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ARTICLE I.—*Annals of the American Pulpit*; or Commemorative Notices of distinguished American Clergymen of various Denominations. With Historical Introductions. By WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE, D. D. Volumes III. and IV. New York: Carters. 1858. 8vo. pp. 632, 836.

WE have already paid our respects to the former volumes of this work, and we need not repeat the remarks which we then made upon the plan and manner of the collection. But this new portion has a peculiar charm, as containing the history of our own venerable and beloved branch of the church catholic. Delightful as it has been to turn over these pages, we have found it a slow process, as our progress has been continually interrupted by the emotions which memory awoke, as we saw passing before us in vision, the images, first of those whose names were perpetually on the lips of our fathers, and then of those at whose feet we ourselves once sat. The task or sacred office of recalling such associations has chastened every controversial heat, and made us fain to recall the day when the Presbyterian church in the United States was an undivided body; while the prospect of yet greater increase and diffusion over rising States and conterminous countries, lifts our hearts in thanksgiving and hope.

When we reflect that the series extends from 1683 to 1855,

he knows believes only in one incarnation. If the Indian or the English government think that they must not proselyte, they must stay away; they cannot help proselyting; the very presence of the Christian religion in that country is a missionary appeal. In the Hindu mind, everything begins and ends with religion. He sees European greatness, power, wisdom, and justice; and he ascribes these attributes, involuntarily, and perhaps unwillingly, to the religion of Europeans. If the government think the preaching of Christianity dangerous, then they must abandon all schemes for improving and elevating the natives, enlarging their minds and acquainting them with European literature and history; for such advance in knowledge must have the effect of making them discontented with their old absurd religion, and introducing them to the evidences and moral fruits of another.\* Whilst, therefore, the Indian government are not called upon to preach the gospel, let them not pander to a vile idolatry; let them cease to bow down in the house of Dagon; let them not be ashamed of the religion they profess; let them now hear the rod, and Him who hath appointed it; let them give God the glory, lest a worse thing befall them than even THE MUTINY OF 1857!

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ART. V.—*The General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly met in the city of New Orleans, May 6th, and was opened with a sermon by Rev. Cortlandt Van Rensselaer, D. D., from 2 Cor. xiii. 11. The Rev. WILLIAM A. SCOTT, D. D., of California, was chosen Moderator, and the Rev. D. X. JUNKIN, D. D., Temporary Clerk. The next Assembly was appointed to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana, on the third Thursday of May, 1859.

*The American Bible Society.*

In the Assembly of 1857, an overture had been presented by the Rev. R. J. Breckinridge, D. D., in reference to the

\* This view has been fully recognized and endorsed by the *London "Times."*

action of the American Bible Society in the preparation of a new standard edition of the Bible, which was referred to this Assembly. The subject was called up on the first day of the sessions, and, after some discussion, was made the second order of the day for the following Monday. When the subject was again called up, the Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckinridge presented the following minute, which was unanimously adopted:

“By a vote of the General Assembly of 1857, an overture to that body, which is printed in its Minutes, pp. 35, 36, relating to the American Bible Society’s new standard English Bible, and to the best method of preserving, in its integrity, the common version of the English Bible, was specially referred to the consideration of the present General Assembly. During the year which has intervened, the attention of the Christian public has been diverted to this important subject in a very unusual degree; and, so far as this Assembly has the means of judging, it is apparent that the Presbyterian church throughout the country is decidedly opposed to the line of conduct in the premises, pursued by the late Committee on Versions of that Society, and to the circulation by that Society of their new standard English Bible. It is, therefore, matter of great satisfaction to this General Assembly, that the Directors of the American Bible Society have resolved to cease publishing and circulating the aforesaid new standard Bible, and to resume the publication and circulation of the standard English Bible in exclusive use by the Society before the late work of collation and change, commenced about the year 1847. We also cordially approve the further action of the Board of Directors, so far as it secures a more vigilant oversight, in future, of the work of its Committee on Versions, and prevents any future change, either of the text or its accessories, without the careful consideration and special order of the Board of Directors. With regard to any change whatever, either in the text of the English version of the Bible, commonly called King James’s Version, or in the accessories to that text, as they were commonly printed at the formation of the American Bible Society, we do not admit that the said Society has any power or authority to make any alteration in said accessories or said text, except such as appertain to a printer, and not to an editor.

By the text of King James's Version, we do not mean a copy corrupted by errors and unauthorized changes—no matter where that copy may have been printed, nor how those errors may have occurred, nor who may have ventured to make those changes;—but we mean the true text in English, produced and published after the labours of the translators appointed by King James the First of England, which for nearly two centuries and a half has been the standard Bible of all people speaking the English language, and which the Presbyterian church in the United States of America is resolved to preserve in its integrity and purity, and to use and circulate. Along with the greater portion of the Christian public in this country, we have confided to the American Bible Society the great work of circulating the English Scriptures in the version in common use; and while we deeply regret the serious error into which it was betrayed, its recent action, in the premises, demands a cordial response from all the earnest supporters of the great work in which it is engaged. In discharge, therefore, of our duty as the General Assembly of one branch of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, to which he has committed his most blessed Word for the guidance and salvation of men, we have made this deliverance. And upon the terms herein set forth, we reiterate our approval of the principles upon which the American Bible Society was founded, our desire to coöperate with our brethren of all Christian denominations, in united efforts to furnish the whole world with the word of God, and our earnest recommendation to our people to give liberally to the support of this good cause.”

We hope that the exciting and painful controversy on this subject is at an end. It is not the Presbyterian church alone, but the Christian sentiment of the country, which has decided the matter, and settled, we trust, finally, the principle that the Bible Society has no authority to alter the received version of the Scriptures or its accessories in any manner or degree affecting the sense. This principle lies at the foundation of the constitution of the Society, and faithful adherence to it is essential to its existence. The Directors seem never intentionally to have called this principle into question. The avowed object of the collation instituted by the Board, and referred to the Committee on Versions, was to correct the “discrepancies still

existing between the different editions of our English Bible; and also between our editions and those issued by the British and Foreign Bible Society." These discrepancies related to "orthography, capital letters, words in italic, and punctuation." The removal of these discrepancies was a perfectly legitimate object, and the collation of the different standard editions was the legitimate means of effecting that object. The whole difficulty has arisen from the Committee transcending not only the power delegated to them, but the power of the Society itself. Instead of limiting themselves to the removal of discrepancies, they assumed the authority of altering the text at discretion, not only in matters of orthography, capital letters, italics, and punctuation, but also as to the words. The objection is not that they exercised this discretion recklessly, or even unwisely, but that they assumed it at all. They had just as much authority to alter a whole book as a single sentence. Besides this, they substituted a new set of headings for the chapters, a work entirely transcending the powers of the Society, and which the Board never referred to the Committee. It was assumed, as the Committee state in their Report, p. 16, "in practice," i. e., without any authority from the Board. This is a work which the church would not commit to any six or six hundred men in the country. Its assumption by this Committee, the acquiescence of the Board in this assumption, and their sanctioning the stereotyping and distribution of thousands of copies of the Bible with these spurious headings, has done more to shake public confidence than anything which has ever occurred in the history of our benevolent institutions. It is the greatest public wrong that, so far as our knowledge extends, has ever been committed by any of our national societies. The fact that these changes, in almost all instances, eliminated the evangelical element from these headings, tended greatly to increase dissatisfaction and alarm. The pertinacity with which the Committee (with the honourable exception of Dr. Spring) have defended this great wrong, and the principles avowed by some of its members and friends in their justification, have rendered the matter, so far as they are concerned, manifold worse. It was asserted, according to the published reports of the debates on this subject, that the Society was bound to give the people



the best Bible they could; that it would not be justified in circulating a version which did not express the mind of the Spirit; that the received version had already passed through many changes and still remained the same version, implying that any alterations consistent with the identity of the version were within the constitutional powers of the Society. The old frigate Constitution, it is said, has had her timbers renewed one after another until scarcely a beam of the original structure remains, and it is the Constitution still. Thus, according to this principle, King James's version may be changed, chapter by chapter, or sentence by sentence, until nothing of the original remains, and be none the less King James's version. It is evident that such assertions assume that the office of the Bible Society is not merely the circulation of the Scriptures, but the improvement of the English version, according to the judgment of the Board or of its Committee. It is the practical assumption of this principle, despite its formal renunciation, which has created so much alarm in the public mind. And it is the explicit condemnation of that principle, by the Christian public, which the controversy on this subject has called forth, which is the permanent good God has brought out of the collision. The foregoing remarks are not made with the design to keep up irritation of feeling, but with the intent that the importance and true nature of the question at issue may be understood and remembered. We do not impute any conscious or intentional wrong to the Committee. We cheerfully acknowledge the zeal and ability manifested in their work. They, as was the case with the Apostle, no doubt thought they were doing God service. This, however, does not render the wrong done either less obvious or less dangerous.

*The Board of Domestic Missions.*

Dr. Musgrave, Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, gave the Assembly a brief summary of its action during the past year, of which the following is an abstract.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary commercial and financial revulsion which has overtaken the country, and produced for a time almost a total suspension of business of every kind, bringing bankruptcy to thousands, the Board have been able to

execute the work entrusted to them with extraordinary success. Indeed, no sooner had the gloom begun to disperse, than the contributions to its treasury largely increased. In the month of February, the receipts exceeded those of the corresponding period of the previous year by \$5,000. The Board have increased the number of missionaries by twenty, making the number now employed by them 600. The appropriations for the past year are slightly in advance of those made during the one preceding it. The total receipts are \$105,277.52; the entire disbursements for the same period are \$104,143.67. The receipts of the Board are considerably above the record of any previous year, and this increase is not the result of individual bequests so much as of the contributions of the churches. The excess of increase in the past year over any preceding one, is above \$8,000. An average reduction of \$3.00 has been made in the appropriation to each missionary, in view of the embarrassments of business; but the churches in which they laboured have increased the amount which they contributed to the salary: so that the salaries received by those engaged in missionary labour average \$500 each.

The reports from the missionary churches indicate the most extraordinary success. There is a sensible manifestation of the influence of the Holy Spirit in a revival of the church, and an awakening of the people. Although the fruits are not reported to this Assembly, it can be confidently stated that such an extensive interest on the subject of religion has never before been witnessed.

The usual series of resolutions expressing the gratitude of the Assembly for the blessing of God on the labours of the Board, confidence in its wisdom and zeal, and urging on the churches their duty, was presented, and, after recommitment and amendment, adopted. The point in the resolutions which excited debate, was the expression of regret that so large a part of the funds were absorbed by feeble unproductive churches. This was considered as an intimation that such churches should not be sustained. Dr. Musgrave disclaimed any such interpretation of the language used. He advanced it as a principle of the Board, that churches however feeble, and however little prospect there might be of speedy increase of strength, should

be sustained. What the resolution objected to really designed, was discountenancing the application for aid on the part of Presbyteries in behalf of churches which did not really need it, or which could be sustained by a less liberal appropriation. The resolution having been modified so as to express that idea was adopted.

*The Board of Foreign Missions.*

The receipts from all sources, (including a special contribution of \$13,112.57 to repair losses in India,) have been \$223,977.79. The expenditure has been \$207,051.51, (the sum specially donated for India, \$18,112.57 being reserved,) leaving a balance against the Board of \$1,186.29.

Thirty missionary labourers have been sent out during the year, twelve of whom are returned missionaries, and ten others are waiting opportunities to embark for the fields to which they have respectively been designated. Under the direction of the Board, there are nine missions among the Indians; one to the Jews, and one to the Chinese in California, within the boundaries of the United States; two in South America; two in Western Africa; one in Siam; three in China; two in India, embracing fifteen stations, and extending over a region of country more than a thousand miles in length; besides which, pecuniary aid has been extended to the Evangelical Societies of Belgium, Paris, Geneva, and to the Waldensian Synod.

Connected with these various missions, there are 170 missionary labourers from this country; 54 native helpers; 50 principal stations and out-stations; 23 organized churches; and nearly 5,000 native youths under Christian training in the schools connected with these missions.

A general survey of the missionary work, during the past year, brings to view facts and events both of a painful and a cheering nature; the former calling for sorrow and humiliation, the latter for praise and thanksgiving.

Under the former head stands out painfully and conspicuous the sad disaster at Futtehgurh, in which the lives of eight beloved and valued missionary labourers and two children were sacrificed by sepoy violence; the removal by death, in other parts of the field, of five other valued missionary labourers;



the partial interruption of the work at one of the principal stations in China; and the withdrawal of a considerable number of labourers from the field, either temporarily or permanently, on account of the failure of health. These are occurrences that call for deep humiliation, and they ought to awaken the heart-searching inquiry, why these reverses have been permitted to befall this great work.

On the other hand, there are facts of an encouraging nature, that are equally deserving of the grateful consideration of God's people. Among these may be mentioned the merciful preservation of the health and lives of the great body of our missionary brethren and their families in India, during all the trials and dangers to which they have been exposed; the noble testimony which the martyred brethren were enabled to bear to the truth, in the immediate prospect of a cruel and violent death, and the heroic fortitude with which their Christian converts endured persecution, and in some cases, met death, forming together a lesson that will be rehearsed from generation to generation in India, and will long be cherished by the church of Christ, as a sweet and precious memorial. The early prospective settlement of disturbances both in India and in China, on a basis more favourable to the spread of Christianity; the quiet and effective manner in which the missionary work has been prosecuted in most of the fields occupied by the Board, in connection with which a large number of immortal souls have been gathered into the fold of Christ; the opening of new fields for missionary enterprise in portions of the earth heretofore inaccessible, and the enlargement of the area of labour in those that have been partially occupied; the present great outpouring of God's Spirit upon the churches in this and other Christian lands, furnishing and sanctifying the means and agents, as it is hoped, for a great extension of the missionary work; the increased contributions of God's people to the support of this great cause notwithstanding the existing financial pressure, and the growing disposition manifested, not only by the students of our Theological Seminaries, but to some extent by settled ministers and laymen of the church, to devote themselves personally to the promotion of this work—all these, if the indications of divine providence are rightly interpreted, betoken

a purpose on the part of the great Head of the church to bring about grander results in connection with the enlargement of his spiritual kingdom among men, than have ever been witnessed before, and a willingness on his part to employ the church as the honoured agency for the accomplishment of this great end. How shall the church respond to this solemn call? How shall she act in view of this momentous emergency?

Mr. Lowrie, the Corresponding Secretary, gave a detailed and most lucid account of the operations of the Board during the past year. Rarely in a lifetime, can it have been the good fortune of an audience to listen to such a narrative of martyrdom, and to such examples of fortitude, worthy of the earlier days of the Christian church, as were illustrated in the death of native Hindoo converts as well as of American missionaries. The mighty influence of this church organization upon the civilizing, the evangelizing, the humanizing of savage nations, was most conspicuously displayed.

He said that in the twenty-one years during which annual reports have been submitted, we have made the discovery that missionary work is never stationary. If it does not advance, it always goes backward. That work consists of three distinct, but harmonious branches: 1st. Preaching the word as soon as the language is sufficiently mastered to enable missionaries to be understood. 2d. Translating and printing the Bible. 3d. The education of the young natives in boarding-schools, for the specific object of raising up a native agency. To supply India alone would require one hundred thousand ministers, and China would need not less than three hundred thousand. They never can be obtained in America; and these necessities can only be supplied by the countries themselves. He spoke of the terrible financial straits to which the Board has been reduced, to meet demands of the holiest character. Though a native missionary in Africa, "a white man, all but his colour," was ready, and most admirably fitted for the work, it took the Board three weeks to make up for his support the indispensable sum of five hundred dollars. Mr. Mattoon, in Siam, the finest Siamcse scholar in the world, has completed the translation of the Scriptures, of tracts, and of school books. If we sent him no printing press, or other means to print, of what use was it to send him? Yet all the

Board could do was to send him the promise, relying on, they know not what resource, to meet the promise. Such expenses are often caviled at as needing justification. Preaching is thought to be the great and paramount work of the missionary; but is not the use of the Bible, and the dissemination of religious knowledge, a process of declaring the will of God to man? And is preaching orally anything more? Even to preach requires travelling, which, in all those countries, is expensive. There are no inns; the people dare not receive you into their houses, nor give you food. They dare not give you drink; the glass that has been polluted by your lips must be broken, and only metal vessels can in any way ever be made fit to be used again. Missionaries must go, as in apostolic times, by two and two. They must take with them tents, provisions, and all else they need to maintain life, and these require a team, and are expensive in such countries. In China and in Siam they can avail themselves of the canals; but there are thousands of localities which these do not penetrate, and there they must travel on foot. They can nowhere stir without additional means.

These details of expenditure refer mostly to small funds; but there are so many of them that they exhaust the treasury, despite any supplies hitherto poured into it. The contributions of churches, since the disuse of agents to collect money for missions, have slowly but steadily increased; but it is a mournful fact, that nine hundred and forty churches, with four hundred and thirty-seven ministers, and sixteen thousand one hundred and twenty-eight communicants, have, during one whole year, not contributed one cent. Were every member of our church to contribute half a cent a month, our receipts would have been increased by five or six thousand dollars. Were they to contribute one cent a week, it would produce a fund of twenty thousand dollars. Of all the contributions of Presbyterian churches, for every purpose, the amount actually given to foreign missions amounts to barely four per cent.

He spoke of incidents of recent martyrdom in India. A native missionary was tied to the mouth of a cannon, and cut to pieces with swords, after the gun had twice missed fire. A mother and her babe left to die, remained two days unburied,

and were at last flung into a stream by men of the lowest caste. The speaker's own son was mentioned in this connection, in the simplest words that could describe his drowning, by violence, in a Chinese sea; but it electrified the Assembly, as nothing but genuine feelings can do, and the entire house melted into floods of irrepressible tears. He told of the personal loveliness of four ladies who were victims; of four men who are not excelled by the greatness or the excellence of any four brothers in this Assembly. When taken, they threw away all weapons, offering no resistance. Mr. McLain, an Indian planter, offered one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for their ransom, and used all other possible means to save them; but the cry was, "We want not money, but blood!" Husband and wife were tied arm to arm, and, carrying their infants, they were marched to the place of butchery, and received the crown of martyrdom. But we need not grieve. In the Revelation, these things are described like a history more than a prophecy, and we are assured by the word of Him who permits such things, that "the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder thereof he will restrain." "Not by power, nor by might, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

On a motion to adopt the report, Mr. Atkinson said: The church is essentially a missionary organization. It is its character to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It is the first instinct of a new-born soul to gather in other souls. What motion is to the health of the body, and exercise of the faculties is to the well-being of the intellect, missions are to the well-being of the church. Macaulay's wonder at the sudden arrest and congelation of the Reformation, would never have been recorded in his history, had he understood church history as he did secular. The church lost her missionary spirit.

He looked on nothing human as so great as the man who takes his life in his hand, and goes forth to the ends of the earth to carry the gospel of Christ. He hoped this Assembly may be hereafter distinguished for the missionary character of its present meeting, beyond all that have preceded it. The best bestowed wealth is that given to this cause. It was his deliberate conclusion that the highest elevation attainable by a



mortal is in the gospel ministry. He knew the martyr Lowrie in the Theological Seminary, and he could not but look with reverence on that father, here among us, whose son is now a glorified saint.

Mr. Paynter spoke in terms of overflowing gratitude of one of the missionaries whose murder had been referred to. He owed to him his nurture, training, education, and love of missions. He had always brought the claims of missions the most prominently of any before his church, and every member of it freely gives to this cause. One whose husband prohibited her from all means of giving, with feeble health, had laboured at midnight to earn means for this cause, and placed it where it was found and secured to missions—almost literally a widow's mite. He thought it essential to keep the heart warm on this subject. Unless the heart is moved, it is little we shall give from mere principle. He hoped that no member who has anything to say on this subject, calculated to send us home with new enthusiasm for this cause, will withhold it.

Dr. Palmer moved that the Rev. Mr. Hay, a missionary recently arrived from India, be requested to give an account of the disturbances in India. A recess was then taken.

On resuming the session, the Rev. Mr. Hay occupied the attention of the Assembly with a thrilling narrative of the mutiny, which lost nothing in its interest from the reflection that in many of the most terrible scenes he had been a personal sufferer.

He said British India embraced a population of not less than one hundred millions. It is not homogeneous in race, language, nor religion. The greater part are idolatrous Hindoos, occupying the eastern, northern, and central portions. Nearly all the rest are Mohammedans. Three hundred years ago the Jesuits first established their missions in the extreme southern parts, whence they spread and extended into other parts, assuming the dress and habits of the people, and propagating their religion under the forms of Hinduism. The Pope at length caused a rigid examination to be made into the condition of Indo-Catholicism, which resulted in repeated bulls and edicts, condemning it as heretical.

After them came Schwartz and his followers, until the Pres-

byterian church established its missions in the northwestern provinces, along the Ganges, up to the Punjáb, and when that was annexed to the British empire they were protected by that government.

The distinction of caste meets the missionary everywhere, and is recognized by the British government. The high caste Hindoos claim their descent from the brain of Brahma, being themselves but divided portions of him, and after death they are to return into him, like cups of water returned into its original reservoir.

He gave an account of the peculiar policy of the British government in organizing armies of native troops, placing caste against caste, so as to have a check upon each other, and Mohammedans against them all. Previous to the arrival of the British the Mohammedans ruled the country; they destroyed the temples, suppressed the practices of many religious rites, and subdued the people.

Amid this mingled population, the missionary enterprise succeeded in a most remarkable manner. They established schools, translated the Bible, tracts, and other religious books, and were greatly prospered in their work.

The speaker had heard during his voyage to this country, that the missionary effort in India has proved a total failure. The same was asserted as to the Sandwich Islands. But these statements are based on insufficient data, and proceed from persons hostile to missionary enterprises. The mission work has stamped its influence upon all eastern life. But a few years since, thousands annually bowed before the car of Juggernaut, and human life was crushed out beneath its ponderous wheels. Now the temple of the idol is nearly deserted, and human sacrifice no longer propitiates its divinity. Not long since, through all India, widows were burned upon the funeral pile, and government itself dared not interfere. Now the custom is disused. Infanticide prevailed as a part of the religion of the inhabitants; and the crocodiles of the Ganges fattened on human flesh. Now parents exhibit the natural affection that marks civilized life, and cherish the offspring they once were taught to destroy. It was the power of mission influence in India which eradicated these horrible customs, an influence

which was brought to bear upon an unchristian government, compelling the Governor-General, contrary to the remonstrances of the Company, to crush out with iron hand the superstition grown strong through centuries.

Better than this, we see fruits of Christianization in India resembling those in our own country. A short time since a pagan prince from the Punjáb visited England, was presented with a Bible, and became a Christian; and at Futtehgurh he has long given liberally of his wealth in support of the mission cause. Another Indian, a Brahman, a Pundit, learned in all oriental science, a man of rank and honours, purchased a Bible, and in the self-sufficiency of his learning, *answered* it. It was hailed by his caste, and believed by himself to be a demolition of the book. But he reviewed the Bible to revise his criticism, and was converted. This man has now no higher ambition than to go into the highways and preach Christ to the lowest orders. He is willing to sacrifice his caste, his honours, his wealth, to spread the gospel. Have you such men here? But this is not a singular case. Similar examples are found in every caste.

The speaker had sat by the bed-side of dying men who but a little while before had worshipped stones and reptiles—degraded, morally and socially, below our conception, and had seen them, supported by the hopes of the gospel, meet death with composure, walking down through its gloomy portals to a glorious immortality. Do we need higher proof that missionary labour has accomplished much in India?

But the missionaries took with them the printing press—the arts and the sciences of the old world, and in that great land of ignorance, men of certain classes who enjoyed no privileges of learning are now compelled to learn to read and write. Mission schools are scattered throughout the whole fifteen hundred miles of territory occupied by your church. Five hundred pupils were in the schools of Allahabad; and these young men, convinced of the errors of paganism, go forth, not Hindus, yet not Christians, but prepared, when the Spirit of God comes down upon the land, to be converted in such numbers as to astonish the Christian world.

The missionary who has seen an hundred thousand of the

highest caste, drinking, as "the waters of immortality," water of the Ganges in which they had bathed their feet, and then, under the transforming influence of the truth, has seen these same men divested of their superstitions, and elevated to the Christian standard, has the strongest proof of the truth of the Bible, and of the success of the missionary work.

The speaker then detailed at length the difficulties with which the missionaries have to contend in India, and gave many interesting illustrations of the Brahminical arguments, and the manner in which they were refuted. There are now in India four hundred evangelical preachers, and sixteen hundred native helpers, and he felt that the day is not far distant, when the whole empire will give up idolatry.

The speaker then alluded to the disasters of the missionaries at Allahabad. It was not at first involved in the revolt, which commenced above it, among the population which was mainly Mohammedan. The first evidence of a spirit of revolt was however, exhibited at Berhampore, twelve miles above Calcutta. A man belonging to the regiment of sepoy, stationed at this place, ran across the parade ground, shouting "Religion! religion! kill the English!" The whole regiment was disbanded. The next day another regiment, supposed to be reliable, was found to contain four hundred men who were concerned in the revolt, and they were likewise disbanded. About the same time at Delhi, the commander attempted to enforce the use of the new cartridges. If greased with tallow, their use was sacrilege to the Brahmans; if with lard, they were an abomination to the Mohammedans. These cartridges were never used at all. Another kind of cartridges, which were discoloured, were ordered to be used by a regiment of high caste men, who refused, and threw down their arms. They were tried, and eighty of the ringleaders were sentenced to ten years' hard labour on the roads.

The speaker gave a narrative of the horrors to which they were exposed, near a fort which they dared not enter for fear of exciting the suspicion of the natives. For many nights they expected every moment to be murdered. They entered the fort at last on the 16th of June, at half-past nine, P. M. The fort was filled with native troops, as well as surrounded by



them, and their principal hope was to prevent the seizure of the twenty-six thousand stand of arms. They mined the magazine, determined to destroy themselves and the arms. They were confined in this fort for ten days, with the thermometer at 120°, and many dropped down dead with apoplexy. The Sikhs got hold of champagne, and drunkenness soon possessed all the soldiery: this among the most warlike soldiery in the world, where the least spark might have excited a general massacre. In all his life he never witnessed such agony of despair as stamped itself on all faces. For two long nights they expected every instant to be murdered, and their only prayer was for the light of morning. Succour came at last in the form of fifty European troops. The General was brave, humane, and wise. He foresaw that pestilence must immediately fall upon them, and he ordered all non-combatants to Calcutta. On board a little steam tug, they started on that voyage of eight hundred miles, and carried an enormous amount of treasure. Two days after they left, cholera broke out, and of those whom we left behind nearly all were swept away. Providence carried us away in spite of our wishes, and thus saved our lives.

He spoke of the wonderful fortitude of the native Christians. They were placed in the stocks to die by inches. They were told that they would be mutilated in their ears, their noses, their chins, and their lips, if they did not deny Christ. All this, too, while they knew not that a European Christian remained in all the land; but not one of them renounced his faith, or denied the Lord that bought him; while many Europeans did, and even derided these poor natives as fools for not yielding. Here is proof of the Spirit of Christ to which we can point evermore. It is hard to die, harder still to be mutilated. It is a terrible extremity, and multitudes preserved their lives by pronouncing the words, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet."

The revolt is almost exclusively confined to the regions where Mohammedanism prevails. It is not among the common, lower caste, orderly Hindus. It is to the Hindus we must continue to carry the gospel. Mohammedanism and Brahmanism will never rise again. The East India Company connived at idolatry, and

contributed to its support, But our glorious work will now go on better than ever before.

The Rev. Mr. Edwards, by request, spoke of the Indian Missions in our own land; but our limits compel us to forbear a report. He closed with a most moving appeal for help in our Western Indian missions.

*The Board of Education.*

The Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer, Secretary of the Board, briefly addressed the Assembly. Not having met with any record of his remarks, nor with any abstract of the Report of the Board, we present the report of the Committee on the subject.

The Committee to whom has been assigned the review of the work of the Board of Education, would respectfully report:

That while the statement of the results of this important branch of our benevolent operations is full of encouragement, it ought to be impressed upon our pastors and people, that if our church is to do its part in preaching the gospel to every creature, the work of raising up an educated ministry is but begun. Even in our own land the increase of candidates for the office of an ambassador for Christ, has by no means kept pace with the growing wants of our country; while in foreign lands, hundreds of millions are yet without the living teacher, and must die in ignorance of the way of salvation.

Your Committee would also invite attention to the fact, that while the funds of the Board indicate the unfaltering attachment of the church to the cause of Christian education, the anticipated withdrawal of one annual donation of five thousand dollars, renders it necessary for the Board to look to the church generally for aid in carrying on efficiently the schools which have been mingling religious instruction with the ordinary course of a common education.

The Committee would also report, that they notice with regret the financial embarrassments which still seem to check the progress of the Ashmun Institute, designed for the education of young men of colour, and would express the hope, that by the liberality of our churches that excellent institution, full of encouragement as it is, may be placed on a firm and substantial

pecuniary basis, and thus be, in years to come, a source of blessing to the African race.

The Committee would also respectfully ask of the Assembly, if, in view of the remarkable outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon our land, in which many of our churches have largely shared, the time has not come for increased and earnest efforts to set before such of our youth as may give indications of usefulness, the duty of consecrating their lives to the work of preaching the gospel. They would, in this connection, call special attention to that part of the Report which is entitled, "Causes of anxiety to young men and candidates," and would express the earnest wish that the considerations there presented, and which they deem of great practical value, may be laid before the youth of our church.

In conclusion, the Committee would respectfully submit the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, 1. That the General Assembly record, with profound gratitude to God, the abundant tokens of the divine blessing which have attended the efforts of the Board of Education to introduce young men into the ministry, and to aid in the religious instruction of our children and youth, as seen in the unflinching attachment of our churches to the cause, manifested even during a period of commercial disaster, in the numbers who have already been assisted to enter the gospel ministry, the enlarged number of institutions for Christian education, and the special influences of the Spirit of God, which have been poured out upon many of the Colleges and Schools under the care of this Assembly, or in connection with Synods and Presbyteries of our church.

*Resolved*, 2. That the field which now lies before our beloved church, demanding, as it does, a vast increase of ministers of the word, calls for earnest prayer to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest, and that the Assembly, while they trust that the cause will be daily remembered by the people of God, recommend the last Thursday of February as a day of special and united prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit upon our colleges and seminaries of learning.

*Resolved*, 3. That in view of the great work which Christ

has laid upon his church to preach the gospel to every creature, it be earnestly enjoined on pastors to set before youth of piety and promise, the question of their responsibilities in this matter, and to endeavour so to direct and assist them, as that there shall be an increase of candidates for the gospel ministry, in some measure proportioned to the growing demands of the church and the world.

*Resolved*, 4. That this Assembly earnestly urge parents to consecrate their children to the work of extending the kingdom of the Saviour in the earth, train them for it, and, when prepared to enter upon the work, cheerfully to give them up to go wherever God in his providence may call them.

*Resolved*, 5. That the last Thursday in February next be observed as a day of prayer for the children and youth, especially those collected in our colleges and other seminaries of learning.

*The Board of Publication.*

Notwithstanding the extraordinary commercial embarrassments and depressions of the whole community, during the past year, the Board of Publication is enabled, by divine favour, to report results which compare favourably with those of any former year. This will appear from the following summary:

I. In the department of Production. The Publishing Agent reports that 55 new works have been issued, of which 45 are volumes. Of these new volumes there have been printed 85,750 copies. In addition to these, 24,000 copies of nine new tracts have been issued, and 30,000 copies of the Presbyterian Almanac, making in all 139,750 copies of new publications. Besides these, there have been published 326,750 copies of works before upon the Board's Catalogue. The total number of copies issued during the year has been 466,500. The total number of copies issued since the organization of the Board, to March 1, 1858, has been 6,819,938.

The report gives special notice of the publication, by the Board, of "The Presbyterian Social Psalmist." The Confession of Faith has been published in German, and other German publications are now passing through the press. Attention is called to "The Sailor's Companion," as a new work



admirably adapted to do good among the brave and hardy sons of the deep. Dr. Jacobus's "Notes on the Gospels," with the accompanying questions, are now issued by the Board, and afford valuable aid to Sabbath-schools and Bible-classes.

A considerable number of choice volumes have, during the year, been added to the Board's Sabbath-school Library, which is increasingly popular and useful. The Board aims to furnish as soon as possible all needful facilities for Bible-class and Sabbath-school instruction. A good beginning has already been made by furnishing a variety of catechisms, question-books, and commentaries.

*Periodicals.*—The circulation of the *Home and Foreign Record* has declined during the past year from 19,000 to 17,500 copies. The circulation of the *Sabbath-school Visitor* is now 54,000, an increase of 9000 copies since the last report.

II. In the department of Distribution. The publications of the Board reach the hands of the people chiefly through three channels:

1. The regular trade sales at the publishing-house have been, during the year, 191,993 volumes, a decrease of 1583 volumes on the sales of the preceding year. Comparing these results of the year with those of other publishing-houses during the recent severe commercial embarrassments of the country, they afford cause for profound gratitude. The sales of tracts at the publishing-house have amounted to 706,963 pages, an increase of 229,522 pages on those of the year preceding.

2. The Executive Committee have granted, in response to appeals made to it, to Sabbath-schools, feeble churches, humane institutions, and to individuals for gratuitous distribution, 3724 volumes, and 246,395 pages of tracts.

3. By colportage, a most important amount of divine truth has been put in circulation, and the results of the year, considering all things, have been in the highest degree favourable. The number of colporteurs in commission during the year has been 263, being an increase of nine, notwithstanding the recent curtailments found to be necessary. These have been distributed into twenty-nine States and Territories, besides all the British Provinces of the north. Increased quantities of books and tracts have been sent to California, Oregon, Washington

Territory, and all the frontier and more destitute regions of our land.

The number of volumes sold by colporteurs has been 123,924, being a decrease of 655 volumes. The pages of tracts distributed by them have been 1,555,469. The number of volumes gratuitously distributed this year has been 17,905, an increase of 876 volumes on the number last year given. The number of families visited has been 119,685, an increase of 5503 over that of last year.

The total distribution of the year has been as follows:

By sales at publishing-house,	-	-	191,993 vols.
By sales by colporteurs,	-	-	123,924 "
Given by colporteurs,	.	-	17,905 "
Granted by Executive Committee,	-	-	3,724 "

Total of volumes, 337,546

Being an increase on last year of 636.

Pages of tracts sold at publishing-house,	-	706,963
Distributed by colporteurs,	-	1,555,469
Granted by Executive Committee,	-	246,395

Total, 2,508,827

Being a decrease, for reasons explained in the Report, of 271,575 pages.

Besides the above matter, the Board has issued a large number of pamphlets and periodical papers.

III. In the department of Sustentation. The Treasurer's Report shows an aggregate of receipts for the year of \$126,960.28, which is an increase of \$7,639.25 over the receipts of the preceding year. The total of expenditures has been \$106,801.68, leaving a balance in the Treasurer's hands of \$20,158.60. This, however, will rapidly be called for by the renewed and enlarged operations of the publishing department.

The amount received from sales of books, tracts, and *Sabbath-School Visitor*, has been \$80,842.86, being a decrease of \$6,581.52 on the sales of the previous year.

*The Colportage Fund.*—The amount received from this fund has been \$21,369.76, a decrease of \$3,453.86. This decrease,

it is pleasant to observe, arises not from decreased church contributions, but from diminished receipts from legacies and miscellaneous sources. The sum received from the churches has been \$17,150.92, an increase from this source of \$1,761.67. The receipts, however, from legacies and miscellaneous sources have fallen from \$9,434.37 to \$4,218.84.

*Church Extension.*

The following is an abstract of the Report of the Committee on this important subject:

The Committee preface their Third Annual Report to the General Assembly with the statement that it shows a decided advance in the work entrusted to them.

*Receipts.*—The receipts from all sources during the year ending April 1, 1858, were \$24,741.15, exceeding those of the previous year \$1,475.54. Less than half, however, of this excess is from donations. The number of contributing churches named in this report is 518. The number named in the preceding report was 502. These results have been reached in the midst of the hard times, without any salaried collecting agent, and are as gratifying as they were unexpected.

*Expenditures.*—The total expenditures of the year were \$24,384.03. The amount paid out to churches this year is in advance of the amount paid out to them last year over seven thousand dollars.

*Appropriations.*—During the year, appropriations were made to seventy-six churches, amounting to \$27,571.03. This is nearly ten thousand dollars more than the amount appropriated to churches last year.

*Applications.*—From April 1, 1857, to April 1, 1858, one hundred churches applied for aid to enable them to complete their houses of worship free from debt. The amount of aid they ask is not less than \$45,000, being fully twelve thousand dollars more than the amount of aid applied for last year. At the close of the year there remained on file *sixty* applications for aid, calling for \$25,000.

*Cost of Church Edifices.*—In the two and a half years the Committee have been fairly at work, they have made appropriations to two hundred and five different churches. One hun-

dred and fifty-three of these two hundred and five church buildings cost from \$500 to \$2,500; thirty-nine from \$2,500 to \$5,000; and the other thirteen over \$5,000: five of the thirteen were special appropriations.

*Distribution of Funds.*—The Committee have endeavoured to distribute the funds entrusted to them as equitably as possible over the whole church. How far they have succeeded in this endeavour may be determined from these two facts:

1st. Only three of the three hundred new applications received by them have been declined.

2d. Grants have been made to churches in thirty of the thirty-one Synods, and eighty-six of the one hundred and two Presbyteries, from whose bounds applications have come. The Synod and Presbyteries to whom no appropriations have been made, are those from whose applying churches the requisite information has not yet been received.

*Results.*—Scarcely three years have elapsed since the Assembly's Church Extension Committee was organized. In that time over \$57,000 has been raised for the Church Extension cause, without any salaried agent. This is within \$11,000 of the whole sum raised during the eleven years of organized effort, in connection with the Board of Missions. The amount received from churches in the last *three* years is *double* the amount received from churches during the previous *eleven* years.

*Union with the New-School, South.*

The Synod of that portion of the New-school Presbyterians, which last year separated from their brethren, having appointed a committee to confer with a similar committee, to be appointed by this Assembly, in relation to a union of the two bodies, Drs. Van Rensselaer and Palmer, and the Rev. W. M. Cunningham, were appointed. This committee submitted the following paper as containing the views of the "United Synod."

This may certify that at the meeting of the United Synod of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, which was organized in Knoxville, Tennessee, the 2d day of April, 1858, the following action, being instructions to the committee of two appointed to confer with a committee of the Old-school General Assembly, in the event of that body appointing one for



the purpose, with reference to a union of the two bodies, was taken.

“*Resolved, 3.* That said committee be directed to propose to the committee appointed by the General Assembly, the following terms of union, as indispensable to an honourable union on our part.

*First.* We agree to unite as ecclesiastical bodies by declaring, as this Synod now does, our approval of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as an orthodox and excellent system of Christian doctrine, and also our adherence to the Plan of Worship, Government, and Discipline, contained in the Westminster Directory.

*Second.* Both bodies agree in declaring it to be a fundamental principle in the Presbyterian church, that no judicatory of the church can, *for any cause whatever*, by an act of legislation, constitutionally condemn, or exclude from the church, other judicatories, or ministers, or private members, without a process of trial, such as is prescribed in the Constitution of the Presbyterian church.

*Third.* Both bodies agree that it is consistent with the requirements of the Westminster Confession of Faith, to receive said Confession according to the adopting act of 1729, to wit: as containing all the essential truths of Christianity, and also the doctrines that distinguish the Calvinistic from the Pelagian, Socinian, and Arminian systems of theology. We agree likewise in believing that this system of doctrine includes the following truths; namely, the Trinity—the Incarnation and Deity of Christ—the Fall and Original Sin—Atonement—Justification by Faith—Personal Election—Effectual Calling—Perseverance of the Saints—the Eternal Happiness of the Righteous—and Eternal Punishment of the Wicked.

*Fourth.* Both bodies agree in declaring that slaveholding, or the relation of master and slave, cannot, *in any case*, be a bar to membership in the church of Christ. And whilst they admit the right of the judicatories of the church to take cognizance, in the way prescribed in the Constitution, of cruelties practised in the relation, they hereby declare the opinion, that as the continuance or abolition of the system of slavery, in this country, belongs exclusively to the State, the discussion or

agitation of slavery, further than pertains to the moral and religious duties arising from the relation, is inappropriate to the functions of church judicatories.

*Fifth.* It is further agreed that in effecting the union, the Presbyteries connected with this Synod shall be united as Presbyteries, and without an examination of their ministers, with the Synods belonging to the General Assembly, to which, because of their geographical limits, they should be attached, excepting that the Synod of Tennessee and the North Alabama Presbytery shall retain their name, and occupy their present territory.

*Sixth.* In the event of the General Assembly agreeing to the above terms, the Committee of Synod are directed to communicate the fact to the Presbyteries in connection with this Synod, and the Presbyteries are hereby requested by the United Synod to take action upon the terms of union agreed upon by the Committees of Synod and the General Assembly, and to send a copy of their minute to the United Synod that will meet in Lynchburg on the third Thursday in May, 1859.

*Seventh.* The Committee appointed by this Synod to confer with a Committee of the General Assembly, are hereby directed to attend the meeting of the Assembly in New Orleans, in May next, and present the preamble and first two resolutions adopted by this Synod as their authority for requesting a conference with a Committee appointed by the General Assembly, to the General Assembly which will then be in session in that city. And if no member of the Committee should be able to attend the meeting of the Assembly in New Orleans, they are directed to send a copy of the preamble and first two resolutions to the Moderator of the Assembly, and request that body, if they should think proper, to appoint a Committee for the purpose above specified, to designate a time immediately after the adjournment of the Assembly for a conference of the Committees. The Committee of this Synod are requested, in the event of a conference being had with a Committee of the Old School Assembly, to publish, as soon as practicable, the result of their consultations.”

JOSEPH H. MARTIN,

*Permanent Clerk of the United Synod.*

The following additional article was submitted and adopted:

“*Eighth.* That in the event no union is agreed to, the Committee be directed to propose to the General Assembly the establishment of a mutual correspondence in the future between us as ecclesiastical bodies.”

A true extract from the minutes.

JOSEPH H. MARTIN,

*Permanent Clerk of the United Synod.*

The following paper, presented by the Rev. Dr. Breckinridge, was, after discussion, adopted unanimously, in reference to this subject.

1. The Committee appointed by the United Synod of the Presbyterian church, has communicated to this Assembly the official action of said Synod, settling, on their part, the “*terms of union*” by them declared to be “*indispensable;*” and the Assembly is informed, through the public press, of the contents of papers adopted by that Synod, and called by it “*A declaration of principles.*” In the judgment of this Assembly, those official papers do not afford a basis of conference, upon which this Assembly is able to see that there is any prospect of advancing the interests of Christ’s kingdom in general, or those of the Presbyterian church in the United States, or those of the United Synod of the Presbyterian church in particular.

2. The Presbyterian church in the United States of America has always received, frankly and in Christian love, all churches, office-bearers, and private persons, of all denominations, making application for admission into her communion, upon the single condition that they are like-minded with herself. At this time ample provision is made in her existing Acts and Ordinances for the reception of all such into her communion, on terms and by methods precisely equivalent, and where it is possible, identical with those provided in regard to her own children reared in her own bosom. Seeing that it was in a voluntary secession from the Presbyterian church that the present difficulties of the United Synod of the Presbyterians had their origin, and that the door has always been open for the orderly return of such of those who left us, as were like-minded with us, it can hardly be unexpected that we decline any official conference based on terms which appear to us to involve a con-

demnation of ourselves, and a renunciation of the rich and peculiar favour of God upon us, in the very matters which led to their secession from our church twenty years ago.

3. With reference to the recent secession in the New-school body, this General Assembly does not see in that event, or in anything which has hitherto resulted from it, any call of providence for the Presbyterian church to take any new steps whatever, either with the view of union or that of a closer intercourse than now exists, with either of the parts into which that body is now divided. The subjects upon which the whole New-School body differed from us, at the period of their secession from us, and the subjects upon which the two very unequal portions of that body have recently separated from each other, are questions upon which we as a denomination are at peace, and with regard to the whole of which, we see no occasion to revise the understood and unalterable faith of our church, or to enter into fruitless conferences.

*Church Commentary on the Bible.*

Dr. Breckinridge offered a minute to provide a Commentary on the Scriptures which shall be in accordance with the Westminster doctrines of this church, as follows:

Inasmuch as the want of a sound, godly, and thorough commentary on the whole word of God, composed in the sense of the constant faith of the church of God, as that is briefly set forth in the standard of the Westminster Assembly, held by the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, has long been felt to be a grievous want, whereby a great lack of due service to God and to his truth occurs, and whereby constant danger arises to men of needless ignorance on one side, and of dangerous misguidance on the other; therefore be it

*Resolved*, By the General Assembly, that the Board of Publication shall, and it is hereby directed to proceed with all convenient despatch to have such a commentary composed, prepared for the press, and published. And in the execution of this great work, the following rules and orders, together with such further as may be adopted from time to time by the General Assembly, shall be carefully observed by the Board of



Publication, and by all others in any ways engaged in the execution of any part thereof.

1. The commentary shall be prepared exclusively by the members of this church, and in the preparing of it they shall have all such indulgence as to time, as they shall respectively demand. And for their own compensation and their heirs, shall receive, for the legal term of twenty-eight years, a fair *per centum* on the price of the work sold, which shall be settled in advance by the Board of Publication, and which shall be uniform, and in lieu of all claims and cost of every sort in any way connected with their said work.

2. The said commentary shall be fitted for common use by all men, and in the preparation of it free use may be made of all material that may exist; the design being to procure not so much what may be original, as what may be best in the way of enlightening and saving men. It shall not be prolix, but so arranged that the whole may be embraced in five or six royal octavo volumes, of good print, containing, besides commentary, the English text in full, together with the usual accessories thereof, and such other suitable helps to its understanding as plain people need. And the text used in it shall be strictly that of the version prepared by the translators appointed by James the First, King of England.

3. In order to secure the fittest men for this great work, the Board of Publication shall make special application to the general Synods of our church at the next stated meetings respectively, and the said Synods shall, upon careful consideration, nominate to the said Board of Publication any number of their own members, not to exceed five from any one Synod, of such as they shall consider qualified to undertake the work, and the Board of Publication may add not more than four, in addition to the whole number thus nominated to it, and it shall communicate the list of names thus obtained by sifting the church, to the General Assembly, at its next stated meeting in May of next year, making, at the same time, and from year to year thereafter, report of its doings under and by virtue of this minute.

4. The General Assembly of 1859 will take such further order in the premises, especially with regard to selection of persons out of the list communicated to it, to the distribution of

the work amongst them, and to all things needful for its effectual prosecution, as shall seem most expedient.

It is evident, from the very nature of this proposal, as well as from the arguments of its advocates, that it contemplates an exposition of the whole Scripture, to which shall be given the sanction of church authority. If the mere suggestion of such an idea does not strike a man dumb with awe, he must be impervious to all argument. It is a fearful thing to give church authority even to articles of faith gathered from the general sense of Scripture. How large a part of the church universal, or even of the church of England, can conscientiously adopt the Thirty Nine Articles in their true sense? How do we get along with our more extended Confession? We could not hold together a week, if we made the adoption of all its propositions a condition of ministerial communion. How is it with the marriage question? If it is not only difficult but impossible to frame a creed as extended as the Westminster Confession, which can be adopted in all its details by the ministry of any large body of Christians, what shall we say to giving the sanction of the church to a given interpretation of every passage of Scripture? This is more than all the popes, who ever lived, merged in one, would dare to propose. It is a thousand fold more than Rome, when most drunk with pride, ever ventured to attempt. Where is there such a thing? who has ever heard of such a thing as a Church Commentary? There must be some mistake about this matter. The proposition cannot mean what it appears to mean, and what some at least, both of its advocates and opponents, understood it to mean. We cannot persuade ourselves that any one, having the least idea of the nature of the work, any apprehension of what it is, to come to a clear conviction, even for oneself, what is the true interpretation of thousands of texts of Scripture, how many questions of philology, of grammar, of logic, of geography, history, antiquities, of the analogy of faith and of Scripture, which such decision involves, could, for a moment, dream of the possibility of a church exposition of the whole Bible. The proposal, on the part of any man, or any body of men, to give an authoritative interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, of the visions of Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel, and John, would be proof that God had given him or

them up to strong delusion. No amount of inspiration ever granted to man would justify such an assumption. The prophets themselves did not understand their own predictions. The apostles, though rendered infallible in what they taught, were as ignorant, it may be, as other men of what they did not teach. The Scriptures were as much an unfathomable sea of divine knowledge to them as they are to us.

It will no doubt be said, that the view above given of the design of the proposed commentary is exaggerated and distorted. It is very probable that the proposition lies in the minds of its advocates in a very different form from that which it presents to others. We are speaking of it as it lies in the record, and as it was exhibited in the speeches of those who urged its adoption. Some may say that there is no great harm in the Board of Publication publishing a commentary on the Bible. Certainly not, and simply because the Board of Publication is not the church, and therefore no special authority belongs to any of their publications. They may print the commentaries of Henry or Scott, or Dr. Jacobus's Notes on the Gospel, with impunity, because no one is responsible for the correctness of the expositions given but their authors. Who ever dreams that the church is responsible for Dr. Scott's interpretation of Ezekiel's wheels? Who thinks of attributing church authority to Dr. Jacobus's exposition of our Lord's discourses? These works pass for what they are intrinsically worth, and for no more. But here it is proposed to pursue the same course in making a commentary, as was adopted in making our Catechisms and compiling our Hymn Book. The church, as such, is responsible for the doctrinal correctness of every hymn in the collection. The people do not know who were the writers or who the compilers. They take the book on the authority of the church, and the church is fully committed to its correctness. This must be the case in regard to any commentary written by men selected and appointed by the church, reporting their work from time to time, as they proceed, and receiving as essential the imprimatur of the church to what they write. This of necessity commits the church; and this purpose was clearly avowed. It was said that the Westminster Confession has a sense, and the church has a clear conviction of

note. high view of church

what that sense is; and according to these principles the commentary is to be constructed. That is, the church is to see to it, that the commentary is orthodox and correct; therefore the church must be responsible. When this commentary is quoted in controversy, it will come not with the authority of Luther, or Calvin, or of Scott, or Jacobus, but of the Presbyterian church. All Presbyterians will go to it, not as to the other publications of the Board, written by private individuals, but as to a book having authority, as being written or compiled by the church. The plan proposed is much the same as that pursued by our Baptist friends in the preparation of their new version. If that work should be completed, it will be the Baptist version, not Dr. Conant's or Professor Hackett's version, but the Baptist version—one to which the Baptists as a denomination stand committed. So the proposed commentary will be the Presbyterian commentary, not the commentary of Mr. A. or of Dr. B., and it must of necessity be clothed with church authority. This was evidently contemplated by those who urged that the exposition of Scripture should be kept under the vigilant eye of the church, and who pled the promise of the Holy Spirit to the church as a reason why the work should not be referred to the Board of Publication, but decided upon and carried out by the church itself, the Board being only her agent, as in the preparation of the Hymn Book. This is a fatal objection to the whole scheme, for the church will never submit, unless God has withdrawn from her the spirit of wisdom and of a sound mind, to have imposed upon her the interpretations of any man, as of authority in the reading of the Scriptures.

Besides this, the object aimed at is not only inconsistent with the liberty of believing, but it is utterly impracticable. It is said the Bible is to be interpreted according to the church's sense of the Westminster Confession. But who is to tell us the church's sense of the Confession? It is notorious, that as to that point we are not agreed. In the second place, even as to points in which the sense of the Confession is plain, there is want of entire concurrence in its reception; and what is the main point, there is no such thing as the sense of the Westminster Confession as to the true interpretation of thousands of passages of Scripture. The standard is an imaginary one. ✓



What does that Confession teach of the dark sayings of Hosea, of the baptism for the dead, or the sense of Gal. iii. 20, concerning which an octavo volume has been written, giving no less than one hundred and fifty distinct interpretations? It is plain that there is not, and that there cannot be a standard for the interpretation of the Scriptures in detail; and therefore the church must either submit to have the opinions of some one man enacted into laws to bind the reason and conscience of all other men, or she must give up the idea of having a church exposition of the Bible.

Admitting, however, that such a work is desirable, and that ✓ it is practicable, where are the men to be found to execute the task? It is proposed that each Synod should nominate five of its own members for the work, some one hundred and sixty in all. We venture to say, that instead of our church being able to furnish a hundred men fit for such a work as this, it does not contain, and never has contained, any one such man. It is bad enough for any poor sinner, after all his study, to undertake to present his own private judgment as to the meaning of Scripture, and to state the reasons for his opinion, leaving all other men to judge for themselves, to receive or reject his interpretation as they may see fit. But to assume to act as the mouthpiece of the church in this matter, to say what the church believes as to the meaning of each text of Scripture, and what all its members, therefore, are bound to receive as its meaning, is a task which none but an idiot or an angel would dare to undertake.

#### *Centenary Celebration.*

The year 1858 being the hundredth anniversary of the union of the two Synods of Philadelphia, and of New York and New Jersey, after the great schism, the Assembly of 1857 determined to commemorate the event with suitable services. The Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer was appointed to deliver a historical discourse before the Assembly at its late sessions. This service was performed not only to the satisfaction, but to the admiration of the audience. As his discourse was requested for publication, we hope to have another opportunity of bringing it to the attention of our readers. The following minute was adopted

in reference to this service: "The Assembly recognize the good hand of God in early bringing to these shores emigrants of Scotch, Irish, English, and Huguenot extraction, to assist in establishing the church of the Lord Jesus Christ among the waste places of this continent. The memory of the ministers who commenced the work of evangelization, and who laid the foundation of the church, is treasured by this Assembly with gratitude to Him who sent them forth to accomplish his purposes, with many self-denials, abundant labours, and great success.

The Assembly record the goodness of God in leading the fathers to adopt authoritatively the Westminster standards for the future guidance of the church, and under such circumstances in the ratification of the 'Adopting Act,' as to afford the clearest evidence of the entire unanimity of the Synod in doctrinal sentiment, and in all matters pertaining to Presbyterian order.

The Assembly further record their views of the unspeakable importance and blessedness of pure revivals of religion in the church; praising God for the general results of the great revival of religion within our bounds, in the days of Whitefield and the Tennents, and rejoicing that the present year has been signalized by the same precious and glorious outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Assembly further put upon record their sense of the obligations of the church to its great Head in preserving incorrupt its outward forms of order in the olden time; in gradually and surely increasing its educational and evangelistic resources, and in endowing it, after the lapse of the first century of re-union, with such enlargement of its missionary work at home and in heathen lands.

On an occasion which forcibly brings to mind the blessings of God upon re-union, and which commemorates the dwelling together of brethren in unity, the Assembly express a deep conviction of the desirableness of the union of all sound Presbyterians, and do hereby cordially and earnestly extend an invitation to all, who are of like mind with ourselves, to unite with this General Assembly in the way and manner conformable to the acts and deliverances on this subject, already made by this Assembly."

On motion of R. J. Breckinridge and J. M. Worrall, the thanks of the Assembly were voted to C. Van Rensselaer, for the address delivered in accordance with the order of the last Assembly; a copy was requested for publication, and it was committed to the Board of Publication, to publish the address in a book, containing, with the address, the whole record of proceedings respecting this occasion.

*Theological Seminaries.*

On motion of J. M. Worrall and G. W. Musgrave, the report of the Committee on Theological Seminaries was taken up, and the order of the day for 10 o'clock was postponed for this business. The report was adopted, and is as follows:

The Committee on Theological Seminaries respectfully report, that they have received and considered the Annual Reports of the Seminaries under the care of the General Assembly, viz. Princeton Seminary, New Jersey; Union Seminary, Virginia; Western Seminary, Pennsylvania; Danville Seminary, Kentucky.

The Assembly will learn, with joy and devout gratitude to the Head of the church, that all these institutions have, during the past year, been highly favoured; that the teachers have been faithful in their work of instruction; that the pupils have been diligent in study, and exemplary in their deportment. It is also gratifying to know that the numbers in attendance have been increased, and an enlarged desire for the foreign missionary field has been manifested.

Only one death has occurred, and generally it has been a year of health. The several reports in detail, as presented by the directors and trustees of these institutions, will fully develop their present condition.

In respect to their financial aspect, the Assembly, while rejoicing in what has already been done, will appreciate the need of continued effort to enlarge their means and complete their endowments. Your Committee would recommend the reiteration of the resolution adopted by the last Assembly, viz.

“That the churches be urged to complete the endowment of those Seminaries that are not yet fully endowed, to increase

the number of scholarships, to furnish funds for repairs and erection of suitable buildings, and the enlargement of libraries."

The Committee find in the Report of the Directors of Princeton Seminary the following resolution, viz.

*Resolved*, That the General Assembly be requested to amend the Plan of the Seminary, Article II., Section 1, so as to erase the following words, "and the President, or in case of his absence, one of the Vice-Presidents, shall be one." The Committee recommend that the request be granted, and that the Plan of the Seminary be so amended.

They also recommend that the arrangement made for this year, to terminate the session of the Seminary at Princeton two weeks earlier, or on the last Wednesday of April, be made permanent in this institution.

In the Report of the Directors of the Union Theological Seminary, Virginia, they request that "the Board of Directors be authorized, with the concurrence of other judicatories to whose care the Assembly has committed the institution, to transfer to 'the Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, in the County of Prince Edward,' recently incorporated by the General Assembly of Virginia, all the lands, funds, and other property now committed to the trust of the Directors."

The Committee recommend that the request be granted, and the following resolution be adopted, viz.

*Resolved*, That "the Board of Directors of the Union Theological Seminary, in Virginia," be authorized, with the concurrence of the Synod of Virginia, the Synod of North Carolina, and the Presbytery of Winchester, to transfer to the Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, in the County of Prince Edward, Virginia, all the lands, funds, and other property belonging to said Seminary, now in the hands of said Directors, or which may hereafter come into their hands.

By the report of the Directors of the Danville Seminary, it will devolve on the Assembly, at its present session, to elect a Professor of Church Government and Pastoral Theology, to fill the chair made vacant by the resignation of Stuart Robinson, D.D. The Committee recommend that it be the order of the day on Friday, at — o'clock, to elect a Professor of Church Government and Pastoral Theology in the Danville Theological



Seminary. This report was adopted; and several nominations were made for the vacant chair in the Seminary at Danville. When the time of election arrived, the names of the Rev. Drs. Anderson and A. Hamilton were withdrawn. Leave was asked by the nominator to withdraw Rev. Dr. Halsey's name.

Rev. Dr. Breckinridge said he is not authorized to speak here for the Directors or the Faculty. The directors are prohibited from making any nomination, but they had expressed their preferences, and these were for the Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer. But that gentleman peremptorily said he was "not fit;" whereas they thought that Dr. Van Rensselaer thought they were "not fit." His next choice was the present Moderator, (Dr. Scott,) but that gentleman gave no encouragement. He was then at the end of his string. He would frankly say that the exigencies of their case require either a man who has no particular sectional character, or, if any, that it should be with the South. Two out of three of the present Faculty were from the North, and he himself is from no further South than Kentucky. The attempt has been made to create the impression that the Seminary is a Kentucky affair. But for this he would favour the election of Dr. Halsey. Upon the whole, his mind has inclined to the Rev. Dr. Stratton, of Natchez. Nevertheless, you are to understand that we can make no nomination, and have no preference.

Rev. Dr. Junkin said he felt it due to Mr. Peck to say that he has never conferred with him. He now nominates him, not to place him in competition with any other gentleman, but because of his eminent qualifications for the place. He is a Southern man, and resident of a Southern State. Besides, he is on terms of personal friendship with all the members of the Faculty. Mr. Peck answers the conditions mentioned by Dr. Breckinridge.

Rev. Mr. Squier said he cordially agrees in all that Dr. Junkin has said in reference to Mr. Peck, but he has lately been called, under peculiar circumstances, to the Central church, Baltimore, and moreover, Mr. Peck has distinctly directed him to withdraw his name in case he were nominated.

On motion of Rev. Dr. Junkin, Mr. Peck's name was withdrawn. Dr. Halsey's name was also allowed to be withdrawn.

No other nomination being now before the House, except that of Dr. Stratton, Rev. Dr. Breckinridge moved that it be the sense of this House that the Rev. Joseph B. Stratton be the Professor of Church Government and Pastoral Theology in Danville Theological Seminary. Unanimously agreed to.

On motion, a Committee, consisting of Rev. Drs. Green and Baird, and Rev. Mr. Worrell, was appointed to inform Dr. Stratton of his election, and to urge his acceptance of the position.

*Appeal and Complaint of Rev. Robert S. Finley and Smith Bloomfield, against the Synod of New Jersey.*

The Presbytery of Elizabethtown had dissolved the pastoral relation between the Rev. R. S. Finley and the church of Metuchin without the formal request of either pastor or people. Against this action a complaint and appeal were carried to the Synod of New Jersey. The Synod, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, sustained the action of the Presbytery. The case was then brought before the Assembly, and after a regular hearing the roll was called, and on the final vote eighty-four voted to sustain the complaint and appeal, twenty-four to sustain in part, and thirty not to sustain. A Committee of seven was appointed to bring in a minute expressing the judgment of the House. The report made by that Committee was laid upon the table, and a substitute proposed by the Rev. Dr. Palmer was adopted, and is as follows:

This General Assembly sustains the appeal and complaint of Robert S. Finley and Smith Bloomfield, against the Synod of New Jersey.

In this decision, it is not intended to censure the courts below for want of zeal and faithfulness in doing according to their best judgment what the case required. Much less is it intended to reverse, in form, what has been done in the case of Mr. Finley, so as to restore him to his pastoral relation, in the Second church of Woodbridge; for this would be not only impracticable, in the circumstances, as they now exist, but inexpedient, even if it were practicable.

But the Presbytery of Elizabethtown erred in attempting too

much to direct and control the action of that Session, interfering without being called to do so, according to the forms of our constitution; in arresting the process of discipline, before it had been issued—while the Session were pursuing it in an orderly manner; and in dissolving the pastoral relation upon a mere presumption of a majority of the people desiring it, without the regular application of either party; thus making what they judged a necessity in the case, of more importance than the forms of the constitution.

The Synod of New Jersey erred, not only in sustaining the action of the Presbytery in this case, but also in refusing to entertain as an appeal the remedy sought by a party, who was both injured and aggrieved by said action of the Presbytery.

John H. Rice asked leave to have his dissent entered on the Minutes, and others joined him in the request.

On motion of E. T. Baird, this leave was granted.

The dissent is as follows:

The undersigned dissent from the vote of the General Assembly, assigning reasons for the decision in the case of the appeal of the Rev. R. S. Finley, because in their opinion it does not express the sense of the court deciding the case, and because the minority were permitted by this vote to change or modify the deliberate decision of a majority of the court.

JOHN H. RICE,	L. H. LONG,
E. W. BEDINGER,	R. C. GALBRAITH,
J. A. SMYLLIE,	LILBURN R. RAILEY,
P. E. BISHOP,	D. M. QUEEN,
R. V. SHANKLIN,	W. E. JAMES,
JAMES CLELAND,	C. M. GREGG.