of that State in its initiation of secession? What of the repeated declarations of sympathy with the Confederate Government and armies by this same Southern Assembly that now hurls its denunciations at us as having "disowned the crown and kingdom of our Lord," and disdains to "hold official correspondence with the Northern church unless the Saviour is reinstated in the full acknowledgment of his kingship?"\* Do they think it enough to say of all this,—

"No ingenuity of sophistry can transmute into political dogmas the scant allusions to the historical reality of a great struggle then pending, or the thankful recognition, in the middle of a paragraph, of the unanimity with which an invaded people rose to the defence of their hearthstones and the graves of their dead; or the pastoral counsels addressed to the members and youth of our own churches, passing through the temptations and perils of the camp and the field; or the half-hour spent in prayer for a land bleeding under the iron heel of war; or

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\* See Pastoral Letter of the Southern Church, in defence of their response to our deputation, written by Dr. B. M. Palmer.

even the incidental declaration in a narrative to stand by an institution of the country, a traditional inheritance from our fathers. Even though, from the ambiguity of human language, these chance references may not have been always discreetly expressed, the most that a just criticism could pronounce is that they are inconsistent with the judicially pronounced principle upon which the Southern Assembly entered upon its troubled career. And when exaggerated to their largest proportions by all the prejudices of bitter partisanship, they dwindle into motes and specks by the side of those elaborate and colossal deliverances, repeated each year through formal committees, and exalted into solemn testimonials co-ordinate with the doctrines of religion and of faith, which disfigure the legislation of both the Northern Assemblies through successive years.”\*

How dare they affirm that the war votes of our Assemblies were made “co-ordinate with the doctrines of religion and faith?”

But still more astounding is the charge that the union of the two Presbyterian bodies “involves a total surrender of all the great testimonies of the church for the fundamental doctrines of grace,” and “must come at length to embrace nearly all shades of doctrinal belief!” We have nothing to say in regard to the doctrinal basis of the united church which we did not say a year ago, and have no room now to repeat. This we deem a sufficient refutation of all such charges as the foregoing. We now only add to these the *argumentum ad hominem*: whoever else might venture such a charge, the Southern church cannot, without tabling the like charge against itself, for it has done the same thing. Some years ago it coalesced with the New School Synod South upon the doctrinal basis of the standards pure and simple, receiving all ministers and churches of that Synod to the precise standing they had anterior to the union. “Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man! whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”—Rom. ii. 1. This is so palpable that it was emphatically objected to this part of the report in the Southern Assembly, in the debate preceding its adoption. The venerable Dr. F. A. Ross, of Huntsville, Alabama, in whose church the Assembly is to meet next year, said, and as conversant with the facts from intimate personal knowledge:—

\* Ibid.

"The second point I would notice is, that an objection to the consideration of the question of correspondence is that the Old School North and the New School North have united. But the Old School South and the New School South have done the same thing. Dr. Barnes is the front of New Schoolism; still I believe he would have agreed to the basis of union determined upon in Lynchburg in 1863. That arrangement has not changed the preaching of any one. Every member of the United Synod has the right to preach just as he preached before; every member of the Old School has the right to preach just as he did before. Where is the difference between the union of the two branches in the North and those in the South? In both cases there was some preliminary discussion as to terms, but finally in both cases they united on the basis of the standards pure and simple. Why, then, should we object to corresponding with them on the ground that they have effected just such a union as we had done before?"

"I am sorry to use the words Old School and New School in this body. We are *not* the Old School Assembly; we are neither Old School nor New School, but *the* Presbyterian Church in the United States. It has been said that the members of the United Synod were Old School men. I mentioned one, a leader among them. He was further from the views of many here than even Albert Barnes."

Dr. Rice said:—

"We must do no act that will for a moment ruffle the calmness and peace resting upon us. It is for this reason, sir, that I object to that report of the committee which speaks of the union of the Old and New Schools of the North as one reason why we cannot hold intercourse with them because we are the only heirs of the truths which have fallen to the ground. You know very well, Mr. Moderator, that I am an Old School man; that I was one of the very last to consent to the union of our church in the Synod which was consummated in 1864. Now, having agreed to that union, and these New School brethren having come among us we are called upon to maintain the doctrines of God's house, and we are bound to stand by those brethren and regard them as integral portions of our church. And therefore it is not right for us to say we object to holding intercourse with the Northern Assembly because they received the New School. It is true that there is a wide difference between the two positions; but we have accepted these brethren as a part of ourselves, and I trust that you will do nothing that will make it appear that we are not one, for we are one."

How can all this be gainsaid? And what had Dr. Palmer to say in reply? We extract from the *Christian Inquirer and Free Commonwealth*, of June, from which we have copied all our extracts from this debate:—

"Dr. Palmer then stated that he was very much impressed with Dr. Hopkins' remark, that Dr. Lyon had assumed that all this opposition to a correspondence with the Northern church proceeds merely from hatred. This idea he combated, and then proceeded to notice Dr. Ross's remarks about union of the churches

in the North and those in the South. He stated that much more care had been taken to secure orthodoxy in the Southern church. There had been no diplomacy in their coming together. There is no jar or discord between them. It never had occurred to him that there was a shade of difference doctrinally between them."

And is this all the justification he can make out for the difference he puts between the Southern and Northern churches, assuming for the former the function of guardian and conservator of orthodoxy, and the prerogative of denouncing the latter as surrendering her testimonies to the faith once delivered to the saints? Allowing the utmost force to the considerations above adduced by him, they only touch the accidents and unessential circumstances of the case. They do not affect the essence of the doctrinal and ecclesiastical platform of the two bodies. These are identical—the simple standards. But we deny that "more care has been taken to secure orthodoxy in the Southern church." So far from this, plans of union were rejected twice by the Northern church, because they contained the slightest qualification of the standards; and it was thus proved that no union was possible except on the pure and simple standards. Not only so, but we boldly affirm, from knowledge independent of the testimony of Dr. Ross and Dr. Rice, that no latitude of doctrine can be found in the Northern, which has not been tolerated freely and without question in the Southern church. What shall we say then to the amazing assurance which vents itself in such "colossal" fulminations? Probably it is useless to say much at present. It is either above or below being reasoned with. It must be left to speak for itself. Probably the following extracts from Dr. Palmer's speech explain the *animus* of the leaders, who were able, by their force of intellect and eloquence, to magnetize the Assembly with their own feelings:—

"He paid an eloquent tribute to the Southern Presbyterian Church—the only home he had left. 'I am a disfranchised man,' he said. 'The boy who waits on my table at twelve dollars a month dictates to me at the polls who shall be my master. I have no vote. I am an exile in the land of my birth. My only consolation is that I have a home in the church of God. I want peace, and do not, therefore, want to be involved in any of these complications. We have not approached them with any disturbing proposition. Why should they come and disturb us, and seek to divide brethren who are united? . . . Moderator, I do not propose to sacrifice substance for shadow at any time. If you enter into

this conference, in three years there will be a fusion between this Assembly and the North. I am opposed to fusion, and will never consent individually to be fused into any body. I hold to the old maxim, *obsta principiis*. Probably that correspondence is introduced in every case with the ulterior view of amalgamation.' "

Somewhat, the reporter mislaid his notes of a portion of this speech, most of all, it is said, surcharged with bitter invective against the North. However this may be, the above means simply that they wish to prevent every sort of conference or correspondence, because they believe it would speedily result in a fusion with us, and that all the apparent differences that now keep the bodies asunder would, on thus meeting face to face, vanish or dwindle into insignificance. Such fusion they do not want, and are resolved to prevent if possible, because, while every other sphere in which their peculiar ideas could dominate is lost, their church kept thus insulated, is their only remaining "home." In the above extract Dr. Palmer depicts the issue of his former appeals to the Southern people, to use his present cautious phrase, "to stand by an institution of the country, a traditional inheritance from our fathers."

It remains to be seen whether his present ingenious and passionate appeals to the Southern church, breathing a very similar spirit, to raise an impassable barrier between itself and the Northern church, by requiring the latter as a condition precedent to conference, to confess that it has "bound itself to the chariot wheel of Cæsar," and has apostatized from the faith by doing just what the Southern church has done, will reach a more auspicious consummation. We do not believe that such accusations from such a source will be heard with deference beyond the geographical limits of the body making them; or that they will long mislead Southern Christians; or always continue to stultify even their authors. We pray and hope that the dark veil may be lifted which now discolors and distorts their view of the Northern church, and of all connection with it; and that in due time all barriers to full fellowship with brethren whom, on so many accounts, we love, may be removed.