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No. III.

ART. I.—*The Writings of St. John, with special reference to the Recent Assaults on the Gospel of St. John.* [Translated from the German of Dr. LANGE, with additions by Dr. PHILIP SCHAFF.]

THE writings preserved by the Church under the name of John, with all their diversity, corresponding to the diversity of their literary species, have so many and so important peculiar traits, and have these traits, too, so much in common, that, with a better developed taste in regard to biblical style, we shall be no more able to ascribe them to different authors, than to attribute the different masterpieces of one great painter to different masters.

The peculiarities of the matter of these writings are: (1.) The depth and fulness of the christological idea of Christ and his kingdom (*the Word*); (2.) The spiritual concentration of the depth and fulness of the Messianic life in the personality of the Lord, making heaven and earth a symbolism of Christianity, of its struggles and its triumphs (*Love*); (3.) The universalism of Christianity, grounded in God, embracing and shining through the world (*Life*); (4.) The festive spirit of the assurance of victory, wherein Christ in his imperial power

believing, and the net is full, or all the purposes of God's grace are accomplished, then shall the angels come forth and perform their part as the executioners of Divine justice in effecting a complete separation of the wicked from among the just, and the eternal purification of the kingdom.

Then shall be realized what has so often been longed for, a perfectly pure society—and not till then. Then the vine will have no dead or fruitless branches. There will be no tares among the wheat. Faith will never again tremble; nor hope waver; nor love decay. Pure, in its freedom from all impure elements—pure, in the perfection of all its individual members, it will be pure, in its complete disjunction and separation from all evil external to itself. The statue has been taken from among the fragments and splinters, where it was wrought and polished, and been set up in the temple not made with hands. The diamond has been taken from the dust and smoke of the lapidary's shop, to glisten in the frontlet of the great High Priest of that temple.

ART. V.—*The General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, convened in the Brick Church, New York City, on Thursday, May 20th, 1869, at 11 A. M.

The opening sermon was preached by the last Moderator, Rev. George W. Musgrave, D. D., from Mark xvi. 16.

The Assembly then proceeded to the election of Moderator and Temporary Clerk.

Rev. M. W. Jacobus, D. D., Rev. Willis Lord, D. D., Rev. A. G. Hall, D. D., Rev. W. C. Anderson, D. D., and Rev. W. Blackwood, D. D., were nominated for Moderator.

Drs. Anderson and Blackwood were excused at their own request.

On motion of Rev. Dr. MILLER, it was

Resolved, That a majority of all the votes cast be necessary to a choice in this and all elections by this body.

On the first ballot for Moderator, Rev. Dr. Jacobus received

140 votes; Rev. Dr. Lord, 54 votes; and Rev. Dr. Hall, 63 votes.

The Moderator then declared that Rev. M. W. Jacobus, D. D., having received a majority of all the votes cast, was duly elected Moderator of this Assembly.

The Rev. R. K. Rodgers, D. D., grandson of Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, original founder of the church in which the Assembly met, was then unanimously elected Temporary Clerk by acclamation.

The STATED CLERK requested members having answers of Presbyteries to the overture on Re-union sent down by the last Assembly, and their action upon that subject, to present them without delay, that they might be properly classified. He had as yet received only about seventy-five answers, but was able to announce that the overture *had been rejected* by a large majority.

Rev Dr. MUSGRAVE offered the following resolution:—

Resolved, That a Committee of Conference consisting of five ministers and five elders, be appointed to confer with a similar Committee, if appointed by the other General Assembly now in session in this city, on the subject of the re-union of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church; to report during our present sessions, and at as early a day as practicable, what farther action, if any, should be taken on the subject.

The resolution was adopted.

On Friday morning, after announcing the Standing Committees, the Moderator also announced the following Committee under Dr. Musgrave's resolution of yesterday, for conference with a similar Committee of the New School body on the subject of re-union:—*Ministers*, George W. Musgrave, D. D., A. G. Hall, D. D., Lyman H. Atwater, D. D., Willis Lord, D. D., H. R. Wilson, D. D. *Ruling Elders*—Robert Carter, J. C. Grier, C. D. Drake, W. M. Francis, and Henry Day.

On motion of Rev. Dr. IMBRIE, it was made the first and second orders on the following days to receive and consider the reports of the Committees on the various Boards:—*On Monday*, first order, Board of Publication; second order, Board of Church Extension. *Tuesday*, first order, Board of Foreign Missions; second order, Board of Education. *Wednesday*, first order, Disabled Ministers' Fund; second order,

Freedmen's Committee. *Thursday*, first order, Board of Domestic Missions; and that 10 o'clock of each day be the hour for the first order named.

Rev. Dr. MUSGRAVE presented the following report from the committee appointed by the last Assembly, in accordance with the recommendation of the Philadelphia Presbyterian Convention, to meet similar committees from other Presbyterian bodies.

A meeting was held April 18, 1869, at the Mission House, 907 Arch Street, Philadelphia, of the following members of the respective committees appointed by the General Assemblies, in pursuance of a request by the Convention held in Philadelphia, November 6, 1867, viz.:—The Rev. Drs. John T. Pressly, David R. Kerr, and William Davidson, from the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church; the Rev. Dr. Zephaniah M. Humphrey, from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (New School); the Rev. Drs. George W. Musgrave and Alexander T. McGill, and the Hon. Robert McKnight, from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (Old School).

It was unanimously resolved that union among the different denominations represented is very desirable, if the way be clear. It was then resolved that the basis agreed on by the Philadelphia Convention, above referred to, be taken as a guide for the deliberations of this conference. Being altered and amended in several particulars, it was unanimously adopted in the following form, viz.:—

Article 1. The Old and New Testament Scriptures are acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Article 2. The Westminster Confession of Faith, as the same has been modified by the churches here represented, in its doctrines concerning the powers of the civil magistrate, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, shall be received and adopted, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.

Article 3. The United Church shall receive and adopt the Presbyterian Form of Church Government.

Article 4. (1.) It is the will of God that the Book of Psalms should be used by his church in his worship, to the end of the world. And the United Body shall, at the earliest practicable day, prepare as faithful and acceptable a version of those Psalms, as may be, for use in the churches. (2.) Any of the churches designing to use Psalms exclusively in the service of song, shall always have the right unchallenged to do so.

It was then resolved that these articles be submitted by the committees composing this conference to their respective Assemblies for consideration; and that if they receive the favorable action of the churches represented, the Assemblies be requested to appoint each a committee of five to meet at Pittsburg, Pa., on the first Wednesday of August, A. D. 1869, at 11 o'clock A. M., to take into consideration such further questions as may be necessary to be decided, in order to a formal consummation of the union of the bodies here represented.

The above is faithfully extracted from the Minutes approved April 18, 1869.

ALEXANDER T. MCGILL, *Secretary.*

On this subject the Assembly afterward took the following action :—

Resolved, That the Assembly accepts and approves the report, and recommends the continuance of the same committee to represent this Assembly in further consideration of the subject of the union of the churches represented in the Conference.

In this we heartily concur. We believe the benefits of the prospective re-union of the two great branches of the Presbyterian church would be greatly enhanced by incorporating the United, and other Presbyterians therein, as soon as the Psalmody, and, in some instances, other questions can be adjusted.

A communication was read from the New School Assembly, announcing that it had appointed a committee of five ministers and five ruling elders to confer with a similar committee from this body on the question of re-union. Said committee consists of Rev. W. Adams, D. D., Rev. J. T. Stearns, D. D., Rev. S. W. Fisher, D. D., Rev. J. B. Shaw, D. D., Rev. R. W. Patterson, D. D., and ruling elders Hon. William Strong, Hon. David Harris, Hon. W. E. Dodge, Hon. Jacob S. Farrand, and Hon. Daniel Haines.*

THE BOARDS OF THE CHURCH.

Want of space compels us to refer only to such action of the Assembly in regard to the Boards as is outside the usual routine. The customary resolutions of approbation of the fidelity and efficiency of the several Boards were adopted, without charges or suggestions from any quarter, so far as we are advised, of negligence, unfaithfulness, or malfeasance in office. Various proposals were made and discussed designed to increase the resources and success of the departments to which they referred. Some of these, as also the general condition and prospects of particular Boards, awakened earnest and able discussion and called forth addresses of great eloquence, power, and unction. This was particularly true of the speeches on the reports of the committees on Missionary Boards, Foreign and Domestic. Large assemblies were quite electrified by these vivid

* The further proceedings of the Assemblies touching re-union, we reserve for another article.

and stirring addresses. It is rare that any Assembly has a larger proportion of effective speakers lay and clerical.

Overtures were made to the Assembly asking it to instruct the Board of Publication to make various issues or editions of the Hymnal, Catechisms, &c., which were referred to the Board itself for decision. Parties who desire such issues would usually save themselves and the Assembly considerable trouble by sending their requests directly to the Board itself, to which the church has intrusted this work, to which the Assembly is quite sure to refer them, which is best informed regarding them, and is quite ready and sure to grant all reasonable petitions of this kind.

One overture called upon the Assembly to instruct this Board to grant the same discounts to Sabbath schools and churches as to booksellers. This request was granted by the Assembly. The subject is a very difficult one, and has two strong sides. If no special discounts are given to booksellers, their services in distributing the publications of the Board must be to a great extent lost. If similar discounts are not given to Sabbath schools, then we suffer from a dangerous and destructive competition with other publishers and publishing boards and societies which grant such discounts. The great publishing houses and societies are divided in opinion and practice on this subject. Our Board expressed its readiness to follow any decided preference declared by the Assembly in the premises. It appeared that the operations of the Board during the past year had been safe, efficient, and prosperous, that its periodicals deserve to have their increasing circulation still further increased, and that larger contributions are needed for the work of colportage.

Indeed the great want of all the Boards is increased funds supplied by the free-will offerings of the churches. The Foreign Board has been rescued from a crushing and almost fatal debt of nearly \$100,000, by a providential legacy of extraordinary amount, such as can scarcely be expected once in a generation. Otherwise it would have been forced to a severe and damaging retrenchment of its present agencies. Nor can it enter upon new fields or send into them the young men who are eager to go, unless the amount of yearly income is

greatly increased beyond the past year, legacies included. The Board of Domestic Missions, though relieved from recent embarrassment, is still compelled to keep its missionaries on a small, often a starveling allowance, and to decline sending new missionaries to openings of the highest promise. The condition of these two great Boards is typical. All are crippled for want of means. The remedy for this deficiency was therefore the great matter in relation to them that engrossed the attention of the Assembly. It came up in an able Report on Systematic Benevolence by Dr. Irving, chairman of a committee appointed by the Assembly of 1867 for this purpose. This document concluded as follows:—

Then what is needed at this juncture is: (1.) Such a full and active acknowledgment of Christian stewardship on the part of each communicant. (2.) Such a heartfelt interest and sympathy on the part of church officers that will seek to bring up all to duty. (3.) Such an intelligent and comprehensive system in each church that will embrace all within its communion. (4.) Such an efficient supervision of every church court that shall be felt in every congregation in connection with it. In view of these solemn truths, the committee recommend that the Boards shall make and send to each General Assembly a carefully prepared estimate as far as they can, which shall be on an economical, yet healthy basis, of the amounts needed to carry on their operations for the coming year; that on these estimates the Assembly shall annually take such action as shall bring them, with power and effect, before the churches for their knowledge, guidance, and active support. Also recommend that these estimates shall be committed by their authority to the Presbyteries, which shall not only consider the same, but shall take such control thereof, that they shall be laid before each church session within their bounds, with their sanction and impress, so that each congregation shall have an opportunity of contributing to the Boards, and shall be expected to embrace the same.

This plan involves church control and supervision on the part of every court, but wholly in the line of our own system. It brings responsibility before all, and keeps it just where it belongs. It spreads important information before our whole body at the commencement of the ecclesiastical and financial year. It gives a basis of action for both the people and the Boards, and it leaves the whole mode of collection, as to time and manner, to the wisdom and experience of each church, and it delivers the whole subject from any expedient contrary to the simplicity that is in Christ.

Dr. IMBRIE, chairman of a committee appointed by the Assembly of 1868, to report to this Assembly a plan of systematic beneficence, made a report recommending the following measures, which were adopted, viz. :—

1. The present rule requiring Presbyteries to report to the General Assembly is rescinded.

2. Makes it the duty of the Secretaries of the Boards and Committees to present before the General Assembly estimates of the wants of their Boards for the year.

3. Makes it the duty of the Assembly's Committee on Systematic Benevolence to apportion the amount upon the several Synods, whose duty it shall be to raise at least this amount.

4. Requires the Synods to apportion the amount to their several Presbyteries, requiring a detailed report from them; each Synod also to send a written report to the Assembly.

5. Each Presbytery to assign to each session its due proportion, and the amounts contributed to be duly reported.

6. The Session shall give all the people and Sabbath schools opportunity to contribute.

7. Constitutes the Rev. Drs. Irving, Schenck, and Robert Strong, of Albany, and the Elders A. McClure and Robert Carter, a committee to prepare a tract giving different plans of giving, and arrange to give it a wide circulation.

The Rev. Mr. PLUMLEY offered the following resolution :—

Resolved. That the present Committee on Systematic Beneficence prepare and send to each Synod and Presbytery the proportionate amount desired from them for the use of the beneficial schemes of the Church this year as presented by the several Secretaries.

The resolution was adopted, with the understanding that the amounts desired are as follows, viz. : Foreign Missions, \$310,000 ; Domestic Missions, \$250,000 ; Education, \$50,000 ; Publication, \$50,000 ; Disabled Ministers' Fund, \$40,000 ; Church Extension, \$90,000 ; Freedmen, \$85,000 ; total, \$875,000.

This is a great advance on all that has yet been done by our church. But shall it not be done? Ought our great and opulent communion, containing single congregations, nay, individuals, that could give the whole, to hesitate a moment? But it should not be done by any one church, or section of the church, exclusively or mainly. It is the work, duty, and privilege of the whole, in which all must share if they would not bring leanness into their souls. The great resources of the affluent should not only flow freely into this treasury of the Lord, but constitute also a reserve for those large donations which are required properly to endow the great institutions of charity, religion, and education, without which they cannot flourish, or perform their proper office in sustaining, defending, and replenishing the church itself. After all, the success of this and all other schemes for organizing and evoking the liberality of our people, depends, under

God, more upon the courage, fidelity, and tact of ministers and sessions in bringing every cause home to the mind and heart of every member of their congregations, than on all the schemes and machinery ever devised without them. All experience and observation exalt this to the authority of a grand induction, a universal law. Wheel may be added to, or displace, wheel. It is all to no purpose unless the living spirit be within the wheels.

The Board of Education held a semi-centenary meeting on Tuesday evening, May 25, which was addressed by Drs. McGill, Willis Lord, Beadle, and McCosh. The following resolution brings forward a proposition of great importance with reference to the equipment of our theological seminaries:—

Resolved, That the unprecedented developments of Divine Providence in this age, and the necessity of instructing and training those who are to be laborers in the coming harvest, seem to indicate to our theological schools the importance of founding in each a separate chair to Evangelistic Theology, the design of which shall be the instruction of students for the ministry, in those special portions of the Scriptures which relate to the aggressions of the church, in this latter day, upon the great systems of sin in the world; upon the duties of pastors, and other officers of the church, as relating to those subjects; upon the organization and operations of the various departments of the church's work, and upon the fields of usefulness, and nature of employments to which they may be called in the publication of the Gospel, and the communication of its blessings to the human race.

All this is in itself highly desirable. But room cannot be made for new chairs in our theological seminaries, without either overcrowding the students, or narrowing the work of existing Professors. The whole problem of successfully organizing the practical training of candidates for the ministry yet awaits solution. But it has so strongly seized the mind of the church, that we hope this solution may speedily be found.

Dr. MUSGRAVE was requested to continue to act as Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, the ensuing year.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

The Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries simply recommended the approval of the reports from Princeton and Alleghany. In regard to the Danville and Northwest Seminaries, a state of things was reported involving grave difficul-

ties and complications, upon which the Assembly felt that it was without sufficient light for a safe decision. It accordingly appointed committees *ad interim*, to repair to each institution, make thorough investigation, and report to the adjourned meeting at Pittsburg, in November. Dr. WEST resigned his chair in Danville; but on the request of the Assembly, and a vote to increase the salaries of the Professors, withdrew it.

THE SABBATH.

An earnest resolution was adopted, urging ministers and Christians to do what is possible to promote the observance of the Sabbath, and arrest its increasing desecration. A strong protest was issued by both Assemblies against the decoration of soldiers' graves, appointed for the last Sabbath in May, and the second during the Assemblies' meeting, and urging the substitution of another day for the ceremony. The effort was unsuccessful in regard to New York, but the day was changed in the adjacent cities of Brooklyn and Jersey City. In New York it fortunately proved a miserable failure, largely because contrary to the conscience of the Christian public. Such action is timely and needful. The Christian religion cannot outlive the Christian Sabbath, against which mighty and numerous foes now conspire.

JUDICIAL CASE NO. 4.

This was an appeal of the church of Greenville, Ill., against the Synod of Illinois. This church had appointed elders to serve for a limited number of years, and not for life. The proceeding was disapproved by Presbytery and Synod, and came before the Assembly on an appeal from the decision of the Synod. The appeal was not sustained.

The question here involved is not likely to be set at rest by this decision. The evils of being compelled to continue in office inefficient and unacceptable elders are so deeply felt, that the doctrine is gaining ground that, while the ordination of elders as of ministers, imparts permanently the rank of office, it ought not necessarily vest the right to exercise that office beyond the limits fixed by the pleasure of the congrega-

tion. Some churches in our own, and still more in the New School body, are acting on this principle. The (Dutch) Reformed Church elects elders to serve actively only for a year, although on great occasions, all who have ever borne the office, are recognized and called to act officially in what is called the Grand Consistory. We have not particularly investigated the subject, and we reserve it for further consideration. But we see tokens of an increasing demand for such action as will allow some sort of rotation in the eldership.

THE PRESERVATION OF AMITY BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND
GREAT BRITAIN.

Judge RYERSON offered and supported resolutions on this subject, which, after an amendment suggested by Senator Drake, and accepted by the mover, were adopted as follows:—

Whereas, The existing state of feeling between this country and Great Britain is a cause of profound regret and grief to all who desire to maintain peaceful and friendly relations between those two great Protestant powers; and

Whereas, There are no causes of difference but such as ought to be peacefully agitated; therefore,

Resolved, That this General Assembly would earnestly exhort all Christians under its care to offer fervent prayers to Almighty God, that he would, by his Holy Spirit, so enlighten and influence the understanding and hearts, and would so guide and control the conduct, of the rulers and people of both these nations, that all matters of difference may be amicably settled, and a lasting peace preserved; and this Assembly would affectionately and earnestly appeal to the Christian people of Great Britain and Ireland to join in like supplications to our common Father in heaven.

Resolved, That a copy hereof be sent to the other General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, now in session in this city, with a most respectful request that they unite with us in our efforts to preserve peace between these two Protestant nations (a war between whom might, and probably would involve the whole civilized world).

Such expressions from our Christian bodies are now very timely, and we trust the assurances conveyed by them to British Christians in regard to the pacific desires of the Christians of the United States, will do something to soothe the national irritation which has been inflamed of late.

TEMPERANCE.

Rev. Dr. KNOX, from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported

Overture No. 3 from the National Temperance Society, asking that all our ministers preach, on the last Sabbath of December, on the Christian duty of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks.

The committee recommend that the Assembly regard its former deliverances upon this subject as sufficient, and earnestly reiterate them.

In answer to the earnest pleas of various members for more decided action by the Assembly, Dr. Knox stated that, after deliberation upon this subject to a late hour last night, the committee concluded that this report was all that was necessary. The difficulty, in the minds of the committee, was in the verbiage of the overture. It requests preaching "upon the Christian duty of *total abstinence*, and not of *temperance*."

After inquiry it was represented, that the last deliverance was in the form of an elaborate paper, prepared by Dr. Elliott and adopted by the Assembly of '65, maintaining decidedly that total abstinence from intoxicating beverages is a Christian duty. Various amendments were moved. Many members, including promoters of total abstinence, earnestly objected to declaring total abstinence a duty, and the neglect of it a sin, as committing the Assembly to untenable and unscriptural ground. Others strenuously urged that no action short of this will avail to arrest the swelling tide of intemperance, with all its woes. The debate issued in the following action:—

Resolved, 1. That the Assembly hereby reiterates its former deliverances in favor of total abstinence, and especially that made at Pittsburg in 1865.

Resolved, 2. That our ministers be enjoined to preach on the duty of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, as a beverage, on the third Sabbath of December next, or at any previous time which their convenience may suggest.

We find on examination that the Assembly of '65 gave two deliverances on the subject of Temperance—the one, with which we mainly concur, asserting the importance of renewed efforts on the part of ministers and good people to promote

total abstinence—the other, the paper prepared by Dr. Elliott, already referred to, which treats more especially of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages, and maintains the right and duty of the church to repress them by discipline and excommunication. With the argument of this paper we do not agree, but as this was not the point acted upon by the last Assembly, and we are crowded for space, we will not now undertake to discuss it. The real point is the apparent *unqualified* assertion of “the duty of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks as a beverage,” and the right of the Assembly to enjoin all ministers to teach this doctrine.

If it is meant that it is a duty simply because it is expedient thus to abstain from them in the present state of things, a duty, however, of which each one must be, as in all things indifferent, at liberty to judge and act for himself, and which cannot be lawfully enforced by church discipline, so that to his own Master alone each one stands or falls, that is one thing. We will heartily join in efforts to promote abstinence on this ground, even to the extent of supporting prohibitory legislation so far as the public will sustain it. But the moment it is maintained that *all* use of any intoxicating drink as a beverage is a sin *per se*, that our liberty herein is to be judged by another man’s conscience, that it can be hedged or fettered by church discipline, that we are called to abstinence by any obligations except those of love prompted by considerations of expediency, we say no; we give place by subjection, no not for an hour.

If it is in this sense a duty to abstain from using all such drinks as a beverage, then so to use them, to any extent, or on any occasion, is a sin. This is clearly unscriptural and anti-scriptural doctrine, and impeaches the morality of our blessed Lord. The wine of Scripture was surely fermented and capable of producing intoxication. Any other view incurs the just contempt of scholars and of all unprejudiced readers of the Word of God, who take the reasonable and obvious meaning which results from a fair comparison of part with part. It is therefore against the Word of God to teach such doctrine, or to command others to teach it.

It is equally hostile to the cause of temperance itself. In view of the immense increase of drinking and intemperance

among all grades of people in this country, the extensive and almost universal adulteration of liquors with poisonous ingredients, and the more acrid products of distillation, we are quite willing and earnest, by precept and example, to urge upon all the great importance of abstaining from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage; nay, as we have just said, we are quite ready to go as far as public sentiment will sustain it, in bringing legal prohibition to bear against the torrent of drunkenness which is spreading everywhere the wrecks of material, moral, and religious desolation. But we are not willing to found such a movement on principles which are directly antagonistic to the Word of God, and must therefore imperil and ultimately undermine any cause built upon them, while they impair that faith in divine truth which is the life of all morality and all religion. It was the introduction and wide adoption of the principle in question into the great Temperance Reformation a quarter of a century since, that contributed to the great reaction against that movement, the bitter and baleful fruits of which we are now reaping. The people and the growing youth were taught that it is a *sin* to taste any thing that can intoxicate, and were led by thousands to subscribe pledges of total abstinence *on this ground*. As they read their Bibles they found this principle contradicted by divine authority. They felt that they had been the dupes of an imposture and a delusion, and recoiled to the contrary extreme, from following a delusion, to the more or less unrestrained indulgence of their appetites. Shall we try the experiment over again and aggravate a curse already aggravated by it?

There is no region in which good men are more in danger of being misled by superficial and fanatical views, than in that wherein God hath called us unto liberty, at the same time charging us not to use our liberty as an occasion to the flesh, but by love to serve one another. We are left to our liberty as to dress, equipage, and general cost and style of living, so long as we are able to sustain it honestly and keep within the bounds of decency. And yet, as we shall soon find, our Assembly justly laid to the charge of the luxury and extravagance now in fashion, that they promote the present alarming growth of licentiousness, including the horrible crime of infan-

ticide! Does the enormity of drunkenness exceed this? And would it not be true that if people were to abstain from all ornaments and luxuries, they would greatly lessen the temptation to these crimes, and promote social purity, together with whatever is pure and lovely and of good report? What then? May the church interdict on pain of excommunication all use of ornaments and luxuries as a sin, in order to lessen the present fearful excess in them, and the direful consequences of which it is so prolific? No. This is an unwarrantable and dangerous interference with Christian liberty. It could never be carried out without putting Christianity in a straight jacket and rending our churches into fragments. Yet who can doubt that there is great sin in much of this luxurious self-indulgence, this costly ostentation, this "splendid misery and shabby splendor?" How ought the pulpit, the press, and all Christian teaching and persuasion, to beseech, persuade, warn, thunder against it? Yet if all this fail, can the church demand of her ministers to preach upon the *duty* of total abstinence from *all* ornaments and luxuries, because it seems as if such abstinence in Christian people would have some tendency to abate the dreadful evils in question? It is, however, none the less the clear duty of Christians to lay these things to heart: to deny the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, and to shun the appearance of evil; and of ministers to warn them thus to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against their souls, on peril of losing these souls. But there is a range of liberty in the manner of doing it, for the use of which they are accountable, not to man, but to that Master to whom they must stand or fall. This is a fruitful theme, with manifold applications, which we have no room to follow further now, but which calls for a speedy re-discussion in the light of first principles.

DIVORCE AND INFANTICIDE.

This subject was brought before the Assembly, in a series of resolutions offered by Rev. Mr. Beer. The following paper reported by the Committee on Bills and Overtures was adopted:—

That it is with great pain we are constrained to admit the increasing prevalence in many parts of our country of unscriptural views of the marriage

relation, in consequence of which the obligations of that relation are disregarded by many, and separations of husbands and wives, and divorces for slight and unwarrantable reasons, are becoming more frequent every year. Nor can we shut our eyes to the fact that the horrible crime of infanticide, especially in the form of the destruction by parents of their own offspring before birth, also prevails to an alarming extent. The evils which these errors and crimes have already brought upon our country, and the worse evils which they threaten in the near future, make it imperative, as we believe, that the whole power of the ministry of the Church of Jesus Christ should be put forth in maintenance of truth and of virtue in regard to these things. Many causes have operated to produce a corruption of the public morals so deplorable; prominent among which may be mentioned the facility with which divorces may be obtained in some of the States, constant promulgation of false ideas of marriage and its duties by means of books, lectures, &c., and the distribution through the mails of impure publications; but an influence not less powerful than any of these is the growing devotion to fashion and luxury of this age, and the idea which practically obtains to so great an extent that pleasure, instead of the glory of God and the enjoyment of his favor, is the great object of life. It is therefore the duty of the Church of Christ to oppose, in every practical way, these and all other corrupting agencies and tendencies, and we especially urge upon all ministers of the Gospel, the duty of giving instruction to the people of their respective charges as to the Scriptural doctrine concerning the marriage relation. We warn them against joining in wedlock any who may have been divorced upon other than Scriptural grounds. We also enjoin upon church sessions the exercise of due discipline in the case of those members who may be guilty of violating the law of Christ in this particular. This Assembly regards the destruction by parents of their own offspring before birth with abhorrence, as a crime against God and against Nature; and, as the frequency of such murders can no longer be concealed, we hereby warn those who are guilty of this crime that except they repent they cannot inherit eternal life. We also exhort those who have been called to preach the Gospel, and all who love purity and truth, and who would avert the just judgment of Almighty God from the nation, that they be no longer silent or tolerant of these things, but that they endeavor by all proper means to stay the flood of impurity and cruelty. We call upon all to remember that marriage is honorable, not only in itself but in its ends. Therefore, those who seek to avoid the responsibility and cares connected with the bringing up of children, not only deprive themselves of one of the greatest blessings of life and fly in the face of God's decrees, but do violence to their own natures, and will be found out of their sins even in this world.

These views need no vindication. They are their own evidence to every unperverted mind. We are pained that a state of things exists which calls for such declarations and warnings on the part of our ecclesiastical bodies. But the proofs of it are abundant and fearful, and the action of the Assembly is timely and important. A motion was made that it be read from all our pulpits. This was wisely voted down.

Matters of such difficulty and delicacy must of necessity be left to the judgment and discretion of each pastor.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH SOUTHERN CHURCHES.

Overtures from the Presbytery of Philadelphia and some others, requesting the Assembly to open a fraternal correspondence with the Southern Presbyterian Church, with a view to ultimate re-union, were reported from the Committee of Bills and Overtures with the recommendation that such correspondence be entered upon with a hope of its leading to the interchange of delegates between the two bodies. This gave rise to animated and extended debate. Nearly the whole Assembly appeared desirous to initiate measures looking toward this consummation. A motion to lay the whole subject on the table was negatived by an almost unanimous vote. The great obstacle to action in the minds of members seemed to be an apprehended aversion to the measure on the part of the Southern Church itself, engendered by the antipathies growing out of the war and the action of the Assemblies of '65, '66, which many of those best informed believe still to survive in unabated intensity. On the other hand, it was urged that the surest way to overcome or soften these antipathies is to approach them with generous and magnanimous advances. The subject was at length referred to a special committee, A. A. E. TAYLOR, Chairman, which recommended and secured the following very judicious action:—

Whereas, The last General Assembly acknowledged the separate and independent existence of the Presbyterian Church in the Southern States, and enjoined upon all subordinate courts so to treat it, thus according to its ministers and members the privilege of admission to our body upon the same terms which are extended to ministers and members of other branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country; therefore,

Resolved, That this General Assembly hereby conveys its Christian salutations to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Southern States, and gives expression to its sentiments of Christian fraternity and fellowship toward the ministers and members of that body.

And as we inherit and hold with them the same ancient symbols of faith, the same forms of government and of worship, thus representing before the world the same sacred principles to which our common ancestors witnessed and which we have maintained together in the past; and especially since we occupy adjacent and in many places common territory, we deem it due to our one Lord, and to the

best interests of his kingdom on earth, to express the desire that the day may not be distant when we may again be united in one great organization, that shall cover our whole land and embrace all branches of the Presbyterian Church.

Resolved, That the Stated Clerk be directed to forward a copy of these resolutions to the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church in the Southern States.

We can only echo these salutations and longings for a consummation so devoutly to be wished.

LITIGATION TO SECURE ECCLESIASTICAL INDEPENDENCE, AND RESCUE THE CHURCH IN ITS OWN SPHERE FROM THE DOMINATION OF THE CIVIL POWER.

The Commissioners of the various Presbyteries in Kentucky brought to the notice of the Assembly various decisions of the civil courts in Kentucky, affecting the interests of the churches in that State.

By the first of these decisions, the decrees of our ecclesiastical courts on purely ecclesiastical matters are subjected to the civil courts, and elders elected in accordance with the direction of the General Assembly are declared not to be elders.

The second decision rules the deliverances of the General Assembly during the late war, as to loyalty, freedom, &c., to be unconstitutional, and its condemnation of the Declaration and Testimony men is adjudged erroneous, null, and void.

The third is a decision of the United States Circuit Court, opposed to the above, affirming that the civil courts are bound to respect and enforce the decisions of all ecclesiastical courts, and especially those of the General Assembly on all purely ecclesiastical matters.

An appeal has been taken from the last decision to the Supreme Court of the United States, and it is needful that the Assembly should take measures to defend its rights. On this subject the following resolutions were adopted:—

Resolved. This General Assembly expresses its deepest sympathy for those churches in the bounds of the Synods of Kentucky which have become involved in expensive and harassing lawsuits, while faithfully complying with the orders of the Superior Judicatories of the church, and directs the Boards of Domestic Missions and of Church Extension, to afford them all possible assistance.

2. While the General Assembly fully recognizes its obligation to be in subjection to the powers that be, yet, so long as any thing can be legally done, it must

not and will not remain silent and inactive when its own rights and liberties, and those of the whole church, are put in peril by injurious decisions in the civil courts: it expresses its gratification at the decision rendered by the Circuit Court of the United States in the case referred to in the memorial, and it hereby appoints E. P. Humphrey, D. D., Edgar Needham, and Gen. James M. Harlan a committee to counsel and co-operate with the proper parties in the appeal which has been taken to the Supreme Court of the United States, and for the necessary expenses of said case in the courts to which it has been appealed said committee are authorized to draw on the Board of Publication for a sum not exceeding \$3,500.

The Rev. WM. J. MCKNIGHT of the Pennsylvania Presbytery said the Chief Justice of the State had decided that no person elected by this General Assembly can be or shall be allowed to exercise the duties of eldership in that State, because the action of the General Assembly at Pittsburg was unconstitutional. Under these decisions, the people, sympathizing with the South, will lay hold of and retain the property of the churches. But since the accession of the Declaration and Testimony men to the Southern Assembly, they will be the real parties, claiming all the property of the Presbyterian Church in that State. This is the farthest point toward the Gulf owned by this church, and will not this Assembly protect its own interests?

Dr. RODGERS moved an amendment that the appropriation to meet these costs be taken from the funds under the care of the trustees of the General Assembly.

Rev. Dr. MUSGRAVE conceived that this suit involved the foundations of civil and religious liberty, and affected the interests of every denomination in the land. He thought the trustees of the General Assembly had no funds which could be appropriated. He would not use any funds contributed to any specific purpose. But the Board of Publication was a publishing house, making money, and out of their profits they could appropriate this amount. The money should be put beyond contingency, and the churches may return it to that Board if necessary.

Senator DRAKE thought that the sum named was inadequate, and moved that the amount be increased to \$5,000.

Judge RYERSON approved of all that Dr. Musgrave and Senator Drake had said.

The Rev. Dr. SCHENCK was heard in behalf of the Board of Publication, so far as affected by the proposed measure. He conceived the Assembly had no moral right to use the funds contributed to publish books, &c., while the Assembly have the legal right to use these funds as they please. But it would not be good policy to devote these funds dedicated to a specific purpose to any other. The capital and its increase should be esteemed sacred. Teach the churches that the Board of Publication is a good fat hen, out of which a golden egg can be squeezed whenever the church pleases, and you establish a dangerous principle.

Dr. MUSGRAVE thought they could furnish this money, and the occasion is a momentous one, which may not occur again in a century. Once in 80 years we may do this thing. The spirit of the Covenanters still lives, and he hoped something would be done which will vindicate the rights of the church.

Dr. Rodger's amendment was lost. Senator Drake's amendment was adopted, and the whole report was then adopted.

There will be but one voice in our church on this subject, and that in favor of prosecuting this contest for its own independence, and that of all churches, to the very last. The only question respects the source whence the funds are to be drawn for the purpose. We would have greatly preferred a special collection for it. We trust that the Board of Publication will not be drawn upon for such matters, and to such an extent, oftener than once in a century. To make it a frequent and convenient resource for the pecuniary wants of the church, will not only invade a sacred trust, and cripple an important evangelical agency, but kill the bird that lays the golden egg.

MEASURES FOR GREATER UNION AND CO-OPERATION AMONG EVANGELICAL CHURCHES. MEETING OF THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

On motion, the Corresponding Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance, Rev. S. I. Prime, D. D., was heard in behalf of the Association. He especially called attention to the indifference with which Protestants regard the progress of Romanism and infidelity. Already the Romanists have secured legislation by which they will receive \$300,000 annually of the school funds for the support of their schools in this city

alone. Unless Protestants wake up to the importance of this subject the whole educational system of this country, which has been its great glory, will be destroyed.

Rev. Dr. JOHN HALL offered the following resolutions, which were adopted:—

1. *Resolved*, That this Assembly has heard with great satisfaction that the Evangelical Alliance of the United States has invited a Conference of Evangelical Churches of this country to meet in the city of New York in the ensuing autumn, and a General Conference of Evangelical Christians in all the earth, to assemble in the same city of New York in the autumn of 1870; and it will unite its prayers with those of Christian people everywhere, that the Holy Spirit may guide their councils and lead to wise results for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

2. That the principles of the Protestant Reformation, identified as they are with the progress of religious liberty, education, and Christianity in the earth, are increasingly precious in our eyes, and we call upon our ministers and people to watch with jealous care the efforts of Romanism in the United States, and by the employment of all suitable means to resist the insidious attempts of Roman Catholics to obtain undue precedence in this country.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES.

A communication was received from the General Synod of the Reformed Church, signed by the Rev. E. S. PORTER, D.D., President, and the Rev. D. DEMAREST, D.D., Stated Clerk, embracing the following plan for a General Council of Reformed Churches:—

Whereas, The constitution of the church confides to the General Synod the duty of "regulating and maintaining a friendly correspondence with the highest judicatories or assemblies of other religious denominations, for the purpose of promoting union and concert in general measures which may be calculated to maintain sound doctrine, prevent conflicting regulations relative to persons under censure of the judicatories of other denominations, and to produce concert and harmony in their respective proceedings to promote the cause of piety and religion;" and

Whereas, It is the conviction of this Synod that wholesome fraternal measures may be adopted for combining and unifying the Evangelical denominations in support of the common doctrines of Christianity, without involving any surrender of the distinctive features and individual characteristics of these denominations; and

Whereas, The doctrinal and governmental system of the Reformed Church is broad and catholic, presenting a basis on which general measures for the promotion of piety and religion may be prosecuted; therefore

Resolved, That the Synod hereby appoints a committee of three ministers and three elders, to present, in its behalf, to the highest judicatories and assemblies of other Evangelical denominations, at their next annual meetings, for their con-

sideration and adoption, the following plan of a National Council of the Evangelical denominations in these United States:—

1. Such Council shall have for its great object the concerting of proper measures for promoting, not organic, but fraternal union, for the maintenance of the common doctrines and ethics of the Christian Church, whose one Head is the Lord Jesus.

2. That its powers shall be simply advisory, and be exercised, not for the purpose of assailing what any denomination represented therein may regard as necessary for its welfare, but to secure concert of action for the furtherance of the Gospel, by diminishing sectarian rivalries and oppositions.

3. Such Council, when convened, may consider and recommend such general measures as may tend to give expression to the proper and essential unity of all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, whether in this or other lands, and draw them closer together in aggressive labors to bring the whole world into subjection to Christ.

4. The Council shall be a delegated body, and may consist of five representatives—three ministers and two laymen—from each Evangelical denomination acceding to this recommendation, but no denomination, as such, shall be held responsible in any legislative sense for what the Council may choose to recommend.

6. The Council shall meet, provided the higher judicatories and assemblies of sister churches accede to this suggestion, on the third Tuesday of October, 1869, in the city of New York, at 10 o'clock A. M., in the Reformed Church on Washington Square.

The President, Assessor, Stated Clerk of this Synod, with the elders, Robert H. Pruyn, Sanford Cobb, and Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, were appointed a committee to carry the above into effect.

The Assembly acceded to this proposal with great cordiality, and appointed the following delegates to said council, viz.: The Revs. J. B. Waterbury, D. D., Lyman Atwater, D. D., W. C. Roberts; Elders, J. T. Nixon and A. B. Belknap.

All will sympathize with the following extract from the address of Rev. Dr. TAYLOR, delegate from the Reformed Church to the Assembly, on this subject:—

“The last General Synod of our church adopted a paper proposing a ‘National Council of the Evangelical denominations of the United States, for the maintenance of the common doctrines and ethics of the Christian Church, whose one head is the Lord Jesus.’ As this document comes before the Assembly in official form, through another channel, I only allude to it here as an indication of the sentiment of the Reformed Church, and of her desire for that living unity and co-operation which the times demand, and for which our Redeemer prayed and yet waits, expectant upon his throne. A distinguished divine of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and perhaps her foremost scholar, when conversing on the Re-union of the Presbyterian Churches, said to me that he looked for the day when the whole Protestant Church would be compelled to unite in on

great league, or possibly in organic form, against the forces of the Romish and infidel antichrists. The General Council which has been summoned to meet in Rome at the close of this year may give the signal for this new warfare, and for closing up our divided ranks. Be it so or not, these wishes and anticipations are born of the Saviour's prayer, 'that they all may be one—that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' An unbelieving world compels them for its own salvation. This question of questions in these General Assemblies, in one shape or another, forces itself upon all branches of the Christian Church.

"And while my own denomination is willing and anxious to stand in her lot, and as she interprets Providence, is not ready for organic union with sister bodies, this much I dare say—that when the royal mandate of her King is heard, her little division will at once fall in with the grand army. Until then she is waiting orders, ready to stand or to move, as the orders come.

"Yet this question, which is upon your hearts, also moves our own. Indifference would be treason to our common Lord. There is too much of good hanging upon it, and too much is imperilled by the disunion of Christians to permit us to slight it. If I may state a fact, drawn from the official service to which God has called me in another sphere, I bear witness before this General Assembly that oftentimes the Word of God is bound in its very circulation more by the unhappy sectarian jealousies and exclusive bigotries of conflicting denominations than by the banded infidelity of the ugly masses who trample upon our Sabbaths, and who perish in the shadows of our sanctuaries.

"Sir, the air is surcharged and vocal with this spirit of union among the churches, for the unity and defence of the faith once delivered to the saints. And in that great battle which is coming, rest assured that the Canons of Dort will never be turned against the towers of Westminster, and our old Belgic Standard will float in heaven's breezes with your banner of the Covenant, both of them red with the blood of our martyrs, and inscribed with the love of him who died for us all."

THE POPE'S ENCYCLICAL.

Dr. Musgrave, Dr. John Hall, and Elder Martin Ryerson, were appointed, in connection with a similar committee from the other branch, to prepare an answer to the encyclical letter of the Pope.

JOINT COMMUNION.

In accordance with a previous resolution, the Assemblies united on Friday afternoon, May 31st, in celebrating the Lord's Supper at the Brick Church. The two Moderators presided. The venerable Dr. Spring, Rev. J. B. Shaw, of Rochester (N. S.), Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Cincinnati, (N. S.), and Rev. Dr. W. C. Anderson, of New Albany, Ind. (O. S.), took part in the impressive services.

The venerable Rev. Dr. De Witt, of the Collegiate Reformed church, pronounced the benediction.

After the usual greetings, farewells, votes of thanks, singing, and prayer, the Moderator, in accordance with a vote of the body, as more fully explained hereafter, adjourned the Assembly, to meet in the First Presbyterian church in Pittsburg, on November 10th, 1869, at 11 A. M.

ART VI.—*Proceedings of the late Assemblies on Re-union.*

THE late meetings of the New and Old School Assemblies, almost within speaking distance, on Murray Hill, New York City, will be memorable as long as the Presbyterian Church lives in this country, or the world. We need not say that this will be due, not to the many other subjects of moment handled and issued by these bodies, but to the measures adopted to effect their own re-union. This was the central and absorbing matter of interest to the Assemblies themselves, the great churches they represented, to other Christian bodies, the metropolis where they met, the country, and all Christendom.

As the delegates assembled, they found all the currents setting strongly in favor of the re-union so long the object of prayer and effort, of discussion and negotiation. In families, social circles, casual interviews, prayer meetings of elders and of the two Assemblies, in public worship on the Sabbath, the speedy consummation of the union was presumed and implied. This was so predominant, that all of a contrary nature seemed exceptional, and the offspring of individual idiosyncrasy. The very atmosphere seemed instinct and vocal with it. It was assumed that the basis of the re-union must be the simple standards common to the two churches. The only question open was, whether it should be immediately consummated by mere concurrent resolutions of the Assemblies, or delayed for Presbyterian ratification. Quite a majority of the delegates had been authorized by