

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

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No. III.

by John W. Prudden

ART. I.—*Lettre de Démission à la Faculté de l'École de Théologie de Genève.* Par Ed. Schérer, Professeur de l'Exégèse, &c. Genève, 1849.

“AN old error often disguises itself under a new name.”* There is something so attractive in the sheen of novelty, something so flattering to human pride in the idea of progress, that, “ye shall be as gods *knowing*” is still the gilding of the bait, whether it be addressed to sense or reason. The pithy observation we have quoted above, may be supported by examples from every century of Church history, and from none more copiously than our own. Certain “old errors” which have worn out not a few suits of phraseology in the course of the last eighteen centuries, have of late appeared in new attire complete, cut after the latest fashion; and with the help of rouge and patches, and other rejuvenating appliances, are seeking to palm themselves off as the youngest-born of truth. A searching glance, however, quickly detects through all their finery and affectations the wrinkles of age, and the deep scars of repeated refutations, received at the hands of those who in old time were “valiant for truth.”

* Dr. Livingston.

ART. VI.—*The General Assembly.*

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States met at St. Louis on Thursday May 15th and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. A. W. Leland, D.D., Moderator of the last Assembly. The Rev. E. P. Humphrey, D.D., of Louisville, Kentucky, was chosen Moderator, and the Rev. W. D. Howard, Clerk.

CASE OF THE REV. DR. DUNCAN McAULEY.

The Rev. Mr. Twitchell submitted the following case: The Rev. Dr. Duncan McAuley asked to be restored to the gospel ministry by the Presbytery of Louisiana. He was suspended from the ministry by the Presbytery of Toronto, Canada. The Presbytery of Louisiana wished to lay the papers in this case before the General Assembly, and to ask for advice. The Presbytery had this case long under their consideration, and referred it to a committee. The majority of the committee reported favourably with reference to Mr. McAuley's application. The minority against it.

On motion, the papers were referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures. When this committee reported, the case was disposed of by adopting the following resolution:

“*Resolved*, That the report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, in the case of Duncan McAuley, LL.D., be substituted by the following resolution, that if the Presbytery of Louisiana shall think it desirable that Dr. McAuley be restored to the functions of the ministry, they be directed to procure all the information accessible on the subject, especially the record of the Presbytery in Canada relating to the case, and to prepare all the papers in the case, and send them up to the General Assembly, that that body may take definitive action in the premises.”

THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The Directors and Trustees of the Western Theological Seminary, submitted their reports, which were committed to a special committee.

It was made the order of the day for Wednesday afternoon, at four o'clock, to proceed to the election of a Professor of Oriental Literature in the Western Theological Seminary.

The Assembly, agreeably to a standing rule, having implored the Divine guidance, proceeded to nominations, when the Rev. M. W. Jacobus was nominated to fill the vacant professorship, and it was stated that this nomination was in accordance with the wishes of the Board of Directors. Mr. Jacobus was elected on the day appointed, by an almost unanimous vote.

The Committee on the Reports of the Directors and of the Trustees of the Western Theological Seminary made a report, which was accepted, and is as follows, viz:

They recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That these reports be printed in the Appendix to the Minutes.
2. *Resolved*, That the Assembly learns with great satisfaction the progress which has been made by the friends of the Seminary towards its complete endowment.

The Committee further report that they have found in the minutes of the Board of Directors, which were put into their hands, a record at page — of the proceedings on April 3, 1851, from which it appears that the Rev. Dr. McGill, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, &c., had sent into the Board, to be transmitted to this Assembly, his resignation; and that the Board, for reasons recorded, assumed the responsibility of withholding the same from the Assembly. The Committee do not find in the records any intimation that Dr. McGill, although the Board voted to inform him of their action in the case, has retracted his resignation; which therefore now comes before the Assembly for its consideration.

Whereupon, on motion of Mr. Howard, the following minute was adopted, viz:

Whereas, The Rev. Dr. McGill, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, &c. in the Western Theological Seminary, did, for

reasons satisfactory to himself, tender to this General Assembly, through the Board of Directors of that Seminary, the resignation of his Professorship. And whereas, in the progress of this affair, the cause which led to this act, on the part of Dr. McGill, is supposed to be effectually removed, so that although he could not see his way clear to withdraw his resignation, yet he is now willing to remain in his present post. And whereas, the interests of that important and increasingly useful institution most urgently demand the continuation of his services, therefore

Resolved, That in the judgment of this Assembly, Dr. McGill will most effectually serve the Church and promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom by remaining in his present office.

This minute was adopted, after a protracted discussion, by a vote unanimous with the exception of the two votes from the Cincinnati delegates. Dr. McGill having conditionally accepted a call to a church in Cincinnati, accounts for the delegates from that place wishing that his resignation might be accepted. In the course of the debate on this subject, the Rev. Mr. Howard read the following letter from Dr. McGill, which it is due to that gentleman to make a part of the history of this case.

LETTER FROM DR. MCGILL.

I hope the General Assembly will pardon the trouble, and not deem it wholly irrelevant, for me to submit a concise statement of facts, connected with my resignation of the place which I have held for nine years. Much misrepresentation has been made, undesignedly, no doubt, for the most part, yet calculated to *perplex my mind* in the course of duty; if not also to diminish my usefulness. I had laboured four years, in two departments of the Seminary; and had become finally discouraged, with the impression that our defective organization of the Faculty would be continued an indefinite period longer; notwithstanding the injunction of the last General Assembly to increase the finances of the Institution, for the support of a third Professor.

A communication was received, last summer, from the Seventh Church of Cincinnati, submitting to me, that they would elect me to be their pastor, if I would favour their application; I answered, with expressions of fondness for the pastoral relation,

but of strong fear, that my health would not warrant a return to that manner of life. They continued the urgency however, and at length I proposed to visit them, at a convenient season; being unwilling that any people should call me to such a relation, without some experience of my ministration among them.

Before the time for that visit arrived, I received information wholly unexpected, that the Synod of Georgia had elected me to the vacant chair of their Seminary at Columbia. This invitation I was very much inclined to accept, and awaited the action of the Synod of South Carolina, in their vote of confirmation. While awaiting in this way, the time arrived for my visit to Cincinnati, during a short vacation in our Seminary, about the beginning of the year. But the visit was providentially hindered at the set time: and I did not deem it a duty to go, after my arrangement in the Seminary had been resumed.

The Synod of South Carolina confirmed the election in Georgia by a divided vote, and before I received a satisfactory explanation of it, I received another communication from Cincinnati, proposing to go on with a call, without my visit, if I would accept. This letter I answered by repeating the difficulties which lay before me; and which, I supposed, would discourage them from proceeding—yet intimating, that, if after all, they should deem it their duty to throw upon me the responsibility of deciding, I would accept, providing I could be satisfied that my health would allow it, and that my resignation at Allegheny would be accepted. I soon after received information, that they had fixed the time for proceeding to a formal call. I consulted some three or four intelligent and eminent medical friends, who strongly discouraged me from returning to pastoral labour. I sent a telegraphic dispatch, on the day appointed, stating the fact; which was read at the congregational meeting. They proceeded however to make out a unanimous call; and sent it by the hands of two commissioners. This singular urgency, under all the circumstances, seemed to be the hand of God shutting me up to that course of duty; and I accepted, precisely in the terms I had promised, and with the additional stipulation that, if possible, no publication of the call should be made, until the time came for my entering on its duties.

The question of health was one of deep and painful anxiety, on which every one around me expressed an opinion adverse to my decision. For this reason, and because the opposition in South Carolina had been satisfactorily explained, I reserved in my hands a declination of the offer from the South, some two weeks after this interview with the Commissioners from Cincinnati; when publications appeared, announcing in the most unqualified manner, my acceptance of that call. I instantly declined the offer from Columbia, lest my conduct might be misunderstood; and from that time, the 11th of March last, to this day, there has been no other issue before me, but that of Allegheny and Cincinnati. It is true that many noble hearted friends at the South have urged me to reconsider my declination; but the course pursued by some newspapers, and a multitude of talkers, has rendered this impossible.

Nor has there been any compromise, or retraction of my word to the people of Cincinnati. The strong resistance at Allegheny is certainly none of my procuring or expecting. But, on every account, it is one which I am bound to respect; and I do so far respect it, as to say that, if the Assembly sustain the action of our Board of Directors, and decline to take my resignation, I shall acquiesce, and cheerfully return to my post. But I cannot recall my resignation, inasmuch as the only satisfaction I received, that my difficulties there would be removed, came too late to govern my conduct in the premises. It is due the Directors to say, that they are worthy in every way of the trust committed to their hands, and have always treated your Professors there with kindness and paternal regard. *I could spend a life-time among them with comfort.* And had there been a prompter exertion, on the part of the churches and people, to make that Seminary what it ought to be, I would not have thought of leaving it for any other situation in the Church.

I regret, inexpressibly, that any personal matter of mine should be made to occupy, for a moment, the attention of the General Assembly; but I have been constrained to detail them thus far, that the reason may be apparent for casting myself *implicitly* on the will of the Assembly; and that the unfounded surmises of some, that there has been vacillation on my part, may be removed, not only for my own sake, but for the honour

of the Assembly itself, whose servant I am, in more than one relation. Very respectfully,

ALEX. T. MCGILL.

In explanation of the action of the Assembly in this case, it was resolved that the Assembly intended in the resolutions already adopted, to decline accepting the resignation of Dr. McGill.

CHEAP PAPER.

The General Assembly took up the consideration of a report from a committee appointed by the last General Assembly on the subject of a cheap religious weekly newspaper, for general circulation throughout the Church. The report, after a full exposition of the advantages of such a paper, proposed the following resolutions for adoption, viz:

1. *Resolved*, That instead of the "*Home and Foreign Record*," as now published, the Board of Publication be directed to issue and circulate, as early and extensively as possible, a religious weekly paper of the common size and form, on good material, of fair execution, and of the very best character, and at the rate of \$1 a year, to be uniformly pre-paid.

2. That it be urged upon all our church courts, officers, and members, to aid the Board in the sustenance of the paper, and in its circulation, so that it may reach every family willing to receive it.

3. That in the opinion of the Assembly this paper should be the medium of communication from our Boards to the churches; and that, for a time, the several Boards should pay a reasonable compensation for the amount of room they shall occupy, this compensation to continue only so long as the circumstances of the paper shall require it.

4. That it shall be the duty of the Board to appoint an editor for the paper, who shall devote himself exclusively to its interests; also to keep an exact account with the paper, and to report annually to the Assembly.

5. That in view of the additional duty here laid upon the Board of Publication, it be recommended to the increased liberality of the churches.

The following letter from the Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander, a member of the above Committee, was read, dissenting from the majority report.

To the Chairman of the Committee on a Cheap Paper.

PRINCETON, April 5th, 1851.

My Dear Sir :—I have acknowledged the reception of your letter of the 27th, in regard to the cheap paper. I was ill, when the Committee met in Philadelphia, and have never heard what they did. At the time of your letter's arrival, Dr. Breckenridge had already sailed for Europe; so that a part of what you purpose is no longer possible. I am therefore reduced to the necessity of addressing my sole opinion, which I am able to do in a few words. As I do not expect to be at the Assembly, I should be glad if my humble judgment in the matter might be represented.

While I have no zeal whatever in the affair, and regret that I have been put on the Committee, I have, from the beginning, had a clear and determinate conviction against any attempt of the Church, as such, to issue a newspaper. My reasons are briefly these :

1. The hope of such cheapness as is promised, is in my view chimerical. And this judgment is founded on the concurrent testimony of practical printers and publishers.

2. Still more am I opposed to any such centralization of our journalism. It may do in records of facts and items of bare intelligence. But in a newspaper, according to our common notion of such a publication, a church organ must be one of two things, either a milk and water, trimming, lukewarm affair, which would die for want of patronage—or worse yet, a powerful party engine. In my humble judgment, it comports far better with the character of independence which belongs to Scottish Presbyterianism, to have a number of journals, each freely and courageously representing some set of opinions. Such generous warfare is good and healthful; and vastly more to my mind, than a religious *Moniteur*, or *Pekin Gazette*, issued by the central power.

3. In practice, it would be found impossible to satisfy the whole Church with a place of publication. New York? Philadelphia? Pittsburgh? Cincinnati? St. Louis? Columbia?—Is it

believed that our Philadelphia friends would go to New Orleans for reading?

4. Our existing Church papers, which are excellent, somewhat exhausted the appetite of the public for "government rations," *e. g.* the *Home and Foreign Record*, the *Foreign Missionary*, and the *Sunday School Visitor*; I might add, Dr. Van Rensselaer's two periodicals, though not under proper Church auspices.

In a word I do not see the crying necessity for such a work. Were it set a going to-morrow, I should feel no wish to subscribe for it, at a shilling. In the proportion of its success, it would injure and supplant many excellent journals, which do great good in their respective quarters, and merit the patronage which they receive. A vast corporation might indeed *undersell* them; but I cannot perceive the necessity for so violent a proceeding. The article of *news* must be somewhat old, before it could go from Cincinnati to New York. All the existing warmth of local attachments would be absent. I observed while in New York, how next to impossible it was, to make a New Yorker take *The Presbyterian*. He wanted his church news fresh from the oven. The stamp of the Church might lead some to subscribe, but would not lead them to enjoy what was either counter to their views, or so trimmed down as to suit all parties.

After all, I think persons remote from the actual operations of journalism will like the cheap proposal, and perhaps gather in sufficient strength to start it. If so, I would not desire to throw a straw in their way.

J. W. ALEXANDER.

After a discussion of the general project, the whole subject was on motion of Dr. Plumer, laid on the table, by a vote of 113 yeas to 63 nays.

On the last day of the session this subject was called up and referred to a select committee to report to the next General Assembly.

DIVISION OF THE SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY.

Overture No. 2. A Memorial from the Presbytery of Newton, requesting that the Delaware river be the boundary between the Synods of New Jersey and Philadelphia.

An opposing Memorial was presented from the Presbytery of Raritan.

A Memorial from the Presbyteries of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Second, in favour of the Delaware river being the boundary. The Committee recommend that the request be granted, and that the Delaware river be the boundary.

This minute was so altered as to read thus:

“*Resolved*, That the boundary line be so changed as to make the Delaware river, up to the mouth of Martin’s Creek, above Easton, the dividing line, and that the Presbyteries and churches on the Pennsylvania side of the river be transferred to the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia.”

MISSIONS TO PAPAL COUNTRIES.

Overture No. 6. A Memorial from the Synod of New Jersey, proposing to the General Assembly the organization of a Bureau in connexion with the Board of Foreign Missions, for spreading the truth in Papal lands; which, on motion, was referred to a select committee of five, viz.: Messrs. Magie, Swift, Smith, Lowrie, and Littell.

This committee subsequently recommended the adoption of the following resolutions, viz.:

1. *Resolved*, That the Assembly would impress upon the Board of Foreign Missions a sense of the great importance of the work brought to view in this overture, though we are not prepared, at present, to recommend any new distinct agency for this specific result.

2. That the Board be especially instructed, as soon as suitable men can be obtained, to extend their operations to the valley of the Rio Grande, to Chagres, and Panama, and other places now open, or which in the Providence of God may be opened in South America and Mexico.

3. That the Assembly would recommend to the Board to take measures to have a separate collection made in the churches, for the diffusion of the light of evangelical truth in Papal countries, unless the same object can be as well reached in some other way.

4. That the Assembly would recommend to the Board to

appoint a sufficient number of agents, assigning to each a definite field of labour, whose duty it shall be to advance the work in every proper way, and especially, by bringing it before the church judicatories in their respective districts.

5. That in order to increase and enlarge our operations among the Indian tribes, the Board be authorized and encouraged to employ such additional assistance as the exigencies of this branch of the Missionary work may require.

The report was accepted, and, on motion of Dr. Plumer, the following resolution was added to the report of the committee, and, as so amended, it was adopted:

6. That all our people and churches be solemnly reminded of the duty of making prayer, without ceasing, to God, for the success of missionary efforts, not only among Pagans and Mahomedans, but also in Papal countries.

The subject of this overture was brought before the Synod of New Jersey last fall, in consequence of an address from the Rev. Dr. Baird, the representative of the American Protestant Union. That gentleman in a kind and liberal spirit urged with much zeal, that in view of the great importance of missions to Papal countries, of the rapidly increasing facilities for prosecuting the work, and of the little now done by our body in this interesting field, that the Presbyterian Church would either engage in this enterprise in a definite and organized manner, or give it up entirely, throwing open their congregations to the American Society, having this work as their special object. The Synod felt that the latter course was out of the question. It was opposed to the settled policy of the Church, to the fixed opinions and preferences of a large portion of our members, and to the frequently repeated decisions of our General Assembly. The thing, therefore, could not be done. The question then arose—Shall things continue in the state in which they now are?—this great work being left as a mere subordinate department of our Foreign Missionary operations, without any special appeal and separate collections, and all our churches left open to the visits and solicitations of the agents of another society. There was a general conviction that this, of all methods, was the most inexpedient. It was not to be expected that our

churches would enter into this work with proper zeal and liberality, if it was not separately and distinctly presented to them, and urged on their attention. Nor could we expect that, considering its great importance, and the interest so generally felt in the remarkable success with which God has blessed the efforts to promote evangelical religion in Papal countries, that our churches would shut their ears and hearts against the men who came to plead this cause before them. Nor, finally, could it be reasonably expected that the money raised by the appeals of agents of the American Society should be, as a general thing, sent to the treasury of our own Board. The fact stared the Synod in the face, that our Church was doing comparatively little through the Board of Foreign Missions, for this work; that a growing interest was felt on the subject by our churches, and that a large part of their contributions for this object was diverted to another channel. It was also plain that this double agency was embarrassing and inefficient. The great majority of the Synod, therefore, entertained the strong conviction that something more should be done by our Church than had heretofore been attempted. Two plans were proposed. First, to organize a separate Board, with all its array of officers and agents, for this special purpose. To this it was objected, that it would involve a great increase of expense, and that the object might be accomplished by another and less cumbrous method. A second plan was, therefore, suggested, viz., to do in this case what had been already in part done in the Board of Missions, in regard to Church Extension. That matter was made a separate department; a separate collection was to be made for that object, and it was understood the Board had determined to appoint a separate secretary to devote himself to that particular department. In like manner, what the Synod determined to urge on the Assembly was the appointment, not of a new Board, but simply of a Bureau in connexion with the Board of Foreign Missions, for spreading the truth in Papal lands. What the Synod had at heart was to secure separate collections in all our churches for this great object. This the Assembly has sanctioned and recommended. To secure this object it was thought a separate officer of some kind, secretary or agent, would be absolutely necessary. This, too, the Assembly has virtually

sanctioned in the fourth of the resolutions above mentioned. We presume, therefore, that this disposition of the subject will be generally acceptable to the members of the Synod.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The order of the day was then taken up, viz: the Annual Report from the Board of Foreign Missions; when Dr. Swift, from the special Committee on this subject, presented the following report, which was adopted, viz:

The Committee to whom was referred the Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions would recommend that this report be approved, and in connection with this recommendation they would offer for the consideration of the Assembly the following minute, viz:

1. *Resolved*, That the Assembly continues to regard with lively interest the foreign missionary work of our Church, and would acknowledge with devout gratitude to God his continued favour to, and his blessing upon it.

2. *Resolved*, That the early removal of valued labourers from important fields; the critical condition of the mission to Siam; the limited measure in which the effusions of the Holy Spirit appear to have been imparted to the members of most of the stations, and the want of a deep and cordial interest in this cause, on the part of some members of the Church, arising from the want of faith in God's word and love to Christ, and compassion for those who are sitting in darkness and the region and shadow of death, in some cases for the want of information as to the nature, importance, and condition of the Foreign Missions of our Church, the Assembly feel to be recognized as reasons for humiliation and sorrow, of repentance and prayer for pardon, and endeavours after new fidelity, by all those who have been heretofore negligent of this cause and work of God.

3. *Resolved*, That the Assembly can, notwithstanding these and other discouragements, view the work of spreading the everlasting gospel among unevangelized tribes and nations, as fraught with increased and substantial encouragement; the fields occupied by our Church, as those of great extent and promise; the varied and faithful labours of our missionaries as highly gratifying and auspicious in their character; and the increased

attention, especially by the aborigines of our country to the missionary education of the young—and they recognize, with special thanksgiving to God, the hopeful conversion of some who were totally Pagans, Romanists, and Jews, and the peaceful departure of others to the heavenly rest, as indications of the presence and blessing of God in this important department of our work.

4. *Resolved*, That the Assembly observe with much satisfaction the steady increase of the pecuniary offerings which are made by the churches to this cause, the manifest energy of the officers and agents of the Board, the wise and efficient supervision of the Executive Committee, and the growing interest of our body in this holy enterprise, and they would take the present occasion to call up all the friends of Christ among us, and all the churches, with a deeper feeling of dependence, a warmer zeal, a stronger faith and prayerfulness, a more expanded liberality, to go forward in the sacred work of evangelizing the nations, and establishing the cause and kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ in every land.

Hon. Walter Lowrie, Secretary of the Board, made detailed and interesting statements explanatory of the condition of the various missions, their success, and their wants. The Board have among the North American Indians, 10 ministers, 12 male, and 23 female assistants, 408 pupils, 6 churches, with 80 communicants; in Africa, 2 ministers, and 1 on the way, 3 churches, with 97 communicants, 2 candidates for the ministry, and 3 primary schools with 103 pupils; in India, 26 ministers, 23 Native Assistants, 22 schools—4 of them high schools—1 a Mission College with 150 students—5 are boarding schools with 115 female pupils, 3 only of the churches reported 157 communicants, and 4 printing presses. In China there are 11 ministers, 1 physician, 4 boarding schools with 120 pupils. Siam is the only discouraging Mission. The Board has 4 missionaries among the Jews, and there have been cheering cases of conversion. \$2050 have been appropriated for operations in Papal Europe.

The receipts of the Board for the year have been \$140,000,—\$2400 over those of last year. The operations at the various missions develop many interesting facts. A native member of

one of our own mission churches has nearly completed the translation of Hodge's Way of Life, and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. The native converts have heretofore been compelled to make a profession of Christianity at the expense of all their earthly goods, and still they are willing to get and give something to the cause of Christ. The little church at Jelunda has gone ahead in this respect of more than 150 of our churches at home. The entire valley of the Ganges is now almost entirely in the hands of Presbyterians. More than \$5000 have been contributed in aid of the Missions by Europeans in India. Most of these Europeans are Episcopalians, but still they lend their aid because they believe the work to be the Lord's. The Board has been advancing during the year, but was never more in need of funds. Mr. Lowrie narrated a number of facts of thrilling interest, and then the resolutions offered by the Committee were adopted.

BOARD OF MISSIONS.

We have heard from various sources, that the exposition made by Rev. Dr. C. C. Jones of the operations and plans of this Board, was one of the most impressive and instructive addresses of the kind ever delivered before the Assembly. For two hours he commanded the attention of the house, while he surveyed the whole field of our Domestic Missions, exhibiting with singular clearness and effect the peculiarities and necessities of the several portions of our immense country. The strongest impression was produced both of the importance of the work, and of the high qualifications of the Secretary for the important post which he has been called upon to fill.

During the year the Board have employed 591 missionaries; supplied 1,043 churches and missionary stations; 2,047 persons have been received on profession of their faith; 1,631 have been received on certificate; there are 24,354 communicants in connection with these missionary churches; 592 Sabbath schools; 3,623 teachers; 22,470 Sabbath school scholars. As one hundred and seventy missionaries did not report, this summary falls short very considerably of the actual results. The total receipts of the year have been \$88,654 84;—the expenditures, \$85,271 51. The balance, \$3,374 33, has been absorbed

by drafts already drawn. The amount received for Church Extension during the year has been \$6,492 17—the whole of which has been expended in finishing thirty-nine churches. During the seven years of the existence of this scheme, 297 churches, making an average of 42 annually, have been aided to completion. The affairs of the Board are in a condition of rapidly increasing prosperity.

On motion, the Report of the Committee on the Board of Missions was taken up, and the following resolutions were adopted:

1. *Resolved*, That the Report be adopted, and published under the direction of the Board.

2. *Resolved*, That in view of the vast field for Domestic Missions now opened in our country, and exhibited in detail in the Report, that it be earnestly recommended to all of the churches to make increased efforts to enlarge their contributions to that Board; and that it be recommended to our pastors and stated supplies to bring the facts presented in the Report of the Board fully before the people of their charge, and, if possible, introduce among them some systematic form of maturing their contributions.

3. *Resolved*, That the direction of the Assembly in 1844 (Minutes, pp. 374 and 375) be renewed; that a special collection be taken up in all the churches in aid of Church Extension, and that the Assembly rejoices in the success which has thus far attended this scheme, although the contributions have fallen far short of the importance and necessity of the scheme, and our own obligations to sustain it.

4. *Resolved*, That the results of the domestic missionary work of the General Assembly for the last twenty-one years, viz: the increase of our missionaries from 101 to 590; the increase of our funds from \$12,000 to \$79,000; the organization of 943 new churches; the erection of 1484 houses of worship; the addition of over 40,000 souls to the missionary churches, on profession of their faith; the constitution of a number of new Presbyteries and Synods, and a great enlargement of our territorial boundaries, and also the results of the past year, by the report, being most favourable—all furnish to the Assembly an occasion for profound gratitude to the God of

missions, and of encouragement to us to proceed vigorously with the work.

5. *Resolved*, That the Board of Missions be requested to keep in view the increasing number and religious wants of the German population in our country, and to do whatever may be practicable, to furnish them with the ministry and means of grace.

6. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly rejoices in the special interest which is manifested by so large a number of their Presbyteries in the work of Domestic Missions, and looks forward with an assured hope that this interest will become universal, and that it must result, under God, in incalculable blessings to our Church and country.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

The Committee to whom was referred the Report of the Directors of Princeton Theological Seminary, presented a report in part, and recommended the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That the Assembly unite with the Board in expressions of kindness and confidence towards the Rev. J. W. Alexander, D.D., who has for two years faithfully filled the office of Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, and that believing the providence of God has called him to another field of service, his resignation of his professorship be and is hereby accepted.

2. *Resolved*, That the Rev. J. Addison Alexander, D.D., be, and he hereby is transferred from his present Professorship to that of Ecclesiastical History, and that his salary be the same as that of previous incumbents in the same office.

3. *Resolved*, That the Professorship of Biblical and Oriental Literature, made vacant by the above transfer of the Rev. J. Addison Alexander, be filled by this Assembly.

4. *Resolved*, That this Assembly, upon the adoption of the foregoing resolutions, will receive nominations, and fix a time for the election of a Professor of Biblical and Oriental Literature.

5. *Resolved*, That the salary of the Professor of Biblical and Oriental Literature be the same as that of the other Professors.

6. *Resolved*, That in the judgment of this Assembly, it is desirable for each of the Professors to give instruction in some portion of the sacred Scriptures, and the Board of Directors are hereby authorized to make such arrangements as shall effect this object, if the way be clear, and are requested to report their action on the subject to the next Assembly.

7. *Resolved*, That the following branches of instruction, viz. the Composition and Delivery of Sermons, and Church Government, which have hitherto belonged to the Professor of Church History, be transferred to the Professor of Pastoral Theology.

Dr. Plumer submitted the following as the eighth resolution on this business, which was adopted, viz.

Resolved, That henceforth the title of the Professorship of Church History be that of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History.

The Committee recommended the following additional resolutions, which were adopted, viz. :

1. *Resolved*, That the thanks of this Assembly are due, and they are hereby tendered to the Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer, for his disinterested, faithful, and successful labours in increasing the funds of the Seminary.

2. *Resolved*, That the Assembly recommend to the Directors and Trustees of the Seminary to adopt speedy and energetic measures to complete the endowment of the Seminary.

3. *Resolved*, That the Assembly direct the Treasurer to restore to the permanent funds of the Seminary such sums collected by Dr. Van Rensselaer, as have been employed in defraying the current expenses, and invest and secure them by bond and mortgage, or in other permanent and unquestioned securities of the United States, or of some other state or city corporation.

The above resolutions were all adopted, though not with the same degree of unanimity. That by which the Assembly transferred Dr. J. Addison Alexander from the Biblical chair to that of Ecclesiastical History was adopted by a vote of 130 to 38. The other features of the report did not elicit much discussion. When nominations were made for a successor to Dr. Addison Alexander in the Biblical Department, the Rev. Dr. Magie nominated the Rev. William Henry Green, of Philadelphia; Dr. Krebs nominated the Rev. James Clark, D.D., President

of Washington College, Pennsylvania; Judge Hepburn nominated Dr. Thornwell, of South Carolina. Other nominations were made, but withdrawn at the request of the gentlemen mentioned. Neither Dr. Clark nor Dr. Thornwell was present. When the election took place, it appeared that Mr. Green had received 112 votes, Dr. Clark 31, Dr. Thornwell 23. Mr. Green was thereupon declared duly elected, and Drs. Plumer and Leyburn were appointed a committee to inform him of the fact.

The friends of the Seminary cannot fail to feel gratitude to God for the degree of unanimity by which these important measures were carried, and to their brethren of the Assembly for the kind spirit with which the discussion of questions, about which diversity of opinion could not fail to exist, was conducted. The seventh resolution, by which the subjects Composition and Delivery of Sermons, and Church Government, were transferred to the Professor of Pastoral Theology, was not designed for any temporary purpose, but to secure a more just and philosophical distribution of the topics of instruction. The proper arrangement of the departments in a theological faculty, has been the subject of much consideration in every country where such faculties exist. Bishop Marsh, in his lectures, states that the distribution which has received the sanction of long experience on the continent of Europe, and which he himself recommends, is into four departments. First, the biblical; second, the dogmatic; thirdly, the historical; fourthly, the practical. Under the fourth is included everything which belongs to the actual duties of the ministry; the composition and delivery of sermons; pastoral care; the government of the church, and administration of its discipline. This is the arrangement which has for years been contemplated, and towards which there has been a gradual approximation in the organization of the Seminary at Princeton, and in that of other similar institutions. When Drs. Alexander and Miller were appointed professors, the one of theology, the other of history, they divided between them the other departments which fell appropriately under neither of those heads. Dr. Alexander took Hebrew, biblical criticism, and pastoral care; Dr. Miller took the composition and delivery of sermons, which clearly has no special connexion with ecclesiastical history, and church government.

This was a temporary arrangement. When a third professor was appointed, Dr. Alexander gave up the biblical department, but retained that of pastoral care. Afterwards, with the consent of the Assembly, he gave up didactic theology, and retained the subjects relating more immediately to the pastoral work. The resignation of Dr. James W. Alexander, whose taste and talents gave him peculiar facilities for the conduct of instruction in the department of sacred rhetoric, seemed to the directors to present a favourable opportunity to make another step towards carrying into effect the arrangement which had been so long acted on in other institutions, and so long contemplated here. They therefore recommended to the Assembly that the departments of composition and delivery of sermons, and of church government, instead of being connected, as heretofore, with that of ecclesiastical history, should be referred to the professor of pastoral theology.

There are two other remarks which it may not be amiss here to make. The one is that the different departments cannot be kept entirely distinct, for the simple reason that they are not distinct. They overlap each other, or in other words, the same subject is of necessity to be viewed under different aspects and from different positions, and therefore comes up under different departments. The biblical professor, if he interprets Scripture, for example, must teach theology, and that in the most effectual way. How can he expound the word of God without bringing out the great doctrines which it teaches? The sacred historian must trespass on the same field. In giving the history of the Church, he must give the history of doctrines; he must unfold the various systems of error which have come in conflict with the truth; he must show the philosophical and historical origin of those errors, and in so doing, he is teaching theology in a most effective manner. The professor of didactic theology on his part, cannot keep clear of the field of history. In presenting the true system he must exhibit it in its relations to the antagonistic systems of error; he must trace in a measure the origin of those errors, and give his didactic instructions to a certain extent an historical form. So also, as the interpreter necessarily becomes a teacher of theology, so the theologian becomes an exegete. He must establish his doc-

trines by Scripture, and to do this he must interpret it. There is not, therefore, in practice such an entire separation between the several departments in a theological curriculum, as these separate designations might lead us to expect. In this connection, we may remark that one of the objections urged against the transfer of Dr. Addison Alexander to the historical department, was founded on the natural misapprehension to which we have just alluded. It was said that it was undesirable to take him away from the direct study and explanation of the Bible. Those who made that objection must for the moment have forgotten that the history of the Church is divided into three periods, the Old Testament period, the New Testament period, and the period from the death of John to the present time. The two former are entirely biblical. The first includes the exposition of the whole book of Genesis; then of all those books of Scripture which relate to the history, the laws, and institutions of the Hebrews; and of the manifold relations between the old and new dispensations. The second requires the vindication and exposition of the four evangelists, and of the Acts of the Apostles. There is not in the present state of theological knowledge and the present condition of the anti-Christian spirit and controversies a field comparable either in difficulty or importance to this. Every one knows that the attacks of the modern infidels of Germany have been mainly directed against the Old Testament history, and the history of Christ. What modern work has had the currency or produced the evils of Strauss's Life of Jesus? No mistake could, therefore, be greater than that the department of biblical and ecclesiastical history is likely to call off the attention of its incumbent from the direct study, vindication, and exposition of the word of God. So far from it, we look upon this arrangement as the very method to secure, with God's blessing, the preparation of precisely that class of works for which there is at present the most pressing need.

It necessarily follows from this intimate relation between the different departments of theology that it is difficult to decide to which of them some subjects ought to be referred. This is specially the case with regard to Church government. It has a very close connection with dogmatics. The nature, attributes, prerogatives, and organization of the Church are one of the

principal heads in every system of theology. They are all embraced in Calvin's *Institutes*. Turretin's *Locus "De Ecclesia"* comprehends them all. Indeed, the almost universally received classification of the subjects belonging to dogmatics is, Theology, Anthropology, Soterology and Ecclesiology, the last being by no means the least in extent or importance. On the other hand, this subject has close affinity with the historical department, because, in one view it is so much a question of fact. How was the Church organized by the apostles, and what changes did that primitive organization subsequently undergo? Then again there is obvious reason for referring it to the practical department, because it embraces so intimately the duties of the minister, as pastor, and ruler in the Church. Perhaps the extent and importance of this subject, embracing as it does the great principles involved in the Romish and prelatival controversies is a sufficient reason why it should be made a prominent topic in the wide field of Pastoral Theology.

As the Rev. W. H. Green, elected by the Assembly as the successor of Dr. Addison Alexander in the chair of Biblical Literature, is still a young man, and of necessity not extensively known in the Church, we may perhaps be excused for stating the following facts in his history. He graduated at a very early age with distinction at La Fayette College, Pennsylvania, and was appointed tutor of Greek and Latin in that Institution when he was only fifteen years old. When eighteen he was made Assistant Professor of Mathematics, though in fact the whole mathematical instruction of the institution was for a season committed to him. When he became a member of the Theological Seminary in this place, he distinguished himself as a scholar and student in every department, especially in that of languages. Besides attending punctually to his seminary duties he devoted much attention to the study of Arabic and read through the Koran in that language before he completed his course. As soon as he graduated he was appointed assistant teacher of Hebrew, in which capacity he acted for three years, gaining the confidence of the students, of his colleagues, and of the Directors, as an able and successful teacher. While thus engaged in the Seminary he acted for six months (in connection with the Rev. Mr. Gosman,) as stated supply of the first Presby-

terian church in this village ; and subsequently he sustained the same relation for eighteen months to the second church in this place. For the last two years he has been the pastor of one of the most important congregations in Philadelphia, a station which he has successfully and honorably filled. Mr. Green is in the estimation of all who have known him eminently a safe man ; a man to be relied upon not only for diligence and devotion to study, but for moderation and wisdom. That he has not intermitted his attention to biblical pursuits since his settlement in Philadelphia, is evident enough to those who recognize his pen in various contributions to the pages of this Journal, and especially in the summary of recent biblical intelligence contained in our last number.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Dr. Van Rensselaer, Secretary of the Board, presented the report. He stated that God had blessed the Board of Education with the usual prosperity during the year. There was reason for encouragement. Forty-nine candidates had entered the ministry. The increase of candidates during the past year has been small, although the increase of our population has been one million and the increase of our church members ten thousand.

Our beloved youth shrink from the sacred office ; some because of its fearful greatness ; some because of inducements of gain and worldly distinction, &c. The fact exists—we have not enough of workmen. Fathers should be instructed that it is their duty to give up their sons to the Lord. Youth must be impressed with the claims God has upon them. Church members must be instructed in their duty to furnish the means, and ministers are called upon to press this subject upon all these, and to urge their immediate action.

The Board is convinced that it is the duty of the Church to train her youth for the great work of the ministry. There is not a sufficient number of candidates. It is the duty of the Presbytery to search out pious youth, to supervise and induct men into this office.

Primary Schools.—The education of the lambs of the flock in church schools is a matter of great importance. There is,

however, a prejudice against the establishment of denominational schools. The number is greater this year than it was last—some have failed, others have had remarkable success.

Dr. Van Rensselaer mentioned one in Illinois, concerning which, an extract of a letter was read, containing sources of great encouragement. Many of the largest churches are contemplating the establishment of schools on Christian principles. The want of funds is an obstacle which retards the success of the experiment. This obstacle can be removed. Two large legacies have been received for educational purposes during the year.

Thirty-five academies are in successful operation. One calamity is to be recorded—the winding up of the Caldwell Institute in North Carolina. This was brought about, by suffering the debts of the Institute to accumulate. Our Academies should be self-sustaining. In some regions of country the churches have been on the decline, because of the lack of this agency in the training of our youth. Other denominations are awake to the importance of this subject and are progressing. Laudable efforts are made in Arkansas, and in the neighbouring Presbytery in Missouri, to establish Presbyterian Academies.

Colleges.—The reformation was carried on by great scholars as well as by good men. What would have been Geneva and Scotland without their Universities? The Pilgrim Fathers planted their college sixteen years after reaching these shores. Dr. Van Rensselaer enumerated different colleges throughout the Union into whose internal arrangements the feature of religious instruction enters, all of which are flourishing.

The connection of the Board with Theological Seminaries has now ceased.

The Board has issued a tract on Education, written by James W. Alexander, D. D., which they wish to distribute extensively.

Home, the School, and the Church, each was commented on at large as to its importance.

The changes contemplated were explained in the Report. They will not be pressed on the attention of the Assembly. The Board simply wish them to be taken into consideration.

The Report was received and referred to a special committee, on whose report the following resolutions were adopted viz:

1. *Resolved*, That in the judgment of this Assembly, the

wants of the Church, and the general improvement of the age demand increasing attention to the qualifications of candidates for the ministry; and that with the view, partly, of keeping more prominent the idea of the necessity of literary attainments in our candidates, and partly with the view of other advantages, the Board of Education are allowed to give their appropriations the title of scholarships; and the Presbyteries are enjoined to use their best endeavours to raise the standard of qualification for the ministry.

2. *Resolved*, That the practice of requiring a pledge from young men to enter the ministry, especially in the early stages of their preparatory studies, is not deemed conducive to the best interests, either of the candidates, or of the Church; and the Board of Education are hereby authorized to modify their rules accordingly.

3. *Resolved*, That this Assembly prefer that young men within their bounds, who are looking forward to the work of the ministry, should be officially recognized as candidates under the care of Presbyteries, only when they are prepared to enter upon their theological studies, and until that time they be regarded simply as students on probation, under the general watch and patronage of the Presbyteries.

4. *Resolved*, That whilst home nurture is according to the word of God and the covenant of his grace, a main reliance of the Church for the salvation of her children, Providence also testifies to the importance of public education, on Christian principles, in schools, academies, and colleges, and particularly to the intimate relation between Christian education and the power of the gospel as proclaimed in the sanctuary, and therefore the Home, the School, and the Church should all be imbued with the spirit of consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly, entertaining a lively interest in colleges in view of the past history of the Presbyterian Church, its present prosperity, and its future hopes, learn with great satisfaction the general progress attending the department of Christian education, and also the addition of Westminister College at Buffalo, to the list of those institutions; and it is recommended to our churches and members to assist, as far as possible, in the endowment of our colleges, and to co-

operate with the Board of Education in sustaining them during the interval for which they may need aid.

6. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly has a deep sense of the importance of giving to its youth a Christian education in academies and colleges on a more extensive scale than has yet been practiced within our bounds, and that for the purpose of contributing to some extent in bringing forward promising young men of suitable character, other than candidates for the ministry, the Board of Education are hereby authorized to apply to this subject whatever funds may be thus specifically appropriated by the donors.

7. *Resolved*, That in collecting funds for the purposes of education, the Board shall, in all cases, keep the specific contributions for candidates, for schools, academies, and colleges, distinct from each other; but, if no special direction is indicated, then the funds shall be appropriated to the education of candidates for the ministry.

8. *Resolved*, That the Board of Education, on account of its responsible work and the increased pecuniary liabilities attending it, be commended to the liberality of all our churches, and that the Presbyteries are invited to secure collections for the cause of education, either general or ministerial, as may be preferred by the churches.

9. *Resolved*, That the last Thursday of February be observed as a day of special prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the youth of our land, who are pursuing their studies in the ministry, and especially that many of them may be called and qualified by Divine grace for the work of the ministry.

These resolutions are of special interest, as they give the sanction of the Assembly to several principles of great importance. One of these is, that it is unwise to exact a pledge of youth in the early stages of their education that they will enter into the ministry. This has been found to be a hurtful snare. There should be no bias on the candidate's mind leading him to decide in favour of the ministry, other than the influence of the Spirit and providence of God.

Another important principle which we rejoice to see sanctioned is, that the benefactions of the Board are not hereafter

to be confined to professed candidates for the ministry or even to those who make a profession of personal religion. The Board are to be allowed to appropriate *sums specially contributed for that purpose* to the education "of promising young men of moral character." This is an enlargement of the sphere of operation of the Board, and will remove an objection which has often been urged against its plans. The seventh resolution wisely provides that the money contributed for candidates, schools, colleges, &c., should be kept distinct from each other, and that where no special direction is indicated, the funds are to be appropriated to the education of candidates for the ministry.

It is thought by many that giving the appropriations of the Board the title of scholarships will serve to remove an impression, which, to a certain extent, in some places at least, is said to rest on the minds of candidates and their friends, that there is something derogatory in the present form and mode of assistance. We do not ourselves see any ground for this impression, and we do not think that it exists to any great extent. But we rejoice in any change which may tend to remove a painful impression. The conviction, however, is gradually extending itself among the churches and their candidates, that there is nothing more derogatory to a young man being educated by the Church for the ministry, than there is in his being educated by the State for the army.

BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

The Rev. Dr. Leyburn presented the annual report of the Board of Publication, whose increasing popularity and usefulness is giving it a strong hold on the interests and affections of the Church. From nearly the entire Calvinistic family, and from Christians of almost every name, the publications have received the strongest approbation. The mechanical execution of the books and tracts has been greatly improved. The receipts for the support of colportage and gratuitous distribution exceed by fifty per cent. those of last year; the sales have increased in an almost equal ratio. For the fiscal year ending April 1st, 1849, they were \$29,000; the year ending April 1st,

1850, they were \$42,000; and the year just closed, they have been \$60,000. Nineteen new books, and seventeen new tracts have been added to the catalogue. Total number of books and tracts published during the year 430,000. Total receipts for the year, \$80,987 52. There have been granted to needy ministers, 1136 volumes; feeble churches, 734 volumes; Sabbath schools, 1301 volumes; hospitals and other humane institutions, 171 volumes; literary and theological institutions, 243 volumes; ships-of-war and military stations, 222 volumes; individuals for gratuitous distribution, 717 volumes, in addition to 250,000 pages of tracts. Donations have also been made through the Board of Foreign Missions of books and tracts to the amount of \$500, and by colporteurs of 5,525 volumes, and 528,154 pages of tracts.

One hundred and twenty-five colporteurs have been employed in twenty-four different States, the aggregate of whose labours are as follows:—Time spent, thirty years, four months and sixteen days; families visited, 50,890; conversed or prayed with, 22,151; families found destitute of the Bible, 1,898; Presbyterian families visited without the Confession of Faith, 2,237; volumes sold by colporteurs, 58,492; volumes granted by colporteurs, 5,525; pages of tracts granted by colporteurs, 528,154.

The Sabbath School Visitor has had an almost unprecedented success, having secured 25,000 subscribers during the four months of its existence, and averaging one hundred new subscribers a day. The Assembly passed resolutions strongly approving the operations of the Board, and commending it to the increased favour and liberality of the churches.

After which Dr. Brown, from the Special Committee, to whom had been referred the printed report, presented the following resolutions, which were adopted, viz:

1. *Resolved*, That the Assembly find much cause for gratitude to God, in the success with which he has crowned the wise and zealous efforts of the Board during the past year.

2. *Resolved*, That inasmuch as the design of the Assembly in reference to this Board is to call forth the resources of the Presbyterian Church in supplying the Church and the world, as far as possible, with a sound religious literature; and its operations have met thus far the Assembly's expectations to a gratifying

extent; the Board deserves the liberal and zealous support of the Synods, Presbyteries, and churches of the Presbyterian Church, and should receive at their hands a preference over other institutions which profess to have kindred objects in view.

3. *Resolved*, That this Assembly learn with pleasure the success which has attended the publication of the *Presbyterian Sabbath School Visitor*, and recommend it to the hearty support of all the churches under its care.

4. *Resolved*, That in order to bring the publications of this Board more fully to the notice of the public generally, and the churches under the care of the General Assembly, and to furnish increased facilities for obtaining them, and thereby extending encouragement to colportage, it is recommended to the Board, by such arrangements as may seem best to them, to place a full supply of their publications at such points of general access as they may select.

The progress made by this Board within the last three years is in the highest degree encouraging, and reflects great honour on the Secretary and his associates. Indeed we do not know that for a long time so favourable an exhibition of the benevolent operations of our Church has been made to the General Assembly. The Church is evidently increasing in zeal for the objects represented by our several Boards, and in confidence in the wisdom and ability of those by whom their operations are conducted.

COMPLAINT OF MR. PERKINS.

Ambrose Stone, a member of the Irish Grove church in the Presbytery of Sangamon, having stated to session that he had reason to believe he had been mistaken in making a profession of religion, and that he wished to be released from his connection with the church, the session dismissed him to the world without tabling any charges or going through the regular forms of trial. The records of the session coming under the review of Presbytery, the decision of the session in the case of Mr. Stone was reversed by the Presbytery. Mr. Perkins then appealed to the Synod, who confirmed the decision of the Presbytery, and against this action of Synod Mr. Perkins now complains to the Assembly.

The case was fully argued by the parties in the case, and the roll was called for the opinions of members previous to taking the vote. An immense amount of time was taken up by this process, the same ground having been travelled over and over again. The opinions of the members were somewhat thus divided: 1st, that the action of the church session was unconstitutional, on the ground that no specific charge had been officially preferred against Mr. Stone, no hearing or trial was had officially before that body, and therefore the action of the Synod in reversing the action of the session was right and proper, and that the appeal of Mr. Perkins should not be sustained. 2d, that Mr. Stone having openly declared to the session that he did not possess the proper qualifications for a member of the Church; that he would not commune with the Church; and that he had neglected family worship—were sufficient causes for dismissal, and that if the action of the session was not strictly according to the letter of the Constitution, it was in the spirit, and that therefore the appeal from the decision of the Synod should be sustained. 3d, that while the Session did right in dismissing Mr. Stone under the circumstances, its action was not strictly constitutional, according to the letter; and that therefore the appeal should be sustained in part.

The vote being then taken stood as follows:—to sustain the appeal 38, sustain in part 43, not to sustain 79. The subject was then referred to a Committee to bring in a minute expressive of the sense of the Assembly in this case.

The Committee appointed to bring in a minute in the judicial case of Ambrose Stone, according to the vote previously taken, reported the following resolutions:

Resolved, That no church session has the authority to dissolve a connection with a member except by excommunication, and that the session is then bound to proceed according to the Book of Discipline; and this Assembly does condemn the action of the church, in dissolving its connection with Ambrose Stone, as irregular and unconstitutional.

Resolved, That the Presbytery and Synod of Illinois acted correctly in not allowing the members of Irish Grove church to vote on approving their own record, and that they did right in refusing to correct said record.

Resolved, That the Synod require the Presbytery to review the record in this case, according to the Book of Discipline.

After discussion, in which Messrs. Plumer, Twitchell, Van Rensselaer, Cheeseman, Fillmore, Leyburn, McCullough, Clark, Burch, and others, participated, and several ineffectual efforts to amend, the report of the committee was adopted.

The principle involved in the above decision was re-affirmed in the answer given to an overture from the Presbytery of Baltimore.

On Overture No. 23, from the Presbytery of Baltimore, asking whether a member could be dismissed upon application by letter upon a statement that he did not consider himself a converted man, &c. The Committee reported a resolution, that, in the opinion of the Assembly, there is no constitutional or scriptural mode of suspending members from church communion, except by death, dismissal to join another church, or excommunication upon trial, according to the provisions of the discipline. Report agreed to.

DISMISSION OF MEMBERS TO OTHER CHURCHES.

Dr. Leland, from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported upon Overture No. 10, from the Presbytery of Baltimore, and submitting the following question: "Shall members of our churches, who may wish to join churches not in correspondence with the General Assembly, receive certificates in the same form as if they wished to join another church in our communion, or in correspondence with the Assembly; or has the church session done all that it ought to do, when in such cases the good and regular standing of the persons so applying is duly certified?"

On motion, the answer recommended by the committee was laid on the table, and the following, after amendment, was adopted, viz.: "This whole subject is one that ought to be left to the sound discretion of the various church sessions, according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church."

The subject involved in this overture is one of the greatest practical importance. There is nothing on which our ministers and members are more sensitive, than on the question of

Christian communion. There is no point on which the great body of them regard the teachings of the word of God more explicit, and therefore as to no point are they more tenacious of their Christian liberty. We may here remark that it is a great infelicity that overtures on such subjects should be so numerous. It is a common infirmity with many men to wish their opinions turned into laws. They think certain things right and expedient, and instead of being content to act on their own judgment, and allow others to act on theirs, they desire their view of the matter to be made obligatory on all their brethren. One good brother, because he thinks the use of organs in churches unauthorized and injurious, becomes very desirous that their use should be absolutely prohibited by authority. Another thinks that a regular dismissal of a church member should be given only in certain cases, and he wishes his private judgment to be turned into a public law. In an extended Church like ours, there are few evils which ought to be more sedulously avoided than excessive legislation. Leave as much liberty to all concerned as possible, if you wish to preserve peace or union.

As to this question of communion, it is well known that there are two very different views arising out of different theories of the nature and design of the Church. The one view is that of the great body of the Christian world, and is the clear doctrine of our standards. It assumes that the terms of Christian communion are unalterably fixed in the word of God, and can be neither increased nor diminished by any human authority. This is one great principle. Another is, that nothing can justly be required as a term of Christian communion, which Christ has not made necessary to admission to heaven. In other words, that we are bound to receive and treat as Christian brethren all whom Christ receives as disciples. We are not to make ourselves stricter or holier than he. Our standards, therefore, lay down the evidences of piety as the only scriptural conditions of church communion. Competent knowledge, faith, and holy living are all the Church has any right to demand, because nothing else is demanded by Christ as necessary to communion with himself. As this is the only scriptural principle, so it is the only one that can be carried out. Can the poor African be required to decide the questions between Prelatists and Presby-

terians, or between Burghers and Anti-Burghers, before he is admitted to the Lord's table? It is out of the question. Every Church must receive, in fact, all whom she regards as the true followers of Christ. Therefore, the lowest terms of salvation are the highest admissible terms of communion. If these principles are correct, it follows that however restrictive are the conditions a Church may see fit to establish as the terms of ministerial fellowship, it must recognize as a sister Church every body which holds and teaches the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, however erroneous it may be in other respects; and, therefore, it cannot with any consistency refuse either to receive members from such Church, or to dismiss them to it. That is, so far as general principles are concerned. For there may be particular cases in which, for special reasons, it is proper to refuse to receive a member from another Presbyterian church, belonging to our own body. All we mean to say is, that any body which we recognize as a Christian Church, we are bound to treat as such, in receiving *worthy* members from them, and in dismissing to them such as desire their fellowship.

The other radically different view of Christian communion is that which is characteristic of our Scotch brethren, and especially of the secession portion of them. They regard the Church so much as a witness for the truth, that they overlook its wider aspect as a "congregation of faithful men" or "the communion of saints." They consider themselves, therefore, as joining in the testimony of any Church with which they commune; and they require all who wish to commune with them to join in their peculiar testimony whatever it may be. Of course they cannot consistently commune themselves nor allow their members to commune with any other than their own churches. Even some of the leaders of the Free Church of Scotland seemed, at first, in danger of falling into this false theory. They were in their zeal for cutting off all communion with the Established Church, lest, as they said, they should vitiate their testimony. Happily for them and the cause of Christ this was a passing cloud. That Church has adhered to the scriptural doctrine, which has ever been held sacred by the great body of Protestants. Christian communion is communion of men as Christians, not as Presbyterians, Methodists, or Episcopalians. We recog-

nize those with whom we commune, or to whom we dismiss our members, as Christians, and as nothing more. We give no sanction to their peculiarities, whatever they may be. We have so often heard the strongest feelings expressed by our pastors on this subject, that we are persuaded that any attempt of the General Assembly to prevent their enjoying on this subject the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, would be followed by the most unhappy consequences. We rejoice, therefore, in the wise disposition of this matter recorded above.

CLOSE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The Assembly having completed their business, it was

Resolved, That this General Assembly be dissolved, and that another General Assembly, chosen in like manner, be required to meet in the Glebe Street Church in the city of Charleston, on the third Thursday of May, A. D., 1852, at 11 o'clock A. M.

Accordingly the Moderator pronounced the Assembly dissolved, according to the prescribed form, with singing, prayer, and the apostolic benediction.

Thus ended what, from all accounts, appears to have been a singularly pleasant and edifying meeting of the Assembly. All parties unite in commendation of the "Great West" and of the hospitality of its large-hearted Christian people. We have seldom heard such strong and unanimous praise of the temper and skill of a Moderator, as has reached us from all quarters with regard to Dr. Humphrey. All these things are sources of gratitude and tend to bind our churches together in the bonds of mutual confidence and love.