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ART. I.—*The Donatist Controversy.*

. 1. *The External History.*

DONATISM was by far the most important schism in the history of the ancient church, and involved important principles and measures concerning the true nature and discipline of the church, which reappear from time to time in active conflict, although under ever new forms and aspects; since history never repeats itself except in its general laws of Divine appointment and under providential control, and in its general tendencies of human nature and Christian life. For a whole century this schism divided the Christians of North Africa into two hostile camps. Like the earlier schisms in the preceding age of Cyprian, during the middle of the third century, it arose from the conflict of the more rigid and the more indulgent theories of discipline in reference to the restoration of the lapsed. But through the intervention of the nominally Christianized state since Constantine, it assumed at the same time an ecclesiastico-political character. The rigoristic penitential discipline had been represented in the previous period, especially by the Montanists and Novatians, who were still living;

place, we should never have known of that error, but for the inspired record condemning it. Thus we are assured, that had the apostles erred in more important matters, the mistakes would have been distinctly pointed out, and not left on the sacred page, to ensnare and mislead the people of God.

In one word, by the distinct admission of our author himself, he and the apostles differ on the subject of baptism. They administered it with water, in the name of the blessed Three, as commanded by Jesus. He thinks they ought not so to have done. The authority of Christ and the apostles is on one side. On the other is our author. The reader will choose between them.

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ART. VI.—*The General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States met agreeably to appointment in Newark, New Jersey, May 19th, 1864; and, in absence of Dr. Morrison, the Moderator of the last Assembly, was opened by a sermon by William L. Breckinridge, D. D., on 2 Cor. viii. 9. After the usual preliminary services, James Wood, D. D., of Indiana, was chosen Moderator and Ravaud K. Rodgers, D. D., of New Jersey, Temporary Clerk.

*Report on Psalmody.*

J. Trumbull Backus, D. D., chairman of the committee on this subject, made a report included in the following resolutions, which, after protracted and desultory debate, were adopted.

*Resolved*, 1. That a selection of psalms and hymns be made from our present book, and from other sources, and published with suitable tunes; and that all the new hymns in this new selection, which are not in our present book, be published as a *supplement*, for the use of those who prefer it; and that the hymns in the new selection, in addition to their own numbers, shall

retain the numbers in the old book, so that both may be used in the same congregation without embarrassment.

*Resolved*, 2. That in accordance with the recommendation of previous Assemblies, and responsive to the wish of many in the church, there shall be made a careful selection from the Bible, of passages to be arranged for chanting; and that this shall be fitted to be bound both with the selection of hymns and tunes, and with the supplement, at the option of the churches.

*Resolved*, 3. That the volumes thus provided for, shall be furnished with ample indices, after the style of the best improvements in this respect.

*Resolved*, 4. That a committee of five be appointed by this Assembly, who shall have power to employ all needful talent and means, at the expense of the Board of Publication, for the accomplishment of these ends, as perfectly and speedily as possible, and report the result to some future Assembly.

*Resolved* 5. That the Board of Publication be instructed to defray the personal expenses of the present Committee, incurred in performing this service.

Dr. Krebs, J. T. Backus, R. Davidson, W. Lord, and J. E. Rockwell, were appointed the committee to prepare a new Hymn Book.

*Increase of Salaries.*

Judge Ryerson introduced at an early period the following preamble and resolutions, which were unanimously adopted, viz.

*Whereas*, By reason of the greatly enhanced prices of every article of family consumption, averaging fully fifty per cent. more than two years ago, the salaries of the great majority of our ministers have become entirely inadequate to the comfortable support of their families—causing in many cases much of destitution and suffering; therefore,

*Resolved*, That a committee of five ruling elders be appointed, to consider what steps it may be proper for this General Assembly to take, to remedy this crying evil.

The Judge said that he thought no remarks were necessary to enforce the importance of this proposal, as the facts were

obvious. He had proposed that the committee be composed entirely of laymen, in view of the delicacy that ministers might feel in acting upon a subject of that nature; and he hoped the proposal would meet with the favour of the Assembly.

The committee appointed in virtue of the foregoing resolution, prepared a letter to be addressed to the churches, by the General Assembly. This letter was adopted, and is as follows:

*Letter of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to the Ruling Elders, Deacons and Trustees of the churches under the care of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.*

*Beloved Brethren*—We have, on various occasions, addressed our churches on the subject of providing an adequate support for the ministers of the gospel, and are happy to know that this obligation has been generally recognized in our communion.

Under ordinary circumstances, it might have been superfluous to advert to the subject again. But the calamitous war, which has been so recklessly and causelessly forced upon our country by unscrupulous and wicked men, bringing with it so many new duties, trials, and sorrows, and affecting in various ways the vital interests of the church, is telling with extreme severity upon the comfort and usefulness of the Christian ministry. Many, very many, worthy, faithful, and devoted pastors, while they and their families have been suffering for want of the comforts, and often the necessaries of life, have most sensibly been caused to realize some of the consequences of the great sin of rebellion.

It would be but a waste of time to dwell upon the greatly increased expenses of living; you have but too many proofs of it already. The inevitable consequence has been a corresponding advance in wages and salaries, and a corresponding loss to all dependent upon fixed incomes. Families have increased the wages of their domestics; farmers and mechanics, of their workmen; merchants, commercial institutions, corporations of every kind, and public offices—municipal, state, and national—of their clerks and agents. A movement so general and comprehensive must have had an adequate cause; the necessity which compelled it must be one reaching all classes of society—all,

at least, dependent upon fixed salaries for a livelihood—and none should be denied a participation in these measures of relief.

We have, however, reason to fear that up to this period, with some rare and honourable exceptions, the claims of the ministry have been overlooked. The salaries of pastors, always small, always much less than they could have earned in secular pursuits, and too often insufficient for even a meagre support, remain in a large majority of cases stationary, while the price of living has advanced fully fifty per cent. We believe this is the result, not of design, but of inadvertence. Pastors shrink from asking an increase, and it is not the way of the world to enlarge salaries where there is neither demand nor complaint. But we are sure that our people would not willingly subject their ministers to the mortification of *supplicating* an increase of their stipends. We cannot doubt their readiness to act in the premises, whenever it shall be properly brought before them. To believe otherwise would be a reproach to their intelligence, their sense of justice, their appreciation of Christian ordinances, and their fidelity to the Saviour. They are not yet prepared to condemn His wise and equitable decree, “that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” What our congregations need, is that some competent authority should bring the subject to their notice.

It is with this view, beloved brethren, that we address this letter to you, the respected ruling elders and trustees of our churches. We ask you to bring the subject before your respective congregations *with the least possible delay*. We beg you to have it candidly and prayerfully considered. Deal justly, nay, generously, by your pastors. Your liberality to them will not be a lost investment, but will yield a rich return to you and your families; for in this, as in other relations, “he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.” You will begin to reap at once, for a congregation always finds its own present advantage in relieving its pastor of all perplexity about his support, and placing him in a position where he can work with comfort, his mind free from anxious and harassing cares about his temporal support. And then, if other motive still be needed, you have it in those touching and wonderful words of our Lord and Saviour, “Inasmuch as ye have done it

unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it *unto me.*" If the Saviour were here, is there a church bearing his name that would not covet the privilege of ministering to his wants?

We are deeply impressed with the importance of this subject. It is not at all in the light of a personal favour to the ministers of the gospel that we bring it before you. It is vital to the church, and vital to our afflicted country. Our most precious interests, secular and spiritual, ecclesiastical and national, demand that the hands of the evangelical ministry be strengthened in every practicable way, and the ordinances of the sanctuary clothed with the highest degree of efficiency. We are now being punished most grievously for the past wickedness of the nation, and it cannot be too often, nor too strongly, impressed upon the minds and hearts of our people that there cannot be any rational hope of maintaining our free institutions except by the all-pervading influence of the gospel. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." All history abundantly confirms these clear teachings of the Bible, and we must heed them if we desire to escape the fate of the many great and powerful nations that have perished from the earth. How is it possible to produce these blessed results, so dear to the heart of every Christian, of every true patriot, unless we maintain the Christian ministry, and the ordinances of the gospel, in a condition of the highest practicable efficiency? And how can that be done without an adequate support of the ministry?

We leave the matter in your hands, dear brethren, satisfied that you will deal with it in a spirit of Christian kindness to your pastors, and of unfeigned love to our common Lord and Master.

P. S. This letter relates to pastors. But the policy it recommends pertains, with equal reason, to ministers who are faithfully serving the church in her Colleges, Seminaries, and Boards, and in this view we invite attention to it on the part of all concerned in the management of these institutions.

JAMES WOOD, *Moderator.*

A. T. MCGILL, *Stated Clerk,*

W. E. SCHENCK, *Permanent Clerk.*

The ground taken in the above letter is self-evidently just and proper. The increased price of the necessaries of life has forced upon all employers a corresponding increase in the rate of compensation. As ministers are salaried officers, though not exactly hired servants, they are very apt to be overlooked in the application of the rule which is recognized not only as just, but indispensable, in other cases. We hope great good may result from the Assembly's kind appeal. That good can, however, at best, be only temporary. The evil lies much deeper than any passing condition of our monetary affairs. It is rooted in our system, which is radically wrong in principle, contrary to all Divine appointments, and to the usage of the church in all ages except our own. Our whole theory of ministerial support is founded on the denial of the unity of the church. It resolves itself into Congregationalism. The minister is the servant of a congregation, and they only are bound to support him. Against this system we have written and protested for years; and some of the best men of our church have argued and laboured to subvert it; but to no purpose. In this, as in so many other points, Presbyterianism has been congregationalized (*i. e.*, adulterated and weakened by the introduction of the principles of Independency) in this country to such a degree, that the public mind has become fixed. The people are set in their present way of thinking. They will acknowledge that they are bound to support their own minister; but what have they to do with supporting the ministers of other congregations, in Iowa, or Kansas? We are glad of every opportunity of bringing up this subject. The truth will at last prevail. *Gutta cavat lapidem.* Let the brethren, clerical and lay, think of these things, viz., 1. The obligation to support the ministry, so far as it rests on the law of Christ, that "those who preach the gospel shall live by the gospel;" or, on the general principles of moral and religious duty, binds the whole church, and the church as a whole. We are bound to sustain and comfort the soldiers fighting on the Chickahominy or the Chatahoochie, as well as those who garrison the forts in our city harbours. 2. Under the old dispensation, the obligation to sustain the temple, its services, and the priesthood, rested on the whole people. It was a lien on the property of

the whole land. 3. The same principle has been the general law of Christendom. 4. Throwing the support of the clergy on the particular congregations to which they minister, is very much an Americanism. It is one of the new principles which have sprung up among us, some of which principles are good, and some evil. 5. It works great injustice to the people. It imposes on the few and the poor the same burden which in other places rests on the many and the rich. 6. It works grievous injustice to the ministry. Hundreds of them are labouring on a salary which does not afford them even the necessaries of life, to say nothing of its comforts. Nearly twenty years ago, Mr. James Lenox, of New York, caused to be reprinted and widely circulated, a pamphlet on Christian Economics, by the late Dr. Chalmers, of Edinburgh, in which the Free Church plan for an equitable, and, within certain limits, an equable ministerial support, was ably advocated. It would be well if the facts and arguments therein presented could once more be brought before the mind of the church.

*Vacant Churches.*

The Rev. Dr. Krebs, from the Committee appointed by the last General Assembly, to report upon the subject of vacant churches and unemployed ministers, and bringing them to a union, made a report, reciting the difficulties that environ the subject, and making some suggestions. The report was accepted, and placed on the docket. It was a lucid and interesting report.

*Prayer for the Country.*

At an early period of the sessions, the Rev. S. Miller introduced a resolution contemplating the appointment of a day for fasting and prayer, in relation to the state of the country. After some debate, a substitute was offered by Dr. Nevin, recommending that the Assembly devote the afternoon of the next Wednesday, to special thanksgiving and prayer in reference to our national affairs. It was also resolved, that notice should be sent to the General Assembly in session at Dayton, Ohio, apprising them of this action of our Assembly, and requesting them to unite with us in the appointed services. To this a cordial assent was signified; and the two assemblies united



their prayers in behalf of our beloved and suffering country. The Rev. Dr. McMaster introduced a paper which was read and made the order of the day for the evening of the fifth day of the sessions of the Assembly. In this paper he recounted the national sins for which we are now suffering, especially our sins in connection with slavery, and urged the appointment of a general fast. The adoption of this paper was urged by its author in an earnest speech, occupying most of the evening in its delivery. On motion of Dr. Musgrave, the paper and its proposals were referred to the Committee of Bills and Overtures. On their recommendation, the first day of September next was designated as a day for fasting and prayer, in case the President of the United States should not previously appoint another day.

*Revised Book of Discipline.*

The Rev. Dr. Beatty moved that the Assembly take up the consideration of the Revised Book of Discipline, commenced in the last Assembly, and by it referred to this body. He proposed the adoption of the eighth chapter of the New Book, with a view to its being sent down to the Presbyteries. The Rev. Dr. Rice moved that the consideration of the subject be referred to the next Assembly. This motion was warmly seconded by Dr. Musgrave, and sustained by Drs. Elliott, Junkin, Nevin, and Messrs. Haskell, Kempshall, Miller, and others. It was opposed by Dr. Beatty, who urged that as the work had already been seven years on hand, it ought to be finally disposed of. Drs. Krebs, Lowrie, and Backus took the same view, but Dr. Rice's motion to postpone was adopted by a large majority. We do not know that any surprise need be felt at this decision. In the first place, the General Assembly is a large body. Its *vis inertiae* is great. It requires a great and continued force to set it in motion. In the second place, in every such body, and in every community, there is a party opposed to all change. They are wedded to old ways, and cannot be persuaded that anything new is good. The old naval officers of England and America opposed the introduction of steam into the navy. It is not surprising, therefore, when a man has trod the quarter deck as long as Dr. Musgrave has

done, that he is disposed to pitch any new sailing orders into the sea without even looking at them. He has sailed in all weathers, and always got into port; he is therefore satisfied with things as they are. This class of men are very respectable, very strong, and very confident. With *them*, seeing is believing. It is no use to tell them that steam is surer and better than wind as a motive power. They have sailed too long to believe that a ship can go ahead against wind or tide, no matter how large "a tea kettle," (as an English Admiral called a steam-engine,) she may have on board. These good men can be moved only by a *vis à tergo*. But move they must. Still for the time being they keep things steady. In the third place, not one in ten of the General Assembly knew anything of the New Book. They had, therefore, no ground for judging of its merits. More effective than any other consideration was no doubt the desire to get rid of business. There is so much more to be done by every Assembly than can be done deliberately, that every item is stricken from the docket which can with any show of propriety be got rid of. There is also a latent consciousness that the General Assembly is not a fit body to frame a book of discipline, or to discuss its several provisions. Its members change year by year. Every question comes up new to every mind. It must decide on the first impression, or not at all. Congress might as well be expected, in the midst of the pressure of all other business, to frame a constitution, as the General Assembly wisely to frame a new Book of Discipline. There are only two ways, as it seems to us, that this work can be well done. The one is, to have a convention called for the purpose, to sit two or three weeks; and when they have settled everything to their satisfaction, send it down to the Presbyteries to be ratified or rejected. Thus our national constitution was framed. The other method is, for the Presbyteries to take the Revised Book and carefully consider, amend, or reject it; and then for the Assembly to act definitively under their guidance. The work of deliberation must be done either in a convention, or in the Presbyteries. It cannot be done in the Assembly; and the plan of having it done by a committee of eight or ten, experience shows will not answer. The reasons for the alterations are presented to too

few minds. The mass of those who are called to judge and decide have not considered the several points to be determined, and they cannot be expected to act blindly. That something must be done, we are fully persuaded. Our present Book is confused, contradictory, and impracticable. It cannot be acted upon without a consumption of time that is intolerable. In every Assembly where judicial business is to be transacted, there are confusion, and disorder,—decisions which shock and offend, first one party and then another, all because the Book itself is what it is. It is no answer to this to say that our present Book was framed by great and good men. So was the constitution of England the work of great men. But it must be altered or overthrown to suit the change in men and things. And our old Book, we are persuaded, must be altered, or our whole system will utterly break down. That a church of three thousand ministers shall be occupied, as it may be for days, or even weeks, in its General Assembly, in determining the merits of a petty slander case, in any village in the Union, is a solecism not to be longer endured.

*Board of Church Extension.*

The Committee on the Board of Church Extension report to the General Assembly, that they have examined the Annual Report and the Minutes of the Board, and find them worthy of approval; and in relation to the important work of this Board, they recommend the adoption by the Assembly of the following resolutions, viz.

*Resolved*, That the Assembly, with devout gratitude, acknowledge the good measure of prosperity which God has bestowed on this Board during the past year, in inclining a number of churches larger by one hundred and forty-seven than last year, to contribute to this cause, from this and other sources raising its receipts to \$24,847, a sum greater by \$5622 than last year received, enabling it thus to increase both the number and the amount of its appropriations; and yet to report an encouraging balance.

*Resolved*, 2. That the Assembly cherish and express entire confidence in the wisdom, zeal, and prudence with which its operations have been conducted during the past year, and that

in these respects the Board be commended to the prayerful affection and support of all the churches.

*Resolved, 3.* That the increase of one hundred per cent. in the cost of building, together with the diminished pecuniary resources of many of our new and frontier churches, and the dismantling and destruction of many church edifices by the presence and ravages of war, combine to enhance, to a great degree, the importance of this cause, and give it a claim more powerful than ever upon the interest of Christians.

*Resolved, 4.* That the Assembly regret to contemplate the large number of churches under its care which as yet have failed to make any contribution to this cause, and that it earnestly asks from all a support for the coming year, which shall be proportioned to the exigencies of the present crisis.

*Resolved, 5.* That the Board be directed to appropriate its resources during the coming year, with the utmost liberality which is consistent with prudence, trusting to that goodness of God, and that liberality of his people, which have characterized so largely the year past.

The following is an abstract of the Report of the Board of Church Extension:

We must open our Ninth Annual Report with a record of death. On the 31st of January, 1864, Hamilton R. Gamble, Governor of Missouri, and one of the original members of the Board, entered into his rest. By his removal, the country has lost one of its wisest and purest statesmen, the church one of its brightest ornaments, and the Board one of its most liberal and judicious friends. Saddened as we are by this great calamity, we yet find abundant cause for thankfulness in the favour of God shown towards the work entrusted to us. He has increased the receipts of the Board \$5622.27 over those of last year, and inclined 713, instead of 566 churches, to remember the cause of Church Extension.

*Applications.*—The number of applications for aid filed from April 1, 1863, to April 1, 1864, was seventy. These applications were from churches in the bounds of twenty Synods, thirty-six Presbyteries, and fifteen states and terri-

teries. These seventy churches ask for aid amounting in the aggregate to \$31,054.02, averaging \$442.91 each.

Besides these new applications, there were thirty-two previous applications, calling for \$12,750, undisposed of April 1, 1863. The Board therefore had before it during the period covered by this Report, one hundred and two applications, calling for nearly \$44,000.

During the year, seven applications, calling for \$7100, were stricken from the file because they had not furnished the requisite information in the two years allowed for that purpose.

There remained on file, undisposed of, April 1, 1864, applications from forty-two churches, requesting aid to the amount of \$22,210.

*Appropriations.*—During the year under review, appropriations amounting to \$11,557.27 were made to forty-seven churches, in the bounds of seventeen Synods, thirty-one Presbyteries, and fourteen states and territories.

*Cost of Church Edifices.*—Since the organization of the Board, July, 1855, appropriations have been made to five hundred and seventeen different churches. Of these, seventy-one churches were aided by special appropriations, for which the Board took no responsibility. As nearly as we can ascertain, the remaining four hundred and forty-six churches cost \$874,847, or \$1961 each.

*Receipts and Expenditures.*—The balance on hand April 1, 1863, was \$20,506.58. The receipts from all sources during the year were \$24,847.49, of which sum \$14,936.52 was from churches. The available means of the year therefore were \$45,354.09.

The expenditures of the year, as shown by the Treasurer's statement in the appendix, were \$12,302.81. The balance in the treasury April 1, 1864, was consequently \$33,051.26. There were, however, unpaid at that time liabilities amounting to \$15,552.71, leaving as the unpledged balance at the close of the fiscal year, \$17,498.55.

Rev. H. I. Coe, Secretary of the Board, advocated its claims, and explained its operations, and was followed by Drs. Musgrave, Tustin, and Candee.

*Board of Education.*

The Committee on the Board of Education respectfully report that they have examined the Annual Report, with an abstract of the Treasurer's accounts, and the several record books of the Board and the Executive Committee, and finding in them evidences of correctness, fidelity, progress, and success, cordially recommend approval, and the adoption of the following resolutions :

*Resolved*, 1. That the continued success of the operations of the Board of Education during the past year furnishes occasion for the reiteration of fervent thanksgiving to God for his approving smiles; that amidst the grievous desolations of an unprecedented civil war, which has filled our Zion and our land with sorrow, the Board of Education has been enabled to meet all the authorized demands upon their treasury, and retain a balance sufficient to enter upon the new fiscal year with an encouraging promise of efficiency.

*Resolved*, 2. That the General Assembly rejoice to know that progress has been made during the last year towards a higher standard of ministerial qualifications, and that so much evidence is afforded of the good which has resulted from the greater caution exhibited on the part of the Presbyteries in receiving and watching over the candidates under their care.

*Resolved*, 3. That the General Assembly learn with gratitude and commendation of the evidence of increasing interest manifested by the courts of our church, in the schools, academies, and colleges under their supervision, in connection with the Board; especially the growing confidence of the church in the Ashmun Institute, the only institution of our church in our country, whose sole object is the education of coloured students for the Christian ministry, and other important positions.

*Resolved*, 4. That whereas a large number of the African race in our country, known as the Freedmen, are in great need of both moral and intellectual culture, the General Assembly do hereby instruct the Board of Education to endeavour to supply these wants for them at all such points as are now or may in the future become accessible, and the funds which are now or may hereafter be in the department of schools may authorize,

and that the necessary and long-established rule for the organization of parochial schools be considered as no hinderance to this important and pressing work.

*Resolved, 5.* That although the number of candidates received during the last year is larger than it was the year previous, yet this General Assembly cannot fail to notice with deep concern the alarming disproportion existing between the increase of candidates for the gospel ministry and the increase of the membership of our churches, which fact prompts them again to urge most affectionately this vital subject upon the prayerful attention of the ministers, elders, and membership of our entire Zion.

*Resolved, 6.* That the General Assembly most cheerfully concur in the recommendation of the Board, and do hereby ordain that the maximum of the scholarships, for the present, be increased from \$80 to \$100 to academical students, and from \$100 to \$120 for college students, and from \$120 to \$150 for theological students, and that the Board be requested to make it \$175, if in their judgment the funds will warrant it.

*Resolved, 7.* That this Assembly renew with increased earnestness the recommendation of previous General Assemblies, that the last Thursday of February may be designated as a day of special prayer for the children of the covenant, and the youth of the world—especially those gathered in our various educational institutions; and that it also be recommended to all the churches to take up collections on that occasion for the fund devoted to the aid of parochial schools, academies, and colleges.

*Resolved, 8.* That the securities which came under the name and control of the Board of Education by the acts of the Agent or Standing Committee of the Presbytery of Chicago, the proceeds of which are to be devoted to the cause of Education among the French-speaking Canadians of St. Anne and Kankakee in Illinois, be returned by the Trustees of the Board of Education to the Presbytery of Chicago, to be applied by them as intended by the original donors of said funds.

Dr. Chester, Secretary of the Board, made the following remarks in setting forth its plans and operations:

The courtesy of the Assembly puts restraint upon a Secretary in regard to complaints, or he would deplore the fact that

the number of candidates for the ministry has greatly diminished. That was the most discouraging fact to which the Report called the attention of the Assembly. They had also to complain of deficient means; at least in one department of the operations of the Board—that of fostering schools, academies, and colleges. The method which was relied upon—the scheme of systematic benevolence—for replenishing the Boards of the church, had measurably failed. It was a scheme which might be well adapted to the *millennium*, and to a more perfect state of the church; but as things are, and as men are, and ministers, it was not likely that the voluntary offering of the people would suffice, unless greater efforts were made to call it forth. He was perfectly satisfied that this system will not accomplish what the church and the cause need, until there is created a public sentiment that will rebuke, as derelict in duty, the minister and the church that fails to make regular collections for the several Boards of the church. Owing to the diminution of the number of candidates, the Board had not a deficiency of means for ministerial education; but in the school and college enterprise, the means were far in the rear of the calls upon the Board. There is a tendency, however, in a direction that he hoped would relieve this ground of discouragement. One of the evils of our educational appliances was that of too many small and illy sustained colleges. There now was a disposition to concentrate into one large and well-appointed institution the means and efforts of many colleges. He thought it likely that five states of the Northwest would unite in the endowment of one great collegiate institution.

In regard to the diminution in the number of candidates, the chief cause, he thought, were the public troubles. Seventeen youth from a single institution had taken their muskets and gone forth to battle, and are now numbered with the dead. In another, the whole senior class had gone to the war, and that year there were no graduates. This is the point upon which the war has struck us—not so much the lack of funds as the decrease of candidates. Something must be done, or the church will suffer for labourers. It is a divine revelation and command, “Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he will send



forth labourers into his harvest," and that prayer should be regarded as incomplete that does not embrace this request.

Dr. Chester wished to bear testimony to the happy effects of the increased care which the Presbyteries bestowed upon the examination of candidates. The best effects had followed this increased diligence. The standard of qualification had been lifted up; if fewer candidates were received, they were better qualified, and less likely to prove failures. The injunction of the Assembly upon the Presbyteries to exercise greater vigilance and care, works well. He was aware that prejudices had arisen against the cause of this Board on account of the fact that from time to time some failures had occurred. It is true that when the enterprise was new, and the Board, and the church, and the Presbyteries inexperienced, some candidates had not turned out well; but the per centage was annually diminished, until under the care of the Board and the faithfulness of the Presbyteries, it is a rare thing for a candidate of improper character to be taken on our funds. Of one hundred and thirty recently passing through the care of the Board to the ministry, not one had been a failure.

Dr. Chester spoke of a wide and interesting field of education lately opened before the Board, in the vast numbers of freedmen that had been and were being delivered from slavery, and whom the church ought to meet with proffers of education. He thanked the General Assembly and Committee for commending them to the notice of the Board, and proposing to authorize the Board to make efforts to send teachers to them. He mentioned the case of the Ashmun Institute, Chester county, Pennsylvania, which had been established for the purpose of educating coloured men for teachers and ministers. The Board assisted in the support of the president, and gave to students in it five hundred dollars last year. The beloved Van Rensselaer had taken a lively interest in this institution, so long as he lived; and the Board desired, as they could get the means, still to cherish it. It had lately sent forth three coloured ministers, with the Hebrew Bible under one arm, and the Greek Testament under the other, to occupy three important positions of usefulness. Scores of individuals, male and female, were ready to go and teach the freedmen, if protection

and bread were furnished. He spoke in feeling and earnest terms of the condition of the coloured population, and plead for their education.

The recommendation to increase the allowance to the beneficiaries of the Board, on account of the great increase of the cost of living, was cheerfully complied with by the Assembly. The resolution respecting the instruction of freedmen gave rise to some discussion, in which Dr. Musgrave, Dr. Nevin, Mr. Logan, Mr. Dubois, and others, took part. The importance of the work, and the obligation of the church in the matter, were fully recognized; but some doubts were expressed whether it fell properly within the province of the Board of Education. On motion of Mr. Logan, sustained by Dr. McMaster, a resolution and a memorial in the hands of Dr. McMaster, on the same subject, were referred to a special committee, who subsequently reported that schools for freedmen were too great a burden to be added to the duties of the Board of Education, and recommended that special committees be appointed to take charge of this business. Agreeably, Messrs. W. P. Breed and Samuel F. Colt, ministers, and Morris Patterson, John McArthur, and Wilfred Hall, ruling elders, were appointed as such committee in Philadelphia; and Messrs. J. H. Nixon and S. C. Logan, ministers, and James M. Ray, C. W. Todd, and Jesse L. Williams, ruling elders, the committee in Indianapolis.

*Board of Publication.*

The first order of the day was taken up, and Dr. Backus, from the Standing Committee on the Board of Publication, presented a report. After discussion, the report was unanimously adopted, as follows:

After careful examination of the books of minutes of the Board of Publication and of its Executive Committee, and their balance-sheet exhibited to us, it is recommended that these records be approved.

The Committee with pleasure report that they discover abundant evidence of fidelity and success in the prosecution of this important work of our church. Particular attention is invited to the fact that the Board promptly and cordially conformed

to the directions of the last Assembly, and that they are enabled to say in their Report that they find themselves, "at the end of the first year after, in a condition of comfort and prosperity," hoping that "the future progress" of the Board may be marked by an experience of "generous confidence from all sides." The Board were, unfortunately, not able to effect the purpose of the Assembly in respect to the annuity for the family of whatever Secretary might die in office, the company with whom the deposit was made declining to permit the withdrawal of the funds, on the ground that it is a permanent investment.

But the hopeful view of the Report appears to be fully authorized by the facts, so far as your Committee have discovered, and the following action is recommended to the Assembly in relation to this subject.

*Resolved*, 1. That the growing importance of this work is recognized by the Assembly, and urged upon the churches, as a means of supplying our people, and especially our youth, in this day of prevalent pernicious literature, the facilities afforded by our Board of Publication for healthful efforts in the direction of congregational and Sabbath-school libraries, and for those forms of parish colportage now becoming more and more manifestly the essential auxiliary of our ministry in their work, are commended to our pastors and churches. That the Assembly approve of and highly appreciate the successful efforts of the Board to enlarge its list of Sabbath-school books, affording (as we believe) an invaluable supply for the church, in their excellent character and superior attractions. And that the recommendations of previous Assemblies be earnestly reiterated in regard to the circulation of the *Home and Foreign Record* in our families, and of the *Sabbath-school Visitor* in our church schools. At the same time the Assembly say to the Board, that in these respects, and preëminently in regard to reading matter for Sabbath-schools, their motto more than ever should be "Excelsior;" that here, under the Divine blessing, is the hope of our church in the efficiency of this Board for developing our peculiar resource and power as a denomination.

*Resolved*, 2. That the liberal outlay of the Board on behalf

of our young men in the army and in the navy, and of our sick and wounded in the hospitals, and the gratuities to our military prisoners, and to the freedmen, are warmly approved; and that the duty and privilege of a zealous coöperation in this work of love and mercy, so greatly owned and blessed of God, is urged upon all our churches. Especially is it advised, that the efforts of our people, through that noble and well-named enterprise, the Christian Commission, recognize the præminent suitability of our own publications for the religious purposes of the camp and the hospital.

*Resolved*, 3. That the Assembly direct the Synods and Presbyteries, at their next regular meeting hereafter, to take order upon these suggestions, and consider the expediency of appointing a committee to secure regular and proper coöperation from the churches with the Board.

*Resolved*, 4. That the Assembly approve of the temporary increase of salaries allowed by the Board in consequence of the times, and regard it as not inconsistent with the directions of the last Assembly upon the subject of remunerations. And they also recommend, for the same reason, a fair addition to the pay of our colporteurs.

Dr. Schenck addressed the Assembly on the operations of the Board, giving a very encouraging view of its history during the past year. He was followed by Mr. Hayes, Dr. Junkin, Mr. Colt, Dr. Musgrave, Dr. Beatty, Mr. C. O. Waters, Rev. Mr. De Lancey, and Rev. Mr. Cleland; and the report of the Committee was unanimously adopted.

#### *Board of Foreign Missions.*

The first order of the day was taken up, and Dr. Candee presented a report from the Standing Committee on the Board of Foreign Missions, which was adopted, and is as follows:

The Committee to whom was referred the Report of the Board of Foreign Missions, beg leave respectfully to present to the Assembly the following suggestions and resolutions:

They have examined with care both the Report of the Board and the Minutes of the Executive Committee; from the latter deriving the strong conviction of the care and caution with

which, in these times of unusual pecuniary derangement, they have managed the funds committed to their trust.

The duty of the church in the spread of truth, is not bounded by her own families or firesides, nor is it limited to her own churches and neighbourhoods. The wide world is her field; and in carrying out her plans of evangelization, her agents must traverse every land, and become inured to every clime.

The Report encourages us to go forward in the great work of furnishing to the whole world the means of salvation. It is not needful that your Committee should review, in this report, the whole field of the Board's operations, nor would time permit. But we are glad to say that in nearly all the fields occupied by our missions, there are strong encouragements to go forward.

Among these encouragements we may mention

The missions to those of the Indian tribes which the rebellion has left within our reach, among whom a great work is being done, at very small expense.

In South America, especially in Bogota, in consequence of certain governmental action, a collision has arisen between the clergy and state authorities, which has tended to turn the attention of the people toward the truth.

We may mention here, also, the encouragement which our missionaries receive from the authorities in India; and also the protection extended to them in China—a mission having been established, and a missionary actually residing in Peking, the capital of that vast empire.

We are happy to state, also, that there has been, during the past year, an increase, both in the amount of contributions from the churches, and in the number of churches that have contributed. Of the twenty-six Synods whose churches have sent up their offerings, all but four have very considerably increased their donations. The income of the Board during the year now closed, has been larger than that of the previous year, by a large amount. This fact is encouraging, as showing the deeper hold this cause is taking upon the hearts of the people.

Thus the greatly increased expense of transmitting funds to our foreign missionaries, has been met by a corresponding

increase in the contributions to the cause. But we must not forget that probably even a greater increase of cost in this direction is to be met another year, and that no provision has been made to meet it. We would say to the churches, whose servants we are for Jesus' sake, *let* not these interests languish.

The increase in the number of native helpers, and the growth of the native churches, is an encouraging and animating feature of this work. In every field the work is progressing. There are, of necessity, loud calls for men to occupy these opening harvest-fields. Are there not in all our tens of thousands of families, and in our hundreds of thousands of purses, men and money enough to answer all these calls? The silver and the gold are the Lord's, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

In view of these facts, the Committee recommend to the Assembly the adoption of the resolutions following, viz.

*Resolved*, 1. That our earnest thanks are due to the great Head of the church—1st. For the raising up of so many efficient native helpers in the foreign field. 2d. That the work is progressing in every field now occupied by the missions of our church. In this we recognize the tokens of the Divine blessing on this cause.

*Resolved*, 2. That our felt dependence on the Spirit of God, for carrying on this work, and giving success to our efforts, does not lessen our obligation to pray and give of our substance to this end, but rather increases our obligation thereto.

Regarding the means and agencies bearing on our work,

*Resolved*, 3. That the periodicals issued by the Board of Foreign Missions be commended to our church-members and Sunday-school pupils, as well adapted to stir up a spirit of prayer, and excite increased efforts for the promotion of the cause.

*Resolved*, 4. That as the way opens, and the fields expand, we do earnestly encourage the Board to enter in and occupy.

New missions are needed. Shall they be established? Is it inquired, Where are the means? We answer, They are in the hands of Christians, who are God's stewards. Let a proper demand be made; let this Assembly call on the churches in the

name of the Lord, and that call will be answered. The response will come to us in the spirit of that consecration in which all God's people have laid themselves and their all upon his altar.

*Resolved*, 5. That this Assembly say to the Board of Foreign Missions—*Go forward* in the great work to which God and this church have called you.

*Resolved*, 6. That, in the opinion of this General Assembly, the Presbyterian church under its care should, during the ensuing year, increase the amount of funds put under the command of the Board of Foreign Missions, for the spread of the gospel among the heathen, to not less than *three hundred thousand dollars*.

The Rev. J. C. Lowrie, D. D., Corresponding Secretary, referred to the severe bereavement which the Board had experienced during the past year, in the death of valued missionaries; to the peculiar difficulty arising from the high rate of foreign exchange; to the encouragements which, in the midst of these trials, God had given them in their labours. Messrs. Platt, Haskell, Walsh, W. Rankin, Hughes, Rodgers, Spears, Dr. Junkin, Dr. Nevin, and Robert Carter, Esq., spoke, more or less at length, words of encouragement and counsel.

*Board of Domestic Missions.*

The Committee to whom was referred the Annual Report of the Board of Domestic Missions, and also certain papers relating to the Board, from the Presbyteries of New Lisbon and Louisville, respectfully state: That they have examined the Report of the Board with care, and find in it matter of deep and sacred interest. It furnishes evidences of substantial progress during the year, both as it respects the resources of the Board, and the extent and efficiency of its operations. It also furnishes evidence that our people, as well as the Board, are gaining a truer and more influential conception of the vast home-work committed to the church, to attempt and to do. That work is no less than the subjection of our whole country to the evangelical truth, and to Christ.

The Committee have also given due attention to the additional papers referred to them.

That from the Presbytery of New Lisbon contemplates prompt and vigorous missionary efforts in the South, as the progress of our arms may open the way; and especially the religious care and instruction of that large and constantly increasing class, once slaves, but now freedmen. This matter seems to the Committee one of great moment, and they would commend it to the favourable consideration and action of this General Assembly.

The paper from the Presbytery of Louisville is of a different character. It complains of the Board for obtaining from the War Department certain facilities for the prosecution of its missionary work, in various portions of the country, now in military possession and under military rule; and calls upon the General Assembly "at once to disavow this action of the Board, and so save the church from the sin, reproach, and ruin which this thing is calculated to bring upon her." The Committee regard this paper as a misconception and misstatement of the real facts in the case. In their judgment, the course of the Board, in the matter referred to, was eminently proper, and indeed indispensable, if in those portions of the country they would carry forward their great and holy work.

In view then of the Report of the Board, and of the papers referred with it, the Committee recommend for adoption, by this General Assembly, the following resolutions, viz.

*Resolved*, 1. That the Sixty-second Annual Report of the Board of Domestic Missions be accepted and published; and that an abstract of the Report be inserted in the Appendix to the Minutes of this Assembly.

*Resolved*, 2. That the Assembly recognizes with devout gratitude the goodness of God, in the enlarged means placed by his people at the disposal of the Board, and also in the increased favourable results of its sacred labours during the year. Let the praise be given to His adorable name.

*Resolved*, 3. That in view of the greatly increased cost of living, and the consequent embarrassment and even suffering of many of our missionaries, the Board be instructed to increase its appropriations to such extent as its means will permit, in all cases of real need; and also, while exercising a just liberality towards churches truly feeble and dependent, to



consider whether there are not some now receiving aid, which have the ability, and therefore ought to be self-sustaining.

*Resolved*, 4. That the Assembly regards with favour the plan of the Board touching the appointment of District Missionaries, to act in connection with Synods and Presbyteries, as detailed on pages 13 and 14 of the Annual Report; but would also direct the Board, while carrying out this plan with all due vigour, to remember that it is an experiment, and to be ready for such changes or modifications of it as actual trial may show to be necessary or expedient.

*Resolved*, 5. That in the wonderful providence of God, spreading out before us so immense a work; in the increase of our home-born population; in the swelling tide of emigrants from the old world; in the desolations resulting from the present stupendous rebellion; and in the condition and wants of the long-oppressed children of Africa—this Assembly has a most imperative and a Divine call to redoubled zeal, labour, and sacrifice; and it hereby enjoins upon the Board, and upon the churches under its care, to put themselves, by Divine grace, in a posture of thought, feeling, and effort, corresponding to the greatness and urgency of the work.

*Resolved*, 6. That the Assembly commend to the careful attention of the Board, all those claims on its sympathy and its active efforts, which arise in connection with the progress and the results of this gigantic war with rebellion; and especially to coöperate, so far as practicable, with the other Boards of the church, in carrying the light, and all the various blessings of religion, to the multitudes emancipated from slavery; that so their sufferings may be alleviated, their ignorance dispelled, their character transformed, and they be fitted for the duties and privileges of American citizenship, and made heirs of the kingdom of God.

T. L. Janeway, D. D., dwelt on the extent of the field and on the difficulty of procuring suitable men. Mr. B. J. Low, of California, Judge Ryerson, Mr. Hay, Dr. Musgrave, and Mr. Fraser, of California, discussed the various points included in the Report.

*Disabled Ministers' Fund.*

The Rev. Dr. Beatty, Chairman of the Committee on Disabled Ministers' Fund, reported thereon, and asked the Assembly to hear their Secretary.

The Rev. Dr. J. H. Jones, the Secretary, then read the Report of the Board, which would furnish the members with more information than any speech he could make. The Report says: The first Report of the Board was made in 1856. At that time there were eight ministers, eleven widows and orphans, to about the number of sixty persons. The amount expended was \$1580. When this is compared with the present, it will show the great increase in the operations and usefulness of the Board. For the year ending May 1st, 1863, the increase was nearly fourfold. There were forty-eight widows, thirty-seven ministers, and a number of orphans—amounting in all to one hundred and eighty persons who have received appropriations from the Board. The sum of \$13,160 had been distributed. The contributions have never been as large as during the present year. Dr. Jones read a number of letters from persons who had received aid, thanking the Board for their timely support.

There are \$8000 in the treasury. The treasurer has given his services gratuitously, and the expenses of the Secretary are paid by private contributions. The results of the last year show a cheerful advancement of the usefulness of the Board.

The following is the report of the Committee:

The Committee on the Report of the Trustees of the Assembly in relation to Disabled Ministers, have carefully considered this Report, and learn from it, with great satisfaction, that the contributors to this good cause have been increased, and that its affairs have been managed with wisdom and efficiency.

The Committee would submit the following resolutions to the consideration of the Assembly.

*Resolved*, 1. That the Assembly has listened, with deep interest, to the Report of the Trustees of the Fund for Disabled Ministers in need, and the destitute widows and orphans of deceased ministers.

*Resolved*, 2. That the Assembly rejoices to learn that this

important cause is gaining a stronger hold on the churches, and that the contributions to it during the past year have been greatly increased.

*Resolved, 3.* That while, in the judgment of this Assembly, a fund, accruing from legacies and other sources, may in some respects be desirable, the chief dependence of this scheme of benevolence should be placed—as it is in the case of the several Boards of the Assembly—on the annual contributions made by the churches in this behalf.

*Resolved, 4.* That the Report be appended to the Minutes of this Assembly, and be printed by the Board of Publication; and that a copy of the same be sent to each pastor and stated supply, and the session of each vacant church, with a request that this important subject be laid before their several congregations.

*Resolved, 5.* That this Assembly earnestly calls upon the churches in its connection to consider their responsibility and duty to contribute to this cause; and in view of the extreme reluctance on the part of the most needy and deserving to make application for aid, urges upon the several Presbyteries the duty of searching out those within their bounds who are proper subjects of relief, and of making the requisite application to the Trustees in their behalf.

*Resolved, 6.* That in consideration of the urgent wants of those needing relief, and of the increased expenses of living, the Assembly recommends that the yearly appropriations to the recipients of this Fund be, if possible, largely increased.

*Resolved, 7.* That the Assembly acknowledges with gratitude the kindness of those friends of the cause by whose liberality a large proportion of the expenses of this important agency is provided for.

Remarks were made by Dr. Jones, the Secretary, Judge Linn, Messrs. Foster, C. Henry, Robert Carter, Osborn, and other ruling elders; Dr. Junkin, Dr. Burtis, Rev. Mr. Miller, &c. The principal point of discussion was the propriety of the establishment of a fund for this benevolent object. Judge Linn advocated with earnestness the establishment of such a fund. After a few amendments, the report of the Committee was unanimously adopted.

*Parsonages.*

Overture No. 2 was taken up and adopted, which is as follows:

A memorial from J. M. Wilson, of Philadelphia, Pa., in behalf of Parsonages, or comfortable homes, for Presbyterian ministers.

*Whereas*, the importance of providing parsonages for the comfortable accommodation of Presbyterian ministers and their families, is a duty, the performance of which cannot be much longer delayed, but the magnitude of the operation demands a careful scrutiny of the state of the church, and a thorough knowledge of her condition, therefore

*Resolved*, That the churches under the care of the General Assembly be requested to reply to the following questions:

1st. Please give the name of your church, with the year of its organization.

2d. What has been (about) the annual rent paid by your minister for a house to live in? or

3d. Have you a parsonage for your minister, thereby securing him a comfortable home?

4th. If you have a parsonage, how long has it been finished, and (about) what amount in rent does your minister annually save by living in the parsonage?

5th. What was the plan you adopted to awaken the interest of the people, and thus secured the means to build your parsonage? You will please let your answer to this question be as full as possible, (as these replies will be published,) and you thereby aid your brethren who have not yet erected a parsonage, but who will do so as soon as they may see how it can be done, by showing them how it has been done.

6th. Have you a glebe attached to your parsonage? If so, what is saved to a minister's family by tilling a few acres?

7th. Please give a description of your parsonage, its size, and accommodations, with specifications of its cost, as far as possible, with diagrams of the arrangement of the rooms, the attention paid to ventilation, the capacity of its library or study, together with such other suggestions as may tend to increase the value of these returns.

*Resolved*, That the ministers, ruling elders, deacons, trustees, or members of the churches under the care of this General Assembly, be earnestly requested to make early and full replies to these questions, adding any information or making any suggestions that may awaken an interest in behalf of parsonages, or comfortable homes for Presbyterian ministers.

*Resolved*, That said replies, suggestions, and information, be sent to Joseph M. Wilson, Philadelphia, Pa., to be by him arranged and classified in time to be presented to the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian church.

*Resolved*, That Joseph M. Wilson be authorized to supply the Stated Clerks of the Presbyteries in connection with this General Assembly, with a sufficient number of copies of this overture as there are churches within the bounds of said Presbyteries, with the understanding that the Stated Clerks will attend to their distribution among the churches.

*Resolved*, That in order to the fulfilment of the objects contemplated, the Presbyteries be enjoined to make inquiries from time to time, testing the diligence of the churches in replying to the questions contained in this overture.

#### *Theological Seminaries.*

Dr. Junkin then read the report of the Committee on Theological Seminaries.

The Princeton Seminary reports that since the last report, 65 new students have been received, and the whole number connected with the institution during the last year is 186, five more than last year. The Directors report improved regularity in attendance, also good attention to study, devotion and other duties, and also very satisfactory examinations—42 members of the Senior class received certificates of having finished the whole course of three years. Three others received specific certificates. Of the whole number nearly one-half are at work as pastors or ministers.

The number of volumes in the library is 19,684.

The report of the Treasurer exhibits a balance of \$7,999.12.

The Trustees during the past year received from Mrs. Isabella Brown, of Baltimore, the magnificent gift of \$30,000, to

erect an edifice to be called "Brown Hall," which is in process of erection.

Allegheny Seminary reports 34 students admitted within the year, the whole number on the roll 114, the number in attendance 100; 23 received diplomas, having completed the prescribed course. The report speaks in terms of high commendation of the piety, Christian earnestness, and general good deportment of the students. Two of the Senior class have offered themselves to the work of Foreign Missions.

The Board of Directors ask the General Assembly to fill the vacancy in the chair of Theology.

The Treasurer's report exhibits a balance of \$1,104.74, and the Librarian acknowledges some valuable donations to the library.

The report of the Seminary of the Northwest, at Chicago, acknowledges the gift of 25 acres of land, and also of a \$2000 scholarship, and of handsome gifts from others. The library numbers 7,000 volumes. The financial report shows a balance of \$1,479.37.

At the Danville Seminary six new students were admitted. Whole number 14; two have received certificates, having finished the full course of the college. 120 new volumes have been added by gift from the Board of Publication.

The exhibit of its financial account shows a balance of \$1,416.05.

After reading the report, the Rev. Dr. Elliott moved that nominations be made for a Professor of Theology in the Western Theological Seminary. Rev. Dr. Krebs nominated Rev. Dr. A. A. Hodge, of Wilkesbarre, and spoke in favour of his merit as a scholar and a fit person to occupy that important position. Dr. Nevin nominated Rev. Dr. John M. Lowrie, of Fort Wayne, and also spoke of his merits.

Rev. Dr. Burt nominated the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, D.D., of Philadelphia. The Rev. Dr. Candee nominated Dr. E. D. McMaster, of Indiana, and spoke of his nominee's ability as a theologian and a scholar, in every way fitted to fill this important chair in the Seminary. The Moderator requested Rev. Dr. Elliott to offer prayer for Divine guidance in the selection. Dr. McMaster's name, at the request of his brother, was with-

drawn from nomination; and subsequently Dr. Lowrie withdrew his name. When the election was made, it appeared that A. A. Hodge, D. D., had received 154 votes, and Jonathan Edwards, D. D., 29. Dr. Hodge was then declared elected, and a committee appointed to inform him of the fact.

*Reunion of the Old and New-school.*

A communication was received from the General Assembly now sitting in Dayton, Ohio, in regard to the action of that Assembly upon memorials from the Presbytery of St. Lawrence, on the subject of the union of the two bodies represented by these Assemblies; and is as follows:

*The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, in session at Dayton, Ohio, May 25, 1864.*

The Committee on the Polity of the Church, to which was referred the overture of the St. Lawrence Presbytery, upon the reunion of two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, propose the following declaration, viz.

1st. That this Assembly cordially welcome all signs of increased love and union among those who hold to the same facts and doctrines of the gospel, and bears its solemn testimony, with self-humiliation, against whatever fosters alienation and genders strife among the disciples of our Lord.

2d. That the tendencies of modern society, the condition of Protestant Christianity, the increase of infidelity, the progress of Romanism, and the present and prospective state of our country, afford powerful arguments against further subdivisions, and in favour of that union and unity of the church, into which it is to grow, and which is to be its consummation; and that we record with unfeigned gratitude our profound conviction that the spirit of disunion and of sectarianism is waning, and that the spirit of brotherly kindness and mutual confidence is largely on the increase.

3d. That in an especial manner are those churches bound to foster this spirit, which adopt the same standards of faith and order, and whose divisions are local, personal, and incidental, and for whose reunion there is only needed a wise deference to each other's rights, and a higher measure of Christian charity.

Adopting the same formulas of faith and Form of Government, all that is needed is to receive them in the same spirit.

4th. That as the churches represented by this Assembly did not inaugurate the separation, so, too, they hold to no principles and views, and would impose no terms inconsistent with a full and cordial reunion, whenever and wherever the will of the Great Head of the Church, as indicated by Divine Providence, may open the way for us all to meet together again on the same basis on which of old our fathers stood; and that we should rejoice in such reunion as a pledge of the future prosperity, and an augury of the accelerated growth of the kingdom of Christ through the length and breadth of our land; and that it is our united and fervent prayer to our common Master, that he would so remove all hinderances as to make a plain path for our feet whereon we may walk together, being of one heart and mind, in the ways of the Lord.

5th. That while we do not deem it expedient now to appoint such a committee as that asked for in the memorial of the St. Lawrence Presbytery, yet, that this expression of our principles and convictions, with our heartfelt Christian salutations, be transmitted to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church now in session in Newark, New Jersey.

The report and recommendation were unanimously adopted.

A true extract.

EDWIN F. HATFIELD, *Stated Clerk.*

In our own Assembly the following action was taken.

The Committee to whom was referred an overture from the Presbytery of Miami, and certain resolutions of the Presbyteries of Ogdensburg and Buffalo City, in relation to a union of the two great branches of the Presbyterian church, submit to the Assembly the following resolutions for their consideration and adoption, viz.

*Resolved*, 1. That this Assembly have witnessed, with unalloyed satisfaction, the happy influence of the correspondence initiated by a former Assembly between the two bodies, in promoting fraternal and Christian affection, and thus preparing the way for a still closer union at some future day, (if such should be judged best for the promotion of the glory of God, and of the spiritual interests of the whole church.)



*Resolved*, 2. That in view of the pleasing results which have already been developed from the plan of correspondence now in successful operation, the Assembly do not deem it expedient at present to propose any additional measure towards the consummation of the object contemplated by the Presbyteries whose action has been submitted to their consideration.

*Resolved*, 3. That with a view still further to attain and strengthen that "unity of the spirit" which is so essential to organic unity, the Assembly express their concurrence with the suggestions and counsels of the Assembly of 1863, as contained in the third resolution adopted by that body, (page 39 of their *Minutes*,) and recommend them to the prayerful consideration of the parties concerned.

The Rev. Dr. D. Elliott proposed an additional resolution, referring the Assembly at Dayton, in answer to their proposal of union, to the foregoing resolutions, viz.

That while this Assembly receive in the spirit of fraternal kindness the "Declaration" transmitted to them, and thank their brethren for the courtesy thus promptly extended to them, yet, having so fully expressed their views on the same general subject in the foregoing resolutions, they deem it unnecessary to add anything further, and recommend that those resolutions, together with this minute, be transmitted by the Stated Clerk to the Moderator of the General Assembly in session at Dayton, Ohio, and reciprocate the feelings manifested.

We rejoice that this subject was left as it was. On the principles which should regulate the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church in this country, there can be little diversity of opinion. All must admit that the gospel requires that the church should be one, not only in faith and love, but in fellowship and organization. If the inward unity of believers were perfect, their external union would be complete. But as the church, in this world, always has been, and probably will ever continue to be, imperfect in other respects, its normal or ideal state of union cannot be perfectly realized.

In the second place, it must also be conceded that error has been, and still is, committed, on the one hand, in requiring too

much, and on the other, of requiring too little, as the condition of Christian and ministerial fellowship.

Thirdly, the Scriptures clearly teach, that in order to Christian fellowship and church communion, nothing but agreement in essentials should be required. In other words, we are bound to receive and treat as Christians, all whom Christ receives. The conditions of Christian fellowship can be neither more nor less than the conditions of salvation. With regard to ministerial communion, the case is different. There are two aspects of this subject. First, Whom are we to recognize as ministers of Christ? and, secondly, Whom are we to admit to the office of the ministry among ourselves? All that can be said on this point on this occasion, is, that it is evident that much more should be required of those who are admitted as authorized teachers in Christ's church, than of those who are simply recognized as his disciples.

Fourthly, that in order to justify or demand the union of believers in the same organized body, there should be such agreement in doctrine, worship, and discipline, (or order,) as will admit of their acting together in harmony, and effectively.

Fifthly, that where this agreement does exist, organized union should take place, so far as geographical considerations admit of united action. The mere size, or number of the members of the church, does not seem to be a legitimate consideration in the determination of this matter.

Sixthly, as to the question of fact, whether the two branches of the Presbyterians in this country are sufficiently agreed in opinion and spirit as to order, doctrine, and worship, as to render their reunion desirable, we have no doubt that some would answer the question confidently in the affirmative, and others as confidently in the negative. We suppose that the truth is, that in some parts of the country they are thus agreed, while in others they are not. This being the case, all efforts for an immediate general union would probably produce much more evil than good.

#### *Report against Slavery.*

In the Presbyterian General Assembly, on Tuesday, the Hon. Stanley Matthews, from the Committee on Bills and

Overtures, presented the following report, founded on an overture from the Presbytery of Newton. It was read, and made the order for Wednesday evening.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures report

Overture No. 12, from the Presbytery of Newton, reciting the former deliverances of the General Assembly upon the subject of slavery in this country, and the duty of emancipation, and asking this General Assembly to take such action as in their wisdom seems proper to meet the present aspects of human bondage in our country, and recommend the adoption of the following :

In the opinion of the General Assembly, the solemn and momentous circumstances of our times, the state of our country, and the condition of our church, demand a plain declaration of its sentiments upon the question of slavery, in view of its present aspects in this country.

From the earliest period of our church the General Assembly delivered unequivocal testimonies upon this subject, which it will be profitable now to reaffirm.

In the year 1787, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, in view of movements then on foot looking to the abolition of slavery, and highly approving of them, declared that "inasmuch as men introduced from a servile state to a participation of all the privileges of civil society, without a proper education, and without previous habits of industry, may be, in many respects, dangerous to the community, therefore they earnestly recommend to all the members belonging to their communion to give these persons who are at present held in servitude, such good education as to prepare them for the better enjoyment of freedom." \* \* \* "And, finally, they recommend it to all their people to use the most prudent measures consistent with the interest and the state of civil society in the countries where they live, to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America."

In 1795, the General Assembly "assured all the churches under their care, that they view with the deepest concern any vestiges of slavery which may exist in our country."

In 1815 the following record was made: "The General Assembly have repeatedly declared their cordial approbation

of those principles of civil liberty which appear to be recognized by the federal and state governments in these United States. They have expressed their regret that the slavery of the Africans and of their descendants still continues in so many places, and even among those within the pale of the church, and have urged the Presbyteries under their care to adopt such measures as will secure, at least to the rising generation of slaves within the bounds of the church, a religious education, that they may be prepared for the exercise and enjoyment of liberty, when God in his providence may open a door for their emancipation."

The action of the General Assembly upon the subject of slavery, in the year 1818, is unequivocal, and so well known that it need not be recited at length. The following extracts, however, we regard as applicable to our present circumstances, and proper now to be reiterated:

"We consider the voluntary enslaving of one portion of the human race by another as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature, as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoins 'that all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system. It exhibits rational, moral, and accountable beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them as dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbours and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery—consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence." \* \* \*

"From this view of the consequences resulting from the practice, into which Christian people have most inconsistently fallen, of enslaving a portion of their brethren of mankind, . .

. . it is manifestly the duty of all Christians, who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and of religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavours to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible, throughout the world."

They earnestly exhorted those portions of the church where the evil of slavery had been entailed upon them, "to continue, and, if possible, to increase their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery, and to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern than a regard to public welfare truly and indispensably demands;" and declare "that our country ought to be governed in this matter by no other consideration than an honest and impartial regard to the happiness of the injured party, uninfluenced by the expense or inconvenience which such a regard may involve;" warning "all who belong to our denomination of Christians against unduly extending this plea of necessity; against making it a cover for the love and practice of slavery, or a pretence for not using efforts that are lawful and practicable to extinguish this evil."

Such were the early and unequivocal instructions of our church. It is not necessary too minutely to inquire how faithful and obedient to these lessons and warnings those to whom they were addressed have been. It ought to be acknowledged that we have all much to confess and lament as to our shortcomings in this respect. Whether a strict and careful application of this advice would have rescued the country from the evil of its condition, and the dangers which have since threatened it, is known to the Omniscient alone. Whilst we do not believe that the present judgments of our Heavenly Father, and Almighty and Righteous Governor, have been inflicted solely in punishment for our continuance in this sin; yet it is our judgment that the recent events of our history, and the present condition of our church and country, furnish manifest tokens that *the time has at length come, in the providence of God, when it is His will that every vestige of human slavery among us*

*should be effaced, and that every Christian man should address himself with industry and earnestness to his appropriate part in the performance of this great duty.*

Whatever excuses for its postponement may heretofore have existed, no longer avail. When the country was at peace within itself, and the church was unbroken, many consciences were perplexed in the presence of this great evil, for the want of an adequate remedy. Slavery was so formidably entrenched behind the ramparts of personal interests and prejudices, that to attack it with a view to its speedy overthrow appeared to be attacking the very existence of the social order itself, and was characterized as the inevitable introduction of an anarchy, worse in its consequences than the evil for which it seemed to be the only cure. But the folly and weakness of men have been the illustrations of God's wisdom and power. Under the influence of the most incomprehensible infatuation of wickedness, those who were most deeply interested in the perpetuation of slavery *have taken away every motive for its further toleration.* The spirit of American slavery, not content with its defences to be found in the laws of the States, the provisions of the Federal Constitution, the prejudices in favour of existing institutions, and the fear of change, has taken arms against law, organized a bloody rebellion against the national authority, made formidable war upon the Federal Union, and in order to found an empire upon the corner-stone of slavery, threatens not only our existence as a people, but the annihilation of the principles of free Christian government; and thus has rendered the continuance of negro slavery incompatible with the preservation of our own liberty and independence.

In the struggle of the nation for existence against this powerful and wicked treason, the highest executive authorities have proclaimed the abolition of slavery within most of the rebel states, and decreed its extinction by military force. They have enlisted those formerly held as slaves to be soldiers in the national armies. They have taken measures to organize the labour of the freedmen, and instituted measures for their support and government in their new condition. It is the President's declared policy not to consent to the reorganization of civil government within the seceded states upon any other

basis than that of emancipation. In the loyal states where slavery has not been abolished, measures of emancipation, in different stages of progress, have been set on foot, and are near their consummation; and propositions for an amendment to the Federal Constitution, prohibiting slavery in all the states and territories, are now pending in the national Congress. So that, in our present situation, the interests of peace and of social order are identified with the success of the cause of emancipation. The difficulties which formerly seemed insurmountable, in the providence of God, appear now to be almost removed. The most formidable remaining obstacle, we think, will be found to be the unwillingness of the human heart to see and accept the truth against the prejudices of habit and of interest; and to act towards those who have heretofore been degraded as slaves, with the charity of Christian principle in the necessary efforts to improve and elevate them.

In view, therefore, of its former testimonies upon the subject, the General Assembly does hereby devoutly express its gratitude to Almighty God for having overruled the wickedness and calamities of the rebellion, so as to work out the deliverance of our country from the evil and guilt of slavery; its earnest desire for the extirpation of slavery, as the root of bitterness from which has sprung rebellion, war, and bloodshed, and the long list of horrors that follow in their train: its earnest trust that the thorough removal of this prolific source of evil and harm will be speedily followed by the blessings of our Heavenly Father, the return of peace, union and fraternity, and abounding prosperity to the whole land; and recommend to all in our communion to labour honestly, earnestly, and unweariedly in their respective spheres for this glorious consummation, to which human justice, Christian love, national peace and prosperity, every earthly and every religious interest, combine to pledge them.

Judge Matthews argued to show that the time had come, when the Assembly was called upon to pronounce clearly its judgment on slavery and its relation to the war in which the country is involved. He said that the objection that this was a political question, was no valid ground against the action of the church. The same question was often moral as well as

political. It was only in its moral aspects that the church presumed to utter her judgment in relation to it. In answer to the objection, that the adoption of the paper would commit the Assembly to the approbation of the President's proclamations, and other acts of the government, about which good and loyal men differed, he said this was not a fair construction of the paper. It gave simply a narrative of the facts, which did not imply approbation of them. The adoption of this paper does not involve an expression of opinion on the part of the Assembly. "It does not bind the opinion of the church-member—it does not bind his conscience." This is very true, and very important. But the Judge further said, that every man is "bound to presume that the laws and the measures of the government are right, and binding." "They may be otherwise," he adds, "but the private citizen is not the judge." This is very loosely stated, and would justify the whole doctrine of passive submission to the authorities of the church and state, against which Puritans and Presbyterians have ever, and ever will contend, to the death. The private citizen is the judge as to what binds his conscience; and he renounces his allegiance to God, and his right to the name of Christian, whenever he renounces this right of private judgment. If the government should make a law that we should blaspheme Christ, or turn Papists, would that bind our conscience? Must the private citizen presume and assume that such a law is right, and binding? This was doubtless only a *lapsus* on the part of the worthy Judge; but the principle is too important to be allowed to pass without a protest.

This paper was further sustained, at length, by Judge Ryerson, Dr. Nevin, and other leading members of the Assembly. Drs. Rice, Maclean, and Junkin, succeeded in obtaining certain modifications in the language used, which secured an almost unanimous vote in favour of its adoption. The best spirit was manifested, as we are informed, not only by Judge Matthews, but by all the more immediate friends of the measure; and every concession was freely made, in order to meet reasonable objections.

Dr. Rice delivered a very effective speech in the course of the debate on this subject, of which we have seen only a very



meagre outline. The first thing which will impress the public mind, in this action of the Assembly, is the remarkable unanimity with which this important manifesto was adopted. The Assembly is a representative body; not only technically, in that it is composed of delegates freely chosen by the Presbyteries in every part of the country, but because it really reveals and expresses the opinions and feelings of our whole church. There cannot be a doubt that the sentiments of this paper are the sentiments of the Presbyterian church in these United States. And as that church does not now, and never has, belonged to any one political party—as its members represent all the prevalent phases of public opinion, on every subject of general interest—we think it may safely be assumed, that the report unanimously adopted by the Assembly expresses the opinions and feelings of the vast majority of the people in the Northern, Western, and Middle States. In this view of the matter, we regard the adoption of such a paper a matter of great public importance. It is the revelation of a spirit of loyalty, and of devotion to the great cause for which the nation is now contending as for its life. In this view, it is matter for gratitude and encouragement.

In the second place, although the spirit of this paper may be new; although its animus, so to speak, may be more distinctly pronounced than that of previous declarations on the same subject, its sentiments are not new. It teaches nothing which the General Assembly has not heretofore openly avowed and distinctly taught. It asserts indeed slavery to be “an evil and guilt,” a moral wrong, which ought to be abated and abandoned. But this was the language of our fathers in the church and in the state. It was the form of expression constantly used by the founders of our national Constitution, and by the early and venerated members of every body of Christians in the country. By slavery, however, they meant that concrete system with which the people of this country are familiar; a system which is designed and adapted to keep a certain class of our fellow-men in a state of degradation in order to retain them in the condition of slaves. It is the system which declares, with the force of law, that a slave cannot marry; which forbids his

being taught to read and write; which allows of the forcible separation of husbands and wives, (that is, of those who in the sight of God are husbands and wives, although the law denies them to be such); which separates parents and their minor children; and which denies to the slave a just compensation for his labour. With regard to this system it is undeniable—

1. That it has prevailed in our country.
2. That it is known and designated as slavery, or the slave system.
3. That it is essentially and inherently unjust and wicked.
4. That these slave laws ought to be at once and universally abrogated.
5. That those who enacted, and those who sustained those laws must have contracted great guilt in so doing.
6. That such guilt rests, in a measure, on all who acquiesced in the system thus established, or who failed to protest against it, and to use all lawful efforts to secure its abolition.

It is only by taking the word slavery in this sense, that the former and present deliverances of our church on this subject can be reconciled either with truth or with the word of God. It is however greatly to be lamented that the word was ever used in this wide sense.

1. Because it is not the proper meaning of the term. Slavery is nothing more nor less than involuntary bondage—that state in which one man is bound without his own consent to labour for another.
2. Because what is true of slavery in the wide and improper sense of the word, is not true of it in its true and proper meaning. There is the same impropriety in confounding slavery with any particular system of slave laws, as there is in confounding despotism in the state with the despotic laws and acts of a Nero, Peter the Great, or Louis XIV. To say that despotism is in itself and under all circumstances sinful, because certain despotisms have been cruel and oppressive, would be absurd. The family government is of necessity a despotism. The possession and exercise of despotic power is therefore a thing right or wrong according to circumstances.
3. Confusion, error, and contradiction inevitably result from using the same word in such diverse senses. It is not true that slavery, in the sense of involuntary bondage, is morally and universally wrong. It is not true that it should be always, everywhere, and immediately abolished. It is not true that all slaveholding is sinful, or that slaveholders as such

should be denounced as wicked men and excluded from the fellowship of the Christian church.

Two enormous evils have long afflicted our church and country in connection with this subject. On the one hand, because all slaveholding is not sinful, a large class of men have maintained that the slave-laws, or that concrete system of slavery which has existed at the South, is not sinful. They have been thus led to defend that system; and to insist on its continuance and extension; and have denounced all those who condemned it as "infidel abolitionists." On the other hand, because the existing form of slavery in this country, (or the slave-laws of the South,) is unjust and antichristian, another large class of men have declared all slavery, or involuntary bondage, to be sinful; they have denounced all slaveholders as wicked men, and demanded universal and immediate abolition of slavery in all its forms as an imperative duty. These are "the abolitionists," technically so called. Their doctrine, as palpably in opposition to the teachings of the Scriptures, both in the Old and New Testament, cannot be maintained in consistency with due subjection to the authority of God's word. The fact is undeniable, that slaveholders were received into communion with the Christian church, and that the apostles did not enjoin the immediate manumission of all slaves as a Christian duty. For any man therefore to assume the ground that slaveholders should not be received into the church, or that all slavery is sinful, is to place himself above the Bible. It matters not from what motive this is done. It is as much the expression of an unbelieving spirit as the rejection of the doctrine of the incarnation, because we cannot understand it; or the denial of the doctrine of endless future punishment of the finally impenitent, because we cannot reconcile it with infinite benevolence. We are Christians, and as Christians we must submit our faith and practice to the supreme authority of the word of God. It is specially important in times of great public excitement, that good men should be upon their guard, and not allow themselves to adopt principles or to use expressions which bring them in conflict with the holy Scriptures, the only infallible standard of moral and religious truth. While, therefore, we can adopt the language of this

paper in the sense in which we doubt not it was intended to be used, and in which similar language has been before used by our General Assembly, we must protest against the assumption that in so doing we adopt the doctrine of the abolitionists, technically so called, viz., that all slaveholding is sinful, or that immediate emancipation is everywhere and always a Christian duty. Those only are entitled to freedom who are able to use it to their own advantage, and with safety to others. Paul tells us that a child, so long as he is a minor, (*νήπιος*,) differs in nothing from a slave, (*δούλος*.) It is morally right that he should be restricted in the use of his liberty, so long as he is unfit to use it aright. So it may be morally right to restrict a class or tribe of men who are in the condition of children intellectually and morally, in the use of their liberty, so long as they continue in that state. But as it would be atrociously unjust to keep a child in the imbecile condition of an infant, in order that others might enjoy his labour or his property, so it is equally unjust to prevent any class of men from elevating themselves into the condition in which they can be safely made free. One of the saddest proofs of the injustice of Southern laws, is, that after more than a century, the vast body of the slaves of the extreme Southern states are in a condition of the greatest degradation. That this is not to be attributed to their inferiority as a race, but to the systematic effort to prevent their improvement, is clear, because it is only the "field hands" who are thus degraded. Household servants, and those living in cities, where they have the opportunity of learning mechanic arts, are as much improved, as intelligent and moral, as any other class of men of no higher advantages. This, however, is not the time to enter anew on questions which have been repeatedly discussed in this journal. We wish, however, to have it distinctly understood, that we have not changed our ground on the subject of slavery. We hold now precisely what we held in 1836, when the subject was first argued in these pages. What is far more important, it should be known that the Old-school Presbyterian church has not changed her doctrinal teaching by the recent action of the General Assembly. God and truth are immutable; and a church vacillates in doctrine only when deserted by God. The General Assem-

bly has not declared all slaveholding to be sinful; it has not contradicted, retracted, or modified its formal and explicit teachings of 1845; it simply declares that slavery, as it exists in this country, (that is, the slave-laws of the Southern states,) is an unjust and antichristian institution. This it has ever taught, and this is self-evidently true.

Thirdly, the Assembly clearly pronounces in favour of the entire abolition of slavery within the limits of the states and territories of this Union. Is this a declaration in favour of abolitionism? Does this justify the assertion that the Assembly has joined hands with the abolitionists? Nothing is more important, and nothing is more necessary to truth and righteousness than the use of words according to their established meaning. Usage, not etymology, determines that meaning. The signification of a word is one thing, its meaning another thing. The word *Jacobin* signifies a member or frequenter of the convent of St. James. It means a man who adopts the principles and sentiments of the atheistical and anarchical faction so denominated during the French revolution. The word *Jesuit* signifies "a follower of Jesus." It means, either a member of the society founded by Ignatius Loyola, or one who adopts the principles and practices of that society. An abolitionist, according to the signification of the word, is one who is in favour of the abolition of slavery. In this sense nine-tenths of the good men on the face of the earth are abolitionists. In this sense the late Dr. Thornwell was an abolitionist. It is not many years since he said to us that slavery was a low state of civilization, and must of necessity come to an end. But for the last thirty years there has been a party, of which Garrison, Wendell Philips, and others, are the acknowledged representatives, who call themselves, and are called by others, abolitionists. So that by abolitionist is now meant one who belongs to that party. The meaning of words thus fixed by usage cannot be arbitrarily altered. It would be obviously untrue and slanderous to call a Christian, law-abiding man, a Jacobin, because he lived in a convent of St. James; or to call him a Jesuit, because he professed to be a follower of Jesus. It is no less untrue and slanderous to call a man an abolitionist, in the sense in which modern and American usage has attached to

that word, simply because he favours the abolition of slavery. We deny, therefore, that our venerable Assembly has enacted abolitionism, because it has unanimously declared that, in their judgment, the time has come when every vestige of slavery should be effaced from this country. The reason assigned for this declaration is not the characteristic and essential idea of abolition, viz., that all slavery is sinful, and therefore should be immediately abolished; but the conviction that the continuance of the system of slavery among us is "incompatible with the preservation of our own liberty and independence," as a nation. This reason we hold to be valid and sufficient.

We fully believe that the leaders of the present rebellion, years ago, determined on the overthrow of the Constitution, and the erection of a southern confederacy, in order to perpetuate and extend the system of African slavery as it now exists; that for this purpose they not only systematically misrepresented the opinions and purposes of northern men, in order to prejudice and inflame the southern mind; but that they made extensive military preparations, by fraudulently amassing public arms in southern arsenals; and by leaving the national forts in the slave states without adequate protection. We believe that without any just, or even plausible provocation, and against the advice and warning of the wisest and best of the slaveholders themselves, they threw off their allegiance to the United States government and to the Constitution which they had sworn to support, seized the public forts and arsenals, fired on the flag of their country, and inaugurated a civil war, which has already cost hundreds of thousands of lives and many thousands of millions of money. During the three years which this war has continued, the President and Congress have repeatedly and authoritatively proclaimed that if those in revolt against the Constitution and Union would lay down their arms, return to their allegiance, and submit to the laws of the land, the war should cease, and the states be restored with the right to determine their own institutions, each for itself within its own limits. These overtures have been contemptuously rejected, and the war has been carried on, and, in many cases, with savage barbarity. The issue has thus been fairly presented. Either our national life or slavery must be extinguished. This issue

our General Assembly has met, by declaring unanimously that the time has come when slavery should be at once and for ever abolished in the states and territories of this Union. In this declaration our understanding, heart, and conscience, fully concur.

Although thus in favour of the abolition of slavery, we do not wish to see it abolished by servile insurrections, by violence, or by the arbitrary exercise of power, but by the alteration of the Constitution, legally effected.

Fourthly, the only other remark which we feel called upon to make in reference to this subject, is that the declaration of the Assembly is patriotic and not partisan. It takes sides with neither of the great parties into which the country is divided. It would be a sad thing for the Church of England, or for the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to declare itself either Whig or Tory; but a very just and proper thing for either of those bodies to declare in favour of the constitution of Great Britain, and to denounce all measures designed for its overthrow. So it would be a sad thing for our General Assembly to declare itself either Democratic or Republican, or to take sides with any particular party. It has done no such thing. It has taken part with the country. The paper which it adopted can be received as cordially by an opponent, as by a supporter of the present administration. It is only upon the assumption that patriotism is not a moral virtue, that the patriotic declarations of the Assembly can be condemned as unbecoming a religious body. If the law of God requires us to love and honour our parents, on whom we are dependent and by whom we are protected, it requires us to love our country, on which we are still more dependent, and whose protection we enjoy from the cradle to the grave. And therefore, if a church can enjoin its people to honour their parents, it may enjoin them to love and stand up for their country.

*Complaint of the Rev. Dr. McPheeters.*

The papers in the case were read, viz., a memorial from certain members of the Pine Street Church, St. Louis; the action of the Presbytery upon that memorial. The complaint of W. W. Green and others; the complaint of Samuel B.

McPheeters, D.D., against the Presbytery of St. Louis, in relation to himself and the Pine Street Church. This complaint embodied a certain military order of Major-General Rosecrans, requiring a particular oath to be taken by members of ecclesiastical bodies, before being permitted to sit and deliberate, with other correspondence bearing upon the same subject.

This case was in form perfectly simple. It was merely a complaint against the Presbytery of St. Louis, for prohibiting Dr. McPheeters from preaching in the Pine Street Church. It would seem therefore to present only two possible questions. First: Had the Presbytery the right to pass the act complained of? And was the act itself wise and just? But although thus simple in form, it was, in reality, one of the most comprehensive cases in facts and principles, and one of the most important in its bearings that ever claimed the attention of the General Assembly.

It appears from the several papers submitted to the Assembly, and from the arguments before that body, that the Rev. Dr. McPheeters, pastor of the Pine Street Church, St. Louis, was, at the breaking out of the war, residing in New Mexico on account of his health. Hearing of the outbreak of hostilities, he determined to return home; and knowing that the people of Missouri and those of his own charge were likely to be greatly excited and divided on the momentous question at issue, he addressed to his church and congregation a pastoral letter, in which he exhorted them to mutual forbearance and kind feeling, and announced his own purpose, while he faithfully performed all his duties as a citizen, to abstain from taking any part in the controversies and conflicts by which the whole country was distracted. On his arrival in St. Louis, he resumed his pastoral functions, and the church continued in a quiet and prosperous state until the spring of 1862. In May of that year, Dr. McPheeters attended, as a delegate from his Presbytery, the General Assembly which met in Columbus, Ohio. While there, he spoke and voted against the adoption of a paper on the state of the country, presented by the Rev. R. J. Breckinridge, D.D., on the ground that it was inconsistent with the nature of the church and the proper functions of its judicatories to express any judgment on political questions



and that such expression would tend to increase the distractions under which many of our churches were suffering. His course in this matter seems to have given offence to some of his own people, and to have increased the misgivings which more or less prevailed as to his loyalty to the Government and Union. One of his elders, George H. Strong, Esq., and one or two others, addressed to him a letter requesting him to express clearly his opinions and feelings in relation to the great struggle in which the country is engaged. This he refused to do, not only because he denied their right to interrogate him as to his political opinions, but specially, because he had always opposed "the introduction of civil, secular, and political questions into the house of God. As a pastor," he said, "and because I was a pastor, I have stood aloof from these things, even in my private relations." The unpleasant feeling awakened by these circumstances continued to increase, and on December 19th, 1862, by a military order issued by Major-General Curtis, he was banished from the state, forbidden to exercise any ministerial functions within its borders, and the church with all its records given over to a commission. This act was promptly disavowed and corrected by the authorities at Washington, but, from some misunderstanding, it remained in force, except so far as the sentence of banishment was concerned, from December 19, 1862, to March 4, 1863. A *pro re nata* meeting of the Presbytery of St. Louis, called at the request of three ministers (two of whom had no pastoral charge,) and four elders, was held on the 15th of May, 1863, "to take measures to remove the grievances under which the Pine Street Church has been labouring for some months past, and to dissolve the pastoral relation between that church and Samuel B. McPheeters, D. D., and in general to take such action as the interests of that church may seem to require." When the Presbytery met, Dr. McPheeters placed his resignation of his pastoral charge into its hands. Whereupon the Pine Street Church and congregation were cited to appear on June 3d, by their commissioners, "to respond to the resignation of their pastor," and to this end they were directed to meet on the 27th of May, to take action in the premises. The congregation met agree-

ably to this direction, and by a vote of ninety-one to fifty-six adopted the following resolution, viz.,

“*Resolved*, That this meeting do not agree to, and protest against, the dissolution of the existing relation with the Rev. Dr. Samuel B. McPheeters, as pastor of Pine Street Church, and that we request him to withdraw his resignation offered to St. Louis Presbytery.”

After this resolution, a majority of the meeting left the house, and near midnight Mr. George P. Strong, the leader of the minority, was appointed the commissioner to represent the church in Presbytery, and instructed to urge the dissolution of the pastoral relation. The Presbytery met on the 3d of June, and on some technical difficulty, adjourned to meet on the 23d of that month. On the 22d, the Pine Street Church met on the call of the session, and on motion of the Hon. W. T. Wood, ruling elder, the following preamble and resolution were adopted by a large majority:

“*Whereas*, at a meeting on the 27th of May, 1863, at a late hour of the night, after a vote had been taken in full meeting of ninety-one (91) to fifty-six (56) against the resignation of Dr. S. B. McPheeters, pastor of the church, and against the dissolution of the pastoral relation, and after a majority of the members had left, and gone home; as it appears by the proceedings of the persons who remained, it was resolved, that this meeting now appoint a commissioner to represent this church in Presbytery, and that he be instructed to urge Presbytery to accept Dr. McPheeters’s resignation, and to dissolve the pastoral relation between him and Pine Street Church; and whereas, the resolution was offered and passed, without even a motion to reconsider the vote that had been taken and entered on the subject, in violation of all rule and order, and against the known voice of the church and congregation; therefore,

“*Resolved*, That said resolution does not express the voice and wishes of Pine Street Church and congregation; and further, *resolved*, that the true voice of the church and congregation was expressed in the resolution adopted at that meeting on motion of Captain Greene; and unless George P. Strong, as the Commissioner from this congregation, can, and will, in

good faith present and urge upon Presbytery the voice and wishes of the congregation, as expressed in the resolution adopted on the motion of Captain Greene, on a fair vote of 91 to 56, he be requested to resign his trust as Commissioner."

The Presbytery met, Mr. Strong was received as the Commissioner of the congregation, and strenuously urged the dissolution of the pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and his church. "After Mr. Strong had concluded, it was moved ~~that~~ *the request of the Pine Street Church be granted*, and the pastoral relation dissolved." Pending the motion, the Rev. J. H. Brookes presented a paper from Dr. McPheeters, in which "he asked leave to withdraw his resignation." This paper was returned to him without being put on the minutes. The motion to dissolve the pastoral relation recurring, it was put to vote and carried, *ayes* eleven, *noes* ten. This motion was carried by the votes of eight ministers and three elders, "out of about sixty in a full Presbytery." The absence of Dr. McPheeters, and of many other ministers, was owing to conscientious scruples. General Rosecrans had issued a general order requiring a stringent oath of allegiance to be taken by all members of any ecclesiastical body. The objection was not to the oath, for they, or many of them (and Dr. McPheeters among the number) had voluntarily taken oaths equally stringent. But they believed that it was incompatible with their allegiance to Christ, as King of his church, to recognise the right of any civil or military authority to prescribe the terms on which they should attend the meetings of courts of his appointment. In this belief some of the members of the Assembly, as, for example, the venerable and zealously loyal President Maclean of Princeton College, concurred. When the vote dissolving the pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and the Pine Street Church was adopted, Mr. W. W. Green, the elder from that church in attendance on the Presbytery, and a member of that body, entered an appeal from the decision to the Synod of Missouri. The Synod received the appeal, declared it in order, and entered it upon their docket for trial.

During all this time, it had, on all hands, been assumed that the military order of December 19th, 1862, forbidding Dr.

McPheeters to exercise any ministerial function in the state of Missouri, was still in force. This turned out to be a mistake. The President of the United States had revoked or annulled the order from the beginning, and intended so to do, although his intention seems to have been misapprehended by his subordinates at St. Louis. At last, however, this misapprehension was corrected, and all legal or military disabilities were removed from the Doctor, as appears from the following extract of a letter addressed to him by Mr. Bates, the Attorney-General at Washington.

“The President, in substance answered, that it was always his wish and purpose to hold individuals responsible for their own acts, without any reference to the fact that they happened to be members or officers of particular churches; that the fact of being a member or pastor of a church was no excuse for personal misdemeanour; but that he never intended to assume, or to permit his subordinate officers to assume, any power to govern or control the churches; or in any manner to determine who may, or who may not preach or minister in them. You say that you are in full function of your civil rights; the President considers you in the full enjoyment of your ecclesiastical rights. I write this with the express permission of the President; and I presume to advise, that you quietly resume the exercise of all the rights, duties, and functions of your office, as if no interruption had occurred.”

All pretence being thus removed, that Dr. McPheeters was not sufficiently loyal to preach the gospel, even in the disturbed state of Missouri; as the Pine Street Church was without preaching, as six out of seven elders composing the session and the great majority of the people desired him to preach there; as he was invited to do so by the committee of supplies; as he considered the act of Presbytery dissolving his pastoral relation to that church suspended by the appeal of its elder, Mr. W. W. Green; and as, whether that act was suspended or not, he had the right of every other minister in good standing, to preach wherever, in the providence of God, he might be called to do so, he complied with the invitation of his former people, and commenced preaching in the pulpit of the Pine Street Church. At the meeting of the Presbytery, April 6th, 1864,

“which was attended by only eighteen out of about sixty ministers and ruling elders, because of the military order touching ecclesiastical assemblies,” a memorial was presented, signed by nine members of the Pine Street Church, asking “that such action may be taken in the premises as to compel Dr McPheeters to respect the decision of Presbytery, and retire from Pine Street Church, and that such other relief may be afforded, as to your body may seem meet and proper.” Mr. George P. Strong, being present, was invited to address the Presbytery on the subject, after which the following minute was adopted.

“1. By action of Presbytery of June, 1863, the pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and Pine Street Church was dissolved, and Dr. McPheeters ceased to be the pastor of that church, and ceased to have the right to exercise discipline or perform the functions of the pastoral office in that church.

“2. *That, inasmuch as this action was taken by Presbytery, in the exercise of its power to ordain whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care, and is its solemn judgment that the interests of Pine Street Church require that Dr. McPheeters shall cease to exercise the functions of ministry to that church; therefore, resolved,*” that Dr. McPheeters be required to cease preaching in the Pine Street Church,\* of this act Dr. McPheeters complained to the General Assembly.

One of the great difficulties of this case, and one of the great sources of the injustice, as we regard it, which Dr. McPheeters has experienced at the hands, both of the military authorities and of the ecclesiastical courts, is the confusion of mind prevailing on this subject of loyalty. The word has two very distinct meanings, which men commonly fail to distinguish, and yet the distinction is essential to the administration of justice, and to the intelligent and proper decision of what is due to our fellow-citizens and to our ministerial and Christian brethren. Loyalty is properly fidelity to law. A man is loyal who complies with every legal obligation resting upon him; who recognizes the constitutional authority of the magistrates, who obeys their

\* The precise words of this last resolution are not given in the document before us. But it appears from the complaint of the whole discussion, that the substance was as above stated.

lawful commands; who pays his taxes, and who, not only abstains from giving aid or comfort to the enemies of his country, but is ready at all times to defend and support it. In this sense of the word, Dr. McPheeters is, and was, thoroughly loyal, his opponents being witnesses. He had taken a stringent oath to do all that a loyal citizen could be required to do. No man pretended that he had violated that oath. But in another sense of the word, loyalty is a feeling. It is love and zeal for a person, for a cause, or a country. A man may, therefore, be loyal in one sense and disloyal in another. He may faithfully perform all legal duties to his sovereign or to country without love and zeal for either. It is perfectly apparent that, so far as all courts, military, civil, or ecclesiastical are concerned, they can take cognizance only of what is outward—of the acts and of the words of men. They cannot hold him responsible for his feelings. The grand difficulty in Dr. McPheeters's case was, that the military authorities and the church court undertook to punish him for his feelings. No one charged him with disloyal acts. General Curtis, when he wished to test his loyalty, did not ask him what he did, but, how he felt. The absurdity and injustice of such a course, President Lincoln, with his usual sagacity, detected in a moment, and ordered his subordinates, in substance, to let the man alone; so long as he acted properly, it was no concern of theirs how he felt. There are hundreds, and we doubt not thousands, of men in the rebel army doing the work of good soldiers, who, if you asked them about their feelings, would say, they hated the whole affair, disapproved of the war, and heartily desired the restoration of the Union. It would surely be preposterous for the rebel authorities to summon these men before a court martial, dismiss them from the army, and banish them from the country because they did not feel right.

While we say this, we can easily see and readily admit that a man who is strictly loyal, in the proper and legal sense of the word, and who did nothing that any court, military or ecclesiastical, could properly take hold of, might simply on the ground of what he did not do, be so unacceptable to a zealously loyal people, as to justify a Presbytery for separating him from his charge. But then the ground of such action must be not his

disloyalty, but the dissatisfaction of the people. The people might be dissatisfied with a pastor because he was a dull preacher, or a disagreeable man. These are not grounds for Presbyterian action. A minister cannot be tried for poor preaching, or for not being agreeable. But he may be dismissed because the people dislike him and desire his removal. We do not know how Dr. McPheeters feels, or what are his sympathies in our national controversies, but we do know—1. That he is free from all charge or suspicion of disloyal conduct in word or deed. 2. That the highest national authorities declared that there was no reason, so far as they were concerned, why he should be interfered with, either in his rights as a citizen or in the exercise of his ministerial functions. 3. That he so conducted himself as to secure, not only the respect and affection of the whole community, but the full confidence of the great body of his people, embracing, as is certified by the majority of the ministers and elders of his Presbytery, many of the most devoted Union men of St. Louis. Under these circumstances, we expected fully that his complaint would be sustained and his rights vindicated. In this, we were disappointed. The great majority of the Assembly took a different view of the matter, although his cause was advocated by many of the wisest, ablest, and best men of the House. Arguments of great clearness and power in support of the complaints were made by Hon. Judge Wood, Rev. Drs. Rice, Maclean, W. L. Breckinridge, and Craven, by Judge Ryerson, H. Murray Gradon, Esq., Rev. Messrs. Samuel Miller, Thomas Cleland, and others. When the roll was called, the vote stood 46 to sustain, 2 to sustain in part, and 117 not to sustain. The views of the majority are summed up in the minute reported by a committee, consisting of Drs. Beatty, Musgrave, Elliott, Tustin, Craven, and Judge Linn, and adopted by the House, which is as follows:

“The Assembly does not sustain the complainants, because the proceedings of the Presbytery of St. Louis in this case appear constitutional and regular, and, so far as we can perceive, were judicious, equitable, and for the edification of the church.

“These complaints, both in their language and the necessity

of the case, brought the whole proceedings under our review. The question of a dissolution of the pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and the Pine Street Church was originally brought in an orderly manner before the Presbytery, by petition from a minority of said church, and a personal tender of resignation by the pastor; and after all the constitutional steps were taken with care and deliberation, was decided by the Presbytery, acting for the peace and welfare of that church. That which was called an appeal and complaint to Synod against that action could not so suspend all further proceedings as to prevent the Presbytery from considering and acting upon the continued disturbed state of that congregation; and when, at a subsequent stated meeting of that body, this subject came before them, they did, almost unanimously, deem it inadvisable that the late pastor should continue ministerial labours in that congregation. Against this decision of the Presbytery, Dr. McPheeters and others have uttered these complaints, which we do not sustain.

“The Assembly has patiently listened to the history of this case from the opposite points of view taken, but in their decision have strictly confined themselves to the facts on record. The resignation of the pastoral relation, and the distracted state of the church, seemed plainly to call for the action of the Presbytery; and being upon the ground, and conversant with all the circumstances and demands of the case, they seem most competent to understand and decide what that action should be. The question of the pastor’s loyalty to his national government, which seemed to be so largely a disturbing element in the church, has not been properly before the Assembly, as it was not pronounced upon in any Presbyterial action. They judged it best for the peace and prosperity of that particular church that the late pastor should retire altogether, and cease from his public ministrations to them; and this Assembly cannot decide otherwise. And though many of the members of the Presbytery were absent from that meeting which so decided, this could not invalidate their proceedings, as it was a regular and lawful meeting of that body.

“The right and duty of the Presbytery ‘to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their



care,' and especially to heal dissensions, by seeking to remove the occasions of them, is a distinctive and important feature in our Presbyterian polity. And when the pastor himself so far recognized the propriety of his withdrawal as to tender to the Presbytery his resignation, it was clearly competent for that body not only to grant his request, but to order, if necessary, that he cease his ministrations to that people, if they believed that by longer continuing to serve them the dissensions would be fomented, the strife become embittered, and the spiritual interests of the church endangered. And when the Presbytery did, at length, so interfere and direct, without pronouncing upon the rumours and side issues which were the occasions of the strife and unhappy condition of the church, they simply undertook to control the relations of pastor and people for the welfare of the church, without impeaching, by any expression, the moral character and ministerial standing of that pastor. They only ordered, as a prudential measure, that the resignation which he had himself voluntarily tendered to them, should properly and entirely be carried out, by his ceasing in any way to keep up this unhappy state of things, and by ceasing to minister to them as their pastor."

We do not dissent from any of the principles stated in the above minute, but as we are so unfortunate as to differ from the Assembly as to the justice and wisdom of their decision, we claim the privilege of presenting in few words the view which we have been constrained to take of this important case. Before doing this, there are some preliminary points which demand consideration.

We think Dr. McPheeters committed some very grave mistakes, which were the source of all his difficulties. In the first place, he adopted the new, exaggerated doctrine as to the spirituality of the church and the limited range of her prerogative as a teacher. He says he had always resisted the introduction of what he calls "politics" into the house of God, and on this ground opposed all deliverances on the part of church courts touching the present rebellion, and the introduction into the services of the sanctuary of anything which implied a decided opinion as to the controversy which now rends the

country. In the year 1859, Dr. Thornwell opposed the recommendation of the Colonization Society, on the principle above stated. In private, if not in public, he took the ground that the division of the country was a certain event. He, however, wished to prevent the division of the church as consequent on the disruption of our national Union. To secure that end, he said, it was necessary to adopt the principle that the only duty of the church as a teacher, was to preach the gospel, to labour for the salvation of men. He said in his public speech that if the Government chose to re-open the slave-trade, the church would have no right to open her lips against it. This new doctrine excited great attention and feeling. When the Assembly met in 1860, the subject was again brought up, and caused for a time great anxiety. A resolution was prepared and presented by the Committee on Bills and Overtures, affirming the directly opposite doctrine, and asserting that the church as God's witness on earth is authorized and bound to reprove all sin and to support all truth and righteousness. This resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote of the Assembly.

There is indeed a sense of the words in which the church has nothing to do with politics. She has no right to pronounce judgment on purely secular matters, or upon such questions which ordinarily divide men into political parties. But politics, in the wide sense of the word, include the science of government, the policy of states, and the duties of citizens. The plain principle which determines the legitimate sphere of the action of the church, is, that it is limited to teaching and enforcing moral and religious truth; and to such truths as revealed and determined by the sacred Scriptures. The Bible gives us no rule for deciding the litigated questions about public improvements, a national bank, or a protective tariff, or state-rights. But it does give us rules for pronouncing about slave-laws, the slave-trade, obedience to magistrates, treason, rebellion, and revolution. To shut her mouth on these questions, is to make her unfaithful to her high vocation. The authors of this new theory soon repudiated it; and while those who agreed with them at the North were protesting against church courts saying a word against the rebellion, the pulpits, conventions, synods, and assemblies at the South, were resounding with

exciting appeals to inflame the spirit of rebellion.\* We think that a great part of Dr. McPheeters's difficulties have arisen from his adopting a principle which prevented him from uniting with his brethren in church courts in condemning the rebellion.

A second error, as it seems to us, into which he fell, relates to the independence of the church. His zeal for the authority of Christ and for his rights as the King of the church, led him to regard certain military orders as entrenching on Christ's prerogatives. He does not appear to have joined in the clamour against arbitrary arrests, or to deny the authority of the Government in times of rebellion and invasion, to suspend the writ of habeas corpus, or to proclaim martial law where necessity calls for it. On all these points his views appear to be just and reasonable. But his conscience would not allow him to recognize the right of the military authorities to interfere with his ministerial duties, or to prescribe any condition for attendance on church courts. On this principle he and his friends declined to attend certain meetings of the Presbytery, because General Rosecrans had issued a general order requiring all the members of any religious convention to take an oath of allegiance to the Government. It was not the oath he objected to, for he had voluntarily taken a similar oath before. But it was the making that oath a condition of membership in a church court. This he said was inconsistent with the independence of the church. Had it not been for scruples of this kind, preventing a full attendance of the members of Presbytery, the

\* The Rev. Dr. Rice, in his speech on the floor of the Assembly, seemed to intimate that Dr. Hodge in the Assembly of 1861, and Dr. R. J. Breckinridge in the Synod of Kentucky, had placed themselves on the same ground as to the prerogative of the church, as that occupied by Dr. McPheeters. This is a great mistake. Dr. Hodge in his review of the Assembly of 1859, argued strenuously against the new doctrine. In the Assembly of 1860, being a member of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, he drafted the resolution condemning that doctrine, which resolution was adopted unanimously. In the Assembly of 1861, he stated publicly that his objection to Dr. Spring's resolution was not founded on the assumption that the church had nothing "to do with politics," and that if those resolutions were presented to the Synod of New Jersey, he would cordially support them. And accordingly he has repeatedly voted for similar resolutions in Presbytery and Synod. The real grounds of his objection to the Spring resolution were stated in the protest in which he joined with other members of the Assembly of 1861.

pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and his church would not have been dissolved in June, 1863, nor he forbidden to preach in the pulpit of that church in April, 1864; and this complaint would never have troubled the Assembly or the church. To us it seems that these unfortunate scruples are founded in error. There was no just ground of complaint against General Rosecrans's order. There was nothing therein inconsistent with the independence of the church or true allegiance to Christ. Suppose the small-pox had been prevalent in that region, and the authorities of the city had issued an order that no one should attend any public meeting, ecclesiastical or secular, who did not produce evidence that he had been vaccinated. Would this be an interference with the liberty of the church? Not at all—because the object sought, (*viz.*, the public health), was a lawful object; and because the thing demanded (vaccination), was something the authorities had a right to demand. So in General Rosecrans's order, the object sought, the public safety, was a legitimate object; and the thing demanded, allegiance to the Government, was admitted to be obligatory. In our view, therefore, the order in question presented no lawful or reasonable objection to a free attendance on the Presbytery.

A third and still more serious error committed by Dr. McPheeters, was his adoption of the principle of neutrality. He avowed his purpose in his letter to his people, written before his return from New Mexico, to have nothing to do with the great conflict in which the nation was engaged. When called upon, in writing, by one of his elders and certain other persons, to say on which side were his own personal sympathies, he refused on principle to answer. And again, when General Curtis requested him to say whether he *wished* the rebellion to be suppressed, he declined to give the desired information. He constantly declared that "as a pastor, and because he was a pastor," he felt bound to be neutral, to abstain from all expression of his feelings or wishes in regard to our national difficulties. This was a very serious mistake, and arose from the same false theory to which the errors before mentioned are to be referred. There are occasions in which neutrality is improper and impracticable; occasions on which our Lord's

declaration, "He that is not for me, is against me," has its full application. And there are occasions on which neutrality is more offensive and irritating than open hostility, as our Lord in another place says, "I would thou wert either cold or hot." Such occasions are these—1. In which great questions of right and wrong are concerned. 2. In which great interests are involved, and 3. Those in which strong and right feelings are implicated: Our present national conflict involves all these elements. The attempt to destroy this Union, and to overthrow the Constitution for the purpose of establishing a great slave empire, is a stupendous wrong. In such a cause no man can be neutral. He might as well be neutral between God and Mammon, Christ and Belial. That such is the object of the present rebellion, the great body of the Northern people fully believe. It has been avowed over and over by the Southern leaders. The Richmond papers not long since told the slaveholders that as the war was made for them, they were bound to bear its burden. But whether on this point Northern sentiment and conviction be correct or incorrect, the fact that it is the conviction of the people makes neutrality in the matter an impossibility. In the second place, vital interests, personal and national, for this and for future generations, for America and for the world, are confessedly involved in the issue of this great struggle. And thirdly, it calls forth our strongest and best affections. The love of country is a virtue. We are bound to seek its honour and its welfare. It is our common parent, and we are under the strongest obligations to live, labour, and suffer, in its behalf. We cannot be neutral in a conflict which involves our national existence.

It is no wonder that Dr. McPheeters, adopting, as he did for his guidance, the three false principles above mentioned, should have trouble. In such times as the present, these false principles would bring a saint to grief; and it is due to Dr. McPheeters's uncommon excellence as a minister and as a man, and to the remarkable amiability of his temper and loveliness of character, that his troubles did not come sooner. It is a question of conscience how we ought to act towards those who do not sympathize with us in our national struggle, or who try to maintain a neutral ground. In answer to this important ques-

tion it may be remarked—1. That it is undeniable that good men do differ in their sympathies on this subject. We must take human nature as it is. A good, and even pious, mother may be blinded to the character of a wicked son; she may take his side in her heart even when he is wrong. A man, therefore, either from the adoption of wrong theories, or from having been born at the South, or from the associations of friendship and kindred, may be led into the great moral error, as we regard it, of taking sides in his feelings and wishes with the Southern revolutionists, and yet be a good man. We are not, therefore, to withdraw our confidence in such men as Christians, because they do not think and feel as we do in these times of trial.

2. If such a man is in a private station, and abstains from any thing in word or deed, that is hostile to the government, or designed to aid the rebellion, he is entitled to remain unmolested in the enjoyment of all his rights, civil and ecclesiastical.

3. If he occupies any public position which renders the avowal of his feelings and wishes unavoidable or necessary, he has a right to make such avowal, as is freely done by so many of our public men on the floor of Congress.

4. If such a man, however, be a pastor, his situation is peculiarly difficult. He is the organ of the people in presenting their prayers and thanksgiving to God. They have the right to have their hearts' desires for their country brought before his throne. If the pastor's principles or feelings prevent his doing this; if he cannot pray for the success of our arms, and for the suppression of the rebellion; if he cannot heartily thank God for the victories he may grant our armies, he cannot satisfy the just demands of the people. The want of agreement or congeniality may be such as to demand a separation. If those who are dissatisfied be the minority, they should withdraw; if the majority, the pastor should withdraw. What, in such a case, should be done, is a question fairly within the province of the Presbytery to decide. These principles appear to us plain and reasonable. How far they apply to the case of Dr. McPheeters will be seen from what follows.

In relation to his case, we have to remark, in the first place, that, in our judgment, the whole course of the Assembly was singularly unfair. The Presbytery of St. Louis had three

courses open to them when the memorial was presented to them in June, 1863. They might have proceeded judicially to try Dr. McPheeters on the charges included in that memorial, if they were such as admitted of a judicial investigation; or they might dissolve the pastoral relation between him and this church at his request, or on application of the people; or they might decree that dissolution on the ground that the interests of the congregation required it. They declined to adopt the first of these courses, and took the second, in June 1863, and the third, in April, 1864. Now, as the Presbytery did not give the case a judicial character, it was not competent for the Assembly to do so; and yet this is what they virtually did. In the first place, they admitted Mr. Strong to appear before them as "one of the original parties." But, if he were one party, Dr. McPheeters must have been the other—one the accuser, the other the accused—and then there must have been charges, testimony, and judicial decision. But in fact there was nothing of the kind. We agree, therefore, with Dr. Rice, who pronounced the admission of Mr. Strong as a party, and allowing him all the privileges without any of the responsibilities of an accuser, was something unheard of in the history of our church. In the second place, Mr. Strong, in his able seven-hour speech, acted not only as accuser but as witness. The greater part of his speech was of the nature of testimony, a statement of fact designed to prove that Dr. McPheeters is disloyal. Here was testimony not before the lower court, not on record, given without the sanction of an oath, without the opportunity of cross-examination or contradiction. When Dr. McPheeters denied one of the statements of a member of the Presbytery, he was told by the Moderator, that he had not then the right to deny anything. He had a right to deny every assertion which he believed to be unfounded, but he had no opportunity to rebut all this testimony thus irregularly adduced. H. Murray Graydon, Esq., had good reason for saying, "Accustomed as he had been to the pleadings of civil courts, where nothing was admitted that might affect the decision, except sworn testimony or official records, he was amazed, as he listened, to hear all the forms of law disregarded, and persons admitted here to make long and rambling statements of fact,

and of rumour and hearsay,—all of which, it is evident, are looked upon as testimony, and have produced their effect upon the minds of the judges of this court of Christ. . . . Why, Sir, if professional counsel should attempt, in a civil court, to argue before Judge Linn as parties have done here, he would silence them, he would turn them out of court; and he was surprised to hear the judge and others seem to vindicate and justify the strange irregularities of this case." It was this irregular testimony, we doubt not, that decided the judgment of the house. The form which the matter evidently took was—Here is a disloyal minister and a loyal Presbytery, whose side will you take? There could, of course, be but one answer to that question. In allowing the case to take that form, we think the Assembly did Dr. McPheeters great injustice.

In the second place, it may be said however, admitting the mode of procedure to be liable to objection, substantial justice was, after all, done by the vote of the Assembly. To this we cannot agree. We think grave injustice was done, not only to Dr. McPheeters, but to the whole Presbyterian church; and that the sanction of the Assembly has been given to principles and acts deserving universal reprobation.

The complaint of Dr. McPheeters and of his session, is technically against the action of the Presbytery in April, 1864, forbidding him to preach in the Pine Street Church. But that act cannot be separated from the act of the Presbytery in June, 1863. The two are related as effect and cause; and the Presbytery assign their action in June, 1863, as the ground of their action in April, 1864. The two were united in the judgment of the Assembly. We do not dissent from that judgment, 1. On the ground, taken by some distinguished members of the house, that the Presbytery was not a free body; that the military order then in force put its members under duress, and therefore its acts are invalid. We have already said that we cannot agree with that view of the matter. We believe the members who absented themselves on account of that order, acted under a mistaken view of duty; and consequently that the integrity or validity of the Presbytery was not thereby impaired. 2. Nor do we agree with Judge Ryerson, Mr. Graydon and others, that the Presbytery were bound, if they acted



at all, to proceed judicially on the charges presented in the memorial of Mr. Strong and others. Judge Ryerson and others voted to sustain the complaint, because Dr. McPheeters had been virtually silenced without a trial. The dissolution of the relation, however, between a pastor and his church, or the forbidding a minister to preach in a particular church, is not an act of discipline. It involves no censure. It leaves the minister perfectly *rectus in ecclesia*. The Presbytery could legally do all they did without a trial. They were not bound to take up the vague charges against Dr. McPheeters's loyalty, which, it is probable, they saw to be mere complaints that he did not feel properly, presenting no grounds for a judicial investigation.

3. Nor do we place our objection on the assumption that Mr. Green's appeal from the decision of the Presbytery, dissolving the pastoral relation, was valid; or that it suspended the operation of that decision, leaving Dr. McPheeters in the possession of all his rights as pastor. This is one of the grounds taken by Dr. McPheeters himself. He argued that he had a right to preach in the Pine Street Church, because Mr. Green's appeal, being valid, he was still its pastor. Mr. Strong made it one of the main points of his argument, that Dr. McPheeters had no right to preach in that church, because that appeal being invalid, he was no longer its pastor. We cannot see that this argument has any force on either side. Dr. McPheeters's right to preach in the Pine Street Church did not depend on the validity of Mr. Green's appeal. He preached there because he was regularly invited to do so. He had the right to preach in any church in the land. It was not because he was the pastor of the church, but because he was a minister in good standing, free from all disabilities, military, or ecclesiastical, that he accepted the invitation to occupy that pulpit.

4. Nor do we think the ground taken by the Rev. Samuel Miller valid. He says, the question is, "Were the Presbytery right in prohibiting a minister of the gospel, in good standing, and a member of their body, from preaching in a certain church? 1. Had they the power? 2. Was it expedient to exercise it?" The former of these questions, he answers in the negative. The Presbytery, he says, had no right to prohibit Dr. McPheeters from preaching, (of course he means in that

church,) without trying him. But why not? If, as he properly admits, they had the power for cause to dissolve the pastoral relation without the request or consent of either pastor or people, why should they not have the power to prohibit his preaching? If they could do the greater, they could do the less. The principle is the same in both cases. If the Presbytery believe that the interests of religion demand that a pastor leave his church, they may decree the separation. If they believe that a minister's preaching in a particular church would distract, and divide it, or be otherwise hurtful, they may prohibit such preaching. For the exercise of these discretionary powers, they are responsible to the higher courts. But the power clearly belongs to every Presbytery.

The reasons why we should have voted to sustain the complaint of Dr. McPheeters, are—1. That he is a good man and a faithful minister of Christ. Had he been a factious, ill-tempered, contentious man, our sympathies would not be so much enlisted on his behalf. But it is acknowledged that he is a remarkably amiable, faithful, spiritual, and devoted man and minister. It is a duty and privilege to stand by and support such a man, as far as a good conscience will permit. This is specially incumbent when such a man is persecuted and unjustly abused. That Dr. McPheeters has been the object of persecution and ill-usage is undeniable. The military order by which he was banished from the state, forbidden to preach within its borders, and the charge of his church taken from its trustees and session, was an unjust and tyrannical proceeding. We say this, not because we deny the right of summary arrest and of martial law. We admit the right. We are surprised that the exercise of that right has been so sparingly made. But it is not a matter of surprise, that, while in many cases its exercise has been just and useful, in others it has been uncalled for and impolitic; and in others, grossly unjust and oppressive. That it was unjust in the case of Dr. McPheeters is plain. 1. Because the order itself gives no adequate and even plausible reasons for this extreme exercise of power. Dr. McPheeters was one the best men in St. Louis; he had by word or deed broken no law of the land; he had failed in no social or civil duty; he had taken and kept a stringent oath of

allegiance to the provisional government of Missouri and to the Government of the United States. There are hundreds and thousands, and, we fear, hundreds of thousands of men in the land more deserving of arrest and banishment than he.

2. We are authorized to speak of this order as we have done, because the authorities at Washington immediately annulled it. Either General Curtis was wrong in issuing it, or Mr. Lincoln was wrong in annulling it. We only agree with the President and the Attorney-General in condemning the order in question. Notwithstanding the action of the national authorities, however, this oppressive mandate remained in force against Dr. McPheeters, except as to banishment from the state, for a whole year. It weighed him down. It declared him to be so disloyal that it was not safe to allow him to preach, and this in a community so excited that Governor Gamble, General Curtis, and President Lincoln himself were denounced as traitors. Dr. McPheeters submitted to all this quietly. He made no opposition or complaint. Such a man is entitled to the sympathy and support of all good men.

3. But the consideration just mentioned, although in our judgment of no slight importance, justifies only sympathy and support so far as higher obligations permit. We are not authorized to justify even a good and persecuted man in doing wrong, or to condemn those who censure his wrong-doing. We should have sustained the complaint of Dr. McPheeters, because we regard the acts of which he complains as deserving of universal condemnation. The committee of the Assembly who framed the judgment adopted by the House, say that they refused to sustain the complaints against the Presbytery of St. Louis: 1. Because the dissolution of the pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and his church, and forbidding him to preach in that pulpit, were acts of the Presbytery in the regular exercise of its authority; and 2. Because the members of that Presbytery, being on the ground, were the best judges of what the spiritual interests of the Pine Street Church required. Were these facts true, we should have nothing to say. Had we been a member of the Assembly, we should have been very slow to put up our private opinion against that of the Presbytery on a matter concerning which they were the best judges.

But we deny, that in the true and proper sense of the words, the Presbytery of St. Louis did separate Dr. McPheeters from his church, or did forbid him to preach. On the contrary, they condemned both these acts and protested against them. And yet the General Assembly, in opposition to their protest and to their better judgment, sanction and endorse the action which the Presbytery condemn. The Presbytery of St. Louis is a permanent body, consisting of over sixty members. Who separated Dr. McPheeters from his church? eight ministers and three elders. Are they the Presbytery? In a technical, legal, constitutional sense, they are entitled to be so regarded; but in a fair, honourable, moral, and righteous sense, they are not. Suppose a Presbytery should be called to meet, and by a storm, railroad accident, or other providential event, only three out of sixty members should come together. Suppose those three should perform an act, (depose a minister or divide a church), which they knew to be contrary to the judgment and wishes of the absent members; and suppose further, that those absentees, nineteen-twentieths of the body, should memorialize the Assembly, stating that they condemn the act of the technical Presbytery, and protested against it; and suppose the Assembly should refuse to hear that memorial, and should sanction the act because it was the act of the Presbytery, and because the Presbytery was the best judge. We do not hesitate to say that every honest man on earth would condemn such a judgment. The Assembly might say they thought the three right, and the fifty-seven wrong; but to say they sustained the three because they were the Presbytery, (that is the sixty), and because they, being on the ground, they were the best judges, is something hardly conceivable. And yet it is into such a judgment as this, our good, wise, and we add with all sincerity, venerated Assembly, have allowed themselves to be bewildered andajoled. They rest their decision on the wishes and judgment of the Presbytery of St. Louis. One-fifth of that Presbytery wish one thing, four-fifths another. Why should one-fifth be preferred to the four-fifths, simply because they voted? They were not wiser, better, more fully informed, or more impartial. It is to sacrifice substance to form, justice to technicality; to take the act

of the small minority of a body against which the majority protest, as the act of the body itself.

3. This fraction of the Presbytery came together June 3d, "to dissolve the pastoral relation between the Pine Street Church and the Rev. Samuel B. McPheeters, D. D.," without being requested to do so, either by the pastor or the church, and against the known wishes and judgment of the great majority of the Presbytery. They knew the majority would not attend. It matters not whether that absence arose from an epidemic, from stress of weather, from the disturbed state of the country, or from conscientious scruples. The minority knew the majority would not be there; and they announced their purpose to do, what they could not do, had their brethren, who had equal rights with themselves, been able to attend. As Dr. McPheeters placed his resignation into their hands, their mode of proceeding was changed. Instead of dissolving the pastoral relation of their own motion, they proceeded to cite the church to appear by their commissioners to signify their wishes in the case. The pastoral relation involves a contract to which there are two parties, pastor and people. Neither can dissolve it at his, or their, option. There must be a mutual agreement, unless the Presbytery see cause to act contrary to the wishes of either or of both the parties. The church met, and by a large majority protested against the resignation of their pastor being accepted. When near midnight, a great part of the meeting having withdrawn, Mr. Strong, the only elder who favoured the dissolution of the pastoral relation between Dr. McPheeters and his church, was, by the minority that remained, appointed commissioner to the Presbytery. When this was known, the church again met, at the call of the session, and protested against Mr. Strong's acting as the representative of the church, unless he would in good faith carry out their wishes and oppose the separation between them and their pastor. The Presbytery met. Mr. Strong was recognized as the commissioner representing the church; was heard at length in favour of the dissolution; and the Presbytery resolved, that "at the request of the Pine Street Church,"\* the connection between it and

\* This statement was made on the floor of the Assembly, and is contained in the memorial addressed to the Assembly by the majority of the Presbytery.

Dr. McPheeters as its pastor should be dissolved. Nothing need be said in reference to this record. If it is not condemned by the instinctive moral sense of every honest man, there is no help for it. Mr. Strong was legally, to be sure, the commissioner of the church; in justice, morality, and honour, he was not. It was in violation of all moral right that he was so received and recognized. This action of the Presbytery was one of the grounds of Dr. McPheeters's complaint, and this action the Assembly is made to endorse.

4. We have already admitted that a man may be legally loyal, one who so discharges all his obligations to his country, that no court, civil, military, or ecclesiastical, can have just ground of action against him, and, nevertheless, may be so hostile in feeling as to render him an unsuitable and even an intolerable pastor of a loyal congregation. With regard to Dr. McPheeters, however, the undeniable facts are these—

1. He was a man universally respected and beloved.
2. He had taken, and faithfully kept, a stringent oath of allegiance to the Government.
3. The highest authorities in the land, the President and Attorney-General, pronounced themselves so satisfied with his loyalty that they forbade his being interfered with on the part of the authorities, either as a citizen or as a minister.
4. Whatever were his private feelings, he so conducted himself, and so performed his ministerial duties, as to retain the affection and confidence of the community, of six out of seven of the elders of his church, of the vast majority of its members and attendants; and of four-fifths of the members of his Presbytery. That such a man should be dismissed from his church and forbidden to preach in its pulpit, by a mere fragment of the Presbytery to which he belongs, who knew him and all the circumstances of the case, seems to us an injustice which has few, if any, parallels in the history of our church.

It seems, however, incredible that any body of men should say that the church requested, what they knew it not only did not request, but formally protested against. If any correction of this statement, as a clerical error, was made before the Assembly, it has escaped our notice. If the record be correct, it is a millstone about the neck of that technical Presbytery.