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ART. I.—*Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, before the Lowell Institute, January, 1844.* By Mark Hopkins, D. D., President of Williams College. Boston: Published by T. R. Marvin. 1846. Svo., pp. 383.

WE fully agree with the learned author, that the evidences of our religion are exhaustless. Though truth is one, as the centre of a circle is one, it may be viewed from as many points as are to be found in the circumference. Every comparison of revealed truth, with all other truth, tends to show the harmony of the whole. According to the cast and temper and discipline of individuals, different minds will view the subject differently; and hence the body of evidence may be expected to accumulate as long as the world lasts. There are kinds of proof which are fitted to certain states of society and human opinion, and which, after serving their purpose, cease to be regarded. Thus, for example, the reasonings of the early Fathers, in their apologetical treatises, which seem to have been sufficiently cogent in their day, exhibit arguments on which we should scarcely rely in ours. Every student of theology has been struck with the very different points of view assumed on this subject, by the Germans and the English, respectively. And, with the progress of science, the increase of exegetical research, and the mutual reflections of prophecy and history, we may expect a series of devel-

Upon the whole, we would remark, that from the character given of Mr. Housman, in this volume, though some allowance may be made for the partiality of the biographer, yet it is evident, that he was a clergyman of rare accomplishments. Although he did not possess the very highest order of intellectual powers, yet his mind was well balanced; and all his faculties were of that kind which qualified him for eminent usefulness. We could wish and pray that the church might be supplied with many ministers exactly of his mould. His life, though protracted, was useful and comfortable to its close.

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ART. IV.—*General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met, agreeably to appointment, in the Tent, Presbyterian Church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, the 21st day of May, 1846, at 11 o'clock, A. M., and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. John M. Krebs, D.D., Moderator of the last Assembly, from Galatians vi. 14: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

After the sermon, the Assembly was constituted with prayer. The Permanent Clerk, from the Standing Committee of Commissions, reported the names of persons entitled to be enrolled as commissioners.

*Title of Bishop.*

When the roll was read in the afternoon of the first day of the sessions of the Assembly, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge moved that the word Bishop be struck out in every case where it was applied to the clerical delegates, and that the word minister be substituted in its place. This motion prevailed by a large majority. With regard to the title Bishop, there are certain points as to which all parties may be considered as substantially agreed. One is that in the New Testament, the title is given to those officers in the Church who are appointed to rule, teach, and ordain. Another is, that the terms Presbyterian and Bishop are applied

to the same officers. Prelatists long contended against this position, but have at last, with common consent, conceded it. In so doing they have conceded almost the entire ground of argument from scripture in behalf of prelacy, and assumed the task of proving that though in the apostolic age a Bishop was a Presbyter, and nothing more, in the immediately succeeding age he was a prelate. That is, that during the time of the apostles the term designated one office, but immediately and forever after a different one. We find while the apostles lived a set of men called Bishops; we find the same thing in the next age, and we are called upon to believe that these men filled offices essentially different. This sudden change in the meaning of a title is unexampled and incredible. A third point beyond dispute is, that though Bishop and Presbyter were convertible terms in the apostolic church, yet as the hierarchial principle gradually gained ground the term Bishop was appropriated to one class of the clergy, and Presbyter to another, and that the *usus loquendi* of the whole church for centuries has given this restrictive meaning to the word Bishop. The question then is, is it desirable to change this long-established usage, and to restore to the word its scriptural meaning. We have no hesitation in saying that if practicable, it would be desirable; but believing it to be impracticable, we regard the attempt as altogether inexpedient. If all Protestant christendom at the time of the Reformation had reverted to the scriptural usage, and called all invested with the cure of souls, all who had the right to rule, teach and ordain, Bishops, it would have deprived prelatists of an advantage to which they admit they are not entitled, and to which they are more indebted than to any of their arguments either from scripture or antiquity. As we admit the office of a Bishop to be a scriptural office, to all appearance, Episcopalians have that office, and we have it not. In relinquishing to them the title, the churches of the Reformation, in appearance, conceded that their ministers were not Bishops, whereas, if those churches had claimed the title, and thus established a Protestant *usus loquendi* agreeable to the admitted usage of scripture, making the word Bishop mean a minister of the gospel, prelatists would have been forced to the constant avowal of their real doctrine, viz: that prelates are not Bishops but apostles. This would have placed them on their true ground. But as this was not done, and as the usage of all

churches and of common life, has made Bishop and prelate synonymous, we think it as hopeless a task to attempt a change now as to make the word white mean black, and black white. If all who use the English language would agree that black hereafter should mean white, the change might in time be made, though with great difficulty even then, as all books written before such determination was come to, would have to be expurgated. In like manner if all Christian nations should agree to revert to the scriptural usage of the word Bishop, its original meaning might gradually be restored. But for any one portion of the Church to effect that change in the meaning of the word, we hold to be impossible; and if impossible the attempt is obviously unwise. We are glad, therefore, that the motion to substitute the word minister for that of Bishop in the minutes of the Assembly prevailed, and we hope the matter will rest where it is.

#### *Choice of Officers.*

The Rev. Charles Hodge was chosen Moderator, the Rev. Revaud K. Rogers, Temporary Clerk; and the Rev. Willis Lord, Stated Clerk in the place of Dr. Engles, whose resignation was tendered and accepted, and the thanks of the Assembly given to him for his services. Four vacancies having occurred in the Board of Trustees of the General Assembly, one by the death of Solomon Allen, Esq., and the others by the resignation of Alexander Henry and Charles Chauncey, Esqs., and of Rev. H. A. Boardman, D.D., their places were supplied by the election of Rev. Courtland Van Rensselaer, D.D., Rev. John Krebs, D.D., Alexander W. Mitchell, M.D. and J. Dunlap, Esq. The thanks of the Assembly were tendered to the gentlemen whose resignations were accepted, for their faithful services; and the following minute was adopted in reference to the case of Mr. Allen, viz: "The Assembly has learned, with much regret, the decease of Solomon Allen, for many years a member of the Board of Trustees of this body, and they deem it but a reasonable tribute to his memory, to record their testimony to the disinterested zeal and unwearied fidelity with which he discharged his various responsible duties as a Trustee of the General Assembly, and also as a member of the several Boards of the Church."

#### *Slavery.*

This subject was before the Assembly on several occasions.

It was first brought forward during the reading of the letter from the Synod of Canada. That Synod indulged in the common-places of declamation and fault-finding which abolitionists have rendered so familiar to our ears. Their letter was remarkably deficient in courtesy, violating the common rules of propriety, and betraying such a want of knowledge of facts, and such a lack of due discrimination, that it was difficult for the Assembly to listen to it with patience or respect. A motion was made to arrest the reading of the letter, which gave rise to some discussion. The house finally decided that it should take the usual course; i. e. be read and referred to the Committee on Foreign Correspondence. That committee, at a subsequent meeting, reported an answer, which the Assembly determined not to adopt and transmit. Different members, doubtless, voted for that course from different motives. <sup>1</sup> Some, because the answer did not meet their approbation; <sup>2</sup> others, because they preferred expressing disapprobation of the letter from Canada by silence; and others because they thought indefinite postponement the easiest method of disposing of the subject. While we seriously disapprove of the whole spirit of the Canada letter, we cannot fully sympathize in the strong feeling towards our brethren which several members expressed; much less can we consider their letter as furnishing any adequate ground for breaking off our intercourse with a branch of the church to which we are bound by so many ties. We ought to bear with each other's infirmities. It is an infirmity which easily besets our brethren from the old world to assume that they know, on all subjects, as much more than we do as their country is older than ours. This is a mistake which will gradually correct itself, and our brethren will soon cease to claim the right of speaking to us as children, simply because England is our mother country.

In the letter from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, this subject was brought forward in a much more becoming manner, and an answer, expressing clearly and forcibly the views of our Church respecting slavery, was reported by the committee, adopted and ordered to be transmitted.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures had this matter brought before them in various ways, and submitted in reference to it, the following report, viz:

“Overture No. 17. A collection of memorials and petitions

on the subject of slavery, containing an expression of opinion by the General Association of Massachusetts; seven petitions from a number of ministers, elders, and private members of our Church; five memorials from Presbyteries, viz: the Presbyteries of Beaver, Hocking, Blairsville, New Lisbon, and Albany, and a resolution from the Synod of Cincinnati; all requesting of the Assembly to utter additional testimony on the subject of slavery; or, at least, to re-affirm or explain its former testimony. In view of these memorials and petitions, the Committee recommended the adoption of the following minutes, viz:

“Our Church has, from time to time, during a period of nearly sixty years, expressed its views on the subject of Slavery. During all this period it has held and uttered substantially the same sentiments—believing that this uniform testimony is true and capable of vindication from the word of God; the Assembly is at the same time clearly of the opinion that it has already deliberately and solemnly spoken on this subject with sufficient fullness and clearness, Therefore,

“*Resolved*, That no further action upon this subject is at present needed.”

It was moved as an amendment to the resolution with which this report concludes, that a clause should be added declaring that the decision of the Assembly of 1845 on the subject of slavery, was not to be understood as contradicting or rescinding any previous testimony of the General Assembly on the subject. The majority of the house preferring a direct vote on the report, laid this amendment on the table, and the report was adopted by a large majority. Whereupon, the Rev. R. M. White gave notice of his intention to enter a protest against the above decision; and Rev. Thomas S. Thomas gave a similar notice, for different reasons. In the afternoon, however, Mr. White moved the following resolution: “*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this house, the action of the General Assembly of 1845 [in reference to slavery] was not intended to deny or rescind the testimony often uttered by the General Assembly previous to that date.” As substantially the same thing had been proposed in the morning as an amendment to the report of the committee on Bills and Overtures, some doubt was expressed as to whether the above resolution was in order. But as the house did not reject the amendment, and had not in any way expressed a judgment

contrary to the sentiment which it expressed, it was pronounced in order and adopted, ayes 88, nays 32. The report of the committee was adopted by a vote of ayes 126, nays 29; but Mr. White and five others subsequently, as appears from the following minute, declared themselves satisfied with the subsequent action of the house on this subject, the vote, therefore, should stand *ayes* 132, *nays* 23. The minute referred to is as follows: "We, the undersigned, respectfully protest against the action of this Assembly in the adoption of the report of the committee on Bills and Overtures on the subject of slavery, upon the ground that that report declares further action on this subject to be unnecessary. But as this Assembly has since taken the action we desired, by the resolution subsequently adopted, we ask that this paper be recorded as explanatory of our vote on this subject. Robert M. White, James M. McGee, Josiah D. Smith, A. T. Henricks, Joseph H. Chambers." To this protest the following answer was placed on record: "The Assembly did not regard the additional resolution which was adopted, as taking any further action on the subject of slavery, but as explanatory of the true meaning and design of the resolution previously adopted." It thus appears that these brethren and the Assembly were exactly of the same mind as to what ought to be done, though they differed as to the import of the report of the committee against which the above protest was entered.

The results above indicated were not arrived at without a good deal of debate, which was conducted in an uniformly kind and Christian temper. The two brethren who alone appeared as technical abolitionists, Messrs. Fullerton and Thomas, we fear would lose caste with their own party, could the reasonable and mild spirit with which they presented their views be known. Whatever may be their doctrines, they certainly exhibited nothing of the animus which has distinguished and disgraced the abolitionists as a body. No one could listen to the debate on this subject without being satisfied that in our Church there is a remarkable and cordial unanimity of opinion in regard to it. Should a collision in reference to this matter ever occur, it must arise from misunderstanding, or from a culpable want of a right spirit. It is notorious that, in this country, men are divided into three classes as regards slavery. The one hold that slaveholding is in itself a sin, and ought to be made a term

of Christian communion; that every man who holds slaves, should, after due admonition, be excluded from the Church. This is the distinguishing doctrine of the abolitionists, popularly so called. This is the burden of their writings. This is the ground of their denunciations. This was the offensive principle in the letter from the Synod of Canada. This is the popular doctrine in England and Scotland; one which the Rev. Dr. Cunningham had the moral courage to resist in the Free Church, and over which, as unscriptural and destructive, he bids fair there to triumph. This is the doctrine against which our southern brethren have rightfully protested. They would be justified in abandoning any church which should undertake to enforce any such doctrine. We are not aware that this doctrine had a single advocate on the floor of the Assembly. Even the two brethren above mentioned, who claimed to be abolitionists, carefully avoided taking this ground, and so long as northern churches of any denomination repudiate this unscriptural dogma, there can be no justifiable cause of schism, as far as this matter is concerned, between them and their southern brethren.

A second class go to the very opposite extreme and maintain that slavery is a good and desirable institution and ought to be perpetuated; that is, since there must always be a labouring class of society, it is best in an economical, social and moral point of view, that they should be in a state of slavery. They insist that the slaves are better off, not merely as to physical comforts, but in their moral and social condition, than the free labouring population of any nation in the world. This is a doctrine which had few, if any advocates even among men of the world, in this country, until within a few years; and we know no presbyterian minister who has ever avowed it. We can easily imagine that a Christian man may believe that, in certain states of society, that is, where one portion is in a high state of cultivation, and another in a state of ignorance and degradation, it may be for the good of the whole that the latter should be in bondage to the former, but we cannot see how any Christian can say that this is a desirable condition, or that the ignorance and degradation without which slavery cannot exist, should be perpetuated, in order that one part of society may hold peaceful sway over the other. It is one thing to say that a despotic form of government is in a low state of civilization the best, and another that a



low state of civilization should be perpetuated for the sake of despotism. The doctrine in question is, however so monstrous, it is in such obvious conflict with the principles of the word of God, which require us to do all we can to diffuse knowledge and to elevate the character of our fellow men; it is so opposed to the inherent rights of men, who have an inalienable right to knowledge and the means of improvement; it is so contrary to common sense, inasmuch as it implies that a nation of ignorant, uncivilized men is better off, that is, is in a more desirable state for all the ends of society and of human existence, than a nation that is enlightened and cultivated; it is so opposed to all experience, to the contrast every where exhibited between despotic and free states, and between communities of free men and communities where the majority are slaves; it is so opposed to the judgment of the good in every part of the world and to the opinions of the enlightened statesmen as well as Christians of the south, that we have no fear that even the spirit of opposition or of self-interest in southern men, can lead to its extensive prevalence, and much less that it can ever make any inroad on a Christian church. We do not know a single presbyterian minister, either south or north, who has ever ventured to teach that slavery is a desirable institution which ought to be rendered permanent. This doctrine, as far as we know, is confined to certain politicians and men of the world.

The third class, which includes the great body of our church, and of the enlightened and good men, in every part of our country, maintain the doctrine which our General Assembly has from first to last inculcated, and which was proclaimed so clearly and with so much unanimity last year at Cincinnati. That doctrine is:

1. That since Christ and his apostles did not make the holding of slaves a bar to communion, we have no authority to do so. The Assembly says, they cannot pronounce slave holding a heinous and scandalous sin, calculated to bring upon the church the curse of God.

2. That the laws of many of the states relating to slaves are unjust and oppressive; that it is sinful to traffic in slaves for the sake of gain, or for a like motive, or for the convenience of the master, to separate husbands and wives, or parents and children.

3. That the slaves have a right to religious instruction, and to be treated as rational, accountable and immortal beings; and con-

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sequently that it is the duty of their masters so to regard and treat them, performing towards them all the duties belonging to this relation specified in the word of God. The Assembly, therefore, exhorted masters to remember that they have a Master in heaven, and that they are bound to do unto others, what they would have others do unto them. Such is the obvious sense of the declaration adopted by the Assembly of 1845, which has commended itself to the judgment and conscience of the vast body of our own church and of true Christians in every part of the land. Such has ever been substantially the testimony of our church on this subject. It has always taught on the one hand, that slaveholding is not in itself sinful, and on the other hand that there are many things which slaveholders often do and too often justify, which are sinful; such as keeping their slaves in ignorance, preventing their hearing the gospel, disregarding their conjugal and parental rights, denying to them the right of property, and the like. If the doctrine above stated is agreeable to the word of God, about which we have no doubt, then the church which teaches that doctrine and acts upon it, may allow the denunciations of abolitionists, and the threats of excommunication from other churches, to pass by as idle wind. We are sorry to see that the managers of the Evangelical Alliance, have for the sake of conciliating errorists, and contrary to their own avowed conviction of the rule of Christ on the subject, agreed that slaveholders are to be excluded from that alliance. This is a determination which, if ratified, will cut off all American churches, who determine to adhere to the rule of communion laid down in the scripture. This concession to what is really only one form of the spirit of infidelity, is not a very happy omen as to the results of the long contemplated alliance of Christians.

Though there is this general agreement on this subject throughout our church, it is very evident there is great diversity of sentiment as to what ought to be the action of the Assembly in relation to it. Some take the ground that the Assembly has no right to say a word on the subject; that slavery is a civil institution and lies as much beyond the province of church courts, as matters of government or politics. It is, however, as far as we know, only one here and there who take this extreme ground. It is too obviously untenable for any but excited men to venture to assume. If the Bible recognises the relation of master and

slave as one which may exist in the church, it is a relation with regard to which the church has a right to teach, to exhort, and to exercise her watch and care. If the Bible tells believing masters what is their duty with respect to their slaves, the church is as much bound to see that her members perform those duties, as that they conform in any other respect to the law of Christ. Her duty here, is just what it is in relation to parents and children, subjects and rulers. She is bound to teach parents what their obligations are, to exhort them to act agreeably to them, and to visit their neglect of duty with her spiritual admonitions and censures.

Others again, who readily admit that the Assembly has the right to speak on this as on other subjects involving questions of duty, still hold that the less that is said the better; that such is the state of mind of southern men that they receive with impatience the annunciation even of truths which they themselves are ready to avow, when that annunciation comes from non-slaveholders, and that more good would be done by allowing the matter to rest in southern hands. There may be some foundation for such remarks, but it must be remembered that the General Assembly is not a northern body, it is the representative of the whole church, of the south as well as the north. It should be remembered too that the church is one; it has a common character and common responsibility. If false doctrine, or evil practice prevail in one part of the church, it is the sin of the whole, and of course the obligation to correct the evil lies on the whole. The General Assembly therefore as representing the whole church has not only the right, but is bound to declare the duties of her members, wherever they may live. To the General Assembly therefore other churches have a right to look, and in fact ever have looked for a testimony on this subject. While all this is true and obvious, it may readily be admitted that it is unreasonable to be calling on the Assembly every year to be affirming the same thing. Unless there is satisfactory evidence that the inferior judicatories are in any part of the church, north or south, neglecting their duty or tolerating abuses contrary to the laws of Christ and our common standards, it is evidently proper that those judicatories should not be interfered with, but allowed to pursue their course unmolested. There is a great neglect of parental duty and of the faithful religious education of children

at the north, yet we do not expect the General Assembly to be every year reiterating its admonitions on that subject. It is of necessity left in a great measure to the presbyteries and synod whom it concerns.

### *Joint Communion.*

At an early period of the session of the Assembly, the committee on Devotional Exercises reported, "That a proposition had been made to them by the committee on Devotional Exercises of the Triennial Assembly, meeting in the First Presbyterian Church, to the effect that the two Assemblies unite in the celebration of the Lord's supper, and recommending the adoption of the following resolution, viz: *Resolved*, That the General Assembly accept the proposition of the General Assembly meeting in the First Presbyterian Church, that the Assemblies unite in the celebration of the Lord's supper; and that the committee on Devotional Exercises, in connexion with the corresponding committee of the other Assembly, make arrangements for the same."

The Rev. Mr. Palmer, as the minority of the committee, offered the following resolution as a counter report: "*Resolved*, That in the judgment of this Assembly, it is inexpedient in our ecclesiastical character, to accept the proposition made by the body now holding its sessions in the First Presbyterian Church in this city, in consideration of the relations which these two bodies sustain to each other, but that the whole question of intercommunion be determined by the consciences, and at the discretion of the members severally."

This was one of the most embarrassing subjects which came before the Assembly, and gave rise to a debate protracted at intervals through several days, and was finally determined by the adoption, with great unanimity of the following minute: "The committee on Devotional Exercises having reported to this General Assembly a communication from a similar Committee of the General Assembly in session at the First Presbyterian Church, representing that the said Assembly has authorized its committee to confer with the committee of this Assembly, in relation to a joint celebration of the Lord's supper by the two bodies; it was ordered, that the committee respectfully acknowledge and reciprocate the courtesy of the communication, and say

in reply, that while this Assembly recognises the above mentioned body as a branch of the Church of our common Lord, and for this reason would, as individuals, under appropriate circumstances, unite with our brethren in the celebration of divine ordinances, yet as this Assembly has never in its corporate and official capacity, united with any other body in celebrating the Lord's supper, it judges it inexpedient to institute a new usage at this time.

On motion, the committee on Devotional Exercises was directed to communicate a copy of the above minute to the committee of the other Assembly."

As this invitation purported to come with the sanction of the unanimous consent of the Triennial Assembly, it naturally excited no little surprise. It was notorious that many members of that body held it to be unlawful to commune with slaveholders, and that one of their synods had suspended from the ministry, one of their members for teaching on the subject of slavery, the very doctrine that our General Assembly had publicly avowed, the question naturally arose, How could those members join in an invitation of this kind addressed to a body, some of whose members were known to hold slaves, and which had officially sanctioned doctrines which they had pronounced merited suspension from the ministry? The true solution of this difficulty, we believe to be this. The proposition was never brought fully before that house for consideration. It was simply moved that their committee be authorized to *confer* with ours on the subject, and this motion was adopted without consideration or debate. Had it been brought before them as it was before us, we are bound to believe it would have met with quite as much opposition in that body as it did in ours. The Rev. A. W. Campbell, chairman of the committee on the part of the Triennial Assembly, has furnished through the New York Observer, the true history of this matter. He says: "At Bowling Green, Ky., as I was coming on to this city, a memorial upon this subject, drawn up without my knowledge by an honoured member of the Old School Church, and signed by all the elders of both Presbyterian Churches of that place, was put in my hands. A copy of the same paper was put in the hands of the commissioner to the other Assembly, and, if I mistake not, by him put in the hands of their committee of Bills and Overtures. I was permitted

to attend an exceedingly interesting union meeting of the two Presbyterian churches of Newark, Delaware. The elders of these churches also signed similar memorials to both Assemblies, which were placed in the hands of the lay delegate to the other Assembly, to bring to this city. After my arrival in this place, I saw in the *Christian Observer* a suggestion from the pen of a layman in reference to a joint celebration of the Lord's supper by the two Assemblies. It harmonized with my feelings. I was delighted with the suggestion. I felt as if I could return with higher conceptions of the power and glory of our common Christianity, were I permitted to see two such bodies, so venerable, so learned, so influential, and hitherto so alienated, sit down together at the Lord's table. Without committing any one, and wholly under the impulse of such feelings, I arose in our Assembly and moved that the committee on Devotional Exercises be instructed to confer with the committee of the other Assembly upon this subject. Without debate, unanimously, and almost by acclamation, the resolution passed. Such is the origin of this matter."

It is obvious from his account, the motion, as far as the other Assembly was concerned, was a mere matter of impulse, and that as far as the real movers in the business were concerned, it was intended as preliminary to a motion for the union of the two bodies. Accordingly Mr. Campbell informs us, that he presented the memorial from Bowling Green upon the subject of reunion, praying the Assemblies to appoint committees of conference, and adds, "unanimously, if I mistake not, the memorial was accepted, and a committee appointed, of which I had the honour to be the chairman." This is another evidence of the want of consideration with which such matters sometimes pass large bodies. Here is the momentous question of the reunion of the Presbyterian Church, disposed of as far as the appointment of a committee of conference is concerned, without debate. Yet no man can believe that the Triennial Assembly unanimously regards such a reunion in the present state of affairs as either possible or desirable. How could their abolitionists consent to an union with us, when they would suspend four-fifths of our ministers from their office, and excommunicate one-half our Church members? This matter was brought before our Assembly by a note from Mr. Campbell to the moderator, but as it

seemed to be an unofficial communication, it was simply laid upon the table.

As before stated the proposal for the joint celebration of the Lord's supper, gave rise to a protracted debate. The leading speakers against accepting the invitation, were Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, Dr. W. L. Breckinridge, Dr. McFarland, Dr. Reed, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Torrance. Those in favour of the report of the committee, were Mr. Watt, Dr. Young, Dr. Musgrave, Dr. J. McDowell, Mr. Baker, Dr. Lindsley, Mr. Backus, Judge Grier, Mr. Blauvelt, Mr. Todd. The reasons assigned by the speakers on either side, were very different, and no one is responsible for any reason, other than those assigned by himself. Two, and as far as we are aware, two only, of the speakers objected to accepting the invitation on the principle of close communion. It is well known as a peculiarity of some of the smaller Scotch sects, that they regard the act of communing with an individual or a church, as implying approbation of all their avowed religious doctrines and practices. They will not commune, therefore, with any out of their own narrow circle. The common doctrine of Christians, the doctrine of our church, clearly expressed in her standards and ever manifested in her practice, is that we are bound to commune, on all proper occasions, with all who give evidence of being the disciples of Christ. We have no right to refuse to receive those whom Christ receives, nor to prescribe other conditions of admission to the Lord's table, and to our Christian fellowship, than he has prescribed for admission into his kingdom and into heaven. We believe there is no one principle more deeply rooted than this in the hearts of our ministers and members, nor one for which they would feel constrained to make greater sacrifices. We rejoice therefore that the opposite doctrine was so generally repudiated by those who opposed the report of the committee, and that the true doctrine is so explicitly avowed in the minute adopted by the Assembly.

One, if not more of the speakers, founded his objection on the ground that the celebration of the Lord's supper was the work of an organized church, and could not be properly attended upon, by an ecclesiastical body as such. It is true that to celebrate the Lord's supper is the work of a church, and therefore we as Protestants protest against private communion and private masses

but it is not true that a permanent organized number of professing Christians, united in covenant is alone a church. This is the Brownist or Independent doctrine, utterly opposed to scripture and to presbyterianism. A church, in the sense in which the word must be taken in the above proposition to make it consistent with scripture, is a company of professing Christians. Any such company, wherever met, may if they see fit, unite in the breaking of bread in memory of the Saviour's death, provided they in other respects conform to the directions of Christ in relation to this ordinance. Our Assembly accordingly has often united as a band of Christians in this solemn service. They have not merely resolved to commune altogether with some church, but to commune as an Assembly, that is, the ministers and elders of which it was composed, have celebrated the Lord's supper together. And it would be hard to find in the Bible or out of it any reason against such a course.

The main objections, however, were of a very different character. The grand source of diversity of opinion as to the propriety of accepting the invitation, arose from difference of opinion as to the necessary or natural interpretation of our answer. A large portion of the Assembly thought that the only proper interpretation of an affirmative answer, would be, we recognise you as Christian brethren, and of a negative answer, we cannot thus recognise you. Those who took this view of the matter were of course in favour of accepting the invitation. Many others, however, thought that while declining the invitation, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, would not imply a denial of the Christian standing of the other Assembly, an affirmative answer would imply a great deal more than they were prepared to say. They thought it would imply that there was a state of harmony between the two bodies, whereas the fact is that in many places the two parties are in constant conflict. Attempts to divide congregations, to proselyte, to weaken and in every way to thwart are still to a lamentable extent prevalent. It was thought, it would imply that we were prepared to undo all that had been done, i. e. withdraw our protest against the doctrinal errors against which we have so long lifted up our testimony. It was said that the natural inference from the two Assemblies communing together would be, that there was never any adequate reason for a separation, and that they ought now



to be reunited. It is not wonderful that those who looked upon the matter in this light, should strenuously oppose the measure. We doubt whether there was a single member on the floor of the Assembly, who was prepared to do any thing which he regarded as a recantation of the testimony borne in years past against the prevalent errors of the New Divinity, or who regarded the union of the two churches as at present constituted, as even possible, much less as desirable. The difficulty was to see how the mere act of communing together, which according to the avowed doctrine of the speakers themselves, implies nothing beyond Christian fellowship, could fairly be interpreted as a recantation of our former testimony, or as an avowal of a desire for ecclesiastical union. We do not renounce our Calvinistic creed when we commune with Arminians, nor express the idea that the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches should be united, when we join with Episcopalians in commemorating the death of our common Lord.

There were again a large portion of the Assembly, who would have gladly voted for accepting the invitation, could it have been done with unanimity, but who thought it undesirable after the matter had been so much debated and opposed. The minute adopted was a compromise, satisfying no part of the Assembly entirely, yet generally agreed to as the best thing that could be done under the circumstances. That minute, by distinctly recognising the other Assembly as a branch of the church, by professing towards them Christian courtesy and fellowship, and by placing the refusal of the invitation upon the ground of usage, deprived the refusal of every thing that could wound the feelings either of the other Assembly or the Christian community.

#### *Parochial Schools.*

A committee of which the Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander was chairman, appointed by the last Assembly, made an important report on the subject of Parochial Schools, which was read and ordered to be printed for the use of the members. The report closed with the following resolutions, viz:

“*Resolved*, 1st. That, in the judgment of the General Assembly, any scheme of education is incomplete which does not include instruction in the scriptures, and in those doctrines of

grace which are employed by the Holy Spirit in the renewal and sanctification of the soul.

“*Resolved*, 2d. That, in consideration of the blessings derived to us, through our forefathers, from the method of mingling the doctrines of our church with the daily teachings of the school, the Assembly earnestly desire as near an approach to this method as may comport with the circumstances of this country.

“*Resolved*, 3d. That the Assembly regards with great approval, the attempt of such churches as have undertaken schools under their proper direction; as well as the zeal which has led individuals friends of the truth to aid the same cause.

“*Resolved*, 4th. That the Assembly recommends the whole subject of Parochial Education to the serious attention of the church—counseling all concerned to regard the maintenance of gospel faith and order, in the founding of new schools, the appointment of teachers, and the selection of places of education.”

On motion of Dr. Young the following additional resolution was adopted.

“*Resolved*, That the whole subject of the report be referred to the Board of Education; that they may, from time to time, report to the General Assembly any further action that may be needed for extending through our churches a system of Parochial Schools.”

The whole report was finally adopted and ordered to be printed in the appendix to the minutes.

The only point which gave rise to any debate was that contained in the second resolution, which affirms that “the doctrines of our church” ought to be mingled “with the daily teachings of the school,” necessarily implying that there ought to be schools under the control of the church. This brought up the great question, whether Presbyterians ought to join with other denominations and sustain the common schools of the state, or whether they should as far as possible establish Parochial Schools under their own exclusive control. When the matter first came up Dr. R. J. Breckenridge made a short and effective speech against the principle of Parochial Schools; and Dr. Tallmadge spoke in reply and in favour of the report. The subject was then postponed and made the order of the day for the afternoon of the following Thursday. When that time arrived, after a short debate, the discussion was again postponed, and finally the

report was acted upon without having been debated to any extent according to its importance. The principal objections urged against the report were, first, that the whole spirit of the age and of our country is in favour of popular education, that spirit we cannot effectually resist, it must have its course, and therefore it is the duty of every evangelical denomination to throw its influence into the movement, and give the common schools of the country as Christian a character as possible. Secondly, that, since Presbyterians, in consequence of their general intelligence, have an influence disproportioned to their relative number, they are of all denominations the last which should withdraw from this general partnership; they are sure to derive more benefit from it, and to have more power in controlling it, than would be due to them on account of their numbers. Thirdly, that it must be disastrous for any body of Christians to separate themselves from the community, sitting apart as on an insulated tripod, out of communion with their fellow citizens. If they would prosper they must enter heart and hand in the common enterprises of the country, in which they have an interest, and not attempt to set up for themselves. Fourthly, that the diversity of sects to be found in all our towns and villages, renders it impossible that each church should have its own schools. Fifthly, that the plan proposed would involve a vast expenditure of men and money; millions would be required to erect and sustain a school in connexion with every Presbyterian congregation in our land.

These arguments have certainly great weight, but they do not seem exactly to meet the case, nor to counterbalance the considerations on the other side. Dr. Lindsley, Dr. Reed, Mr. Mebane and Dr. Young sustained the report, the latter speaking at some length and with great strength of argument in its support. It is a conceded point that children ought to be religiously educated; that not merely natural religion, but Christianity, and not merely Christianity in general, but in the definite form in which we believe it has been revealed by God for the salvation of men, ought to be inculcated on the infant mind, so that the rising generation shall be imbued with the knowledge of divine truth. Secondly, it may be assumed as conceded that it is the duty of the church to impart this religious education. This is one of the most important parts of her vocation. She received her commission to teach; she is by the will and authority of her author an insti-

tute of education, established to communicate and preserve the knowledge of God, of Christ, of the way of salvation and of the rule of duty. Thirdly, this is a duty which the church cannot devolve on others; she cannot throw the responsibility on the state, for it is the very work God has given her to do, and she might as well look to the state to preach the gospel, as to make disciples of the nations by *teaching* them. Fourthly, the only question then is how the church is to acquit herself of this obligation; how is she to fulfil her vocation as teacher as far as the young are concerned? Can she safely rely upon family instruction, on Sunday schools, on the religious teaching of pastors, separately or combined? It is acknowledged that all these modes of religious education are legitimate and important, and ought to be assiduously used, but they are all inadequate. With regard to family instruction, it is obvious that many parents have no disposition to teach their children the doctrines of the gospel; others who may have the disposition, have not adequate knowledge or skill; so that if the church were to rely on this method, a very large part of the young for whom she is responsible, would grow up in ignorance. As to Sunday schools, they are inadequate for two reasons, first, because in most cases they embrace children of various religious denominations, the instruction given is consequently often too general; and secondly, because only an hour a week is devoted to the subject, a portion of time altogether insufficient to attain so great an end as teaching Christianity to the rising generation. As to pastoral instruction, this is or ought to be the main reliance of the church, and is an agency of divine appointment which no other should be allowed to supercede or weaken. Much in many parts of the church is effected by this means, and more ought doubtless to be accomplished. The pastor by catechetical instruction, by teaching the Bible, and by other means, has it in his power to do a great deal towards attaining the great end in view. The pastor is the teacher, the *διδασκαλος* of his whole people. But at best this brings under instruction only the children of the church-going part of the population, leaving a large portion of the whole number unprovided for. Then again it is rare that the pastor can, or at least does, bring even all the children of his own people under this course of training. Either their number, or the wide extent of country over which they are scat-

tered, or the pressure of other duties, or the remissness of parents, or other reasons, prevent this agency from fully accomplishing the desired end. It is an obvious fact that if the children of the country had no other religious instruction than that derived from the pastor, they would to a vast extent grow up unenlightened by the knowledge of the Bible. Our condition is greatly modified by the peculiarity of our political institutions. In Prussia and other countries of the old world, the law intervenes and requires the attendance of the children on the instruction of the pastor, and makes it obligatory on the pastor at stated times to give that instruction. Every pastor has always under instruction all the children of his district, between the ages of thirteen and fourteen for boys, and eleven and twelve for girls. He is required by law to meet them once a week and take them through a prescribed course, and they are required to attend his instructions, and at the end of the year they are publicly examined. A certificate of having satisfactorily sustained that examination, is demanded of every young person before he can marry or in any way settle in life. Any thing of this kind among us, is of course out of the question. Unless therefore the church can employ some other agency than those already mentioned, she will not accomplish her vocation as the teacher of the people. That other agency is the common school. In all ages of the church and in every part of Christendom it has been considered a first principle that religious teaching should be incorporated with the common school system. This is not peculiar to Protestantism. In Popish countries it ever has been, and still is the great aim of the priesthood to get the children imbued, while pursuing their secular education, with the doctrines of the church. In this they are right. Their error lies not in thus incorporating religion with early education, but in teaching a false system of religion.

Until the difficulty arising from diversity of sects began to be felt, it was the universal rule that the church system, the doctrines of the gospel as held by the church, should be sedulously taught in the schools. To meet the difficulty just suggested, the first plan proposed was to fix upon some common standard of doctrine in which the several sects could concur, and confine the religious teaching within those limits, leaving denominational peculiarities to be otherwise provided for. On this plan in Great

Britain the attempt has been made to unite not only evangelical Protestants, but even Protestants and Romanists in the same schools. This plan has satisfied no party, and though still persisted in, has proved in a great measure a failure. It is peculiarly inappropriate for this country. Because as we are obliged to act on the principle of excluding no class of the people from the common school, this common standard of doctrine, is of necessity that with which the very lowest and loosest of the sects of the country, will be satisfied. It is not only the Episcopalian, Romanist, Presbyterian, Methodists or Baptist that must be satisfied, but Socinians, Universalists, and even Infidels. An immediate out-cry is made about religious liberty, and the union of church and state, if in a public school any religious instruction is given to which any of these parties object.

This has led to the plan of confining the instruction of the schools to secular branches exclusively, and leaving the parent or pastor to look after the religious education of the children. This is becoming the popular theory in this country. It is already difficult, in many places, to retain even the reading of the scriptures in the public schools. The whole system is in the hands of men of the world, in many of our states, and is avowedly secular. Now with regard to this scheme it may be remarked that it is a novel and fearful experiment. The idea of giving an education to the children of a country from which religion is to be excluded, we believe to be peculiar to the nineteenth century. Again, it is obvious that education without religion, is irreligious. It cannot be neutral, and in fact is not neutral. The effort to keep out religion from all the books and all the instructions, gives them of necessity an irreligious and infidel character. Again, the common school is the only place of education for a large class of our people. They have neither parental nor pastoral instruction to supply its deficiency or correct its influence. Again, this plan is so repugnant to the convictions of the better part of the community that its introduction into our colleges has been strenuously resisted. Where is the Christian parent who would send his son to a college from which religion was banished, in which there were no prayers, no preaching of the gospel, no biblical instruction? But if we shrink from such an ungodly mode of education for the few who enjoy the advantages of a classical education, why should we consent to the great mass of the chil-

dren of the country, being subjected to this system in the common schools? Under the plea and guise of liberty and equality, this system is in fact in the highest degree tyrannical. What right has the state, a majority of the people, or a mere clique, which in fact commonly control such matters, to say what shall be taught in schools which the people sustain? What more right have they to say that no religion shall be taught, than they have to say that popery shall be taught? Or what right have the people in one part, to control the wishes and convictions of those of another part of a state as to the education of their own children? If the people of a particular district choose to have a school in which the Westminster or the Heidelberg catechism is taught, we cannot see on what principle of religious liberty, the state has a right to interfere and say it shall not be done; if you teach your religion, you shall not draw your own money from the public fund? This appears to us a strange doctrine in a free country; and yet it is, if we mistake not, the practical working of the popular systems in every part of the Union. We are not disposed to submit to any such dictation. We cannot see with any patience the whole school system of a state, with all its mighty influence, wielded by a secretary of state, or school commissioner, or by a clique of unitarian or infidel statesmen, as the case may be. We regard this whole theory of a mere secular education in the common schools, enforced by the penalty of exclusion from the public funds and state patronage, as unjust and tyrannical, as well as infidel in its whole tendency. The people of each district have the right to make their schools as religious as they please; and if they cannot agree, they have the right severally of drawing their proper proportion of the public stock.

The conviction, we are persuaded, is fast taking possession of the minds of good people that the common school system is rapidly assuming not a mere negative, but a positively anti-christian character; and that in self-defence, and in the discharge of their highest duty to God and their country, they must set themselves against it, and adopt the system of parochial schools; schools in which each church shall teach fully, fairly and earnestly what it believes to be the truth of God. This is the only method in which a religious education has hitherto ever been given to the mass of the people of any country, and the novel

experiment of this age and country, is really an experiment to see what will be the result of bringing up the body of the people in ignorance of God and his word. For if religion is banished from the common school it will be excluded from the whole educational training of a large part of the population. It is an attempt to apply to the whole country, what Girard has prescribed for his college. Under these circumstances the church of every denomination is called upon to do its duty, which is nothing more or less than to teach the people Christianity, and if this cannot otherwise be done thoroughly and effectually, as we are persuaded it cannot, than by having a school in connexion with every congregation, then it is the duty of the church to enter upon that plan and to prosecute it with all her energy. It is often said that we cannot argue from the case of European countries to our own. But the Free Church of Scotland has taught us that it is not only in established churches that the system of parochial schools is feasible. The devoted men who are laying the foundation of the new system in Scotland, never imagined that their duty would be done if they planted a pastor and a church in every parish. They at once, and with equal strength of conviction and purpose, set about establishing a school in connexion with every church. It is as much a part of their system as having ministers or elders. And it should be ours also. A school of this kind, established and controlled by the session of the church, becomes a nursery for the church, the ministry and the whole land. Its blessings are not confined to any one denomination. The people are so anxious to get a good education for their children, that they will not hesitate to send them to a Presbyterian school, if that is the cheapest and best. Do we not see Romish schools crowded with Protestant children, attracted by the reputation of the teacher or the facility of acquiring some trifling accomplishment? If we do not adopt this course, others will. If Presbyterians do not have schools of their own, other denominations will soon have the education of Presbyterian children. Romanists are every where setting up for themselves; and as the principle on which they act commends itself to the judgment and conscience of good people, other denominations will soon follow their example.

The objection on the score of expense does not seem very formidable. The portion of money for each school which comes



from the public treasury is, in most of our states, very small. And if the several denominations adopt the plan of parochial schools, the state will soon be forced to the obviously just method of a proportionate distribution of the public funds, whether derived from taxation or lands or a capital stock. A beginning has been made on this plan in New York, in favour of the Romanists, and what has been granted to them cannot long be withheld from others. But even if we are to be permanently cut off from all support from the state, still the expense can be borne. Any good parochial school would soon sustain itself, and be able to afford gratuitous instruction to those who need it. Nor can we see that we should thus isolate ourselves. We have too many points of contact with the community of which we form a part, to admit of any such isolation. Action and reaction to any degree that is healthful to us or useful to others cannot fail to be kept up. Our having separate churches, pastors and church courts, do not make us a separate people in the country, and we see not why having separate schools should produce that effect. The greatest practical objection to the plan proposed would seem to be the minute division of the population into sects. In reference to this difficulty we would only remark, that a population that can sustain a church is large enough to have a school; and secondly, if the school be good its support will not be confined to Presbyterians. Methodists and Baptists will not refuse to educate their children at all rather than send to a school under the charge of Presbyterians. All experience shows this to be true. We sincerely hope, therefore, that the plan proposed by the report, and sanctioned by the Assembly may be adopted and strenuously prosecuted by the churches. Let the session of the church look out for a competent teacher; let them prescribe the course of instruction, making the Bible and the Catechism a regular part of every day's studies, and we doubt not the plan will meet the concurrence of the people and the blessing of God.

*Foreign Missions.*

Mr. Lowrie, the Secretary of the Board, laid the report for the last year upon the table, and in an interesting discourse gave a general outline of their past operations and of their plans for the future. After noticing the death of several members and

three missionaries, the report states that the receipts of the year have been \$91,764.28, and the expenditures \$89,814.93, and that of the *Missionary Chronicle* there have been published over 8000 copies, and of the *Foreign Missionary* 13000 copies, and that ten new missionaries have been sent out during the year. They have a missionary at each of the following stations in Texas—at Houston, Victoria, Galveston and San Antonio; four missionaries among the Choctaws, and a school, supported chiefly by the Indians, and designed to accommodate one hundred pupils; among the Creek and Seminole Indians are five labourers and a boarding school of twenty scholars, with buildings for fifty pupils soon to be completed; and a church consisting of ten members. Among the Sac and Iowa Indians there are six missionaries, who have nearly completed buildings for a manual-labour boarding school, to which many natives are desirous of admittance. Portions of the scriptures have been translated, and a synopsis of a grammar of the Iowa, Oote and Missouri languages. Among the Chippewas and Ottowas there are four missionaries, and a school of more than thirty scholars and fourteen native members of the church. The mission has to contend against the whiskey trader and the Roman priest, the latter offering the Indian a religion that will not seriously interfere with his traffic with the former. The Indians, however, are advancing in temperance and comfort in proportion as the influence of the mission prevails. There are thirteen missionaries, male and female at Liberia who have several flourishing schools under their charge. At this mission a larger force is much needed. In India there are stations in Lodiana, Saharunpur, Sabathu and Merat, and connected with these are thirteen labourers, five of whom are natives; and also stations at Allahabad, Futtehghur, Mynpoory and Agra. At all these missions there are scholars, of whom one hundred and seventy are boarded and supported. At Lodiana and Allahabad there are printing presses and book binderies. The press at Allahabad printed upwards of 4,500,000 pages. Tours were extensively made for preaching the gospel, and the distribution of the scriptures, and in short the labours of the missionaries appear to have been abundant.

“In Siam two missionaries have been engaged; there is one at Canton, two at Amoy, and at the Ningpo mission there are ten labourers, four of whom are females.

"In the China missions, the brethren are all diligently prosecuting the study of the language. There are boarding-schools at Macao, Ningpo, and Chusan, with fifty-seven scholars. The press has been removed from Macao to Ningpo, and 3,376,000 pages have been printed since June, 1844.

"Moneys have been remitted to the amount of \$3400, to the Evangelical Society of France, and the Evangelical Society of Geneva, for the support of evangelists and colporteurs among the Romanist population of France.

"A missionary has been engaged for the Jews, who will be ready to enter upon his work. It is considered highly desirable that he should be accompanied by another minister."

The committee to which this report was referred, presented the following resolutions for the consideration of the Assembly, which were adopted:

"1. *Resolved*, That the report of the Board of Foreign Missions be approved and referred to the Executive Committee for publication.

"2. *Resolved*, That this Assembly consider the work of diffusing a missionary spirit among our churches at home, and the consequent spread of the church in foreign lands, as of great importance in itself, and its prosecution a great advantage to any church, and an evidence of God's Spirit among them.

"3. *Resolved*, That while we rejoice over the indications of the increased missionary spirit in some of our churches, we feel called upon also, to grieve that so many do nothing in aid of this cause, and cordially invite such of our brethren as aid the heathen through other channels, to unite with us in the great enterprize of spreading the Redeemer's kingdom, both as a means of reaching the heathen no less directly than by their present mode of operation, and also as a means of increasing the spirit of missions in the church.

"4. *Resolved*, That as a means of awakening a proper spirit in our churches, we recommend to every session prayerfully to consult over this matter, especially in reference to the circulation of the *Missionary Chronicle and Foreign Missionary*; to all our church members to observe diligently the monthly concert; and to the Executive Committee to hold missionary conventions on central points of influence, especially where the spirit of the churches is defective or declining.

"5. *Resolved*, That in view of the fact that by the different fields now occupied, the church is brought into direct contact with three-fourths of the heathen world, with large masses of Mohammedans in India, with Popery in Europe, and with the seed of Abraham, the time has fully come when the whole church should unite as one man in earnest prayer for the divine blessing, and in furnishing the means necessary to carry forward this work.

"6. *Resolved*, That this Assembly, entertaining no doubt of the ability of our churches to sustain this enterprize, recommend that the Board increase, as rapidly as possible, the force at each station, and follow, as far as practicable, the indications of Providence in opening new fields, ever remembering that the greatest ultimate success at each station will be secured by the most thorough and patient instruction of those reached by its instrumentality.

"7. *Resolved*, That as the blessings of the gospel are yet in store for the house of Israel, it is the duty of the church to preach Christ and him crucified to the Jews in this and foreign countries, as well as to the Gentiles; and the General Assembly believe that the time is come for them to engage in this great work, and they would again express their full conviction of the ability of the church to sustain a mission to the seed of Abraham without impeding enlarged and increased efforts for the perishing heathen.

"8. *Resolved*, That as Texas has now become one of the states of the Union, the care of the missions in that state be transferred to the (Domestic) Board of Missions.

"9. *Resolved*, That this Assembly express to all their missionaries, their affectionate sympathy and encouragement. Whilst we exhort and charge all our brethren in the foreign field to be diligent and faithful in their great work, our daily prayer is that the Saviour may be present with them, and that the blessing of the Holy Spirit may rest upon their labours."

#### *Domestic Missions.*

The report was read by the, Secretary Dr. W. McDowell, from which it appears that eleven hundred churches and missionary stations have been supplied during the past year, between fifty and sixty itinerant missionaries have been employed; fifty

new churches have been organized, about one hundred places of worship been erected. The report was referred to a committee who at subsequent session brought in the following resolutions, viz:

"1. *Resolved*, That the said report be approved by the General Assembly, and be returned to the Board for publication; and that the board be requested to furnish the stated clerk of the Assembly with an abstract of the report for publication in the appendix to the minutes.

"2. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly have heard with great pleasure of the increasing prosperity and usefulness of their Board of Domestic Missions, and do hereby express their gratitude to the great head of the church for his gracious smiles upon this precious cause.

"3. *Resolved*, That while we rejoice at the increased interest which the churches have manifested in the work of Domestic Missions, yet, in view of the magnitude of the work—the extent of the field to be occupied—and the rapid increase of the population of our country, we earnestly exhort the churches to augment their contributions to this object and to pray with increased earnestness for its enlarged success.

"4. *Resolved*, That it be recommended to *all* the churches under our care to take up an annual collection in behalf of Domestic Missions, and it is hereby again enjoined upon such Synods and Presbyteries as have not acted in the premises, to adopt such plans as seem best suited to secure the contributions of all the church members in its own bounds with system and certainty, and to report its action in this matter to the next General Assembly.

"5. *Resolved*, That the inquiry respecting the propriety of either enlarging the Missionary Chronicle, or issuing a separate periodical, as a channel of communication with the churches on the subject of Domestic Missions, be referred to the Boards of Foreign and Domestic Missions, and that they be authorized to make any change which they may deem expedient.

"6. *Resolved*, That it be recommended to all the churches under our care, to aid, as far as practicable, in the work of Church Extension, and to take up for this important object, a collection *distinct* from that in behalf of Domestic Missions. The General Assembly regret that so few of the churches have

contributed any thing towards this object during the past year, and unless much more should be done during the present year, it would be probably better to abandon the present plan, and to leave this matter to the action of the presbyteries. But it is believed that if the churches generally, would contribute according to their ability, to this object, the present plan would be found advantageous and useful. If each church would contribute only five dollars, the aggregate would amount to at least eighteen thousand dollars.

In view of the demand for greatly increased efforts, which will certainly be made upon the board during the present year, your committee feel that it is very important, not only that they should be sustained by a perfect union of all our churches in this work, but also that all obstructions, so far as practicable, should be removed, and the board, under its responsibility, to the General Assembly and to the church, should be left free to adopt such plans as, in their wisdom, will most effectually accomplish the great object—and believing, as we do, that the act of the last General Assembly, requiring the Board to have two distinct co-ordinate Executive Committees, must produce embarrassment, without adding any thing to the strength or efficiency of the work, the committee submit to the Assembly the following resolution :

“7. *Resolved*, That the resolution of the last General Assembly requiring the Board of Missions to appoint a second co-ordinate Executive Committee at Louisville, be, and the same is hereby rescinded—and the Board are directed to make such arrangements and adopt such measures, as in their view will most effectually promote the interests of this cause, in all sections of the great Missionary field.”

The report was adopted with the exception of the seventh resolution with its preamble, which after a protracted debate was rejected, yeas 47, nays 94.

The Secretary of the Board, who was heard twice at length on the subject, sustained by a very powerful speech from Dr. Musgrave, was in favour of the resolution. It was opposed by Mr. Scovel, secretary of the western committee, by Dr. Wm. L. Breckinridge, Mr. Thomas, Dr. Young, and most of the brethren from the west.

*Board of Education.*

“The Board of Education presented their annual report. It stated the number of new candidates during the year to be sixty-seven, making from the beginning one thousand five hundred and sixty-seven. Whole number assisted during the year, three hundred and eighty-five; in a theological course, one hundred and twenty-five; collegiate one hundred and seventy-eight, academical fifty-one, stage of study unknown four, teaching to procure funds twenty-seven. During the year forty-eight have finished their studies; four have devoted themselves to foreign missions; six have died; thirteen have ceased to need aid; four have been discontinued; and seven have abandoned study. Cash received during the year, \$34,953 25. Amount paid on orders of the executive committee, \$32,486 26. The report noticed the fact, that, for the last two yeas, the number of candidates has been diminished. The number for the past year, has been decreased by twenty-six. This statement called forth interesting remarks from Dr. McFarland, Dr. Young, and others.”

The following resolutions were adopted in reference to this subject:

“1. *Resolved*, That the training up of young men for the ministry of reconciliation is a great work, on which depend the general interests of religion, and all our hopes of usefulness as a church of Christ, in the regeneration of the world.

“2. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly earnestly enjoin upon the Board of Education to exercise the utmost vigilance in maintaining the high standard of ministerial qualification in regard to piety and scholarship, so often insisted on by former Assemblies, and so urgently demanded by the wants of the church and the age.

“3. *Resolved*, That for the sake of guarding against an indolent, imbecile, or unacceptable ministry, the Presbyteries be enjoined, in their selection of candidates, to have a special regard not only to their piety and talents, but also to their natural disposition and habits, their promise of aptness to teach, readiness to engage in self-denying service, and their general acceptableness of character. And pastors are also enjoined to make themselves personally and thoroughly acquainted with the qualifications, in

these respects, of those whom they recommend to the notice of the Presbyteries.

"4. *Resolved*, That in order more systematically to remind our churches of their responsibility in the education of the rising generation, and to invoke the blessing of God upon this work by united and special supplications, the first Sabbath of December be set apart for the offering up of special prayer to the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into the harvest, and that it be recommended to every minister to preach at that time on some topic connected with the obligations of the church to train up a pious and educated ministry.

"5. *Resolved*, That the annual report of the Board of Education be committed to the Board for publication.

#### *Board of Publication.*

The committee to whom was referred the annual report of the Board of Publication, together with certain memorials touching the operations of the said Board, beg leave to propose to the Assembly for its adoption, the following resolutions:

"1. *Resolved*, That the report be approved and returned to the officers of the Board for publication.

"2. *Resolved*, That the experience of each successive year has furnished increasing evidence of the high importance of this enterprise as a means of diffusing those religious truths which our church holds dear, and of promoting purity of doctrine, and a spirit of enlightened piety throughout our bounds, and while in view of the encouraging success which has thus far attended the undertaking, we would thank God for the pleasure he has been pleased to show it; we would call on our ministers and churches to lend a more vigorous support, by their patronage and their prayers to an institution which is continually sending forth streams of healthful influence to make glad the city of our God.

"3. *Resolved*, That we view with much satisfaction, the pious liberality of those friends of the Board, whose contributions have enabled it to make donations of libraries to a number of ministers, destitute churches, and Sabbath schools, and we would earnestly recommend this mode of doing good to all who have it in their power.

"4. *Resolved*, That it affords us peculiar pleasure to find



among the works published by the Board, so large a number specially adapted to the young, and well fitted for a place in the libraries of Sabbath schools, and that we recommend to pastors and church sessions to take measures for introducing these publications generally into their Sabbath schools.

"5. *Resolved*, That in the spirit of recommendations made by former Assemblies, we recommend to our Synods, where it can be advantageously done, to employ colporteurs for circulating the publications of the Board, and also to establish, where it is practicable, depositories, to be owned and managed by themselves.

"Further, in reference to the alterations of works published by the Board, concerning which this Assembly has been memorialized, the committee report, that on examination they find but one instance stated in which such a measure was adopted, and this consisted in the omission of a paragraph on the subject of slavery, in one of the books republished by them.

"Although the General Assembly have never given any explicit directions to guide the Board in re-publishing foreign works, they appear to have made it a rule to themselves never to alter historical statements, never to put sentiments into an author's lips which he did not hold.

"In the case complained of, the proof reader of the Executive committee in revising for the press, omitted the passage from an apprehension that if it was retained, the church might regard the Board as assuming the right to dictate on a much litigated subject, and that, too, in a way seemingly at variance with the general sentiments of the church.

"He therefore concluded that to omit the passage would be the safer course, and the one least likely to give offence to any portion of the church; for if the Board might publish sentiments on one side of this vexed question, they might also on the other.

"When, however, the subject of this omission was brought before the committee, the passage, by their order, was restored.

"In view of these facts, your committee are of opinion that no censure in the present instance is demanded. And to prevent any ground of blame for the future, they recommend that it be enjoined on the Board to exercise special caution, so as to avoid any thing which might be justly interpreted as a mutilation of books republished by them."

*The McQueen Case.*

The General Assembly having in 1845 recommended the Presbytery of Fayetteville to restore, if they saw fit, the Rev. Archibald McQueen, who had been suspended from his office for having married the sister of his deceased wife, that Presbytery referred the case back to the Assembly, praying them to take action in the case. When the case came before the house, Rev. Dr. Reed, of Virginia, moved that the reference be indefinitely postponed. This motion was carried, ayes 75, nays 55. The commissioner from that Presbytery not being present when the vote was taken, requested that it might be reconsidered. A motion to that effect having been made and seconded, Mr. Shaw presented with much earnestness, a series of reasons why the case ought to be considered and decided by the Assembly rather than the Presbytery. The Assembly, however, refused to reconsider, and left the matter where it was last year. The house felt that it was the proper business of the Presbytery to restore as well as to suspend a minister. They alone could tell whether the deportment of the person, in question, merited restoration or not; and for them to call upon the Assembly to do their work, was precisely as though an inferior court should refer to a higher one a troublesome case which they did not wish to have the responsibility of deciding. When a case decided in an inferior court is brought up by complaint or appeal, the higher court is bound to decide it. But it is under no obligation to decide any case merely referred to them, otherwise the Assembly might have all the judicial cases in the whole church thrown on their hands. The prayer of the Presbytery was not that some decision should be reviewed, but that that Assembly should perform an executive act, which it was at full liberty to do or not to do, as seemed wise.

*Commissions of Presbytery.*

When the minutes of the Synod of Virginia were reviewed, the committee recommended that they should be approved. Dr. McFarland moved that the censure passed by the Synod on the Presbyteries of Lexington and Winchester, for having appointed a commission with presbyterial powers, should be excepted. After some debate it was resolved that the minutes of the Synod be approved, but that so doing the Assembly was not to

be understood as expressing any opinion on those parts of the record which relate to the cases above mentioned. All the arguments urged against the right of Presbyteries to act by commission, or in other words, to appoint committees with presbyterial powers, were founded upon the assumption that the presbyteries derive their powers from the constitution. It was said that a commission of Presbytery was a body unknown to the constitution; to appoint such a commission was to create a judicatory, which the constitution does not sanction; that the constitution prescribes what Presbyteries may do, and beyond those limits, they cannot go. If, however, the constitution gives no power whatever to the Presbyteries; if on the contrary it limits the free exercise of powers inherent in those bodies; if it is of the nature of a treaty between different presbyteries prescribing certain rules according to which they agree to act, then it is evident all the arguments above mentioned fall to the ground.

The least reflection we think must lead to the conclusion that the latter is the true view of the matter. The Presbyteries have certain inherent powers, which they derive from Christ the source of all authority in the church. So long as there is but one Presbytery, or one standing out of ecclesiastical connection with any other, there is nothing to limit the exercise of those powers but its own discretion and the word of God. But as soon as it becomes united with other similar bodies, then they become interested in its acts, and it becomes proper that they should agree upon certain terms according to which they will exercise the powers common to all. Thus, for example, every Presbytery has the right to ordain. If a Presbytery is independent it may ordain any man who it believes has the scriptural qualifications. But if it is united with other Presbyteries, the conditions under which the right to ordain shall be exercised, become a matter of contract, in other words, a matter to be determined by the constitution. This is obviously proper, because a man ordained by one Presbytery becomes thereby a member of Synod, and eligible to the General Assembly, and thus has jurisdiction over all other Presbyteries. Hence all have a right to say under what conditions each Presbytery shall exercise its right to ordain. Our presbyteries have agreed that no man shall be ordained who has not studied theology at least two

years, who has not had a classical education, who cannot write Latin, and read Greek and Hebrew. Were it not for these limitations of the constitution, a presbytery might ordain a man who had studied but one year, or but six months, or who did not know a word of Latin. Again our Presbyteries have agreed that they will exercise no presbyterial power unless three ministers be present. It is obvious this is an arbitrary provision; it might have been five or two ministers, or three ministers and two elders, or any other condition that the contracting parties chose to agree upon. We might thus go through the book and show that every prescription it contains is of the nature of a limitation of the exercise of rights recognised as inherent in the Presbyteries, and which but for such limitations might be exercised at discretion. The same thing is of course true with regard to other churches. According to the episcopal theory, every bishop is independent in diocese, having certain rights and powers derived from Christ, which he can exercise at discretion. If he chooses to unite with other bishops, they agree upon certain rules or canons according to which they will exercise their powers, but they do not get their powers from those canons. It is here as with the states of our union. They have certain powers which inhere in them as sovereignties. Having entered into a treaty with each other, however, they have given up entirely the right to exercise some of those powers, and greatly limited themselves with regard to others. But no man ever thinks of looking into the constitution of the United States as the source of the powers of the several states. It is a treaty limiting those powers. As, therefore, it would be absurd to say that the legislature of New York has no right to contract debts, or to create a committee with powers, because the constitution of the United States is silent on those subjects; it is no less inconsequent to say that a Presbytery may not appoint a commission with presbyterial powers, because the constitution says nothing about such commissions. The only pertinent questions are, first, Does the right to appoint such a commission inhere in every Presbytery? and second, If it does inhere in such a body, does the constitution prohibit its exercise? If the former of these questions must be answered in the affirmative, and the latter in the negative, then it is plain that the Presbyteries have

the right to act by commission, and that the Presbyteries in Virginia were perfectly justifiable in exercising it.

As to the question, whether the right to appoint a commission belongs originally, to a Presbytery, we suppose there can be little doubt. It is difficult to see on what principle it can be denied that an independent Presbytery, trammelled by no contract with other Presbyteries, could not rightfully appoint a committee to act in its name and with its authority and subject of course to its control. No one denies that the acts of such a commission must be subject to the review and control of the Presbytery; because such oversight is not only, on the part of the Presbytery, a right but a duty. We are not aware, however, that any one has ever ventured to say that a Presbytery has not in itself the right to appoint a commission, the whole argument was that it has not the right under our present constitution. Our early history, and the history of all other churches, are too full of examples of the exercise of this right to admit of its being denied. Almost the first page of the records of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, contains an account of a committee sent to Cape May, invested with the power to examine and ordain a candidate for the ministry. And our minutes abound in instances of a similar kind, where commissions have been appointed to examine and decide judicial and other cases, and report their action for the revision of Presbytery, just as the acts of a Presbytery are revised by a Synod. In other Presbyterian churches this is done every year. There can be, therefore, and we presume there is not any question, as to the inherent right of a Presbytery to appoint such commissions. The only debateable point is the question whether that right is taken away under our present constitution.

On this point we would remark first that we heard no argument to show that such was the case, other than that the constitution says nothing about it. But this as we have shown, proceeds on the false assumption that the Presbyteries get their powers from the constitution. It is not enough to show that the power is not granted, because no power is granted. It must be shown that it is taken away. A second remark is, that the prohibition ought to be explicit, and not merely inferential or implied. It is too serious a thing to take away important inherent rights by mere implication. But thirdly, we are not

aware that there is any thing in the constitution which even implies that the Presbyteries have no longer the right to act by commission. It may be said that this may be inferred from the fact, that since the adoption of the present constitution our ecclesiastical bodies have ceased to appoint such commissions, though they did it freely before that time. But even admitting the fact, the conclusion does not follow. Other circumstances may have led to the non-exercise of the right in question. It is only when the church is widely scattered, and the meeting of a whole Presbytery is difficult, or in cases of peculiar emergency, that it is desirable to act by commission. As our church filled up, and Presbyteries became more numerous, this custom became less common. And being unusual in old Presbyteries, it was not generally adopted in new and widely scattered portions of the church. But the fact is not as assumed. The custom of appointing a commission, or a committee with full powers, has never gone out of use. In all our presbyteries it is still common to appoint a committee to instal; which is a Presbyterial act. The same thing is virtually done when a committee is appointed to take part in the ordination of a minister, and the Presbytery adjourn to meet at the time and place appointed. Though none are present but the committee, they proceed to the ordination. Besides this, in various parts of the church, the custom has not been abandoned. Much of the synodical action of the Synod of Kentucky in reference to the Cumberland Presbytery, was by a commission, though involving the standing of licentiates and ministers. We contend, however, that the mere neglect of Presbyteries to avail themselves of this right is no proof that it has been taken away by the constitution. If it existed before, it still exists, unless it can be shown that the constitution expressly, or by necessary implication prohibits its exercise. No express prohibition is contended for, and the necessary implication has not yet been exhibited.

It may be thought that the agreement of the Presbyteries not to exercise any presbyterial power except when three ministers are present, necessarily forbids the appointment of a commission. It, however, only renders it necessary that such commission should include three ministers, if clothed with presbyterial powers. Nothing beyond this can be fairly inferred from that provision of the constitution.

If it be said that all our rules, referring to licensing and ordaining ministers, trying and censuring church members and officers, relate to Presbyteries, and suppose these duties to be discharged by Presbyteries, and therefore forbid by necessary implication, their being performed by a commission of such bodies, it may readily be answered, that if all these were presbyterial powers before the adoption of the constitution, and if all were exercised by the Presbyteries or by commissions appointed by them for that purpose, then these rules do not imply that the Presbyteries may not do, what they did before under precisely similar rules contained in the Westminster Directory. That Directory as clearly implies, as does our present constitution, that to license, ordain, or censure, are presbyterial acts, and yet no one doubts that under that Directory, those acts were performed by commission. Then how can it be inferred that those same rules prohibit now, what was before allowed? The fact is, all these rules are to be the letter complied with, when a Presbytery appoints a commission, subject to its review, and clothed with full powers, for a special purpose, provided such commission include three ministers. We cannot, at present, see any thing in our constitution, that prohibits the Presbyteries from exercising a right which beyond dispute originally belonged to them; nor can we see any ground in reason, for such a prohibition; on the contrary it seems to us, highly important that such power should be recognised, and on due occasion, freely exercised. It is certainly often a matter of great convenience, when a Presbytery is numerous or widely dispersed, that a few competent members near at hand, and able to devote the requisite time to the business, should be selected to discharge some special duty, or to settle some case of discipline. This not only saves the time of the judicatory, but promotes the ends of justice. It gives all parties a better opportunity of being heard. And in case there is dissatisfaction with the result, the Presbytery is still accessible. It is in fact, giving as it were, an additional remedy against error or injustice. The cases are very numerous which would be better investigated and decided by a commission, than by a Presbytery, for the same reason that they could be better dealt with by a Presbytery, than by a Synod or General Assembly. The only real question, however, is, does the constitution take from

the Presbyteries this power? If it does not, then as it confessedly once belonged to them, they still possess it.

Many of the remarks made in the Assembly, referred really to the propriety of a commission of the General Assembly. This, however, is a very different question. Many who contend for the right on the part of the Presbyteries, advance no such claim on behalf of the General Assembly. In our church the Assembly is a creature of the Presbyteries, and can exercise only such powers as the presbyteries agree to commit to its hands. It is a disputed point whether even with regard to the Assembly the constitution is a grant, or a limitation of powers, which belong *jure divino* to such councils. Into that question it is not necessary to enter, because the cases under consideration, referred solely to Presbyteries.

As the house had not the time to enter into the constitutional question involved in this matter, a motion presented by Dr. Lindsley affirming it to be contrary to the constitution and practice of the Presbyterian church, for any of our courts to appoint a commission for the decision of any judicial case, was referred to a committee, who were directed to report to the next General Assembly. The matter being thus brought before the church, we thought it right to call the attention of our readers to it by the foregoing cursory remarks, which occur to us on the first view of the question.

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ART. V.—*Lectures on Biblical History, comprising the leading facts from the Creation to the death of Joshua. Designed for the use of families, Bible classes and young people generally.* By William Neill, D.D. Philadelphia: William S. Martien. 1846. pp. 343.

THESE lectures, thirty in number, were originally prepared for the benefit of a Bible class under the pastoral charge of their respected author. Having found them useful and acceptable on other occasions, he has been induced to commit them to the press, to extend the range of their influence. Their principal bearing is, as it ought to be, of a moral and religious character.