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No. I.

Joel Jones

ART. I.—*Protestantism.*

“Is the Protestant religion the religion of Christ?” This is a very common question. It is usually considered a fair question. Yet it seems to us that there is a fallacy involved in it, which is made the foundation of an argument by those who hold the negative. Protestantism is a principle, or, if you please, a *doctrine* of religion, not a religion; and the question should be, whether the principle of Protestantism is consistent with the gospel of Christ. It is the principle by which those who dissent from the doctrine of Papal supremacy in matters of religion, are distinguished from those who hold to that doctrine. The pope claims to be the vicar of Christ, and the supreme judge of controversies in matters of religion, doctrine and morals. This claim was asserted at the Reformation, and was denied by the Protestants. Proofs are abundant. But take the following: Martin Luther said, *Certum in manu Papae aut Ecclesiae non esse statuere articulos fidei—imo nec leges morum seu bonorum operum.* This proposition was condemned by Leo X., A. D. 1520, by the bull which begins, *Exsurge Domine.* Dr. Gregory Kurtz, in his *Theologia Sophistica* (published at Bamberg, A. D. 1736, more than two hundred years after

author's merit in comparison with Ewald, whose grammar has already been translated into English.*

Charles Moore

ART. IV.—*A Plea for Voluntary Societies and a Defence of the Decisions of the General Assembly of 1836 against the Strictures of the Princeton Reviewers and others.*—By a member of the Assembly, New-York, John S. Taylor, 1837, pp. 187.

WE are disposed to think there must be, on an average, at least one misrepresentation for every page in this work. As it requires more words to correct a misstatement than to make it, we should be obliged to write a book instead of a review, if we thought it necessary to correct all these errors. We believe they may be safely allowed to work their own cure. It is our object to leave personal matters, as far as possible, on one side, and to attend to those only which are of general and permanent interest. The first topic of this nature presented in the work before us is:—

The relative claims of Voluntary Associations and Ecclesiastical Organization.

In the discussion of this point, a great deal of confusion often arises from not accurately defining the terms employed. Thus, our author says, (p. 17) "It is the revealed will of God to evangelize the world by the instrumentality of his church." Here are two expressions, the meaning of which must be definitely fixed, to secure any thing like accuracy of deduction, or correctness of result. The above statement is one in which high church-men and low church-men, papists and independents, would agree. Before we can argue from it, we must know first what is meant by the *church*, and, secondly, what is intended by the expression "to evangelize the world." Our author informs us that "the church is composed of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus,—all converted men—associated by public profession and covenants, under whatever form, for the maintenance of the worship of God and for the advancement of his cause." According to this definition believers are not the church in virtue of their spirit-

* Since writing the above we have been informed that the translation of Genesis here proposed is already executed by an American Professor.

ual relation to each other and their divine head, nor in virtue of a profession of the true religion, but in virtue of their *association* for the maintenance of the worship of God and the advancement of his cause. The church, then, is an associated, organized body, and it is to this organization the revealed will of God assigns the duty of evangelizing the world. This would be a good introduction to an argument in favour of the doctrine our author ascribes to the Pittsburg convention, but seems an extraordinary statement of preliminary principles in favour of voluntary societies. If the church is a body of men organized for the purpose above specified, and if the revealed will of God has assigned to this organization the duty of evangelizing the world, then, beyond all controversy, the church as such, as an organization, must do all that is necessary for the accomplishment of this object. If a number of men are organized as a school committee, or board of regents, to superintend the education of a whole community, then they are bound not merely as individuals but as an organization to attend to this object. It is their official duty, and any voluntary combination for the purpose of taking it out of their hands, would be an usurpation. Is then the Home Missionary Society a church? Is it a body of believers associated by public profession and covenants? Or, has any such association ever appointed or constituted that society? If not, is it not, according to the doctrine of his book, interfering with the appropriate duty of a divine organization, and undertaking to do what God has assigned to other hands?

The truth is, the idea of *association* which the author has introduced into his definition of the church, does not belong to it, in the sense in which he meant to use the term, as designating the catholic visible church. And the introduction of this idea vitiates all his arguments, and leads him to conclusions directly opposite to those which he meant to establish. The church, according to our Confession, "consists of all those who profess the true religion together with their children." The wandering savage who has heard the truth, who believes and declares it, is a member of this church, as truly as any minister or elder. We concede that it is to the church in this wide sense, the work of evangelizing the world is assigned. But here again, to avoid confusion, it is absolutely necessary to explain the terms employed. The expression to "evangelize the world" is very vague and comprehensive. It includes every thing which is designed and adapted to secure the extension and influence of the gospel. Education in all

its departments, from the Sunday-school to the Theological Seminary; the circulation of the Scriptures and tracts; the preaching of the gospel, the ordination and installation of pastors, the mission of evangelists, &c., all are included. The church then, or the people of God, are bound to put into operation all these and other agencies for the attainment of this great object. For this end they are bound, by the command of God, to organize themselves as a society. In what form this organization shall be made has always been a matter of doubt; and whether any one form is prescribed in the Scriptures is also a subject of debate. But it is on all hands conceded that the people of God are bound to organize themselves, under some form, in order to accomplish the great purpose for which the church was constituted. It is as an organized society she is to judge of the qualification of new members, and exercise discipline on unworthy ones; that she is to select, ordain, and install pastors, and send out evangelists. There are then some of the most important of all the means for evangelizing the world, which can be employed by the church in her organized capacity only. There are others as to which the people of God are at liberty to act either as an organized ecclesiastical society, or in voluntary combinations for some specific object. There can be no doubt that for some purposes, such as the distribution of the Scriptures for example, the latter is the preferable method. With regard to others there can, we think, be as little doubt that the ecclesiastical method is to be preferred.

To which of these classes should the work of missions be referred? Is that one of the methods for evangelizing the world which the people of God are bound to employ in their organized ecclesiastical capacity, or is one with regard to which they are at liberty to adopt either plan, as they think best? And if the latter, which, all things considered, ought in our church and under present circumstances, to be preferred?

To answer these questions intelligently, it must be borne in mind that the term *missions* is a very comprehensive one. It includes two very distinct functions, so to speak; the one strictly ecclesiastical and the other secular. When a man is sent out as a missionary, whether to the destitute or the heathen, it is his presbytery (we speak in reference to our own system) that sends him. They give him his mission and his authority as an evangelist, and it is to his presbytery he is responsible for the manner in which he discharges his duty; they alone have the right to determine where he shall go, and where

he shall remain. There is then in the work of missions a part which the church in her organized capacity alone has the right to perform, and which she is under the strongest obligation to execute diligently and faithfully. If these evangelists were all men of wealth, or if in all cases it was possible for them to be supported either by the labour of their own hands, or by the contributions of those to whom they were sent, there would be no need of any other agency in the business. The part which the ecclesiastical court is bound to do, would be all that is to be done. But as neither of the above suppositions is commonly realized, there arises the necessity for an organization to provide the means of sending these missionaries of the church to their respective fields of labour and of sustaining them when there. Here comes in the secular part of the work of missions. There must be men organized and employed in collecting and disbursing money, and in attending to the numerous and often contemplated concerns connected with this subject. The whole debateable ground is covered by the question, Is it desirable that this secular part of the missionary work should be entrusted to voluntary associations, or to Boards appointed for the purpose by ecclesiastical bodies? We concede that either plan is allowable, the question is, which, all things considered, ought to be preferred?

That churches and individuals are at liberty to decide this question for themselves is almost universally admitted. This is the ground which we have always taken.* Dr. Miller in his Letters to Presbyterians takes the same ground. And it is known to our readers that the Board of Missions officially and by its leading friends and officers on the floor of the Assembly have assumed the same position. In an address to the churches signed by Dr. Green as president of the Board, and by its two secretaries, it is said, "We are not only willing but anxious that the churches should be left to their own unbiassed and deliberate choice of the particular channel through which their charities should flow forth to bless the perishing: nay more, that the God of all grace may give to the poor a heart to pray, and to the rich a disposition to contribute liberally to either of these missionary Boards according to the decided preference of every donor."† The same ground is taken in the report on the subject of foreign mis-

* See *Biblical Repertory* for July 1835, p. 460, also for July 1836.

† See *Christian Advocate*, vol. 7, p. 138.

sions presented by Dr. Phillips to the last General Assembly.* There are no doubt many persons who suppose that there is an obligation on Presbyterians to sustain the Boards of their own church, arising out of the general duty of members of a communion to the body to which they belong, or from the supposed superiority of these Boards, as to the wisdom or fidelity with which they are conducted. This, however, is a very different thing from resting this obligation on ecclesiastical authority. We are aware also that many who some years ago cheerfully voted to recommend the Home Missionary Society would not do so now, simply because they believe that that society has, under the management of its present secretary, become a great party engine, and is operating in a manner most unfriendly to the best interests of the church. This, again, is a very different thing from opposition to that institution founded on the assumption that a voluntary society has no right to engage in the work of missions.

(The people of God then, or the church in the wide sense of the term, are bound to do all they can to evangelize the world. One of the most important means to be employed for this purpose is the sending abroad, among the destitute and heathen, preachers of the gospel. In conducting this work there is a part which the church in her organized capacity is alone authorized to perform, and there is a secular part which may be performed either by voluntary associations, or by Boards ecclesiastically appointed and controlled. Our decided preference is for the latter; and it is a preference which every year's experience tends to confirm. But let us hear the objections which our author has to urge against such ecclesiastical organizations.

1. "For church courts to assume the control and direction of missionary operations and disbursements," he tells us, "is an attempt to subject to ecclesiastical legislation that which the Great Head of the church has left to the unbiassed decision of every man's conscience. . . . He has not authorized any ecclesiastical tribunal to assess the amount of each one's contribution, nor to prescribe the objects or modes of its administration," &c. &c. This objection is founded on a mere assertion, and on a most extraordinary one. The appointment of a Board of missions, by a church court, involves

* We see substantially the same position assumed in the *Presbyterian* for Dec. 17, 1836.

an act of legislation as to the amount of each one's contribution, and makes alms-giving a matter of law! Do, then, the Boards of Missions and Education assess the amount of every man's donations? Are the contributions to those Boards less spontaneous than those given to the Home Missionary Society? We cannot imagine on what class of readers the author expected this argument to operate.

2. "There is no enactment in the Bible, enjoining it on the church, as such, in her organized form, by her judicatories, to evangelize the world." The author here, as so often elsewhere, loses himself in vague generalities. Is it not the business of the church, by her judicatories, to ordain and install pastors and send out evangelists? And are not these of all means the most important for evangelizing the world? The broad proposition as stated by the writer is at variance with his own opinions, and those of every body else, as far as we know. A little discrimination would have saved him from this mistake. There are certain things in carrying on the great work of spreading the gospel, which the church, in her organized form and by her judicatories, is not bound to perform, and there are certain other things which she can do in no other way. The secular part of the work of missions, as stated above, belongs to the former class. The mere collection and disbursement of funds, and attention to the secular business connected with missionary operations, may be performed either by persons ecclesiastically appointed, or by single individuals, or by voluntary associations, as may, in any given case, appear most desirable. But that the church, in her organized capacity, has nothing to do in the matter, is a most grievous error. How low a conception of the church as an organized society does this objection betray! The organization which Christ and his apostles have ordained, is to be set aside, and all its most important duties, according to this doctrine, are to be assumed by societies of man's devising.

As to the question of expediency, we have the following arguments against ecclesiastical organizations. 1. "That our church, as such, in her highest court, is not well adapted, by the mode of her organization, to superintend and direct the work of missions, either faithfully or efficiently." The reasons assigned for this statement are, that the members come from a distance, are frequently changed, are not familiar with the business, are incumbered with other affairs, &c. The little plausibility which belongs to this argument is due to a fallacy, which we presume no reader can fail to detect.

The author unfairly institutes an implied comparison between the General Assembly and the more permanent Boards, or executive committees of voluntary societies. But the comparison should be between the Assembly and the Home Missionary Society itself. The Assembly does not enter into the details of conducting missions, it is merely the appointing, and controlling body. The question, therefore, is, which is worthy of most reliance as an appointing body, the representatives of all the churches, or a promiscuous assembly collected from all parts of the Union, for a few days in the city of New York, and whose members owe their seats and votes to the mere payment of a subscription? Had we, or any one else, attempted to undervalue the Home Missionary Society on the ground that it was impossible, that a number of men coming from a distance, remaining together but a few hours, practically ignorant of the business, changed more or less every year, could be competent to conduct the complicated, and delicate work of domestic missions, what would the friends of the American Home Missionary Society think of such an argument? Would they not say that we know better, that we know very well that it is not the fluctuating subscribers collected for a few hours at the "Business Meeting of the Society," that really conduct the work of missions; but that this matter is committed to a corps of able and efficient men always at their post, and devoted in whole or in part to the business? Would they not tell us that the Society was the mere appointing and controlling body, authorized to redress grievances and correct abuses should any such arise? With the same propriety we may ask this writer and his friends, if they do not know that their argument, as above stated, is no less unfair and deceptive? Whether they are not aware that the Board and its executive committee appointed by the Assembly, are as permanent as their own, and as much conversant with the work of missions? We think the General Assembly need not shrink from a comparison with the Home Missionary Society. The members of the former are ordained ministers of the gospel and ruling elders of the churches, men whose moral and religious character has received the sanction of their Christian brethren in various forms. The members of the latter may be, and we have no doubt are, very good men, but who they are, it is hard to tell. Any one who will comply with the rules as to subscription, &c., no matter what his character, has as much right to vote, as the best and wisest members of the body.

Again, which is the most promiscuous, fluctuating, and uncertain body? Which has the best opportunity of knowing and inspecting the conduct of the men whom they appoint? Does not every one know that the meetings of the society are little more than matters of form, that every thing is arranged beforehand, and managed by the executive committee? This, from the nature of the case, must be the course of things.* The promiscuous assemblage collected for a few hours every year, cannot be expected to inspect very minutely the complicated doings of their agents for the preceding twelve months. We are not presenting these considerations as arguments against the Home Missionary Society, but as proof of the unsoundness of the objections urged by its friends against ecclesiastical Boards.

There is one point in which we are ready to admit that the advantage is with the Home Missionary Society. Its members are its friends; whereas, in the General Assembly, we have foes as well as friends. Those who attend the meetings of the former are supposed to be in honour and honesty bound to co-operate in promoting its success. Whereas, members of the Assembly feel at liberty to do all they can to embarrass the operations of the Board of Missions. This we acknowledge is a great disadvantage, but it arises, we must be permitted to think and say, from the exceedingly improper conduct of the opponents of that Board. So long as a majority of the church wishes there should be a Board of Missions appointed by the General Assembly, so long is it the duty of the minority to allow it unembarrassed operation. If the majority of the churches and of the Assembly are of opinion that, under all the circumstances of the case, the Board should cease to exist, let them so decree. But it is evidently most unworthy conduct for a minority, by combination and by the secrecy of the ballot, to endeavour to harass and embarrass a Board they have not the courage or power openly to destroy. Of all the proceedings of the Home Missionary party in the last Assembly, the attempt to place in the Board of Missions men known to be inimical to its very existence, is certainly one of the most

* A gentleman who was present at an anniversary of one of the large national societies, was accosted by one of the officers, and told there would be no Board of Managers chosen if he did not vote. Being informed by the gentleman that he was not a member, the officer threw a handful of tickets into the hat and walked off. This is an illustration of the degree of responsibility felt by the members of such societies. They are sensible the business all rests with the officers.

dishonourable. And what renders the fact the more humiliating and the more alarming, is, that they were able to muster nearly their whole strength to accomplish this object. The votes in favour of the candidates unfriendly to the Board amounted to 125, while the vote against Dr. Miller's resolution was but 122, and that against the formation of a Foreign Missionary Board only 111. Let us turn the tables. Let us suppose a number of men by the payment of three dollars, or whatever the subscription may be, to become members of the Home Missionary Society, and to watch their opportunity at some annual meeting, and vote out the present executive committee, and supply its place with men decidedly hostile to the existence of the Society, what would be the feelings of the religious community in view of such conduct? The indignation of every good man would be roused, and the impropriety would rebound on its authors. We cannot see in what respect the conduct of the 125 members of the last Assembly, just referred to, is less deserving of disapprobation.

2. Our author proceeds thus:—"We maintain that Boards thus constituted, and acting under so wonderful a sanction of what is so little understood, are the most irresponsible bodies that could be devised. They are responsible to the public only through the General Assembly, and that body gathered from all parts of the land, changing every year, &c., &c." This argument is an inference from the preceding, and must stand or fall with it. If we have shown the fallacy of objecting to the Assembly as an appointing and controlling body, for characteristics which it possesses in common, though in a less degree, with the appointing body of the executive committee of the Home Missionary Society, there is little reason to say much on this objection. In what way is that executive committee responsible to the public for the management of its funds, and conduct of its agents? Only through the transient, fluctuating, promiscuous, inexperienced body of subscribers who may happen to assemble at an annual meeting. If the public are dissatisfied, they may indeed withdraw their support, and this is the only effectual check. But are not the Assembly's Boards responsible in precisely the same way? If they act improperly, will not the public withhold their contributions? And is not the General Assembly as likely to be vigilant in detecting abuses, and is it not as competent for this purpose as the transient annual meetings of the Home Missionary Society? In our

opinion, the advantage in this comparison is decidedly in favour of the Assembly. Its members are known; they are the representatives of the churches. The members of the other are in general unknown. Any one may join them, they are commonly self-appointed and self-delegated. As all Boards are liable to abuses, the question is, whether such a body as the Assembly, or such an one as the Home Missionary Society is best constructed to detect and correct them? Can any one doubt on this point? The Assembly must assume the complexion, not of any one party or section in the church, but must represent all parties and all sections. Is such a body likely to be less vigilant in watching the conduct of its servants, than one which is composed almost exclusively of men of one way of thinking, and one party? Has the Secretary of the one Board as free a scope for party-management as the Secretary of the other? Can the one meet the General Assembly with the same hope of ready acquiescence in all his doings, as the other can meet his assembled subscribers at an annual meeting? Will the latter find any Mr. Jessup, or Dr. Peters, or Dr. Patton there, to recast up his figures, to sift with jealous eye his statements, to examine to what field he sends his missionaries, or from what sources he derives them? As far then as responsibility to the churches, and security for good management are concerned, we think there can be no comparison between the two institutions.

3. "By conducting all her concerns ecclesiastically, the judicatories of the church would be loaded with an amount of property and of secular business, which would endanger her spiritually." "The concentration, therefore, in these courts, of so much ecclesiastical and pecuniary power, is both inexpedient and perilous." The author, still further to alarm his readers, makes the following monstrous supposition: "Suppose that in addition to this (its ecclesiastical authority) the Assembly possesses the property and pecuniary patronage of the whole church, and how tremendous must be the power of this judicatory." He then asks, as well he may, "Who would not fear before this Assembly?" Does then the writer believe that it is proposed to invest the Assembly with the whole property of the church? The whole force of this representation is founded upon the assumption, that the funds contributed for education and missionary purposes, come into the treasury of the General Assembly, and are subject to its control. He knows, however, that the Boards of Education and Missions, has each a treasury distinct from that

of the General Assembly; and that the funds contributed to these Boards are received and paid out without any intervention of the Assembly in the business. The writer speaks as though these vast permanent investments were to be held by the Assembly, which might tempt "the cupidity" of its members. Whereas almost all the funds in question are the annual contributions of the churches which hardly remain a day in the treasury of the Boards, and which are given only so long as the churches have confidence in their faithful distribution. The power of the Assembly is hardly appreciably increased by the mere right of appointing the members of this Board, and then adjourning and dispersing itself among the churches, to be renewed the next year by new members, fresh from the presbyteries, and possessing their confidence. The pecuniary power of the American Board of Commissioners, though a close corporation, with its income of from one to two hundred thousand dollars, is next to nothing, and that of the Assembly is, if possible, still less.

Whatever danger there is of a money power becoming connected with missionary enterprises, it is far greater in regard to the Home Missionary Society than to the General Assembly. The latter body is renewed every year; it must take the character of the whole church, and cannot become corrupt until the church is so. The former, is far less certain in its character, being composed of the subscribers for the time being, who may happen to meet in New York. As the secretary and officers of the Home Missionary Society can manage their annual meetings with greater ease and certainty than the secretary and officers of the Board of Missions can control the General Assembly, so the danger of abuse and malversation is greater in the one case than in the other. We think, however, such arguments are unbecoming and unwise. The wicked are sufficiently disposed, without being excited to it by Christians, to cry out about the danger of ecclesiastical authority, and the pecuniary power of religious institutions. And we regret that in repelling such arguments we should be forced even to appear to recriminate.

4. His last argument is founded on a distrust "of the relative efficiency of formal ecclesiastical organizations." In conducting this, as in all the preceding arguments, we find our author presenting the numerous, cumbrous General Assembly in contrast with the compact and alert Boards of voluntary societies; instead of comparing the Board of the one with that of the other. We are at a loss to imagine why a

Board appointed by the General Assembly might not be as active as if appointed by the same men assembled as a voluntary society. The Boards of the Assembly are not so much behind others in their efficiency as to give this objection either much plausibility or much weight.

We must be permitted to leave for a moment the work of self-defence; and to assume, in our turn, the office of objectors. We have always readily admitted that there are purposes for which voluntary societies, embracing members of different religious denominations, are greatly to be preferred to separate ecclesiastical organizations. And in our number for July 1836, p. 429, we stated at least one principle by which such cases may be easily distinguished. Wherever the field of operation is common to different denominations, and the proper means for its cultivation are also the same for all, there is an obvious reason why all should unite. These conditions meet with regard to the Bible and Tract Societies, and in many important respects in regard to Sunday School Unions. There are other cases in which voluntary societies of a denominational character may be either indispensable or highly desirable. On the other hand there are cases for which ecclesiastical organizations appear to us to be entitled to decided preference. To this class belong the work of educating ministers of the gospel, and that of missions. We shall proceed to state very briefly some of the grounds of this opinion.

In the first place, the object of these societies is strictly ecclesiastical as well as denominational. Every church has its peculiar system of opinions and form of government, which it is bound to preserve and extend. And in order to effect this object it is necessary that it should have under its own direction the means employed for its accomplishment. Of these means beyond all comparison the most important are the education of ministers, and the organization and support of churches. The men who decide where and how the rising ministry are to be educated, and who determine where they are to go when their education is completed, have the destiny of the church in their hands. This being the case, is it wonderful that each denomination should wish not only to have this matter under their own control, but confided to persons of its own selection? Is it wonderful that Presbyterians and Episcopalians should decline committing their candidates to the care of Congregationalists or Baptists? Or that they should be uneasy at seeing their

churches supplied with ministers by a society in which some other denomination than their own, has an equal or controlling influence? On the contrary, would not indifference on these points argue a strange and criminal unconcern about what they profess to regard as the truth and order of God? We consider, therefore, the extension of the principle of united action by voluntary societies to cases affecting the vital interests of separate denominations as fraught with evil. Even if these sects ought to be indifferent to their respective peculiarities, they are not, and the attempt to deal with them as though they were, must excite ill-will and strife.

The answer to this objection, that the Education and Missionary Societies do nothing but provide and sustain men to be examined and installed by the judicatories of the several denominations, is very far from being satisfactory. The mere right to examine before Presbytery the candidates for ordination is not the only security which the church needs for the fidelity of her ministers. She wishes that by their previous training, they should be made acquainted with her doctrines, and become attached to her order. Reason and experience alike demonstrate that the perfunctory examination before an ecclesiastical body is altogether an inadequate barrier to the admission of improper men into the ministry, and that by far the most important security lies in the education and selection of the ministers themselves. If these matters are committed to other hands, every thing is given up.

Again, the office assumed by these societies involves an encroachment on the rights and duties of ecclesiastical courts. This may be inferred from what has already been said. One of the most important duties of the church in her organized capacity is the preservation of the truth. It is her business to see that faithful men are introduced into the ministry and set over her congregations. To discharge this duty properly, she must do more than merely examine men prepared and sent forth by other hands. She must herself see to their education and mission. These are in a great measure strictly ecclesiastical functions, which, to say the least, it is incongruous for societies composed for the most part of laymen, and without any ecclesiastical appointment or supervision to perform. Indeed it is one of the anomalies of the times, that laymen should be the great directors and controllers of theological education and domestic missions.

We have already remarked that there are in the work of missions two distinct functions, the one ecclesiastical, the

other secular. The one *must* be performed by church courts; the other *may* be performed by others. To the former belong the ordination, mission, direction, and supervision of evangelists; to the latter the mere provision of the ways and means, and the administration of them. There is a great difference between theory and practice on this subject. According to theory the committee of the Home Missionary Society may be the mere almoners of the churches' bounty. They may profess simply to stand at the door of the treasury to receive applications from feeble congregations and presbyteries. This is all very well. But if in practice they go much farther than this, and assume the direction of ecclesiastical persons, deciding where they are to labour, instructing them as to the discharge of their official duties, and requiring their missionaries to report to them on all these points, then do they assume the rights and privileges of an ecclesiastical court; they usurp an authority and power which do not belong to them, and which they have no right to exercise. People may cry out against all this as high churchism. It is Presbyterianism. And if they dislike it, let them renounce it and the name; but do not let them under the guise of presbyterians undermine the whole fabric. There can be no doubt that, according to the system of our church, the control of ecclesiastical persons rests with ecclesiastical courts. Every licentiate and minister is under the direction of his own presbytery, and is bound to go where they send him, and to stay where they place him. It is to them he is responsible for the right discharge of his official duties, and to them he is bound to report. For any set of men to assume this direction, supervision and control of such licentiates and ministers, is a direct interference with the rights of presbyteries. If then, the Home Missionary Society practically assumes the direction and supervision of its four or six hundred missionaries, if it regards them as its missionaries, sent by it, determined directly or indirectly as to the place or character of their labours by its authority or influence, and demanding accountability to that society or its committee, whatever be the theory of the matter, it is a practical subversion of the whole system of our church.

It may be replied to all this that the Board of Missions appointed by the General Assembly, are guilty of the same kind of interference with the rights and duties of ecclesiastical courts. To this we answer, even admitting such to be the fact, it does not mend the matter. Two wrongs can

never make one right. But we deny that the cases are parallel. The Assembly's Board is an ecclesiastical body. It is the mere organ of the Assembly in conducting missions. All its members are appointed by that body, and its acts in the premises are virtually the acts of the Assembly. If the Assembly has "a constitutional and inherent right," as this author admits, to conduct missionary operations, it must have the authority to commit this business to a Board of its own appointment. In order to prove this point, it is not necessary to attribute to the Assembly the inordinate powers claimed for it, on several recent occasions, by our new school brethren. When they wished to create a presbytery without the concurrence of the synod, we were told glorious things of the power of the Assembly; it was represented as analogous to the parliament of Great Britain; it was called the great universal presbytery, vested with all presbyterial powers, and, if we mistake not, the very source of all such powers. We do not believe all this, nor is faith in these extravagant positions necessary to lead us to the conclusion that, if the Assembly has a right to conduct missions, it has a right to conduct them by a Board. We might argue this right upon the acknowledged principle that where a specific power is granted, all subordinate powers necessary for its proper exercise are also granted. If the General Assembly, in virtue of its relation to the church, and in virtue of the whole design of the constitution, as well as of express provision, has the right to conduct missions, it is absolutely necessary that more or less of this business should be confided to agents, it matters little what they are called. The right to conduct missions belongs to the presbyteries, to synods, and to the General Assembly. Either or all of these bodies may attend to this business while actually in session, or they may refer the matter to a committee to do it for them. Again all analogy is in favour of the possession of this right; analogies derived from the church of Scotland, from the action of our own Assembly in similar cases, (as in the constitution of Boards for the government of theological seminaries, &c.) and from political bodies. It is a matter of every day's occurrence, that all these bodies commit certain duties to be performed in their name and by their authority to boards or agents of their own appointment. The objection that if the Assembly can confide the work of missions to a Board, they may commit the hearing of appeals, &c. is about as forcible as the objection that if parliament or congress can

appoint a Board of public works or navy commissioners, they may appoint a committee to pass bills through all the stages of legislation. Besides, this is a point which has been settled by precedent and uncontested decisions of the Assembly, almost from the beginning. Almost from the first moment of its organization the Assembly has had a standing Committee of Missions, which did not cease to exist when the Assembly adjourned. In the year 1828 the Assembly resolved, That the Board of Missions have the power to establish missions,—to select, appoint and commission missionaries,—and in general to manage the missionary operations of the General Assembly. Who contested the passage of this resolution? Who ever dreamed, before the meeting of the late Assembly, of declaring it a breach of the constitution? We cannot here pursue this subject. It is clear, however, as we think, that the Board of Missions, and committee of the Home Missionary Society, stand in very different relations to the business of missions; that what in the one is a decided infringement on the rights and duties of ecclesiastical courts, may have a very different character in the other.

It has already been intimated that one great objection to voluntary societies for the purpose of domestic missions and the education of candidates for the ministry, is the power which they possess. We are aware that the use of this argument is apt to excite suspicion against those who employ it. But the truth ought to be looked at dispassionately, and allowed its proper influence as estimated by reason, and not by an excited imagination, or distempered feeling.* We say then that the power possessed by these societies is inordinate and dangerous. It is a power, in the first place, to control the theological opinions of candidates by the direction of their whole professional education; and in the second place, by means of these candidates thus prepared, extensively and materially to influence the character and action of the church. It is in the power of the Home Missionary Society, or of its executive committee, to determine what character, as to doc-

* The writer, with unwonted frankness, on pp. 180, 181, gives us to understand that one great reason why his friends resisted the organization of a Board of Foreign Missions by the General Assembly, was the dread of the power it would give their opponents. The majority acted, he tells us, from the instinct of "self-preservation." He moreover clearly intimates, that the desire of power was the great motive which actuated the advocates of such a Board. Their professions of pious and benevolent motives, he very clearly regards as entirely hypocritical.

trine and policy, a large portion of our presbyteries shall assume. This cannot always be done at once, but by a steady purpose and a gradual progress it may be more or less rapidly accomplished. And this progress will not be slow, if three, six, or ten ministers are ordained at one time, by one presbytery, and then sent to one neighbourhood. It would require little skill or talent for management, in this manner to decide the complexion of any presbytery where there are many new and feeble congregations.

But further, this power enters our judicatories, and is there brought to bear on questions of doctrine, of order and discipline. This results not merely indirectly from the ascendancy obtained in congregations and presbyteries, but from the influence which the prominent friends and officers of these societies possess over those connected with them. In assuming the existence of such influence, we make no disparaging reflection on those who are the subjects of it, beyond the assumption that they are men of like passions and infirmities with others. It is no reflection to assume that a set of men who owe their support to the kindness or agency of another set, and who have the natural feeling of obligation which arise from this fact, and who are open to the usual innocent and even amiable sentiments which arise from association and co-operation, should be led to act with their benefactors and to follow them as their natural leaders.

We say this is a dangerous power, because it is apt to be unobserved. It is not the acknowledged authority of a prelatial bishop ascertained and limited by law, of an officer who has been elected for the very purpose of being the depository of this power. But it is an incident, a perquisite, a matter not taken into the account, without being, for that reason, the less real, or the less extensive. It is dangerous, moreover, because it arises out of the church, and yet is made to bear upon all its internal operations. It is not the influence which superiority of wisdom, experience, piety or talent bestows on one member of a judicatory above his fellows; but it is an influence which cannot be met and counteracted within the sphere of its operation. Again, it is dangerous, because pre-eminently irresponsible. This irresponsibility arises from various sources; from the fact that it is not an official influence conferred by law, that it is intangible and secret, that those who wield it are independent of those on whom it operates. It is lodged in the hands of those who are not appointed by the church or responsible to it; of men who

owe their station to votes of a society composed of persons of various denominations, who may be decidedly hostile to what the majority of our church considers its best interests. All that we have already said to show that a society, composed as the Home Missionary Society is, is far less safe and efficient as an appointing and controlling body than the General Assembly, goes to prove the peculiar irresponsibility of the influence of which we are now speaking. Can it be doubted that if the Secretary of that Society had formed the purpose of doing all he could to influence the theological character of particular presbyteries, and to control their course of policy, he might prosecute this purpose long and effectually without exciting the notice or animadversion of the Society itself? This is not a purpose to be announced to his unsophisticated and pious lay-associates. Their co-operation might be secured without their ever conceiving of any other bearing of their measures, than on the wants and wishes of the destitute.

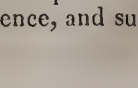
Besides, this influence is irresponsible, because the society in which the control is vested, is uncertain, fluctuating, and unknown. Can any one tell who constituted the last annual meeting, or predict who will constitute the next? Can any one know whether the majority was Presbyterian or Congregational? Whether they were from New-Haven or East-Windsor? Our author has undertaken to present his objections to ecclesiastical Boards. We must be permitted to point out the weak places on the other side. We say, then, that it is a great objection to a society constituted for the purposes of domestic missions, that the church possesses no adequate security for the character and opinions of its members. They may be good and they may be bad, but what the character of the majority at an annual meeting may be, who can tell? What security is there that they shall be even professors of religion, much less that they approve of the doctrine and discipline of the Presbyterian church? Is it no advantage on the other side, that the members who appoint and control the Board, are men who have adopted our standards, and who are as ministers and elders known to the churches? This is no captious objection. Its importance is so great and so obvious that, to avoid this difficulty, the founders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, preferred forming themselves into a close corporation, rather than be exposed to the uncertainty and instability of a voluntary society. It is time for the advocates of voluntary institutions to be ashamed of appealing to the American

Board, whose organization is a most pointed condemnation of their favorite principle.

Finally, another dangerous feature of this influence is its concentration in the hands of a few persons. We have already seen that the Society, from its organization, and from the short time which it remains in session, can have little oversight or control over the operations of its officers. These officers are, in fact, almost the sole depositories of the whole of the power which arises from the employment of numerous agents, the disbursement of thousands of dollars, and the support of hundreds of ministers. And just in proportion to their facilities for controlling the society to which they belong, are their independence and irresponsibility.

It may be said that this influence must exist somewhere, if not in the hands of the officers of the Home Missionary Society, that it will fall to those of the Boards of the General Assembly. If it must exist, then it is of the first importance that it should be subjected to every possible check and to the strictest accountability. We believe, however, from the difference of their organization, especially as it relates to the Board of Education, the power in the one case is far less than it is in the other. And we have already said enough to show that it is more natural, and safe, more closely watched and guarded, when exercised by men appointed by the church in her organized capacity, than when wielded by the hands of irresponsible voluntary societies.

It will be seen that few of our arguments have any bearing on the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. We cheerfully admit that our objections to this institution are far less strong, and that they do not interfere with our entertaining for it the highest respect and confidence. It is only by a strange solecism that this society is called a voluntary association; it has, in fact, less of the character than any similar institution in our land though it seems on this account to forfeit none of the esteem of those who are forever insisting on the necessity and excellence of the voluntary principle. The power of this society is comparatively small, and there is little temptation to abuse what it does possess. So long as it continues the course which it has hitherto pursued, and keeps itself aloof from the internal contentions of the church, abstaining from all attempts to influence the decision of its judicatories on the missionary, as well as other questions, we are sure it will have the prayers, the confidence, and support of the churches.



There is one other remark which we wish to make in the conclusion of this part of our article. We have never been opposed to the existence of voluntary societies. While we have had our decided preference for ecclesiastical organizations, we have felt perfectly willing that those who differed from us should take their own course in doing the work of the Lord. Believing that there was a large part of the church who would not co-operate with the Boards of the General Assembly, we have rejoiced that they had institutions through which their energies might be exerted in doing good. It was only in repelling the arguments of their exclusive friends against the institutions of the church, that we were led, in our number for July last, to animadvert in any measure on the evils connected with the operations of these societies. And now, we are writing in opposition to a formal and laboured assault against the Boards of the church, combined with an extended personal attack upon ourselves. We are, therefore, not to be considered as aggressors in this business. And while we have a deep conviction that the Home Missionary Society, under the management of its Secretary, has become a great party engine, operating most unfavourably for the peace, union, and purity of the church; we, at the same time, believe that his lay-associates are in a great measure innocent in this matter. With them, therefore, we have no controversy, and for them we entertain undiminished confidence and affection.

Foreign Missionary Board.

The second general topic of discussion presented in the work before us, is the attempted organization, by the late Assembly, of a Board of Foreign Missions. The reasons urged in favour of this measure are exhibited so fully in our number for July last, that we deem it unnecessary to repeat them here. So little is said by our author to invalidate the force of those reasons, that we shall not detain our readers long on this subject. There are one or two points, however, on which we wish to make a few remarks. The first of these is the origin of the proposed measure. This, though in itself of comparatively little moment, is of so much importance in the estimation of our author, that he devotes nearly two, out of the four chapters assigned to the whole question, to the consideration of this single point. For some reason or other he seems exceedingly anxious to prove that it originated in the Pittsburg convention. The assertion that such was the

fact had, as we understood, been made on the floor of the General Assembly by Dr. Peters. We undertook to show that this was a mistake; that the plan had been in contemplation long before that convention was called, and that it had been recommended, in all its essential features, by the late Dr. Rice. We are so unfortunate as on this account to have incurred the author's particular displeasure. Towards the conclusion of his severe rebuke, he says of us, "It is presumed they will never make these declarations again, and that hereafter, should they ever allow themselves to write with the haste and carelessness, as to matters of fact, which are manifested in their review of the 'General Assembly of 1836,' they will confine themselves to topics concerning which their exists no documentary evidence." p. 70. How far this severity is merited will appear from what follows.

The question is, did the project of a Board of Foreign Missions under the care of the General Assembly originate with the Pittsburg convention, or had it been contemplated or desired at an earlier period? The author can hardly object to this statement of the point at issue, as it is not only the form in which we presented it, but the very heading of his third chapter proposes it in nearly the same form. As we had the best possible evidence that the proposal had been in contemplation, and had been made a subject of extended and prayerful consultation years before the Pittsburg convention was thought of, we little thought we should incur any one's indignation by saying so. All we ask of our readers is to admit that a thing cannot exist before its *origin*, and, consequently, if the plan of conducting foreign missions by the Assembly was under consideration long before the Pittsburg convention, it did not originate in that body.

At the very time of the re-organization of the Board of Missions, in 1828, it was formally declared to be authorized to conduct missions in any part of the world. The following resolution was passed, as we believe by common consent, by the General Assembly of that year, viz:—"Resolved, That the Board of Missions already have the power to establish missions, not only among the destitute in our own country, but also among the heathen in any part of the world; to select, appoint, and commission missionaries, to determine their salaries, and to settle and pay their accounts; that they have full authority to correspond with any other body on the subject of missions; to appoint an Executive Committee, and an efficient agent or agents to manage their missionary concerns;

to take measures to form auxiliary societies, on such terms as they may deem proper; to procure funds; and, in general, to manage the missionary operations of the General Assembly.

“It is therefore submitted to the discretion of the Board of Missions to consider whether it is expedient for them to carry into effect the full powers which they possess.”*

Shortly after the rising of the Assembly, the Board addressed a letter to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, apprising them of the passage of the above resolution, and of their having it in contemplation to engage in the work of foreign as well as of domestic missions. “This letter,” the Board say, “was answered in a manner which was peculiarly gratifying to our feelings, and we were encouraged to believe that we should ever be regarded by the highly esteemed members of that venerated society, as humble co-workers with them in the hallowed enterprise of evangelizing the world.”† Accordingly, in the same address which contains the above passage, they say to their brethren, “we would endeavour by argument to enforce the obligation which clearly rests upon you, and upon all, not merely as individuals, but as constituent parts of the visible church, to be earnestly engaged, in a distinctive, associate capacity, in the work both of foreign and domestic missions.”

In a series of articles on the best method of conducting missions, written in a spirit of candour and genuine liberality, which no Christian can fail to admire, and published in the *Christian Advocate* for 1829, the venerable editor urges at length the duty of the Presbyterian church, in her distinctive capacity, to engage in the work of foreign missions.

In the year 1830 (we believe) a memorial was addressed by a number of the students of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, (all of whom, with one exception, are now missionaries among the heathen) to the professors, expressing an earnest desire that they might be sent to the foreign field by their own church. This memorial was submitted to a number of the directors of the seminary at an informal meeting, for their advice. As might have been anticipated, considera-

* See minutes of the General Assembly for 1828. This declaration of the full powers of the Board of Missions, was passed with the full concurrence of the friends of the Home Missionary Society, having been reported by a committee of conference. This, however, was before the recent discoveries as to the power of the Assembly in such matters.

† Circular of the Board of Missions, Feb. 25, 1829.

ble diversity of opinion was manifested as to the propriety of any separate Presbyterian organization. It was decided, however, that the subject should be presented at the meeting of the American Board of Commissioners, which was then just at hand, to ascertain whether any method could be devised to secure the object of a Presbyterian organization, without disturbing the harmony of the churches. The matter was accordingly made the subject of repeated conference with the members of that Board at Boston. Many of them were so impressed with the necessity of some such measure, as to give their opinion in favour of such an organization; others, however, were very decidedly opposed to it. It was thought, therefore, best not to urge the matter, or at least to leave it to other hands. Still its importance was not lost sight of. It was made the subject of frequent consultation among those who believed that the American Board could not effectually arouse and combine all the energies of the Presbyterian church, and bring them to bear upon this great work.

It was about this time the Presbytery of Baltimore passed several resolutions declaring it to be, in the judgment of that body, the duty of the church in her distinctive capacity to engage in the work of foreign missions, and expressing their purpose to support at least one missionary in the foreign field. A committee was appointed to address a circular letter to the several presbyteries, calling their attention to this great work. This letter was accordingly prepared and sent. It was in the fall of 1830 that Dr. Rice, on his return from his last visit to the north, stopped in Baltimore. While there Dr. Nevins and Dr. Breckinridge informed him of the steps taken by their presbytery, and urged him to prepare an overture to the General Assembly, proposing a plan by which the action of the several presbyteries might be combined, and the church in her distinctive capacity brought up to the work. To this Dr. Rice consented. His sickness, however, delayed for some time the preparation of this overture. But the subject was near his heart, and when too ill to write himself, he availed himself of the services of Mr. Ballentine as an amanuensis, and consecrated almost his last energies to this work. Of this overture one copy was sent, as stated in his life, to Princeton, and another to Drs. Breckinridge and Nevins in Baltimore. By them it was forwarded to the General Assembly. It was in consequence of this overture that a committee was appointed to confer with the American Board, who afterwards reported against the expediency of any separate

organization. In the meantime the Western Foreign Missionary Society was formed, and served at once to diffuse a spirit of missions in the church, and to strengthen the desire for an organization which might more effectually combine the efforts of those who preferred this mode of conducting the missionary work. It was this long continued desire and effort on this subject which led to the action of the Synod of Philadelphia, of the Pittsburg convention, and of the Assembly of 1835. The action of the convention was but one link in an extended chain. It would be quite as absurd to assert that opposition to Pelagianism, or zeal for the rights of presbyteries, arose from that convention, as that the proposal for the organization of a foreign missionary Board took its rise in that body.

One of the leading characteristics of the book before us is, that it silently, as mathematicians say, shifts the hypothesis, sliding in unawares a new statement of the case, and thus presents a different issue to the reader. According to the heading of his third chapter the author was to prove that "the proposal to organize a Foreign Missionary Board originated with the Pittsburg convention." After his array of evidence he draws his conclusion after this wise, "Sustained by the foregoing evidence, we now affirm, without fear of contradiction, that *the proposal to transfer the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the General Assembly* did originate with the Pittsburg convention." This is no concern of ours, as we never said any thing to the contrary. We shall hardly be suspected of asserting that the proposal to transfer the western society was in contemplation years before that society had an existence.*

Another of our statements, which seems to have excited the displeasure of this writer is, that the overture of Dr. Rice contained every essential feature of the proposed measure, i. e. of the proposal to organize a Board of Foreign Missions. What then are the leading features of Dr. Rice's plan? It declares that one primary and principal object of the institution of the church by Jesus Christ, was "the communicating of the blessings of the gospel to the destitute with the efficiency of united action."—"The en-

* We do not believe that Dr. Peters, as quoted by our author, is correct even in this statement. We have been informed, through a leading member of the Convention, that not one word was said on the subject of a transfer; that he and others did not wish the business to take that form, but preferred a separate organization created immediately by the Assembly. We leave this subject, however, to those who think it of sufficient importance to pursue it.

tire history of the Christian societies organized by the apostles, affords abundant evidence that they so understood the design of their Master," i. e. his design, as we understand it, of their organization. Agreeably to these principles, it resolves, 1. "That the Presbyterian church in the United States is a missionary society." This surely means that the Presbyterian church in her organized distinctive capacity, as she exists in the United States, is and ought to be, a missionary society. 2. That the ministers of the gospel be enjoined to present this subject to their congregations. 3. That a committee of — be appointed from year to year by the General Assembly, to be designated the Committee of the Presbyterian church for Foreign Missions, to whom this whole concern shall be confided, with directions to report all their transactions to the churches. 4. The committee shall have power to appoint all necessary officers. 5. The committee shall, as far as the nature of the case will admit, be co-ordinate (not sub-ordinate) with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and shall correspond and co-operate with that association, in every possible way, for the accomplishment of the great objects which it has in view. 6. All individuals, congregations, or missionary associations to be at liberty to send their contributions either to the American Board, or the Assembly's committee. 7. That every church session be authorized to receive contributions, and be directed to report on the subject.—This is the outline of this noble plan, which we repeat contains every essential feature of that proposed to the last Assembly. We have here a distinct ecclesiastical organization, precisely such an one as our author labours through the whole of his first chapter to prove to be undesirable, inefficient, dangerous to the spirituality of the church, and involving a most perilous amount of power, and yet he eulogizes it as breathing the very spirit of the gospel! By what possible contrivance is a plausible appearance put upon this gross inconsistency? Not by comparing the two plans in their several parts, but by quoting hard passages from the Pittsburg convention and the Synod of Philadelphia. Scarcely one sentence of the language, however, quoted on pp. 67, 68, was before the Assembly, or contained in any of the documents presented to that body. It is not employed in the terms of agreement with the Synod of Pittsburg, nor in Dr. Phillips' report recommending the adoption of those terms, and the appointment of a Board of Foreign Missions, yet these were the immediate matters of

discussion. What if the convention were ever so severe on the Home Missionary Society, or ever so strict in their views, would this alter the nature of the plan? The most that could be said is, that different reasons were assigned by different persons for the same thing. But even this can hardly be said, for the report of Dr. Phillips is scarcely less catholic in its spirit than the preamble to Dr. Rice's overture. It provides 1. For the transfer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society. 2. For the appointment of a Board (instead of a committee) of Foreign Missions. 3. It prescribes the mode in which that board shall be organized, what officers it shall appoint, &c. 4. Prescribes the duties of the executive committee. 5. Directs how the property of the Board is to be held. 6. Designates the seat of operations. It presents, as the great reasons for the proposed measure, the preference of a large proportion of our churches for an ecclesiastical organization, the necessity of this plan in order to enlist them in the missionary work. It disclaims any desire to interfere with the American Board. It proposes to leave every man at liberty to patronize whichever of these institutions he may prefer. If these sentiments in the overture of Dr. Rice prove it to be so good, we see not why they may not perform the same office for the proposal of Dr. Phillips. If the author really approves of Dr. Rice's plan, we can show that he ought to be greatly delighted with the Assembly's Board of Missions, for they on their re-organization desired to be only "humble co-workers" with the American Board; they rejoice at its success and usefulness, and pray for its greater extension. They say the same things in effect to the Home Missionary Society.* What has Dr. Rice said more?

* To this society they say, "Let there be no strife between us, we pray you; none between your and our husbandmen, unless it be in the Christian effort of spreading the gospel, and in diligence, meekness, humility and zeal according to knowledge in their Master's service. We wish you all success in the Lord's field, and an abundant harvest." See Letter of Executive Committee of the Board of Missions to the Executive Committee of the American Home Missionary Society, July 4, 1828, in the *Christian Advocate*, vol. 6. p. 422. Again, in their address to the churches, signed by Dr. Green, and published in 1828, they say, "As a part or portion of the church universal, the church to which we belong is, we verily believe, chargeable with great and criminal neglect" as to the work of missions. They utterly disclaim "a bigotted or sectarian spirit." "If by a wish we could engross the missionary business of our country, that wish should not be formed. We have no desire to hinder, or to interfere with, any evangelical missionary operations by whomsoever conducted, but to promote them." See *Christian Advocate*, vol. 6, p. 324. We might almost

The proposal submitted to the last Assembly was then, in its essential features, identical with that proposed by Dr. Rice. The transfer of the western missionary, and the conditions attached to that transfer, were merely incidental, and not essential. If that transfer was deemed unwise, or its conditions unconstitutional, the contract might have been voided on the ground that the Assembly had no right to accede to such terms; and the way left open for the organization of a Board or committee on the plan of Dr. Rice. The course pursued by the opponents of the measure, proves that they viewed the matter in this light. Dr. Skinner, in his report counter to that of Dr. Phillips, did not say, 'Whereas the conditions attached to the transfer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society are unconstitutional, therefore, Resolved, 1. That the said transfer be declined, and, 2. That the Assembly will proceed forthwith to organize a Foreign Missionary Board of its own.' No such thing. He and his associates knew what was essential and what merely incidental. His report is to this effect, "Whereas, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, has, from the year of its incorporation, been connected with the Presbyterian church by the very elements of its existence; and, whereas, at the present time the majority of the whole Board are Presbyterians; and, whereas, it is undesirable, in conducting the work of foreign missions, that there should be any collision at home or abroad: therefore, Resolved, That it is inexpedient that the Assembly should organize a separate Foreign Missionary Institution." This is to the point. The question was, Board or no Board? And not this or that mode of organi-

suppose that Dr. Rice had taken these documents as his model, so nearly do they coincide in spirit and sentiment with his own overture. Why are the same words which are milk and honey in the lips of Dr. Rice, gall and wormwood in those of Dr. Green? There is a most marked contrast in the spirit of the letters of Mr. Evarts and Dr. Peters, in answer to the communications of the Board of Missions to their respective societies. The former transmits the following resolution of the Prudential Committee: "Resolved, that the committee cordially approve of the truly catholic and Christian spirit which pervades that letter, (letter of the Board of Missions); and that the corresponding secretary be directed to reciprocate the sentiments of Christian friendship and union, which are there so affectionately expressed." In the course of his letter Mr. Evarts remarks, "there may be diversity of opinion as to the number of missionary societies which should be organized," but immediately adds, "In regard to such diversities of opinion, it does not become us, as functionaries of one of those societies to decide." Dr. Peters' long letter, on the other hand, is almost entirely occupied in showing the necessity of their being but "one general Board," and that the Home Missionary Society should be that one. See *Christian Advocate*, vol. 6, p. 471.

zation.* We leave it, therefore, to those who profess to regard Dr. Rice's overture with so much favour to reconcile this profession with their arguments and conduct on the floor of the Assembly, and recommend to them to set themselves right with the churches in this matter.

Right of the Assembly to conduct Missions.

In our review of the General Assembly, we stated, on what we deemed adequate authority, that the opponents of Dr. Phillips' report had taken the ground that the Assembly had no right to organize a Board of Missions, or to conduct missionary operations. We remarked that this was a new and alarming doctrine, inconsistent with the previous opinions of its authors, and adapted to shake the confidence of the churches in the conduct of our leading men, and in the stability of our institutions. For these statements and remarks the author deals with us with great severity. "Can it be wondered at," he asks, "that mutual confidence should cease, when grave, religious periodicals, conducted under the sanction of '*men venerable for age and station,*' are allowed thus to misstate, and then to hold up to ridicule and reproach, the principles and reasonings of a majority of their brethren," p. 97. "We cannot divest ourselves of the unpleasant impression that their oft-repeated expressions of *alarm may* have been published for the sake of *producing alarm,*" p. 101.

It is not so much for the sake of self-vindication, as on account of the intrinsic importance of the subject in debate, that we deem it necessary to prove the correctness of our previous statements, and to show that the ground was assumed that the Assembly had no right to organize a Board of Missions, or to conduct missionary operations.†

The question before the Assembly was somewhat complicated, by the union of two distinct, though nearly related points. The first was, whether the Assembly had the right to form the contract which had been entered into in reference to the Western Foreign Missionary Society; and the second,

* The writer, on p 85, says, "The Assembly was constrained, by the urgency of the friends of the proposed Board, to appoint it subject to all the conditions and claims of that agreement, or to reject it altogether." The reader would infer from this that the objection was not to the proposed Board, but merely to the conditions and claims contained in the agreement with the Synod of Pittsburg. Yet nothing is more notorious, than that the opposition was mainly against the organization of a new Board.

† We used these two expressions as synonymous because we found them thus employed in the reports of speeches delivered on the floor of the Assembly.

whether it had the right to organize a Board of Missions at all. These two points are so mixed up that it is not always easy to see on which of the two the remarks of the several speakers were intended to bear. We shall present abundant evidence, however, that both were openly and boldly maintained. On the one hand, it was agreed that the compact was binding, because it related to a matter within the competency of the Assembly; and on the other, that it was unconstitutional; first, because it involved an act of legislation binding future Assemblies, and secondly, because the matter of the contract was not within the competency of the Assembly.

The speech of Mr. Jessup, of which we have before us three independent reports,* assumes, if we understand it, both these positions. He argues that the Assembly, being a judicial and not a legislative body, has no power to bind its successors; that all its powers are derived from the churches; that the presbyteries have not "clothed us with power to establish ecclesiastical Boards for the management of missions," and consequently the act of the last Assembly is not binding upon this Assembly. "Let us inquire," he adds, "whether the church has given us power to form such an organization as is prescribed in this report, and whether it is expedient for the General Assembly to establish such an organization. According to the arrangement proposed, this Board will have a treasury distinct from the treasury of your board of trustees; it will be just like the treasury of a voluntary society." (See Evangelist, June 4.) The writer of the work under review himself admits that Mr. Jessup, "after showing that the powers of the Assembly are derived from the presbyteries," denied "that the presbyteries have ever clothed the Assembly with power to establish Boards for the management of missions." If then all the powers of the Assembly are derived from the presbyteries, he who denies that the presbyteries have granted the power, at the same time denies that the Assembly possesses it.

With the legal argument of Mr. Jessup, Dr. Peters professed his agreement. He too maintained, agreeably to the doctrine of the Pittsburg convention, that all authority originates with the presbyteries, and therefore that the Assembly could not consummate this arrangement until it is sent down to the presbyteries, and their consent was obtained.

* One in the New York Observer of June 4; one in the Evangelist of the same date, and one in the Presbyterian of July 9.

“It must, therefore, be sent down to the presbyteries as an overture, and obtain their sanction, before the General Assembly could organize a Board of Foreign Missions. This was his firm conviction.” Presbyterian, July 9.

Judge Stevens, however, was the gentleman who expended most argument in defence of this position. From his high respectability, and from his legal attainments, much importance was attached to his opinion. The previous question had actually been moved, “but,” as we learn from the Evangelist, “on the earnest entreaty of Dr. Skinner that Judge Stevens might have the opportunity to speak, it was withdrawn.” We attach importance to this speech, not only from the circumstances just stated, but also from the consideration that it was an answer to a formal argument by Dr. Hoge to prove the right of the Assembly to conduct missionary operations. The Judge remarked, that he “wished to speak to the constitutional question, on which his professional pursuits had suggested a few thoughts that might be worthy of consideration. The question of constitutional authority, is in its very nature a technical one. The sweeping argument of the brother (Dr. Hoge) who spoke last, finds its source in his own good feelings, in his zeal to have every body engaged in the missionary cause, and not in the constitution of the church. He says it is the duty of the church to carry on missions. Nobody doubts that it is the duty of the catholic visible church to spread the gospel through the earth. But that is nothing to the point to prove that this body has the power to appoint a Board of Missions. The catholic visible church, it is truly said, is not an organized body. It is composed of individuals, and the duty of the church is the duty of all the individuals who compose it. And they are to promote missions and extend the gospel in the best way they can. How does this go to prove that the General Assembly has authority to conduct and regulate the missionary efforts that are to be made by the members of the Presbyterian church? This question of authority is to be proved, not assumed. If it exists in the General Assembly, it has been given by the churches. The whole authority, as I understand our constitution, remains in the sessions and presbyteries. Hence when any new authority is proposed to be exercised by this body, it is necessary to send down the question to the presbyteries for their consent. It is said we subvert the authority of the Board of Missions. Suppose we do. A precedent is nothing in the face of the constitu-

tion. It is to be presumed that it was an act of inadvertence that the minds of the Assembly were not distinctly turned to the question of constitutional power, rather than to suppose that they established the Board of Missions, knowing they had no constitutional warrant for the same. It is a bad argument from one breach of the constitution to plead in favour of another. I believe we have no authority until the presbyteries give it." Evangelist, June 25.

This is one part of the evidence in support of the correctness of our previous statements on this subject. We see that the speakers referred to did assume the position that the Assembly has no right to organize a Board of Missions. We proceed to show that the speakers on the other side attributed this opinion to their opponents, and argued in defence of the right in question. First, then, we have the speech of Mr. Nesbit, in which he says, "It has been denied that one Assembly can bind its successors, and, therefore, there is no obligation, legal or equitable, in this body to execute the contract with the synod. Sir, this is a wide mistake, a fatal error. The beloved brother who has taken this ground, surely has not maturely reflected on the consequences of this assumption." He then refuted this part of Mr. Jessup's argument, and afterwards took up the second point. "My esteemed brother Jessup denies the power of the Assembly to create a Board of Missions, asserting, as I understood him, that the Assembly has no legislative powers, that all the powers of this body are judicial and advisory, and that all other powers belong to the presbyteries." Presbyterian, July 9.* Again Dr. Phillips, in reply to Dr. Peters, says, "It has been said that the General Assembly has no power to conduct missions by a Board, and the Act and Testimony has been quoted, that all authority in the Presbyterian church originated with the presbyteries." Again, Dr. Hoge said, "I have thought it inexpedient on other grounds for the General Assembly to take up, in its distinctive character, the work of foreign missions. As the subject has been brought up in other forms, from time to time, I have always objected. But the question is now brought before us in a new form, and is to be *decided on the naked ground of the power and rights of the Assembly to conduct missions.* And on this ground I cannot abandon it while I love the faith and order of the Presbyterian church." "The great question after all, is this:—

* See also New-York Observer, June 11.

Has the General Assembly constitutional power to act on this subject? It is said, because this power has not been granted in express terms, that, therefore, the Assembly do not possess it. I am not, and never have been, strongly in favour of such a strict and literal construction of the constitution as to bind us down to the mere letter of the constitutional rule. I look for authority to the great leading object of the constitution itself. Here I find the power to conduct both foreign and domestic missions, and the education of young men, and theological seminaries, and the like. *All that we have done, and are doing, goes by the board if you give up the principle*, and this General Assembly will become a mere advisory committee in regard to matters of general interest, and a mere court of appeal in cases of discipline. I contend, without examining the constitution of this church, that the General Assembly, as the great organ of the church, must have the powers requisite to carry into effect the great objects for which the church is constituted." "The power of the church is in the hands of the officers of the church. I do not ask for an act of incorporation, in any explicit clause, declaring that the Presbyterian church in its denominational capacity may carry on missions." Much more to the same effect might be quoted, not only from the speech of Dr. Hoge, but from those of Mr. Nesbit, Mr. Boyd, and others. What does the author think now of assertions made in the face of documentary evidence? Besides all this, we have seen at least some ten or twenty different individuals, who were present at the General Assembly during these discussions, and we have heard almost all of them speak on this subject, men of various opinions and predilections, and we have never heard a whisper of a doubt as to the new school men having taken the ground in question. It was always spoken of as a notorious and admitted fact; as one of the leading and most exciting circumstances connected with the proceedings of the Assembly. We know more than one person who went to the Assembly with his prepossessions against the expediency of the organization of a Board of Foreign Missions, but who were so shocked by the spirit and principles disclosed by Dr. Peters in his very first speech, as to feel it was no longer a question of expediency, but one of principle, involving the vital interests of the church. Now, are we to be told, in the face of the recorded declarations of the opposers of a Foreign Board, in face of the uncontradicted assertion of the speakers on the other side, in face of the extended arguments

in defence of the right of the Assembly to organize a Board of Missions, are we to be told in the face of all this the new school men simply denied "the power of the Assembly to appoint *such a Board*, as was proposed by the committee of 1835, with all the unconstitutional conditions in their agreement," and that too by an anonymous writer, who has not had the courage to put his name to this startling declaration? It is perfectly plain, either that this writer, though a member of the Assembly, mistook the ground assumed by his friends, or the whole Assembly were mistaken. The reader may judge which is most probable.

We admit, that if the opposers of the proposed organization spoke as this gentleman writes, it would be no matter of surprise that their meaning was not apprehended. We have read the two chapters of his book relating to this subject, at least three times consecutively from beginning to end, besides repeatedly reading and comparing one paragraph with another, and we seriously say, we do not know what he means. We have no idea what ground he intends to assume as to the power of the Assembly in relation to missions. We have been accustomed to give to ourselves credit for about the average amount of common sense, and therefore conclude if the author meant common people to understand him, we should be competent to the task. But we confess ourselves completely foiled. 1. At one time we think he means to admit every thing, the constitutional right of the Assembly to conduct missions, and to appoint a Board for that purpose. Thus, on page 79, he admits "that the Assembly has a right to conduct missions, and that this right is not only conferred upon it by the constitution, but belongs to it from the nature of the body, as the supreme judicatory of the church." He calls this "a constitutional and inherent right." The same admission is made on p. 90, where he acknowledges also that the Assembly "has power to appoint a Board of Missions, and *recommend* it to the confidence and patronage of the churches." 2. Sometimes we think he intends to deny the right of the Assembly to organize a Board of Missions, and means to confine its power in the premises to conducting missions "of their own knowledge," and while in session. Thus, in p. 80, he says, the constitution "asserts the right of presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly, to conduct missions. But this right is asserted under certain restrictions. Either of these bodies may send missions" to supply vacancies, in answer to applications from presbyte-

ries, or from vacant congregations, with the leave of presbyteries, and it is manifestly intended that the application shall be made to these bodies themselves. There is no provision made for the appointment of permanent committees or Boards to act upon these applications. But farther than this, the General Assembly are authorized, "of *their own knowledge*," without the formality of an application, "to send missions," &c. Here again, there is no provision for the appointment of a permanent Board for this purpose. The missions must be sent *by the Assembly, of their own knowledge*. This can be done only while the Assembly is in session." "Again, if the power to appoint missionaries may be *constitutionally* delegated to a permanent Board, under sanction of the above article, (ch. 18 of the constitution,) by the same rule, the Assembly may empower such a Board "to direct presbyteries to ordain evangelists," &c. "Besides, if the General Assembly is authorized by the above provision to appoint a missionary Board, to act in its name and by its authority, then the synods and presbyteries" may do the same. "But if this power belongs equally to these several bodies, within their respective spheres, it is manifest that no one of them has a right to appoint a Board for the whole without the consent of the others." "That which is equally the constitutional right of these bodies, during their continuance, becomes the *sole right* of the permanent body, as soon as the other ceases to exist, and so remains the sole right of one presbytery until another General Assembly is constituted. It is therefore an unwarrantable assumption of authority for the General Assembly to claim the constitutional right, over the heads of the presbyteries, to conduct the missions of the whole church, by a permanent Board, to act during the interim of its own sessions, when the sole constitutional power belongs to the presbyteries and synods, which are the only permanent bodies known to the constitution. We affirm, then, that the General Assembly of 1835 had no right, by the constitution, to appoint the proposed Board to act in its name and by its authority, and if they had no right to do it, they had no right to agree to do it, nor to authorize their committee so to agree." Let it be remembered that the report of Dr. Phillips, as far as this point is concerned, simply recommended the organization of a Board of Foreign Missions; that neither in its preamble nor resolutions did it claim, but on the contrary pointedly disclaimed, either the right or the wish to coerce congregations or indi-

viduals, but left it optional with them to sustain the proposed Board or not; and we see not how the above extracts are to be understood, if they do not deny the right of the Assembly to constitute a Board of Foreign Missions, analogous to that of Domestic Missions. Besides, as we have already seen, the author maintains that all the powers of the Assembly are derived from the presbyteries, and that the presbyteries have not "clothed the Assembly with power to establish Boards for the management of missions," and consequently, as seems to us, he denies that the Assembly possesses this power.

3. Again, at times we are disposed to think he means to deny merely that the power in question arises out of the constitution, or is granted in any one specific clause, but is willing to admit that it belongs to the Assembly in virtue of "a right inherent in all bodies, who are not prohibited by the constitution under which they exist, to do good on the individual responsibility of their members." Thus he says, p. 93, "All we have ever affirmed is, that the appointment of a Board of Missions is *extra-constitutional*." It is true, that both on the floor of the Assembly, and in this book, as we understand it, much more is asserted. But we are not able to reconcile one portion of this work with another; and happily we are not bound to do so. On p. 79 he says that the right "to conduct missions" is "*constitutional* and inherent;" on p. 93, and elsewhere, that the right to appoint a Board of Missions "is *extra-constitutional*;" or as it is expressed on p. 90, it is "not by any express provision of the constitution, giving authority to their acts binding on the churches or upon future Assemblies, but from the nature of the body irrespective of all constitutional provisions." If this is all that was intended, how came it that on the floor of the Assembly the mere appointment of a Board of Missions was resisted on the ground that the Assembly had not the right to make such an appointment? And how is this position to be reconciled with the denial, as quoted above, of the power of the Assembly to appoint such a Board, on the ground that the presbyteries had not expressly granted it, when it seems the writer professes to believe the Assembly has the power irrespective of all constitutional provisions?

4. Sometimes we suppose the writer means to oppose the idea that the Assembly has the right to appoint a Board of Missions, and then by law enjoin on the churches to support it, whether they approve of it or not. Thus, (p. 91) he says, "The Assembly has simply the power to recommend

them (these Boards), and all beyond the exercise of this recommendatory power is usurpation and assumption, until the presbyteries shall have authorised it according to the constitution. The appointment of such Boards, therefore, by the Assembly, imposes no obligation upon the churches contrary to their own preference. This the Reviewers admit," &c. We certainly do admit it, and it was admitted fully in Dr. Phillips' report. The right to coerce the churches in this matter, has never been asserted by the Assembly. It is strange that it should be objected to the formation of the Board in question, that the Assembly could not force the churches to sustain it, when in the very document proposing the organization, the right to do so was disclaimed. 5. Another solution of these enigmatical chapters has occurred to us, viz., that the writer is simply opposing Boards invested with "ecclesiastical authority." This phrase seems to be used by the writer in two senses; first, as expressing the idea that these Boards may authoritatively claim the support of all the churches. "Boards thus appointed or recommended," he says, "have no right to exercise the ecclesiastical authority of the bodies appointing them. The Assembly, as we have shown, possesses no authority which it can confer upon such Boards." The second sense in which the phrase is used, seems to be, having the right to exercise judicial functions. Thus, in answer to the argument that the Assembly had the right to appoint a Board of Missions, since it was acknowledged to have the right to appoint a Board of Directors for a theological seminary, he answers, "if these seminaries were established to exercise the ecclesiastical authority over the churches, in any respect, which belongs to the bodies which have established them, they would be 'unconstitutional excrescences.' These bodies have no right to confer upon such seminaries their own authority to license ministers, to sit in judgment on appeals," &c. This is all very true. As, however, there was no proposal before the Assembly to establish a Board of Missions invested with ecclesiastical authority, in either of these senses of the phrase, we see not how this could be the real objection urged on the floor of that body, or if it had been urged, why it should so alarm such men as Mr. Nesbit and Dr. Hoge, as to make them think it a blow aimed at the very vitals of the church.

6. There is still one other supposition left, and that is, that the writer does not deny the right to appoint *a* Board of Missions but simply *such a* Board. This is the ground

assumed on page 97, where he says, "We have already explained the grounds on which we deny the power of the Assembly to appoint *such a Board* as was proposed by the committee of 1835, with all its unconstitutional conditions embraced in their agreement." It would be a matter of small moment if the writer had contented himself with saying that this was the reason why he was opposed to the proposed Board, but when he asserts that this was the ground assumed in the Assembly on the subject, he contradicts every report of the speeches of Mr. Jessup, Dr. Peters, Judge Stevens, Mr. Nesbit, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Phillips, and others. He completely stultifies these last named gentlemen, by representing that they were alarmed for nothing, that they were contending with a mere shadow, and could not distinguish between an objection to the transfer of the Western Missionary Society, and an objection to the organization of a Board of Missions. We deem it an impossibility that any man can read the speeches of the above named gentlemen, and still believe the statement of this writer to be correct. No one can fail to be convinced that the ground was openly assumed, not only that the conditions of that transfer were unconstitutional, but also that the Assembly had no right to appoint a Board of Missions. The fact, indeed, is so notorious, that we wonder that any one should think of calling it in question.

This is one of the subjects on which any discreet friend of the dominant party in the last Assembly, would have counselled the author either to retraction or silence. If the appointment of the present Board of Missions, was, as Judge Stevens affirmed it to be, "a breach of the constitution," so must the organization of the Board of education, and of our Theological Seminaries be. All must be given up, or as Dr. Hoge expressed it, be allowed "to go by the board." Let the reader now turn back and look at the resolution passed in 1828, with the full concurrence, if not of these same individuals, at least of the same party, in which the powers of the Board of Missions are so fully set forth, and so freely acknowledged, and compare it with language of the party on the floor of the last Assembly, and wonder how men can change. Any set of men who could assent to those resolutions, and then take the ground assumed in the last Assembly, may well consider their character for consistency as completely bankrupt.

Trial and Restoration of Mr. Barnes.

The point connected with the trial of Mr. Barnes, which produced the greatest surprise, was the answer to the protests presented by Drs. Phillips and Hoge for themselves and others. As this answer conceded every thing for which the orthodox had been so long contending, and was considered as being in direct contradiction to the known opinions of its authors, it naturally produced an unusual excitement. The moment this book came into our hands we instinctively turned to the chapter relating to this subject. Our principal desire was to see how this matter was explained; to learn how it was that men who had been all their lives resisting, and in many cases ridiculing certain doctrines, were brought so suddenly to profess their faith in them. We confess we have been greatly disappointed. The mystery is not explained; no attempt even is made to explain it. The writer seems to think it sufficient to ask such questions as these, Why is it wonderful that such an answer was given? "The Reviewers do not leave us in doubt on this point. Their wonder is that the answer is *orthodox!* How could it be, that such *heterodox* men, as constituted the whole majority of the Assembly, should profess to be *orthodox?*" We will undertake to answer his question, why it is so wonderful; and if he supposes this is a matter to be trifled with, we can assure him he is under a great mistake. The wonder then is this, that men who had openly declared that they received the confession of faith only as a system, or for substance of doctrines, should suddenly come forward and declare that they "do cordially and ex-animo adopt the confession of faith of our church, on *the points of doctrine in question, according to the obvious and most prevalent interpretation.*" The wonder is, not that they should declare themselves orthodox, for that is a relative term, but that they should profess to believe that our first parents, by eating the forbidden fruit, "fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body;" that, "they being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation;" that, "from this original corruption, whereby we are *utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed*

all actual transgressions;" that in regeneration, or effectual calling, "man is altogether passive, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and receive the grace offered and conveyed in it;" that believers are justified "not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelic obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righthousness by faith." We by no means deny that these brethren believe these declarations "according to their obvious and most prevalent interpretation;" but what we assert is, that if there is one fact more notorious than any other in the history of the theological controversies in our church, it is that a large portion of those who sanctioned the "answer" in question, have been accustomed to deny and oppose these doctrines; that as to original sin, the "utter" inability of men to do any thing spiritually good, the imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin, and the imputation of the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, they have been accustomed to reject and oppose the obvious and most prevalent interpretation of the Confession of Faith. For the truth of this declaration, appeal is made to their public preaching and declarations, to their printed sermons and other writings, to the periodicals which they sustain and sanction, and to every other kind of proof of which such a point is susceptible. This being the case, it was certainly incumbent on this writer, as he volunteered a defence of the General Assembly, to explain this fact, to show either how the answer to the protest of Drs. Hoge and Phillips, is to be reconciled with the previous professions of its authors, or how this extraordinary change in their opinions was brought about. He, however, makes no attempt to do either, he does not allude to even a seeming inconsistency. He has, therefore, left the matter tenfold worse than he found it. The moral sense of the church and of the community calls for an explanation. And we are persuaded the parties concerned never committed an act which it is more imperatively incumbent on them either penitently to acknowledge as an error, or fully to clear up and justify.

The writer complains that he cannot understand what we mean by appearing, in one place, to admit the sincerity of the authors of this Answer, and in another, stating the case hypothetically, saying, "if they are sincere," &c. We will endeavour to remove the apparent inconsistency. These

expressions occur in different connexions, and were used for different purposes. In the former, we were speaking of ourselves, and said we could not doubt the sincerity of the gentlemen concerned; in the other, we spoke in reference to those, who less charitable than ourselves, had openly called their sincerity in question. We, therefore, meant to say, take it either way, on our own hypothesis or on that of others, this Answer must prove fatal to its authors.

The writer, however, seems to make too large a use of our charity, when he asks, "At what then are these gentlemen so much startled? Where is the ground of alarm? They admit that the Answer is orthodox, that it was unanimously adopted by the whole majority of the Assembly, and that these men are honest and sincere in avowing the sentiments which it contains! Is there any thing startling and worse than startling in all this?" p. 146. This is giving us rather more credit than we deserve. The case is not quite so plain as would appear from the above extract. We did not intend to intimate that we had no difficulties or misgivings. All we meant was that when a set of men under peculiarly solemn circumstances, come forward and make a declaration as to their opinions, we felt bound to believe them. We did not then, and do not now, feel authorized to call their sincerity in question, though we are entirely unable to reconcile their present with their past professions. Had they with equal solemnity declared themselves Episcopalians or Papists, we should have felt equally bound to believe them, though we should have felt equally startled, and equally authorized to solicit an explanation of the process and means of their conversion. We have been disposed to make, in our own minds, a very great distinction between the great majority of those who merely voted that this ill-omened Answer should be adopted, and those who were engaged in its preparation, and gave it their deliberate sanction. It is too often the case, when important documents are read before a large assembly, and submitted for their acceptance by men in whom they have confidence, and whom they are perhaps too much disposed to follow; that a vote of approval is given without properly appreciating its character and bearing. We have never been disposed to charge these brethren with any thing more than an act of culpable inconsideration. The immediate authors of the document, however, and those who deliberately sanctioned it, are in a very different position. They have come forward and deliberately avowed

opinions in direct opposition to those they have always been understood to hold. For this declaration an explanation is due to themselves and to the brethren whose good opinion they desire to possess. This is no ordinary nor trivial affair. The official declarations of the General Assembly on matters of doctrine, are among the most important acts that body can perform. And the churches have a right to demand that those who put such declarations in the mouth of the Assembly, should not only be honest in fact, but honest in appearance. It will not do for them to draw on their general character, and say, we are good men, and, therefore, sincere; they must allow their brethren to see, as well as believe. We repeat, therefore, that the difficulty remains. The millstone is still around the neck of the authors of the Answer, and it can be gotten off by penitent confession or satisfactory explanation alone.

Division of the Church.

As the writer, on p. 147,* expresses his doubts as to our sincerity in the remarks which we felt called upon to make on the Answer to the Protests, so on p. 153 he gives utterance to his "suspicion" that we are quite as little in earnest in the views which we expressed in reference to the division of the church. He assigns two reasons for this suspicion, the first is "many things in the style and language" in which we express our dissent from the acts of the late Assembly. He specifies particularly some remarks on Dr. Beecher, Dr. Skinner, and Dr. Peters.† We think this very slight ground

* "On the whole, it is *more than probable* that the real ground of alarm expressed by these gentlemen, and by the minority, is not that the majority are not orthodox, but that certain measures, which they relied upon to give them a permanent ascendancy in the Assembly, have been frustrated."

† For cause of complaint, however, with regard to this last gentleman, he is obliged to travel out of the record, and quote a passage from the Review of Colton on Episcopacy, in which we ventured to express our agreement with Mr. C. in thinking that the Secretary of the Home Missionary Society had something like prelatial influence, and that he exerted it without much compunction. As we still believe this is but too true, we cannot recall what we there said, nor can we confess to much sorrow for having said it. The fact is we cannot avoid suspecting that the imputation in question was rather palatable, if not to Dr. Peters, at least to his friend the writer of this book. Why else should he roll the words "Right Reverend Father" as a sweet morsel under his tongue, quoting them over and over, first in the text and then in the notes? For his good opinion of the supposed writer of that Review we are indebted to him, though we cannot admire his delicacy in holding him up by name on the mere authority of rumor. We set a better example in our notice of the anonymous book before us. We have no disposition to remove the author's mask, but would, out of

for such a suspicion. We supposed we might very seriously dissent from those gentlemen, and still not desire a division of the church. Nor can we yet see how confidence in the clearness of their views or the consistency of their conduct is necessary to hold the church together.*

The second ground of the writer's suspicion is the character of the Resolutions adopted by the Presbytery of New Brunswick at their meeting in October last. This seems to have had most weight with him. For while he was hesitating on the propriety of publishing his suspicions to the world, on the slender foundation afforded by his first reason, these resolutions came to hand, and his "doubts were wholly removed." We cannot help thinking he must have had a great desire to be convinced of the correctness of his unpleasant impression. It would probably have occurred to one less ready to believe evil, that possibly all the conductors of the Repertory, or even a majority of them, were not present at that meeting of their presbytery. There are so many circumstances connected with the weather, with the domestic affairs, with the state of health, official engagements, &c. of members of presbytery, as to make the failure of their attendance on any one meeting no uncommon event. Could not that charity which hopeth all things, find in this consideration, reason for keeping that "suspicion" silent a little longer, until the fact could be ascertained? Was he bound to proclaim it to the world that the gentlemen who in July deprecated division, in October advocated it? Did he feel reluctantly constrained to fill one short paragraph with six interrogations and exclamations, to excite the due degree of wonder at such conduct? Even supposing the writer to have been ignorant of the real state of the case, can he stand acquitted before his own conscience of great uncharitableness in this business. But what if he knew the facts? What if he knew that of the eight ministers resident in Princeton, only one of them was present at that meeting of their presbytery, or knew any thing of the resolutions until after they

kindness, rather aid him in preserving his *incognito*. We can, however, assure the writer, that we never thought of accusing Dr. Peters of being "destitute of moral honesty," or the majority of the last Assembly of being "guilty of perfidy and folly." We should be sorry to be obliged to put a similar construction on all our author's charges against ourselves and friends, of inconsistency and contradiction, to say nothing of those of insincerity and hypocrisy.

* With regard to Dr. Skinner, our remarks were far from being disrespectful. We should be sorry indeed had we said any thing inconsistent with the esteem we have always entertained for that gentleman.

were passed? What then must be thought of his conduct? He virtually, in the paragraph referred to, assures the public* that the same men who "had pledged themselves before the church and the world, as the friends of union," voted in October for division, when, on the above supposition, he knew that such was not the fact. We shall be glad to hear that he was not so well informed, as we have reason to fear he was.†

Whatever then may be thought of the resolutions in question, it is plain, from what we have already said, that the "*associated gentlemen in Princeton*" are not responsible for them. But we have still further to remark, that the only one of their number who was present when those resolutions were adopted, exerted all his influence to have them reduced to the standard which he and his friends had already adopted. He was so far successful, that the resolutions, as originally presented, were very materially modified. And he assented to their passage in their present shape, not as what he himself would have proposed or desired, but as the nearest approach to it which, under the circumstances, could be obtained.‡

But further, the gentleman referred to we know does not admit the correctness of the interpretation which has been put upon the resolution in question. He does not understand it as asserting the necessity of the division of the church. By this expression is correctly and commonly understood a separation effected in an extra-constitutional manner, either by violence or by mutual consent, not in the regular exercise of ecclesiastical or judicial authority. Believing as he does, that the great majority of the Presbyterian church are sufficiently harmonious in their views, to render it possible and proper for them to remain united, he regarded the resolution as calling for nothing more than the regular exercise of discipline on the part of that majority towards those who will not conform either to the doctrines or order of the church, and as expressing the idea that if the present discord is to continue, it must destroy the usefulness of the church.

* "Here is the necessity of division of the church declared by the Presbytery of New Brunswick! But who are the leading members of this presbytery? The *associated gentlemen in Princeton* who conduct the *Biblical Repertory*!"

† Compare p. 155 with p. 178.

‡ We are assured that the statement in the public papers that the resolutions were *unanimously* adopted, is a mistake. The question was asked in Presbytery, whether the vote should be recorded as unanimous, and it was answered, "by no means;" as even to their amended form one member, at least, was decidedly opposed.

Such also, we believe, was the idea meant to be expressed by the brethren of the presbytery generally, though for them we are not authorized to speak.

Nothing, therefore, can be more unreasonable than the charge of insincerity and inconsistency brought against the conductors of the Repertory on the ground of those resolutions. We were not present when they were prepared or adopted; they have never received our sanction, nor do they express our sentiments. Our opinions are now what they ever have been on the subject of division.* We expressed our dissent from the Act and Testimony, and its associated

* This writer, indeed, says, that we are recent converts to the doctrines of the Pittsburg Convention, p. 67, but it must be remembered that he is not very scrupulous in making assertions. We have just given one proof of this fact; we might give many more, did we deem it necessary. For example, on p. 137, he misrepresents, almost wholly, the course of our remarks in relation to the restoration of Mr. Barnes, and the rejection of Dr. Miller's resolution. He represents us as complaining of that restoration, though Dr. Miller voted for the measure, and though we repeatedly and pointedly said, the complaint was, not that the Assembly did not condemn the man, but that they refused to censure, and by that refusal, virtually commended the book. He asserts, again, that we "will have it, that Mr. Barnes is a 'Taylorite.'" We never said any such thing, but the very reverse. We said, that while on one page he affirmed the peculiar doctrines of New-Haven, on another he affirmed the opposite doctrine; and, that consequently, we did not know what his real opinions were. We thought the object of the trial was to ascertain this point. And we presumed that it was ascertained to the satisfaction of the great majority of the Assembly, that Mr. Barnes disclaimed and repudiated those doctrines, and thereby retracted the most offensive positions in his book. In view of his recantations and explanations, we said, "The obvious course of propriety and justice was for the Assembly to condemn the erroneous propositions, and to acquit the man on the ground of his explanations and corrections." Again, the writer asserts that we could not have been favourable to the organization of a Foreign Missionary Board by the Assembly, at the time the Act and Testimony was under consideration, because we were opposed to that measure, and to the Pittsburg Convention, p. 65. That is, because we differed from our brethren in one point, we must differ from them on all. By parity of reason, we were then in favour of New-Havenism, and of every thing else those brethren were opposed to. We invite the author to review the course of the Repertory, to see if he can find one single principle on which we have changed our ground; whether we ever denied the right of presbyteries to reject applicants with clean papers; whether we ever denied the right of judicatories to condemn erroneous books; whether, in short, there is one position assumed by the Assembly of 1835, and advocated in the Repertory, which we had not, as individuals, or as members of the New Brunswick Presbytery, previously avowed. The assertion, therefore, that we are "converts," i. e. have changed, is incorrect. We are almost ashamed of noticing such things, because we regard them as of little importance. If a set of men are really straight-forward, consistent, and honest, it will be known and acknowledged, and all the hue and cry of those who wish the contrary to be believed, will be so much breath wasted. And, on the other hand, if a man is really double-dealing, managing, or jesuitical, all the cunning in the world will not prevent others finding it out.

measures, mainly on the ground that we thought them designed and adapted to divide the church. Our brethren were hurt that such a view should be entertained or expressed. They came out in the public papers and denied that such was their design, and endeavoured to disprove that such was the tendency of their measures. Some of the leading advocates of the Act and Testimony, adopted nearly our very language in declaring against division, unless we were called upon to profess what we do not believe, or to do what we do not approve. In all this we greatly rejoiced. If they have changed, we have not. We adhere to our principles, and disclaim all co-operation in any extra-constitutional measures, until the crisis shall arrive, when we shall have to decide between a good conscience and disunion. We are well aware that many of our brethren, with whom we agree on most points, differ from us on this. Nor can we shut our eyes to the indications, which are increasing in number and significance every week, which render the disruption of our beloved church a very probable event. Its probability, however, does not render it, in our apprehension, less to be deprecated. We believe the principle to be erroneous, and fear the consequences will be disastrous. We are far from thinking, however, that the chief blame for such consequences should rest on those who feel constrained, by their regard for truth, to effect a separation, even by disruption of the church, from the advocates of error. The moral blame must rest principally upon those who have driven them to this extremity. It is such men as those who guided the casual majority of the last Assembly, who attacked principles long regarded as sacred, and threw their shield around the clearest forms of error, to protect it from the slightest censure, who are the real dividers. It is the spirit which breathes in the following summons to the work of destruction, by the author of this book: "We address ourselves to *American* Presbyterians, and ask, cannot these divisions be healed? If they have resulted from the perversion of official influence, is not that influence within the control of the church which has conferred it? May it not be arrested by the voice of her members? Has it come to this? Must the church submit to be divided and distracted by the agencies of her own appointment? We put the question to all her members." In the preceding chapters, he had endeavoured to prove that the secretaries of the Boards of Education and Missions were plotting the division of the church. These then are the agencies, which, as we understand this appeal to

American Presbyterians, are to be put down. And this call emanates from the avowed advocate of the Home Missionary Society. Is it wonderful, then, that when such a spirit is manifested in such a quarter, distrust, want of confidence, and desire of separation should arise? The writer says, p. 149, "There exists no occasion of separation excepting in the lust of power and in the unwillingness of a portion of the minority to submit to the mildest and most tolerant government." Alas! that the charge of lust of power should escape from such lips! Alas! that the "mildest government" the church is to hope for, is to be instinct with the spirit of the author of this book! Though we have our fears, we have our hopes also. We can cordially adopt the sentiment of the Synod of Kentucky, and say we earnestly deprecate the division of the church, and believe that, with the blessing of God on wise, faithful, and firm measures, such a result may be avoided. Our hope under God is founded on the conviction that the casual majority of the last Assembly, is not the majority of the church. The action of the various ecclesiastical bodies shows that, with the exception of western New-York, and the Western Reserve, the great mass of the church is opposed to the principles and spirit of the leaders of the last assembly. We believe, then, that the majority of the church is sound, and sound as Presbyterians. Secondly, we believe that the conduct of the leaders of the last Assembly has excited almost universal disapprobation; and produced a re-action which may yet prevent, even in the judgment of the most strenuous, the necessity for separation. We hope, also, that the acknowledged evils of a separation which must divide synods, presbyteries, and congregations, will produce, under the divine blessing, a spirit of moderation and concession, and render an union of views and plans of all the sincere friends of the doctrine and order of the Presbyterian church, practicable and easy.

We do not feel called upon to enter on any extended consideration of the subjects introduced in the two concluding chapters of this book. The author manifests here the same disposition to put the worst possible construction on the language and conduct of others, to present every point in the light best adapted to cast odium on his brethren, and to avail himself of all the controversial arts of a partizan writer, which characterises the other portions of his work. He represents the New-York committee as appointed for the very purpose of producing a dismemberment of the Presbyterian church, and exhausts himself in efforts to rouse against its

members the indignation of their brethren. A very short statement will be sufficient to expose the gross misrepresentation which pervades this part of his book.

The meeting at which that committee was appointed was called, as the writer himself states, by a *public* notice, given by the moderator of the Assembly, just after he had "pronounced a benediction, in which he expressed, with *apparent* sincerity and solemnity, his desire that the church might be saved from distraction, and preserved in perfect peace and unity." This must be admitted to be a very silly proceeding as preparatory to "secret machinations," and the issuing of a "*secret* circular." If, however, the gentleman concerned, had no secret purpose to effect, and contemplated no concealed mode of operation, this course was perfectly natural and proper. The man who sees plots and plans, manœuvres and machinations, on every occasion, is very much to be pitied, and very much suspected. The simple history of the matter seems to be this. The rejection of Dr. Miller's resolution, and the principles avowed in relation to that proposition, and to the appointment of a Board of Foreign Missions, produced in a large part of the Assembly feelings of distrust, dissatisfaction and alarm. Those who entertained these feelings were naturally desirous of ascertaining each others views. It had been said on the floor of the Assembly, by Dr. Hoge, that if the majority pursued the course which they did ultimately take, it would convulse the church to the very centre. This is sufficiently indicative of the opinion and feeling which prevailed in regard to the conduct of the majority. When, under these circumstances, the minority assembled at the meeting called by the Moderator, one member proposed that a separation of the church should be immediately effected; another, that a convention should be called with that object. After these plans had been for some time discussed, Dr. Hoge (as we are informed) rose and said that though he sympathized with his brethren in their sense of the wrong that had been done them and the church, they must remember that those present were but a small portion of the church, and, consequently, should take no step until they had ascertained the views of the brethren whom they represented. For this purpose he proposed the appointment of a central committee to correspond with the constituents of the minority. This course was acceded to, and the committee was accordingly appointed. This is substantially the account of that meeting as we have received it from persons who were

present during its proceedings. It appears, then, that this committee was not appointed to take measures for the dismemberment of the Presbyterian church; but, on the contrary, as we have no doubt, at least in regard to a large part of those who concurred in the measure, with the desire and hope that such a catastrophe might be avoided. The definite object of its appointment was to ascertain the wishes of that part of the church which disapproved of the course adopted by the factitious majority of the Assembly. The character of the gentleman who proposed the measure, and of those who were appointed on the committee, is a further evidence of the nature of the object aimed at. Accordingly, when the committee met, this was the very first point brought under discussion, and it was, we know, insisted upon by some of the members as the condition of their consenting to act, that the committee should not propose, or labour to effect a separation of the church. Such, we are assured, are still the views of the gentlemen referred to, and they do not regard themselves as having said or done any thing inconsistent with these opinions. It is not our business, however, to enter upon any extended explanation or defence of the proceedings of that committee; its members are abundantly able to take care of themselves.

Our position we feel to be difficult and delicate. On the one hand we respect and love the great mass of our old school brethren; we believe them to constitute the bone and sinews of the Presbyterian church; we agree with them in doctrine; we sympathise with them in their disapprobation and distrust of the spirit and conduct of the leaders of the opposite party, and we harmonize with them in all the great leading principles of ecclesiastical policy, though we differ from a portion of them, how large or how small that portion may be we cannot tell, as to the propriety and wisdom of some particular measures. They have a right to cherish and to express their opinions, and to endeavour to enforce them on others by argument and persuasion, and so have we. They exercise that right, and so must we.* They, we verily be-

* We speak, of course, as the conductors of a periodical work devoted to the defence of the truth and order of the Presbyterian church. Our author intimates, on p. 48, that there is some great impropriety in the gentlemen connected with the literary institutions in this place, undertaking to conduct such a work. We feel that there are some infelicities attending this course, but we cannot see its impropriety. If the time of pastors is so occupied with other duties, or if their studies are of such a kind as to indispose them for the labour of con-

lieve, have no selfish end in view. We are knowingly operating under the stress of conscience, against all our own in-

ducting such a work, who are to do it, if the officers of our literary institutions do not undertake it? Are our doctrines to be left without any vindication from misrepresentation and attack? May the Unitarian professors of Cambridge, the professors of New Haven, the Baptists at Newton, the Congregationalists at Andover, (whence the Repository for a long time issued,) all have their periodicals, and most orthodox Presbyterians be silent? We understand that even Dr. Peters, secretary of the Home Missionary Society, was so impressed with the necessity of having an organ for the dissemination and defence of his own views, as to make great exertions during the recent meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, at Hartford, to have a new periodical started in New York. We infer from what is said in the last number of the Biblical Repository, now the American Biblical Repository, that instead of instituting a new enterprise, he and his friends are to avail themselves of that work. It is now to be issued from New York, and Dr. Peters is prominent among its contributors. It is to advocate specially voluntary societies, and is to be biblical, in distinction from sectarian, in its theology. Now, so far from thinking this wrong in Dr. Peters, because he occupies a public station, we think it right, and are glad to see it. We wish every great interest, or mode of thinking in the church, to have its organ. We want to know where to look for an avowal and support of the opinions which any class of our brethren may entertain. There is only one point about which we are disposed to feel any regret. The Repository is a New England work, it was such in its origin, and is so still. Its editor is a Congregationalist, resident in Boston. That such a work is to become the organ of any particular division in the Presbyterian church we think rather unhappy. We are anxious to see peace and love prevail between the New England brethren and our own denomination. And for this reason we are desirous that the one party should not interfere with the affairs of the other. If our New England brethren prefer voluntary associations and new divinity, let them enjoy their preference with all freedom, but do not let them attempt to force it upon us. That they should transfer one of their most able periodicals to New York, still retaining the control of it, for the purpose of taking sides in our internal disputes, we cannot consider as either wise or decorous. The editor gives us a list of his contributors, of whom fourteen are in New England, and the remainder, excepting Dr. Schmucker, are new school Presbyterians. This combination proves two things: first, that Dr. Peters and his friends feel that they cannot fight their own battles, or sustain themselves without foreign aid; and secondly, that a portion of our New England brethren are determined to make common cause with our new school party. If they wish to divide our church, this is the very way to effect it. That the Repository is not to be backward in taking sides in our internal differences, is apparent from this very number. We have an extended argument, from the pen of the editor, against ecclesiastical organizations; an article on the Law of Paradise, the name of whose author is, "by particular request," withheld; though it might as well have been given, as there is but one man in the country, who has retained so much of his college style as to say that the crime of our first parents "*whelmed* in ruin the whole human race." In this article we have not only gross, but perfectly silly misrepresentations of the doctrine of imputation. The writer tells us, "The whole narrative is against the supposition which has been made by many, that Eve was guilty in this affair only because the sin of Adam was imputed to her. That this opinion should have ever been held may appear strange and incredible. Yet it has been so held; and, indeed, it is indispensable to the doctrine that the sin of Adam is

terests, so far as they are not involved in the interests of the church of God.

imputed to his posterity." We have then a long argument to prove that Eve sinned personally, and not by imputation only, in eating the forbidden fruit. Contempt, we know, is a very unchristian feeling when exercised towards *persons*, but we hope it is not always wrong when exercised towards *things*, otherwise few men, or children either, can read such statements without greatly sinning. If this is a specimen of the manner in which the League propose to write down Presbyterian doctrines, we have small reason for alarm. In preceding numbers of the Repository, there have been several extended articles against the doctrine of the imputation of either sin or righteousness. In one of these the writer frankly states that the design of his piece was, "to show, in the first place, that the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness to believers as the ground of their justification, has its origin neither in the Scriptures nor in remote ecclesiastical antiquity." It is really melancholy to see Christians in this country fighting the battles of Rationalism; uttering the very sentiments about the Reformation and its doctrines, against which the pious and devoted little band of believers in Germany are contending. In a review of a "Commentary for Preachers," in a recent number of the *Evangel. Kirchen Zeitung*, edited by Prof. Hengstenberg of Berlin, we were struck with the following passage. The reviewer quotes from the commentary this sentence, "He alone is righteous before God, who is righteous in himself. An imputed righteousness is moral nonsense, (ein moralisches Unding) and contains a *contradictio in adjecto*;" on which the reviewer remarks: "Herr Hulsmann (the author) then does not know the fundamental doctrine of the gospel, the very spring of life from which the Reformation arose." The writer in the Repository informs us in the article just referred to, that Neander attributes the rise of neology in Germany "to dead orthodoxy," and by a strange perversion of mind, he seems to find in this a warrant for attacking orthodoxy. Why does he not attack the DEADNESS? The orthodoxy did no harm. Why must he assault the very doctrine which pious Germans are now contending for as for their lives? - Why must he labour against them and with their opponents? If we know any thing of the opinions and feelings of German Christians, the theology of the Repository and New Haven Spectator would be denounced and rejected by them as Pelagian and neological in its tendency, with more decision than it ever has been in this country.

It must certainly excite surprise that the men who in our church have so recently and solemnly declared their belief of the doctrines which the Repository assails, should make that work their chosen organ. We have no right to infer from this fact that they are insincere in their professions, but we cannot avoid the inference that they attach no value to these doctrines. Why else should they lend their sanction to a work, and endeavour to increase its influence, which is the great instrument of assault against them? So long as the Repository remained in its proper sphere, no one could complain of its conductors taking what course they pleased. But when they transfer it to our church, and make it the organ of one of our parties, it assumes a new position. Though it is apparent enough that the Repository is to be devoted to the new-school interests, we are at a loss to know what form of doctrine it is to represent. Every such work, to have either significance or effect, must have a basis of its own, and represent some form of theological opinion. Thus the Examiner rests on Unitarianism; the Spectator on New Havenism; the Theological Review on old New England divinity; the Repository on old Calvinism. But what is the Repository to rest upon? Perhaps on Christianity in the general. The editor says, "The theological character which will be stamped on the work, it is

The portion of our brethren to whom we here refer, believe that presbyterianism has been tried long enough, that every effort that ought to be made has been made in vain, in the regular exercise of our system, to rid the church of error and disorder, and therefore that the time has come to resort to extra-constitutional measures for the accomplishment of this object. If they are right here, they are right in all they do and in all they propose. If they are wrong here, they are wrong in all their deductions from this assumption. When the thirteen American provinces became satisfied that the time had arrived when they ought to be separated from the mother country, they were right in all the measures which they took to accomplish the object, though these measures were avowedly in themselves unconstitutional and revolutionary. Those members also of the southern states, who believe that the protection of their own rights and interests calls for disunion, would be justifiable in labouring to affect it, if their primary assumption be correct. In other words, there are occasions when it is proper and wise for the members of any society to resort to the right of revolution. The only question, as it regards our church is, has such an occasion yet arrived? If it has, then let us have combination, conventions, and whatever else is necessary to do the work effectually and well. But if it has not, then all extra-constitutional measures are not only unwise, but wrong, not in policy merely, but in morals. Here then is a point on which every man is bound to be fully persuaded in his own mind. It is a question of conscience and personal duty. We do not believe that an occasion for revolution has occurred. Assuming even the principle on which these brethren proceed, that when the majority of a church becomes corrupt, so as to prevent the

hoped, will be distinctively and eminently *biblical*. In this way, it is conceived, it may find currency in all parts of the Union, and avoid being identified with a mere sect or party." Does this mean, that in the judgment of the conductors of this work, no theological opinion, which distinguishes one Christian sect from another, is *biblical*, or has its foundation in the Bible? Is this work to be the advocate of that general theology, which embraces nothing in which Calvinists, Arminians, and Pelagians, are not agreed? If so, it must rest upon indifference, and represent the sect of anti-sectarians. By the way, we see that the very first meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Union, (at least, the first of which we ever heard,) ended in disunion. The meeting was addressed by the Rev. Mr. Dowling, of the Baptist church, and by President Mahan and Dr. Skinner, of the Presbyterian church. The two latter gentlemen expressed sentiments, which convinced the former, that he, as a conscientious Baptist, could have nothing to do with them. (See Evangelist, Jan. 7, 1837). Thus ended this vision. We shall see what will come of the anti-sectarian theology.

ejection of errorists by the regular exercise of discipline, it is the duty of the minority to secede, we deny that any sufficient evidence has yet been afforded that such is the case with regard to our own church. The failure of one case of discipline, under any circumstances, would hardly be sufficient evidence of such a fact. And in the case of Mr. Barnes there are three considerations, which show that his restoration is no adequate proof of the defection of the church. The first is, that the final decision was had when one of the largest and most orthodox synods was excluded from the Assembly; the second, that the trial in the lower court was, in the judgment of some of our oldest and soundest men, unconstitutionally conducted; and the third, that Mr. Barnes, even in the judgment of his opponents, retracted all his offensive opinions. A failure under these circumstances should not produce even discouragement, much less despair or violence. We say then, that it has not been made out that the church is so corrupt that the regular exercise of discipline is inadequate for its purification. The action of our several ecclesiastical bodies, since the rising of the Assembly, shows, as we have already remarked, that with the exception of the Congregationalized portions of New York and the Western Reserve, and of here and there a detached presbytery, the church is substantially of one mind. That such a church should be rent asunder, and split, no one can tell into how many fragments, is enough to make dispassionate men wonder and weep. Believing such separation to be wrong in principle, and fraught with calamities which no one can foresee or estimate, we should be recreant to every principle of duty if we did not say so. Those who think differently, must act differently. To their own master they stand or fall. We conclude this article, therefore, as we concluded our former one on the same subject, with the full and frank expression of our own opinion, knowing that we neither have nor ought to have the slightest influence beyond the weight due to the considerations by which that opinion is supported. While these are our views of this momentous subject, we not only must submit, but are ready to submit cheerfully to the majority of our brethren. If they think the church ought to be divided, they will of course effect the division. And on the other hand, if the majority of those who are admitted to be sound, are against a division, we think the duty of submission, on the part of those who may differ from them, is no less clear. Our prayer is, that God would imbue his people abundantly with the spirit of wisdom and meekness.