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*J. J. Alexander*  
ART. I.—*A Grammar of the Hebrew Language; with a brief Chrestomathy, for the use of beginners.* By GEORGE BUSH, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in the New York City University. New-York: Published by Leavitt, Lord & Co. 12mo. pp. 298. 1835.

WE hazarded nothing, it appears, by our prediction, that Professor Bush would take an active part in behalf of Hebrew learning. The first number of his Commentary on the Psalms is already followed up by a Hebrew Grammar, a work more likely to do its author immediate justice, because it is not a fragment, but a book complete. To us it is doubly welcome—first, as an addition to our biblical apparatus; and then as a proof that the author, in his zeal for sacred letters, is disposed to build upon the right foundation, thorough grammatical knowledge. We have more than one reason for giving the work a very early notice: as a contribution to our literary stores, it would demand attention; but it has a higher, or at least a more urgent claim, as being professedly a book for learners. Among teachers of Hebrew in America, it is felt to be an evil, or at least an inconvenience, that they have no choice of text-books. The only Hebrew grammar hitherto published in America, which deserves attention in the present state of learning, is that of

*Charles Johnson*  
ART. VI.—*The General Assembly of 1835.*

During the sessions of the late General Assembly of our church, so many subjects of interest were brought under discussion, that a brief review of the more important of these topics may perhaps be both acceptable and useful. The principles involved in the settlement of these questions are likely to be called up in subsequent Assemblies, and must influence to a greater or less degree the action of all inferior judicatories. It is, therefore, a matter of importance to have the grounds on which certain measures were advocated and opposed spread before the ministers and elders of the church. We propose, therefore, to notice the most important questions debated and determined by the last Assembly and to present a general view of the arguments on both sides. We are well aware that this is a difficult and delicate task. Our dependence for information must be almost exclusively on the reports of the debates published in the religious journals which are confessedly very imperfect. Great credit is indeed due to the enterprising conductors of those papers who, at great expense of time and labour, have furnished the public with far more extended and accurate sources of information than we have ever before possessed. These reports are evidently made with great ability and we should think, in general, with very commendable impartiality. Still from the nature of the case they present at best a very imperfect view of the whole proceedings of the body. It would require a daily publication instead of a weekly one, to exhibit, with the fulness and fairness of a parliamentary report, the multiplied and complicated discussions which occupied the attention of the house.

Were these papers in the hands of all our readers, and did they present the information which we wish to communicate in a form as convenient for preservation and reference as the pages of a Quarterly Review, we might well spare ourselves the labour of this digest. But this not being the case, we feel we shall be rendering an acceptable service in reducing within as small a compass as possible a view of the more important discussions of the supreme judicatory of our church. There is one other preliminary remark that we wish to make. While we shall aim at perfect impartiality we do not expect fully to attain it. It is next to im-

possible, in presenting the arguments for and against any particular measure, not to exhibit those which strike the writer's own mind with the greatest force, with more clearness and effect than those of an opposite character. Our readers therefore must make due allowance on this score, and remember, as an apology for occasional inaccuracy, the comparative scantiness of the sources of information at our command.

### *Choice of Moderator.*

The first question, involving any constitutional principle, that occupied the attention of the Assembly, was, who was entitled to act as moderator until the house was constituted and a new moderator chosen? The constitution directs that "the moderator of the last Assembly if present, or in case of his absence, some other minister shall open the meeting with a sermon, and preside until a new moderator be chosen." (Form of Government, ch. xii. § 7.) The "General Rules for Judicatories" (revised and approved by the General Assembly of 1821, but which form no part of the constitution) direct, "If a quorum be assembled at the hour appointed, and the moderator be absent, the last moderator present shall be requested to take his place without delay." (Rule 2.) In the present instance the Rev. Dr. Lindsly the moderator of the last assembly being absent, it was moved that the Rev. Dr. Beman, the last moderator present, *as a commissioner*, should take the chair. This motion was carried unanimously or with only one dissenting voice. Subsequently, however, a motion was made to reconsider that decision on the ground that as the rule directs that the last moderator present should take the chair, and as Dr. Wm. A. McDowell, who had acted as moderator subsequently to Dr. Beman, was present, though not as a commissioner, he ought to have been requested to preside. The motion to reconsider was carried unanimously. It was then moved that the nomination of Dr. Beman be confirmed; this motion was lost 113 members voting in the negative, and 74 in the affirmative. Dr. McDowell was then unanimously requested to preside. The grounds assumed by those who advocated the appointment of Dr. Beman were principally the following. 1. That the rule in question was no part of the constitution and therefore not obligatory. 2. That it was inconsistent with the constitution, inasmuch

as that instrument requires that the General Assembly should be composed of persons elected by the Presbyteries, but according to this rule a member who has not been so elected may have a casting vote. It was therefore argued that a minister not in commission could not constitutionally be called to the chair. The arguments on the other side were: 1. That the constitution itself directs that the moderator of the last Assembly if present shall preside until a new moderator be chosen, without saying a word about his being in commission or not. 2. That the practice under the constitution had been uniform, that the moderator of one Assembly presided at the opening of the next, although he might not be a member of the latter body. It was hence argued that the constitution was not opposed to the rule in question. 3. That this rule, though not a part of the constitution, was still a rule which had been recommended to all the judicatories, and ought to be observed, unless there were special reasons for disregarding it. 4. That it was necessary for some one to take the chair and call the Assembly to order before it could be ascertained or announced who were commissioners and who were not, and that for the sake of convenience, this person is designated by a standing rule.

We presume there can be little serious diversity of opinion on this subject. As the constitution goes no farther than to state that "the moderator of the last Assembly, if present, or in case of his absence, *some other minister*, shall open the meeting with a sermon, and preside until a new moderator be chosen," the appointment of Dr. Beman was clearly not unconstitutional; but as the standing rules go one step farther, and designate who that "other minister" shall be, his appointment was contrary to that rule; a rule which the Assembly (before the usual vote adopting those rules) was under no other obligation to observe than that which arises from custom and courtesy. Had the house been aware of the presence of Dr. McDowell and of the existence and intention of the rule above stated, it is probable little or no opposition would have been made to his being requested to take the chair. The impression out of the house seems to have been general that this duty would naturally devolve on him. And accordingly Dr. Lindsly, being aware that he should not be able to attend, advised Dr. McDowell of the fact in order that he might be present, and act as the rule directed. After the Assembly was con-

stituted and the roll prepared, a new moderator was chosen; the candidates were Dr. Phillips, of New York, and Mr. Leach, of Virginia. Dr. Phillips was elected by a vote of 117 to 85.

*Right of Dr. Edson to his seat.*

Soon after the organization of the house a question arose involving the right of Dr. Freeman Edson, a ruling elder from the Presbytery of Rochester, to a seat in the Assembly. The case was brought up by an overture from the first Presbyterian church in Wheatland, N. Y. This communication stated that that church had adopted the plan of annual election of elders; that Dr. Edson's term of service having expired, he was not re-elected (being "unacceptable to the church;") and that the Presbytery of Rochester though apprized of these facts, appointed him a commissioner to the General Assembly. The points disputed were: Is Dr. Edson a ruling member of the church? and, if this be admitted, had he a right, under these circumstances, to a seat in the house? The committee to which the case was referred, reported in the negative on both these points, asserting that the election of an elder for a limited time was invalid; and that Dr. Edson having ceased to act as an elder, because unacceptable to the church, was not eligible as a commissioner. This report after debate was re-committed to the same committee, Drs. Ely and Junkin being added to their number. The second report of the committee admitted the validity of Dr. Edson's election and ordination as an elder, but denied his right to a seat, because he was not an acting elder in the congregation to which he belonged. Dr. Ely, as the minority of the committee presented a counter report.

The house seems very soon to have arrived at unanimity on the first point, viz: that Dr. Edson having been elected and ordained as a ruling elder, he was to be recognized as such, and that neither the irregularity of his election, nor the fact of his having ceased to exercise his office in a particular church could invalidate his ordination. On the second point, viz: the right of a man who is not an acting elder in some congregation to a seat in the Assembly, the debate was more protracted. It was argued in defence of this right, 1. That ceasing to act as an elder in any particular congregation could not deprive a man of the other

functions of his office. What is an elder under our constitution, but a man entitled to rule, when requested, as a member of a session, or when appointed, as a member of Presbytery, Synod, or General Assembly? His not having been invited to rule in a session cannot invalidate his right to rule, when properly called upon, in other judicatories. The right to rule is incident to his eldership and must continue as long as the office continues. 2. That this principle was sanctioned by precedent; elders who had ceased to act as such having often been admitted to a seat in the Assembly. 3. That it would have all the injustice of an *ex post facto* law now to deprive a presbytery of one of its representatives on this ground. 4. That this rule, if applicable to elders, must be applied also to ministers, and lead to the exclusion from the house of all ministers who were not pastors. On the other side, it was argued, 1. That elders are representatives of the people, and that sending up elders who are not rulers in some congregation, is divesting the lay delegation of its character as a representation of the people. 2. That the perpetuity of the office of an elder only means that a man once ordained as an elder may be recalled to the eldership in the same or another congregation without being reordained. 3. That the cases of ministers and elders are not parallel, inasmuch as the former, although they cannot become pastors without the consent of the people, may yet, according to our system, be ordained and made members of a presbytery, without any previous election to a particular charge. After several protracted sessions, the debate was finally terminated by Dr. Miller proposing the following substitute for the committee's report, which substitute was adopted by a nearly unanimous vote:

The committee to whom was referred overture No. I., a communication from the session of Wheatland congregation, in reference to the appointment of Freeman Edson as a commissioner to this Assembly, beg leave to present the following report, viz. Agreeably to the constitution of our church the office of ruling elder is perpetual, (see Form Gov. ch. 13. §6.) and cannot be laid aside by the will of the individual called to that office, nor can any congregation form rules which would make it lawful for any one to lay it aside. Your committee are of opinion that the mode of electing elders in the congregation of Wheatland for a term of years, was irregular, and ought in future to be abandoned; but cannot invalidate the ordination of persons thus elected and ordained to the office of ruling elder.

And whereas it appears that Mr. Freeman Edson was once elected to the office of ruling elder in the church of Wheatland, and was regularly set apart to that office; whereas there seems to be some material diversity of views between the Presbytery of Rochester and the church session

to which Mr. Edson once belonged, as to the manner in which, and the principle on which he ceased to be an acting elder in the said church, into which the Assembly have no opportunity at present of regularly examining, and whereas the presbytery, with a distinct knowledge, as is alleged, of all the circumstances attending the case, gave Mr. Edson a regular commission as a ruling elder to this General Assembly; therefore Resolved, That he retain his seat as a member of the Assembly.

*Theological Seminary at Princeton.*

When the Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary at Princeton was presented, Dr. Junkin made the following motion: "Resolved, That a committee be appointed to inquire whether any, and if any, what provision can and ought to be made to guard our Theological Seminary at Princeton against the influence of young men who may be there, or may come there, with a view to proselyte its students to doctrines inimical to its standards." This motion was advocated on the ground that it was understood that instances of serious departure from the standards of the church had occurred among the students of that seminary; that direct efforts at proselytism had been made; that there existed no test by which young men who were erroneous could be prevented from entering the seminary; and that the professors had not authority to prevent the evil complained of. It was opposed on the ground that the professors had already the power to remove any student from the seminary whom they thought to be injurious to it; that there was a Board of Directors appointed to watch over the institution and examine the students semi-annually, who had made no report of any difficulty; that to require a declaration of opinion as a test from those who professed to come to study theology was incongruous; that the resolution implied a reflection on the professors, &c. &c. After considerable debate the motion was carried, and Drs. Hillyer and Hill, and Messrs. Winchester, Breekinridge and Craig appointed as the committee. On a subsequent day this committee reported a resolution declaring that by the existing laws the professors are vested with all powers for the right government of the seminary, and that no additional regulations need at this time be made. This resolution was carried; only one member voting in the negative.

We should not have adverted to this subject did we not believe that the motion for a committee of inquiry was

made and advocated from the kindest feelings towards the seminary, and did it not aim at an evil which really exists, to a certain extent, in all institutions. The question, however, is not whether the evil exists, but whether it is not incidental to the system; and whether it can be excluded without sacrificing more important objects? That all the theological seminaries in our country are liable to suffer from young men coming and passing a few months within their walls, and then going out and making these institutions responsible for their scholarship and opinions, every one knows and laments. But this evil cannot be prevented without making it obligatory on every student who enters such a seminary to remain in it, should Providence permit, two or three years. Something like this has, we believe, been attempted at Andover, but not with complete success.

• We know no other institution where the attempt has been made. As to having a test which shall operate as a bar before the doors of our seminaries, we believe it to be entirely out of the question; not only because it is incongruous and even unjust to require young men at the threshold of their theological studies to profess beforehand what results they mean to arrive at, but because it must be inoperative as to the effect intended, and productive of evil. Precisely the men whom the test would design to exclude, would scruple the least to take it. If our long and exact Confession of Faith cannot exclude these individuals from our church, how can one less minute (more extended, we presume, it could not be made) exclude them from our seminaries? If this preliminary declaration were designed merely to prevent the propagation of sentiments inimical to the standards, it could be of very little avail. It is not to be expected or desired that young men, in the course of their studies should not express their opinions and advocate their various views among themselves. It is one of the best possible means of their arriving at the truth. If this free discussion is to be allowed, and allowed it ever has been, the difficulty of drawing a line between this commendable freedom of debate and improper hostility to the standards and indecorous proselytism, must render the declaration of little use. It is far better to lodge a discretionary power somewhere, to correct specific cases of the abuse of the liberty of discussion, than to impose a general and entrapping obligation on the consciences of all the students, who can never be sure whether they violate the



obligation in the sense of those who impose it. The multiplication of tests in ecclesiastical affairs is like the multiplication of oaths in civil matters; the tendency in both cases is demoralizing. Such declarations should be reserved for great occasions; their influence is in inverse proportion to their frequency. While therefore we admit that our seminaries must occasionally suffer from the conduct or opinions of their members, we believe that any attempt to prevent the evil by coercion or restraints, would do far more harm than good. Has it never happened that young men, who entered a theological seminary with all their prepossessions hostile to the peculiar doctrines of its teachers, have been completely reconciled and convinced of their truth? Or if this complete conversion does not take place, is it not better (assuming the orthodoxy of the teachers) that these young men, if they are to enter the church, should have an opportunity of learning what orthodoxy is from its advocates, rather than from the misrepresentations of its opposers? Is error so much more powerful than truth, that we should dread their collision as fatal to the latter? For our part we heartily wish that all the young men, provided they be sincerely pious, whose prepossessions are unfavourable to orthodoxy might pass through an orthodox seminary. If they do not prove better ministers and more correct theologians than if driven to institutions of an opposite character, we think something must be sadly amiss with orthodoxy or its teachers. It is not seemly for the advocates of truth to be too timid. If it cannot defend itself, we shall have to give it up.

#### *The Previous Question.*

An important alteration was made in the rule respecting the previous question. (General Rules, 17, 18.) The rule as it stands in the book is as follows, "17. The previous question shall be put in this form—'Shall the main question be now put?' And until it is decided, shall preclude all amendment, and further debate on the main question. 18. If the previous question be decided in the affirmative, the debate on the main question may proceed; if in the negative, the effect shall be to arrest the discussion, and to produce an indefinite postponement." We think it must be admitted that this rule is a complete puzzle; and no man need won-

der that the deliberative bodies who adopted it were constantly in the dark as to what they were going to do when the previous question was put to vote. We have never known this question called for, in any of our judicatories, without its producing the greatest confusion; and rendering it necessary for the moderator or some other member to go into an exposition of the law. This exposition was seldom given with much effect; for it is very hard to make a body of men understand that when they say *yes*, they mean *no*. The rule directs that if the motion be carried that the main question shall *now* be put, it shall *not* be put, but the debate continue; and if decided that it shall not *now* be put, it shall never be put, but the whole matter be thrown out of the house. A member, who had been caught in this trap more than once, moved to have the Rule stricken out. This motion was committed to Judge Darling and Messrs. Leach and Gilbert. These gentlemen reported a resolution striking out the 18th Rule, and establishing one analogous to the rule in congress, directing that if the previous question pass in the affirmative, the main question shall be immediately put without further debate; and if the previous question pass in the negative, the debate may proceed. This has certainly the great advantage of being perfectly intelligible. The adoption of the report, however, was opposed on the ground that it was inexpedient to give the majority such power over the minority as to enable them to cut short debate just when they pleased, and silence all reasoning or remonstrance; that the rule was unnecessary as the British Parliament got along without any thing of the kind; and that all really valuable ends might be attained by the question of consideration to be put in the simple form, "Will the house consider the question?" which would give the house the control of matters, and enable it to keep out improper subjects. It was argued on the other side, that all rules were liable to abuse; that it was only the abuse of the power given by the proposed rule that was really exceptionable; and such abuse, it was said, in a Christian assembly ought not to be feared; that something of the kind is absolutely necessary in all deliberative bodies as a matter of self-defence to prevent the waste of time; that in the British Parliament they arrest debate by coughing and scraping, but that it is better to have a regular and orderly way of accomplishing this object than to force the majority to resort to such unseemly expedients. The rule as reported

was adopted and, according to the papers, stands as follows, "The previous question shall be in the following form, 'Shall the main question be now put?' and until decided shall preclude all amendment and debate on the main question. If decided in the affirmative, the main question shall be immediately put without debate; if in the negative the debate may proceed."

#### *General Assembly's Funds.*

Mr. Symington from a committee to whom were referred the books of the Treasurer of the Assembly reported, and a certificate of Messrs. Stille and Bevan was read, together with a statement of the stocks and other securities in which the funds had been invested. A desultory discussion ensued on the subject of these investments, and a motion was made by Mr. Patton to re-commit the report. The discussion turned on the propriety of investing the funds of the Assembly in bank stock of any kind, both on account of its fluctuating value and the present connexion of banks with the political affairs of the country. Dr. Ely explained the manner in which the funds had been invested, and stated that the gentlemen under whose direction it had been done were experienced and wealthy merchants, who had so much confidence in the solidity of the banks whose stock they had purchased, as to invest their own funds in those same banks to a large amount. The motion to re-commit was thereupon put and lost.

This is a very important subject, and one in which the friends of all corporate bodies having permanent investments are deeply interested. We do not presume to be competent to form a decided judgment; and yet, without expressing any opinion upon the wisdom of the particular investments alluded to in the preceding paragraph, about which we know nothing, we feel constrained to make one or two general remarks. It seems to us that the first point to be attended to in the investment of the funds of benevolent institutions is not profit but security. They are not money making bodies, but require a fixed and certain income. It will not answer for them to have ten per cent. one year and three per cent. the next; nor can they without great injury be subjected to the necessity of frequent reinvestments. Fluctuating stocks, therefore, however well

suitable to men in business, do not appear suitable for public institutions. It may easily happen that stock purchased at 25 per cent. advance may have to be sold at par or below it. This is a greater evil, than the opposite benefit; because when money is lost in this way it destroys public confidence in the management of such institutions and indisposes even good men to contribute to their support. Wherever stocks yield more than the regular lawful rate of interest, except in some fortunate exceptions, there is always some consideration of insecurity, fluctuation, or distance of the place of investment, which, for public bodies, more than counterbalances the advantage. The case is very different with men of business in relation to their own funds. Even if it could be assumed, that benevolence and a sense of responsibility in the minds of the trustees of these corporations, would make them as watchful as personal interest makes the man of business, they have not the same power of prompt action. The merchant or broker sees the state of the stocks every day; he is on the watch for all circumstances indicating a fall or rise; he has no one to consult, but may sell or buy at a moment's warning. It is far otherwise with a board of trustees; a meeting must generally be waited for, or called; a report made, a debate had, and instructions given; and in the mean time the mischief may be consummated. This difficulty may indeed be met by giving an individual member of the board or a small committee plenary powers; but this is a responsibility few individuals would be willing to assume, and perhaps few boards ready to entrust. We are perhaps violating the maxim *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, but there can be no harm done by the expression of even unfounded fears, when they tend to safety. We have great confidence in the wisdom of the Trustees of the General Assembly, and great deference for the opinion of Dr. Ely on all subjects of finance; but this is a subject on which even the initiated seem to differ. We perceive from the report respecting the Connecticut school fund, that of upwards of 3,000,000 of dollars only 200,000 are invested in bank stock, the residue is in bonds and mortgages and real estate.

### *Slavery.*

The subject of slavery was brought up by means of several petitions and memorials. One was a respectful and

well written paper, signed by 1051 ladies of the city of New York; and another, and the most important, a memorial from the Chilicotte Presbytery. The pith of this memorial is contained in the following resolutions, which they wished the Assembly to sanction.

1. *Resolved*, That buying, selling, or holding slaves, for the sake of gain, is a heinous sin and scandal, and ought to be taken cognizance of by church courts.

2. *Resolved*, That giving or bequeathing slaves to children or others, as property, is a great sin; and when committed by members of the church, ought to subject them to church censure.

3. *Resolved*, That to sell a slave his own liberty, except when the slave was purchased at his own request, and has failed to remunerate his master for the price paid, is a great injustice, and ought to be made a term of communion.

4. *Resolved*, That to offer a slave his freedom only on condition that he will leave his country and go into a foreign land, is unjust and cruel, and ought to subject a church member to censure.

5. *Resolved*, That when a slave is emancipated, whose services have been of much value to his master, refusing to give him a reasonable compensation for his labour, when the master is able to do it, or turning him out to the world, when he wishes to stay as a tenant or a hireling, is a grievous sin, and when committed by a church member, ought to subject him to suspension until he repent.

6. *Resolved*, That when a master advertises a reward for a runaway slave, against whom no other crime is alleged than escaping from his master, he is guilty of a scandalous sin, and forfeits his right to the sealing ordinances of God's house.

7. *Resolved*, That to apprehend a slave, who is endeavouring to escape from slavery, with a view to restore him to his master, is a direct violation of the divine law, and when committed by a member of the church, ought to subject him to censure.

8. *Resolved*, That any member of our church, who shall advocate or speak in favour of such laws, as have been or may yet be enacted for the purpose of keeping slaves in ignorance, and preventing them from learning to read the word of God, is guilty of a great sin, and ought to be dealt with as for other scandalous crimes.

9. *Resolved*, That should any member of our church be so wicked as to manifest a desire to exclude coloured people from a seat in the house of God, or at the Lord's table with white people, he ought, upon conviction thereof, to be suspended from the Lord's table, until he repent.

All the papers relating to this subject were referred to a committee, consisting of Drs. Hoge, Cleland, Messrs. Galaher, S. D. Williamson, and Elmes. This committee subsequently made a report, which is in substance as follows: That they feel the subject to be exceedingly important and difficult, and peculiarly delicate at the present time, on account of its political aspects, and on account of the array of hostile opinions which the subject has produced in the community. That the Assembly ought not to be involved

in these difficulties—that it is not invested with power to legislate on the subject, or to establish new rules of admission to sealing ordinances. The committee refer with approbation to the views formerly expressed by the Assembly on the subject, and they also report the following resolutions:

1. That the General Assembly regard slavery in its existing condition as an evil of immense magnitude, and that it is the duty of Christians to use all proper means for its safe removal, as speedily as is consistent with the good of all concerned.

2. That all our members ought to favour voluntary emancipation, when it can be done consistently with the public good.

3. That it is recommended to those who are engaged in promoting voluntary emancipation, that they be careful to act in a prudent and intelligent manner, lest they should excite prejudices against a cause so holy and important.

4. The Assembly renew the injunctions formerly adopted respecting the buying and selling of slaves, and respecting the duty of masters to instruct their slaves in a knowledge of the Christian religion.

5. That the notes on this subject, (referred to by some of the memorials,) which were formerly attached to some parts of the Catechism, were never any part of the Constitution, nor were they of any authority, and therefore it is inexpedient to renew them.

This report was afterwards, we understand, called up and discussed, but not adopted. The whole subject was referred to another committee, who were directed to report to the next Assembly. This committee are Dr. Miller, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Beman, Dr. Dickey, and Mr. Witherspoon.

*Appeal of Thomas Bradford, Esq. and others.*

The Appeal of Thomas Bradford, Esq. and others, from a decision of the Assembly's Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, in relation to the division of the Fifth Presbyterian Church in that city, occupied the Assembly nearly three days, and was finally decided in favour of sustaining the Appeal, by a majority of two-thirds. This case was unusually complicated, owing partly to the peculiar constitution of the church in question, and partly to the number of dif-

ferent subjects embraced. In order to the proper understanding of this case, it seems necessary to state some facts in relation to the origin and constitution of the Fifth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. It was originally organized under the pastoral care of the Rev. James K. Burch and worshipped in a building in Locust-street. The congregation subsequently called the Rev. Dr. Skinner, who accepted their invitation, and became their pastor. Owing, it is believed, principally to its unfavourable location, and to the congregation being in debt, it did not prosper as much as was expected. In order to obviate these difficulties, a number of gentlemen (we believe all of them members of the congregation) formed themselves into a voluntary association, and erected a new church on Arch-street. When this building was completed, the Association to which it belonged sent an invitation to themselves and others, constituting the Fifth Presbyterian Church, to occupy and use it, upon certain conditions. This invitation was accepted, and the old building in Locust-street was abandoned to its creditors. The new society, thus constituted, consisted, therefore, of an association, a corporation, and the church, strictly speaking. On the removal of the Rev. Dr. Skinner to Andover, difficulty arose as to those who were entitled to vote for a new pastor. It was understood to be the custom in that church that all communicants should be allowed to vote; but by one of the articles of the association, and one of the conditions of the invitation to the Fifth Church to occupy the new building, this right is restricted to those who were of age, and owned or rented a pew, or half a pew. A part of the session, and a majority of the association, were for insisting on the execution of this condition; while a majority of the session wished that all communicants should be permitted to vote. The difficulties consequent on this difference occasioned a reference to the Presbytery, and afterwards to the General Assembly. This resulted in a recommendation to the members of the session that they should all resign, and allow a new set of elders to be chosen. The elders at first consented to resign, but subsequently called a meeting of the communicants to ascertain whether they wished them to give up their offices. The church having voted that the existing elders, with one exception, were acceptable to them, they retained their places. The matter again coming before Presbytery, that body was requested by three elders and 131 communicants

to divide the church, and constitute two new ones. Against this request being granted four elders and 219 communicants remonstrated, and denied the authority of the Presbytery, under the circumstances of the case, to make the division. The Presbytery, however, decided that the church should be divided, and proceeded to constitute the two divisions into separate churches, giving a name to neither. Against this decision the present Appeal was taken. That part of the church which, by means of their majority in the association, retained possession of the building, subsequently called the Rev. George Duffield as their pastor.

The simple question was, whether the Presbytery, under the circumstances of the case, had a right to divide the church in the manner stated above? It was argued that they had not this right—1. Because the constitution of the church being a compact, under which the Presbyterians of the United States were united, the powers of the several ecclesiastical courts are to be ascertained by the terms of the constitution, and not by an undefined system of ecclesiastical common law. The acts of the Assembly or practice of the courts under this constitution, was to be regarded as an authoritative interpretation of that instrument. In reference to the present case the constitution declares, that the Presbytery has power “to unite or divide congregations, at the request of the people, or to form or receive new congregations, and in general to order whatever relates to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care.” It was contended that the Presbytery, by this article of the constitution, has the power to divide a congregation only *at the request of the people*; but the Fifth Church was divided in opposition to the earnest remonstrance of the people, and therefore the act was unconstitutional. It is of course assumed in this argument that the majority are the people, in the sense of the constitution. To justify this assumption it was argued, that the word never occurs in any other part of that instrument in reference to a minority of any ecclesiastical society, and therefore should not be allowed such latitude of construction in this particular clause. 2. It was denied that the Presbytery could rightfully claim the power to divide the church, contrary to the wishes of the majority, under the general clause, “and in general to order whatever relates to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care,” because such an interpretation would render the power of the Presbytery perfectly unlimited and dis-



cretionary. There could be no meaning or use in the specifications of their powers, if they had, under this clause, the right to do whatever they thought best. 3. That the constitution makes full provision for the case where a minority is dissatisfied, and wish to be set off into a church by themselves. Such minority can receive regular dismissions, and be set apart as a new church, leaving the majority in the full possession of their former name and privileges. 4. That instead of taking this regular constitutional course, the Presbytery proceeded to erect two entirely new churches, contrary to the wishes of at least one of the divisions, which had no desire to be erected into a new church. By this course, it was contended, the Fifth Presbyterian Church was destroyed; since, if the act of the Presbytery be valid, it no longer exists. Accordingly, neither of these congregations is recognised by the Presbytery as the Fifth Church; the old session book has been given to neither, and neither is so designated in their minutes. It was argued that the Presbytery had no power thus to blot out of existence the old church; and as a church is a voluntary society, they had no right to form a number of persons into a new church, contrary to their wishes.

On the other side it was argued. 1. That the word *people* in the constitution is, in every case, to be interpreted by the immediate context; that it does not necessarily mean a precise numerical majority, but any large number of persons acting together. In support of this interpretation, appeal was made to the use of the word in common life; and to the injurious consequences which must flow from restricting the word to mean a majority of any particular society. If a church were equally divided neither part could apply to Presbytery for a separation, however great the necessity of effecting it. The constitution, it was said, could not intend to leave a Presbytery powerless in such a case. 2. In answer to the argument that the proper course of proceeding when a minority wishes to be set off is for them to obtain regular dismissions, or be constituted by act of Presbytery a separate church, leaving the old one with its name and privileges, it was said, that in this case there were civil rights involved which would have been jeopardized or sacrificed by taking this course. 3. It was denied that the Fifth church was destroyed by the act of the Presbytery. That body simply left the matter undecided which of the new congregations was the Fifth church, in order not to

prejudice the rights of either in the civil courts. On this account it retained the session book, and abstained from giving a name to either of the congregations, until it was decided by some competent tribunal which was the true Fifth church.

The argument in support of the appeal was made by Joseph Montgomery and Thomas Bradford, Esqrs. who were among the appellants; and the argument in defence of the Presbytery was made by Thomas Elmes, Esq. and Judge Darling, and by Dr. Ely and Mr. Barnes. After the parties were fully heard, the roll was called for the judgment of the members of the Assembly. When this was accomplished, the question was taken on sustaining the appeal and decided in the affirmative, by a vote of 133 to 55, according to one statement; according to another 135 to 63.

It is probable that the above account of this case is very imperfect, as the arguments of only four speakers, two on each side, are given in the papers. As far as we are able to understand the case from this exposition of it, the Presbytery seem to have erred in the manner in which they effected the division. If it be admitted that a majority of the *people* of the Fifth church were opposed to a separation, they should have been left as the Fifth church, and the minority constituted into a new one; and if the legal title to the property is vested in the association, and not, as is usual, in the trustees of the congregation, they might have extended the invitation to occupy their building to the newly constituted church instead of continuing it to the old one. But to effect a division in such a way as to change the ecclesiastical connexion and character of the majority, without their consent, seems a clear violation of the rule.

*Appointment of a Professor of Pastoral Theology in the Theological Seminary at Princeton.*

The report of the Directors of the Theological Seminary at Princeton contained a recommendation that the Assembly should, in pursuance of a resolution of the Assembly of 1830, appoint a Professor of Pastoral Theology in that institution. The committee to whom this report was referred having reported in favour of this recommendation, it gave rise to a somewhat protracted and earnest debate. The appointment was opposed on the following grounds: 1. That it was altogether unnecessary. There were already four

professors who had, it was said, but from three to five lectures or recitations a week, and to preach once a month in the chapel. These were surely sufficient to visit one hundred and twenty young men and discharge all necessary pastoral duty towards them. It was assumed that the new professor would have nothing to do, but to visit the young men and preach in the chapel. 2. That it was inexpedient and improper to separate the pastoral supervision of the young men from their instruction. That the other professors should not be freed from the responsibility of watching over the religious conduct and exercises of their pupils. 3. That it was difficult to obtain funds for Princeton; and if the funds could be obtained it was inexpedient to expend so much on one institution while others were languishing for want of support. On the other side it was said, 1. That the present professors had more to do than the first objection supposes; that they must by law attend at least one lecture or recitation daily; that three evenings each week are devoted to public exercises; and that either in the chapel or in some other place, they preach almost every Sabbath; besides the incessant demands upon their time for minor objects. 2. That the new professor would have the whole range of ministerial duties under his care; that is, all that is included in the departments of Sacred Rhetoric or Pulpit Eloquence, and the Pastoral Care. So far, therefore, from having nothing to do but to visit one hundred and twenty students and preach, he would have two whole departments of instruction committed to him, either of which is sufficient to occupy the attention of any one man. 3. That as to funds, it was hoped there would be no difficulty. If the friends of the Seminary and of this particular measure were willing to sustain it, it would succeed; if not, it of course must be given up.

We are not at all surprised that a measure so important as this should call forth much diversity of sentiment; but we are a good deal surprised at the turn which the debate took. The objections to the appointment (except that in relation to funds) seem to be founded on an entire misapprehension of its object. If it was really intended to bring a fifth professor to Princeton simply to visit the students and preach in the chapel, the Assembly and the churches might well cry out against it. But our wonder is how such an idea could have arisen. The terms of the resolution recommending that a professor of *Pastoral Theology* be ap-

pointed, could hardly have suggested it. *Pastoral Theology* is a very common and well understood expression; it includes all that instruction designed to qualify the student for the discharge of his duties as a pastor; how to prepare his sermons, how to preach, how to lecture, how to instruct the young, how to deal with the anxious, the young convert, with church members, with the poor, the sick, and the dying, &c. &c. As to the extent and importance of this department there can scarcely be a difference of opinion. One, and much the least important, division of it is erected into a distinct department in some of our Seminaries. At Andover, Dr. Griffin, Dr. Porter and Dr. Skinner were successively called to teach Sacred Rhetoric; and Dr. Porter considered that he had by far the most laborious office in the Seminary to which he belonged. Yet this department relates to but one single part of a pastor's duty, that of preaching. We know no work to which a man could be called, requiring more wisdom, reflection, study, prayer and experience, none more solemn and responsible than to teach hundreds of candidates for the ministry how to win souls to Christ and how to train them up for his kingdom. The Rev. Stephen Taylor, recently elected professor of Ecclesiastical History and Pastoral Theology in the Union Theological Seminary, states, in his inaugural address, that highly as he estimates the importance of the former of these departments, the latter had most strongly impressed his mind. "This," he adds, "is eminently the practical part of the whole theological course. He who shall skilfully perform the duties of this branch of instruction, will stand in the same relation to the churches, which the teacher of elementary tactics does to the army or navy." We refer our readers however to the whole of this excellent Address, and to the admirable charge, (delivered by the Rev. James W. Douglass,) which accompanies it. Even this extended and arduous field of labour is not the whole of what the new professor will have to cultivate. If the statement in the papers be correct that he is made Professor of Missionary Instruction also, he will have to embody the results of Missionary experience as to the best method of evangelizing the world; as to the requisites, trials, duties of the messengers of the gospel in foreign lands; as to the character, necessities and facilities, of the different parts of the missionary field, &c. &c. If the cry is ever pressed from any man's heart, "Who is sufficient for these things?" it

must be from his who has the special training of future ministers and missionaries for the active duties of their high vocations; and if any man has a claim upon the sympathy and prayers of his fellow Christians, it is he whom the church has called to this responsible work. Surely the gentleman who said, on the floor of the Assembly, in reference to the design of the new professorship, "One great purpose is to perform pastoral visitation to the theological students; another is, I suppose, to preach in the chapel; and this is about the amount 'of it,'" will feel that he was labouring under a great mistake.

As to the objection, that the present professors have little to do, and might easily divide the duties of the new professorship among them, it is enough perhaps to say, that it rests on a misapprehension of the nature and extent of the duties of the new professor; and that experience has led to the appointment in other seminaries of a teacher for a small part of the ground covered by this professorship. It would be difficult and unprofitable to attempt to make an estimate of the relative labours of a pastor and professor. It is no doubt true that an active pastor does far more than an indolent professor; but, it is no less true that a diligent professor does far more than an indolent pastor. Both have enough to do if they are but faithful; and either may get along with little labour if disposed to violate his conscience and squander his time and opportunities of usefulness. The only wonder is that this objection should have come from the lips of a student; from a man who knows the labour a single text of scripture, a single fact in history, a single question in theology often occasions. The objection must have been made in a moment of temporary forgetfulness of his own vocation and experience. There is far more force in the objection made by the Rev. Mr. White of New York, that it is inexpedient to separate the pastoral supervision of the students from their instruction. But this also, as we trust, is founded on a misapprehension. We should be very sorry to have the existing relation between the students and the present professors changed. According to our information and understanding of the matter, this is not to be the case. It is true that as the professor of the Composition and Delivery of Sermons has a special supervision of all the rhetorical exercises of the students, so the professor of Pastoral Theology will have a special call to exercise a pastoral supervision over them. That is, it will fall in more

directly with his duties; but he is not to be a pastor of the seminary as we understand it, to the exclusion of his colleagues. If, as was stated in the Assembly, and as may be true, there has been too little of this kind of intercourse between the professors and students, it is the more necessary that some one should be found who has a better gift or more heart for this important duty. The objection also urged by the Rev. Mr. Rowland of New York will, we presume, take the public mind with no little force. That gentleman is represented to have said that he considered it inexpedient to endow Princeton Seminary so fully, while other institutions and objects were languishing for aid. But it should be remembered that the departments filled in Princeton are those which either are, or are about to be filled in Andover, Auburn, Cincinnati, South Hanover, and even in Marion college at its first organization. Should Princeton be left behind all these institutions? The only difference between the present organization of Princeton and some of these seminaries, is that the Biblical department is there divided. The necessity of this division, however, has been felt from the first at Andover, where they have long had two instructors in this department. Before the division was effected at Princeton, the professor in that branch, instead of "from three to five recitations a week," had ten; and notwithstanding this increase, the students had during their first year but two exercises in the exegetical study of the New Testament; and during their second and third year none at all. Was this right? Yet how could it be avoided, when one man had to teach a class of 40 or 50 a new language, and instruct them at the same time in sacred geography, antiquities, biblical criticism, the interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. The necessity for a division of labour in this department was so obvious, that the recommendation to effect it passed the Board of Directors unanimously; was acceded to unanimously (we believe) by the Assembly of 1832; and not a word, so far as we know, was said in the last Assembly against the propriety of rendering the arrangement permanent. There is, therefore, no such disproportion between the array of professors in Princeton and what experience has elsewhere shown to be necessary, as at first view might appear to be the case. We feel confident that when these brethren themselves come to review this subject calmly, they, as well as the churches generally, will be convinced that nothing

more has been done on this subject than the best interests of the seminary and its future usefulness demanded.

As the faculty of any literary institution may be supposed to be better acquainted with its wants, and as much interested in its prosperity as others, it is very natural to conclude that any movement in its behalf had its origin in their suggestion. We are, therefore, not surprised to find that the impression has been made, that such was the fact in the present instance. It is but due to all concerned to state that there is not the least foundation for such an impression. The present professors were taken completely by surprise by the passage of the resolution of the board, recommending the appointment of a professor of Pastoral Theology. It is believed that but one member of the board, and it is known that not one member of the faculty, had any idea that such a resolution was to be brought forward. The only intimation of the measure which any of the professors had, was that one of their number was called from his parlour a short time before the thing was brought forward and asked what he thought of the plan. He replied, it struck him favourably at the moment. The others knew nothing about it; and even the professor referred to had no idea it was to be seriously and promptly urged. The measure appeared so feasible and so important to the board, that it is understood they were perfectly unanimous and cordial in passing the resolution. It must not be inferred from this statement that the professors are opposed or indifferent to this arrangement; far from it. But we wish it to be understood that they had nothing to do with it. There never was a measure effected more entirely without pre-concert or management. It is peculiarly God's doing, and this is one reason why we look for his blessing upon it.

### *The Pittsburg Memorial.*

The memorial presented to the Assembly by the members of the Pittsburg convention, in their individual capacity as ministers and elders of the Presbyterian church, was referred to Drs. Miller, Hoge, Edgar, Messrs. Elliot, Stone-street, and Banks. This committee made a report consisting of a preamble and eleven resolutions. The first resolution asserts the right of every presbytery to be satisfied with the soundness and good character of those ministers

who apply for admission into the presbytery, and, if they see cause, to examine them, although they have testimonials of good standing from some other presbytery. This resolution was opposed on the following grounds: 1. That it was inconsistent with the unity of the Presbyterian church. The radical principle of our system is, that the several congregations of believers constitute one church in Christ; but this resolution declares that the church is not one, that there is no uniform system of action and government in the Presbyterian church. To allow the presbyteries to determine the terms of membership within their own bounds, is to create separate churches; it is to make ourselves Congregationalists, or independent Presbyterians. The constitution declares what are the qualifications for the ministry; and if any Presbytery enacts a different rule, (making, for example, the knowledge of German or Sanscrit necessary,) it puts itself, *quoad hoc*, out of the pale of the Presbyterian church, and declares itself a different body. In like manner, if any church session should undertake to prescribe new terms of communion, it would violate the constitution. The qualifications for the ministry and terms of communion are prescribed in the constitution, and are uniform throughout the church, and binding alike upon all the presbyteries and all the churches. These terms cannot be altered by individual presbyteries or sessions. If they can add to them, they can subtract from them; but to allow this, would be to declare that the presbyteries were without government in this essential particular. When the Cumberland Presbyterians undertook to dispense with some of the requisites prescribed in the form of government, they were justly separated from the church.—2. It is inconsistent with the respect and confidence due from one presbytery to another. To subject a man, who has been declared qualified for the ministry by one presbytery, to an examination before another, is to say that we doubt the fidelity or competence of the body by which he was ordained. This is incompatible not only with proper confidence, but also with the rule that declares that the decisions of one court are to be received by another. It thus arrays the presbyteries against each other. One presbytery pronounces a man sound, another declares him to be unsound; this destroys the connexion between the presbyteries; it is a complete ecclesiastical revolution, the destruction of Presbyterianism, and the establishment of independency.—3. The rule established by the resolution is



unjust towards the applicant. He may have the confidence of the presbytery to which he belongs and their testimonials of his good standing, and yet be rejected by a presbytery where he is not known, and without any fair and adequate trial. This could not be done without injustice and injury. It is admitted, that if the presbytery has reasonable ground to doubt of the soundness or good character of the applicant, this is a sufficient reason for not receiving him, but not for examining him. His own presbytery should be informed of these reasons—but a body to which he does not belong, and to which he is not amenable, has no right to put him on his trial. The assumption of this right is not only unjust to the individual, but it produces a clashing jurisdiction. A jurisdiction is assumed by one body, while that of a co-ordinate body still remains.—4. The resolution is inconsistent with the nature of ordination in our church. A man is not ordained as a minister within the bounds of one presbytery, but within the whole Presbyterian church. If qualified constitutionally for the bounds of one presbytery, he is equally qualified for all presbyteries. If one presbytery is to rejudge the judgment of another presbytery, with regard to a man's standing in the ministry, the idea of our belonging to one Presbyterian church is all a farce.—5. This resolution being directly opposed to one passed by the last General Assembly, its passage would tend to destroy the authority of the Assembly. It would be better to have no court of final appeal, if its decisions are to be thus treated.—6. This question was to be decided upon by men who had prejudged the case, who stood pledged to decide in a certain way.—7. This resolution goes to create an *inquisitorial* court; it places a man before a court to purge himself from suspicion, and gives to a foreign presbytery a power which even a man's own presbytery does not possess.—8. It was argued that the resolution was inexpedient, because it could not accomplish the design contemplated by it, viz. to keep out heresy. It would operate the other way. If an unsound presbytery should dismiss a man to a sound one, the latter would have him in their power, and could either reform him or cut him off. Thus they might catch one heretic after another, until the church was purified. As to church members, the case was the same. Suppose a member dismissed from one church to join another; he comes with good testimonials, but is refused. What is he to do? Is he to go back into the world and be refused communion with the

church? If a good man, this would be monstrous; and if a bad one, he should be disciplined. We should "receive the greatest atheist on certificate, and rejoice in the opportunity of thus detecting and exposing a false professor of religion, and removing the scandal of his bad example."—The leading opposers of the resolution were Mr. Leach and Dr. Hill of Virginia, Mr. Wisner and Mr. H. White of New York, and Mr. Stewart, a ruling elder from Illinois. The speech of the latter gentleman we give entire, as reported in the New York Evangelist.

Mr. Stewart, a ruling elder from Illinois, said he intended to vote for the resolution. He liked it, not because it is constitutional, for it is not! but because it is common sense, and it is Bible too. And it will answer a valuable purpose where I live; it will enable us to keep out the Old School, and that is a prime object for us. If the motion should carry, presbyteries can act just as they please, and that will suit us right well in Illinois. Heretofore we could not move to the right or left, because we supposed the General Assembly would restrain us. But pass this resolution and we are free, and we will take care that they have no Old School in Illinois. We have one Old School church that has made us trouble, but pass this resolution, and we never will have any more. We think Old Schools are heretical, and they think we are heretical, and where there is a majority of the Old School they will purge out the New School, and then they will have a heap of peace. And if there is a majority of the New School, they will clear out the Old School, and then they will have good times, and have revivals, and not be disturbed with their opposition and noise. For my part, I like Old School men; good, honest, thorough-going Old School men! I like them very well, only we don't want them in Illinois! they don't suit there, and if you pass this resolution, we shan't have them there. If you pass this resolution, you will divide the church according to elective affinity, and I hope it will pass; I came here with a strong desire to have the church stay together, but I have altered my mind. I hope the General Assembly will never come to Illinois. I don't wish to cast reflections, but I think the devil must have been highly pleased with what is going on.

The resolution was supported by Dr. Hoge, Dr. Miller, Mr. Elliot, Mr. Winchester, and others. The arguments principally relied upon are the following: 1. That the right asserted in the resolution is the right of self-preservation, inherent in all bodies, and independent of all constitutions. It is, therefore, not a right derived from the constitution—not an acquired, but an original right. Unless there could be adduced decided evidence that this right had been voluntarily relinquished by the presbyteries, it must be assumed as still in existence. The *onus probandi*, therefore, was entirely on the other side. It should be remembered, that the presbyteries are the true fountain of all ecclesiastical power. They are independent bodies, except so far as they have

chosen to unite with other presbyteries, and cede part of their original rights. 2. The right of judging of the qualifications of their own members, the presbyteries have never conceded. No express declaration of concession is to be found in the constitution, nor is any such declaration pretended to exist. It is an argument of induction. It is attempted to be inferred from certain provisions of the constitution, that the right in question has been tacitly relinquished. But this method of reasoning on such a question is very unsatisfactory. The original powers and rights of contracting bodies should not be reasoned away; if they no longer exist, clear evidence of their having been knowingly and voluntarily relinquished, must be produced. It had been argued, that because the church is *one*, therefore the several parts or separate presbyteries have no right to judge in this matter for themselves. This argument, however, is invalid, because their union is by compact, and cannot be pressed beyond the terms of that compact. The presbyteries and churches are one, for the purposes and to the extent declared in the constitution, and no farther. To insist that the union was such as to destroy the separate existence and unceded rights of the constituent parts of the body, is to maintain that the church is consolidated, and to establish a complete spiritual despotism. That no such union really exists between the several parts of the Presbyterian church is plain, because a member of one presbytery or congregation does not become *ipso facto* a member of every co-ordinate body. His admission into one of these associations gives him no rights in others of the same kind, until these rights are voluntarily conceded to him. Accordingly, the member of one presbytery or church never *demand*s admission into another; he *asks* it; and the question whether his request shall be granted is put to vote. This is a clear recognition of the right asserted in the resolution, for the right of voting on the question of admission is the right of deciding it; it is the right of saying *No* as well as *Yes*. It is true, that the presbyteries have agreed on certain qualifications, which they have promised to require for admission into the ministry and into church membership; and these terms of admission no individual presbytery or church has any right to alter. Should any presbytery, therefore, require the knowledge of Sanscrit, or dispense with the knowledge of Hebrew (!) in its ministerial members, it would be a violation of the compact. And in like manner it would be un-

constitutional to make the mere repetition of the Lord's prayer the test of fitness for church membership. It is also true, that the decision of one church court that the qualifications required by the constitution are, in any given case, possessed by any individual, should be respected in all other courts. Clean papers, or regular testimonials, therefore, are, it is readily admitted, *prima facie* evidence of good standing, but they are not conclusive evidence. They are not such evidence as cannot be questioned or rebutted. They are only a declaration on the part of the body that granted them, that in their judgment, and to the best of their knowledge, the person to whom they are granted has the constitutional qualifications for a member of presbytery, or for a member of a church. But the body to which the application is presented may know better; it may have good reason for doubting the correctness of the judgment of the other court, and it certainly has the right to have those doubts solved. It is out of the question to maintain, that because one church session thinks a man a Christian and fit to be received into the church, all other sessions are bound to think so too, whatever evidence they may have to the contrary.—3. The right in question has always been asserted and exercised by our presbyteries and churches. The case of the Rev. Mr. Birch, a foreign minister, is generally remembered. He applied for admission to one of the western presbyteries; they not being satisfied that he possessed the constitutional qualifications, refused to receive him. He complained to the Assembly; the Assembly examined him, and declared themselves satisfied. They did not, however, order the western presbytery to receive this gentleman, but simply authorized any presbytery that saw fit to admit him as a member. He was received by the presbytery of Baltimore, and although he continued to reside in the west, he retained his connexion with that presbytery. It was never thought or pretended, that because the presbytery of Baltimore was satisfied, therefore other presbyteries must be; and Mr. Birch did not dream that he had a right, on the ground of a dismissal from the former body, to demand admission into every other. The General Assembly has distinctly recognised the right in question. In answer to an overture from the presbytery of Baltimore, the Assembly declared, "It is a privilege of every presbytery to judge of the character and situation of those who apply to be admitted into their own body, and unless they are satisfied, to

decline receiving the same. A presbytery, it is true, may make an improper use of this privilege; in which case, the rejected applicant may appeal to the Synod or General Assembly." Minutes, vol. v. p. 265. Even in the last Assembly, the resolution as introduced by the chairman (Mr. Leach) of the committee on the Cincinnati memorial, contained an explicit recognition of this right, though he readily accepted of the amendment by which it was stricken out. The member from the presbytery of Londonderry, in moving that this resolution be sent down to the presbyteries, said, "I am in favour of the principle of the resolution. I have been astonished at the remarks which have been made on the subject, because I always supposed it was competent for the presbyteries to examine, if they thought proper. The old original presbytery which I represent, has always acted on this principle." In fact, this seems to have been universally admitted until very recently, when it was called in question in a particular case, which led to its reference to the General Assembly. The right to judge of the qualifications of their own members has been claimed and exercised with equal uniformity by the churches. When members from other churches have applied to be admitted on certificate, they have always felt competent to refuse to receive them, if they saw cause.—4. It was argued, that the right recognised in the resolution could not be safely relinquished. It is the great conservative principle of Presbyterianism. Its denial would subject the whole church to the domination of any one of its parts, and be attended with incalculable evils. A presbytery might refuse to ordain an individual on grounds perfectly satisfactory to them, and he might apply to another presbytery, and after having received ordination return with clean papers to the former body, and they be bound to receive a man whom they conscientiously believed to be unfit for the ministry. The right to discipline such members gives no adequate remedy for this evil; for a minister can only be disciplined for *offences*. Yet there may be abundant and solid reasons, other than indictable offences, for not receiving a man into the ministry. The denial of the right in question would subject all the presbyteries and churches in the country to the judgment, or even want of fidelity, of any one church or presbytery. Even where the ground of objection to an applicant is, in the judgment of a church or presbytery, serious enough to be the ground for a charge and trial, it is put beyond their cog-

nizance by the act of receiving him as in good standing with the knowledge of this ground of objection. This is a bondage to which the presbyteries and churches cannot be expected to submit. One church thinks that slave holding, slave dealing, the use and manufacture of ardent spirits, are consistent with a creditable profession of Christianity; are those churches which think differently to be bound to receive members on certificate from such a congregation? There have been, and perhaps are, Presbyterian churches in which members are admitted to the communion without any examination as to their knowledge or religious experience. Are all other churches bound to receive such members? Would a southern presbytery be bound to receive an abolitionist who felt it to be his duty to speak and preach on the subject of slavery as many ministers speak and preach in the north? Would it not be competent for a presbytery to say to such applicant, you may be a very good and proper man for the north, but here you would do more harm than good?—5. It has been said that the resolution recognizes the existence of two conflicting jurisdictions, and makes a man subject to two presbyteries at the same time. This is denied, because both presbyteries have not the right to arraign, and try, and punish him. He is subject to his own presbytery alone; but if he voluntarily asks admission into another, it is the privilege and duty of that other to be satisfied that he has the constitutional qualifications, and that his admission would be for the edification of their churches. The refusal to admit deprives the applicant of no right, it subjects him to no censure, it derogates in no degree from his ministerial standing. It is a simple declaration on the part of the refusing body that the reception of the applicant is inexpedient. It is true, reasons may be assigned for this refusal which implicate the character of the applicant. If these reasons are wantonly assigned it is a just ground of complaint, and should call down the censure of the higher courts on the presbytery or church which thus assigns them. But that a power may be abused is no evidence against its existence.—6. It had been said, that the passage of this resolution contradicting the decision of the last Assembly, must tend to degrade this body and weaken its authority. This is a consideration, however, which should have operated on the last Assembly, as their vote on this subject is inconsistent with the express declarations of previous Assemblies, and with the practice of the churches.

when a wrong has been done, the sooner right is done the better and safer for all parties.—7. It had been said that part of the Assembly was already pledged on this subject. But can this interfere with their right to consider and vote upon the question? Are not some pledged against as well as others for the resolution? Was it ever known, in a deliberative body, that a man's having spoken or written in favour of any measure, or his having signed a petition or memorial in relation to it, disqualified him from considering it? Such a principle would throw out the majority of both sides of every such deliberative body on all subjects of general interest.—8. Finally, Whatever may be the difficulties connected with this subject, the question must be decided. The church cannot be kept together unless the rights of presbyteries and churches in this matter be acknowledged. The Assembly must go back to simple Presbyterianism, both in regard to doctrine and practice. There is no way of saving the church from disruption but to revert to first principles, and to cast away fanciful desires of improvement, all harsh deductions, all arraying of parties against each other. If we could come to this, the Presbyterian church would soon become a united body.

The resolution was adopted. Yeas 129—Nays 79.

*The second resolution on the Memorial* declares it to be the right of the judicatories of the Presbyterian church to bear testimony against erroneous publications, whether the author be a member of the judicatory passing sentence or not. This resolution was opposed on the following grounds: 1. On account of peculiar and embarrassed phraseology, and its blending subjects very different from each other. The case of a book published in a foreign country, or by an author not connected with the Presbyterian church, is very different from that of a book published by a member of our own judicatories, and with his name attached to it. There can be no objection to any body warning those under its care against a book likely to do them harm, whose author was not amenable to them in any way; but the case is very different when the author is under the control of that body. The resolution reaches both classes of such cases. 2. It is inconsistent with our book of discipline, and with the universally recognized principles of justice and brotherly love. Because it is to all intents and purposes a trial of the author without an accuser, without the liberty of explanation and defence. It is a condemnation of a man first, and the trial

of him afterwards. He is thus deprived of all chance of a fair hearing. A minister may be arraigned before his own presbytery, on the ground of a certain publication, and, while the cause is pending, a superior judicatory to which this very case may be brought by appeal, may be called upon to decide it in the abstract; thus prejudicing his cause in the court below, and prejudging in the court above. Is this justice? It is inconsistent also with the tenderness due to a brother's character and usefulness, to pronounce his book erroneous or injurious, without giving him the opportunity of explanation or defence. 3. The mode of proceeding sanctioned by the resolution is unnecessary. The constitution points out another and fairer way of reaching the case. If a man has published heresy, let him be arraigned and have a fair trial. In this way, if his book is erroneous, it can be condemned and the people warned. 4. Such condemnations of books may do more harm than good, by increasing their notoriety and extending their circulation.

The resolution was supported on the following grounds: 1. It was denied that the trial and condemnation of a book was a trial and condemnation of the author. The opinion expressed upon the book might be given by a presbytery to which the author was not amenable, and could not prejudice his having a fair trial before his own body. The opinion did not affect his standing or rights; his liberty to explain and defend his sentiments was not impaired. 2. There are two different methods by which our judicatories may operate to correct the evils arising from erroneous books; the one is by disciplining their authors, the other examining and condemning the books themselves. Sometimes justice and propriety may demand the one course and sometimes the other. Because a judicatory may sometimes adopt the latter course, when it should have adopted the former, is no reason why the latter should be in all cases prohibited, because there are many cases in which it is the only proper or practicable method of meeting the evil. A book published in a distant part of the country may be circulating within the bounds of a particular presbytery and doing much injury. They certainly have a right to express their opinion of the work, without waiting until the presbytery to which the author belongs think proper to call him to an account. Or, supposing that the author's presbytery thinks there is nothing seriously erroneous in the book, are all other presbyteries, though they may think very differ-



ently, to be forced to allow it to circulate among them without the power of saying a word on the subject? Again, the sentiments of a book may be erroneous and yet not heretical, or the author may by his explanations satisfy those concerned that *he* does not hold the errors which his book may, in the judgment of others, inculcate. A tract in defence of slavery, or of church establishments, or against temperance societies, or voluntary associations, might be so written as to do much evil, without perhaps justly subjecting their authors to ecclesiastical censure. Against such publications, or any other which they deem injurious, church courts have a right to protest, and to warn their people. All that the resolution asserts is the right. That it may be unwisely or unkindly exercised no one doubts, but this does not invalidate the right itself.—3. This right has ever been claimed and exercised in the church. In the Constitution, chap. 10, sect. 8, it is expressly stated, that among the powers of the presbytery is that of condemning “erroneous opinions, which injure the purity or peace of the church.” The import of this declaration is rendered perfectly plain by the reference, in support of this right, to Acts xv. 22–24. That passage does not contain an example of the disciplining of a heretic, but of the condemnation of an erroneous opinion in the abstract. The council at Jerusalem pronounced the opinion of the false brethren, who had crept in unawares, to be erroneous and injurious. The General Assembly itself once appointed a committee to examine a certain book, (Davis’s Gospel Plan,) and the report of that committee condemned it, and then directed the presbytery to proceed against its author. See Digest, p. 144. Not only in the Presbyterian church, but in all ages and parts of the Christian world, ecclesiastical bodies have, from time to time, warned the people against erroneous publications.—4. There is little danger of this power being abused. The danger is rather on the other side. In this age and country at least, the evil is that the church is disposed too much to overlook both books and men who teach erroneous doctrines.

The resolution was carried.

*The third resolution* condemns the erection of ecclesiastical bodies on the principle of *Elective Affinity*, i. e. without geographical limits and on account of difference of opinion as to doctrine and ecclesiastical polity. This resolution was opposed:—1. Because it connected things very different from each other, as though they were alike. It con-

tained a double definition of *elective affinity*, a body formed without geographical limits *and* on account of difference of doctrine and ecclesiastical polity. These two things are very different. It is very often exceedingly desirable to constitute churches, presbyteries, and synods, without strictly defined geographical limits. But to constitute such bodies on the ground of a difference in doctrine between the members of them, and other portions of the church was wrong. There could be no diversity of opinion on that point.—2. It had always been customary in the erection of new bodies to have reference not merely to the geographical position of their members, but also to their convenience and wishes.—3. That in cases where there was a firm attachment to the standards of the church, there might be such a prejudice existing between the different members of the same body and such an alienation of feeling as to render their separation highly expedient or necessary. This method of preserving the peace of the church, therefore, ought not to be forbidden.

The resolution was supported, because:—1. It defines the *elective affinity*, which it means to condemn as the principle of separating men into distinct ecclesiastical bodies on the ground of peculiarities of doctrine, and it declared the evil to be greatly aggravated where such bodies had no definite geographical boundaries.—2. That the constitution prescribes the principle upon which such bodies should be constituted.—3. That experience had proved that great evils must result from having presbyteries and synods formed in the way which the resolution condemns. It leads to collision between different presbyteries, to the division and distraction of churches, &c. &c.

The resolution was carried.

*The fourth resolution*, restricting the present 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia in its right to receive or ordain new members, or to organize new churches, met with very little favour from either side of the house. The committee that reported it were divided in opinion on the subject. Dr. Miller and Mr. Elliot, members of the committee, were opposed to it; Dr. Hoge, one of the wisest and best men in the church, was almost its only advocate. Mr. Elliot proposed, as a substitute, a series of resolutions, repealing the acts of former Assemblies constituting the Synod of Delaware and the 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia. These resolutions, after considerable discussion, were withdrawn, and

a resolution, proposed by Dr. Ely, directing that the presbyteries now constituting the Synod of Delaware be united to the Synod of Philadelphia, and that the said synod, thus constituted, take what order it may deem proper concerning the organization of its several presbyteries, was, after a slight modification, unanimously adopted.

The fifth resolution fell as a matter of course, as it depended upon the fourth, and the sixth was, on the motion of Mr. Patton, by an unanimous vote indefinitely postponed. "It was gratifying to witness," says the New York Observer, "the effect of this sudden and happy change in the aspect of one of the most embarrassing and painful portions of the business before the Assembly. Smiles and joyful congratulations were exchanged on all sides. The Assembly seemed to feel as if an incubus had been suddenly removed from its breast, and it breathed freely, in hope and gratitude to the Divine Head of the church, the lover and helper of his own Zion in all her times of need."

*The seventh resolution* referred to the Assembly's Boards of Mission and Education, and the American Home Missionary Society and Presbyterian Education Society. The Assembly had been called upon by the Memorialists to discountenance the operation of the two last named bodies within our bounds; this the resolution declares to be inexpedient, but expresses the opinion that it is the first and binding duty of the Presbyterian church to sustain her own Boards. Dr. Fisher (according to the Evangelist) moved its adoption; Dr. Hillyer wished it to be indefinitely postponed, and things to be left as they were before. It was better to keep up the good feelings we now have, and not to say any thing new on the subject. Mr. Winchester moved to strike out the first part of the resolution, which recognises the existence of the voluntary associations. He thought it enough for us to take care of our own Boards. This was opposed, on the ground that the committee found a request in the Memorial, that the Assembly should interdict the operations of these societies, and they thought it their duty to refuse this request, and thus reprove such an application, while at the same time they could not but express certain important principles of duty which they thought binding on all members of the Presbyterian church. After some further discussion the previous question was called for, and the resolution passed as reported by the committee.

*The eighth and ninth resolutions* went to repeal the "Plan of Union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the new settlements, adopted in 1801." Dr. Fisher was in favour of repealing the compact, provided it be done in a proper manner. He thought the Assembly ought to express the wish that it should be done, and direct their delegates to the General Association of Connecticut to request the concurrence of that body in the measure, as they were parties to the contract. He showed that the union had arisen out of a request from the Presbyterian church, and was designed to build up that church. Dr. Miller fully concurred with Dr. Fisher in his statements and his conclusions as to the course which propriety required. Dr. Fisher moved three resolutions as a substitute for the two reported by the committee. The first declares, that in the opinion of the Assembly it is no longer suitable that churches should be formed on the "plan of union adopted in 1801;" the second requests the General Association of Connecticut to unite with the Assembly in declaring the union null and void; the third provides that the annulling of the said plan shall not affect in any way the lawful existence and operation of churches already formed upon it. Some of the western members opposed these resolutions, but after some debate they were carried.

*The tenth resolution* declares, that "this General Assembly see no cause either to terminate or to modify the plan of correspondence with the associations of our Congregational brethren of New England." *The eleventh resolution* declares, that "the holding the errors referred to in the memorial is wholly incompatible with an honest adoption of our Confession of Faith." These resolutions, together with the preamble to the report, were adopted almost without debate.

### *Missions to the Heathen.*

Overture No. 24, calling upon the Presbyterian church to more vigorous action in her distinctive character in the work of foreign missions, with other papers on the same subject, was referred to Messrs. Elliot, Magie, Witherspoon, Williamson, and Symington, who subsequently reported that a committee should be appointed to make inquiries, negotiate, and prepare a plan of action, to be submitted to the

next General Assembly. This committee, which by a vote of the Assembly were vested with plenary powers, consists of Drs. Cuyler, Hoge, Edgar, Cummings, and Wither-  
spoon.

### *Ruling Elders.*

Dr. Junkin moved the following resolution:—

“*Resolved*, That no ruling elder, who has retired from the active exercise of his office in the church to which he belongs, can be admitted as a member of presbytery, synod, or General Assembly.” This resolution, after some debate, was carried by a vote of about 70 to 16.

### *Installation of Mr. Duffield.*

The papers having been read, Mr. Montgomery was heard in support of the appeal, and Dr. Ely and Mr. Elmes in defence of the presbytery. The appeal was sustained; and the following minute adopted as the judgment of the Assembly in the case:—

“*Resolved*, That the appeal of the session of the 5th church be sustained, and that the acts of the presbytery in relation to the call and installation of Mr. Duffield be reversed.”

### *Report on Popery.*

This subject being called up, Dr. Hoge moved as a substitute for the report of Mr. Breckinridge, the following resolutions which were ultimately adopted, viz. “*Resolved*, that it is the deliberate and decided judgment of this Assembly, that the Roman Catholic Church has essentially apostatized from the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore cannot be recognized as a Christian church.

“2. *Resolved*, That it be recommended to all in our communion to endeavour by the diffusion of light, by the pulpit, the press, and all other Christian means, to resist the extension of Romanism, and lead its subjects to the knowledge of the truth, as it is taught in the word of God.

“3. *Resolved*, That it is utterly inconsistent with the strongest obligations of Christian parents to place their children for education in Roman Catholic seminaries.”

*Ministers without pastoral charge.*

The committee to whom an overture had been referred, questioning the right of ministers not acting as pastors, to sit in church judicatories, reported *against* that right. Dr. Ely said, the adoption of the report would disfranchise ministers and destroy ministerial parity. Dr. Junkin said, it would take away half the ministers of New York. A president of a college was virtually the pastor of the college, and often performed the duties of a pastor. Mr. Dickey maintained, that it is a fundamental principle of Presbyterianism, that the church should have the choice of their rulers. Reject this report and you leave some ministers whom the church never called; or others, whom having called, she, after trial, rejected, sitting to govern the church. It contradicts first principles and the uniform practice of Presbyterians throughout the world, except in the United States. This subject after some further debate, was committed to Drs. Blythe and Hoge, and Messrs. Monfort and A. O. Patterson, to report to the next Assembly.

This is a difficult subject. When our constitution was revised, there were some members of the committee of revision very anxious to introduce a provision declaring that no minister who was not a pastor, should be allowed to sit in any church judicatory as a member. It is certain, that there are two principles of our system violated by our present practice on this subject. The one is that referred to by Mr. Dickey, and mentioned above; the other is, that there should be in all church courts an equal representation of ministers and laymen. It is the theory of our constitution that each church has one pastor, and it has a right to send one ruling elder to presbytery and synod. And these bodies when constituted agreeably to the theory of presbyterianism, are composed of an equal number of clergymen and laymen. Our present practice destroys entirely this equality. In many presbyteries, (as for example that of New Brunswick,) the number of ministers without charge is so great as to reduce the lay members to a very inconsiderable numerical part of these bodies; though there are other presbyteries where, from the number of their small vacant churches the elders preponderate. There are also serious inconveniences resulting from the course now pursued, arising from the great multiplication of ministers of

this class. We have so many presidents and professors of colleges, professors of theological seminaries, agents of benevolent societies, teachers of schools, besides supernumeraries of various kinds in the ministry, that we are not surprised that the pastors and elders are beginning to be alarmed. There are however, both principles and inconveniences to be taken into account on the other side. When a man is ordained to the ministry he becomes a member of presbytery, and has all the rights and privileges of a presbyter. How can he be deprived of these rights? Besides, he is subject to the various judicatories of the church, and bound by the laws which they may enact. Is he to have no voice in making these laws either as a layman or minister? He cannot become a layman except by deposition. He is not a member of any church, or subject to any session. Is he then to be subject to a presbytery of which he is not a member, and to be tried by men no longer his peers? As this matter, however, has been referred to a wise committee, we hope they may be able to discover some method of reconciling these and other difficulties, with the true principles of Presbyterianism, and the best interests of the church.

### *Close of the Session.*

Dr. Hoge introduced the following resolution which was carried unanimously. "Resolved, That in view of the influences of the Spirit being withheld, and the fearful declension of vital piety, it is earnestly recommended to our ministers and elders, to pray and labour for the revival of genuine religion, and that it be recommended to all our ministers to present this subject seriously and fully on the first Sabbath in August next."

After prayer and the benediction, the Assembly was dissolved, and a new one appointed to meet in Pittsburg, on the third Thursday of May, 1836.

In reviewing the proceeding of the late Assembly, we think our readers will feel that the churches have great cause for thankfulness, both on account of the general spirit which characterized its sessions, and the results to which it arrived. We are aware that there were several debates of a very painful kind, and some collisions between individual members, which are much to be regretted. But neither of these circumstances affect materially the general character

of the house. They implicate merely the temper or spirit of the individuals who allowed themselves to transgress the bounds of Christian propriety. We are aware too, that representations very unfavourable to the general spirit of the Assembly, have appeared in some of the public papers. But from all that we can learn from the printed reports of the debates, and from the statements of persons who attended the meetings, we are persuaded that these representations are unjust. We transcribe the remarks of the venerable Dr. Hillyer on this subject, made upon the last day of the sessions of the Assembly, as we find them reported in the *New York Evangelist*. Dr. Junkin said, that taking into view the important and interesting subjects that had come before us, he must pronounce this the most pacific General Assembly he ever attended. "Dr. HILLYER said, it was a fact we have had in general a very pleasant Assembly, and I do think there has been in this respect a reformation, which I hope will be lasting. I have always belonged to the new school, and I came to this house with great fears. I had read the Act and Testimony, and I knew there were also heresies and false doctrines agitating the churches in some parts, and I dreaded a collision. But the more we have proceeded the more we found good men who had been so much alarmed, laying aside their suspicions as groundless. I have been now more than forty-five years in the ministry, and I have never seen the time when there was less difference in theology among the ministers of our church than there is at this moment. If no other good had been done by this Assembly than the removing these fears, I should rejoice. And if the old school have done this, I am willing they should have all the honour of it. I wish the narrative had said something about praying for a revival. And now let us go home A UNITED PEOPLE."

The results of the deliberations of this Assembly we believe will commend themselves to the approbation and support of the great majority of our churches. We do not mean to say that all will agree as to the wisdom of every vote, or the soundness of every principle which has received the sanction of this venerable body; we mean merely to express our belief that the leading principles avowed, and the most important measures adopted, will meet the cordial concurrence of the great majority of our ministers and elders. The grounds of this belief are principally the following. 1. The character of the measures themselves. All



men are disposed to think that what they regard as plainly wise and proper, others cannot fail to look upon in the same light. This, however, is not what we now refer to. We believe the measures adopted by this Assembly will receive the approbation of the churches, because they are in general but a re-enactment of old measures, or a new declaration of principles which the churches have repeatedly sanctioned. What they have done often, they may be expected to do again. There is hardly a single principle affirmed by this Assembly, which has not from the beginning been current in the Presbyterian church. The measures in question were not the result of excitement, or the determinations of a body driven to extremes by the impulse of some transient causes. Were this the case, we might expect the cool verdict of the churches to be against the Assembly, and be led to look for the speedy reversing of its decisions. The appeal from the fifth church in Philadelphia was sustained by a majority of two-thirds, much too large to be attributed to any other cause than a clear conviction of the unconstitutionality of the decision of the presbytery from which the appeal was taken. Almost all the resolutions embraced in the report on the Pittsburg memorial, were carried by large majorities; and some of the most important of them passed unanimously. These facts afford at least presumptive evidence of their wisdom, and give promise of their stability. As the General Assembly, therefore, has not taken new or extreme ground upon any of the contested points, we have reason to hope that its decisions will meet with general approbation. There may be some few exceptions to the remark just made. The ground taken in the first resolution on the subject of Popery we suspect is new, and it is certainly a position which we have not yet light enough to assume. Whether the seventh resolution is new or not, depends upon the interpretation given to it. However it is to be explained, we must take the liberty of saying, that we are on the old ground on this as well as other points. We presume, however, the Assembly had no intention of recalling its previous declarations on this subject. It can hardly be that they meant to advance the principle, that because a majority of the Assembly choose to adopt one method of promoting benevolent enterprises, *therefore* all good Presbyterians are bound to support that method. Suppose this method be unwise or ill conducted; suppose the majority give their boards a party

(say New School) character and bearing—must all good Presbyterians support them? It would be terrible if consolidation were to be carried so far, that a casual majority of two or three should in such matters control the whole church. The true principle with regard to this matter is, to leave the people to their free election, and to endeavour to determine their choice only by reason and argument. We readily admit, that where there are two societies equally good in their organization and equally wise in their management, one connected with the Presbyterian church, the other more or less under the influence of other denominations, there are considerations which would lead us to give a decided preference to the former, in all cases where the operations of such societies terminate on our own members. But we cannot expect all men to agree as to what is a good organization or wise management. One man prefers the loaning and debt system in the education of young men for the ministry; we prefer the opposite; but we cannot force others to be of our opinion. So long as our boards are as wisely organized and as faithfully conducted as they are at present, they need fear no competitors; but should they ever fall into hands in which the sound part of the church has not entire confidence, we should expect and hope to see that portion of our body vindicate their liberty by setting up for themselves.

Our opinion as to the general character of the acts of the late Assembly, and our hope of their meeting with general approbation, are rendered the more confident, by noticing the names of the men by whom they were advocated. These men do not belong to any one narrow division of the church; they are not men of any extreme section of the Assembly, but men who are known to differ on many of the questions which have agitated the church. The fact that so large a majority of the Assembly could conscientiously and cordially unite on the ground assumed in the report on the memorial, is evidence that the safe middle ground has at length been found, on which the friends of truth and order (according to the common interpretation of our standards) can stand side by side. That such men as Dr. Hoge of Ohio, and Mr. Magie of New Jersey, were among the decided advocates of the leading principles of that report, makes the attempt to decry it as the offspring of ultraism almost ridiculous. On the first resolution, which was the most warmly contested, and which is certainly among the

most important, we find the names of Dr. Hillyer and Dr. Fisher in the list of *Yeas*. And in affirming the declaration that holding the errors specified in the Memorial is inconsistent with the honest adoption of the Confession of Faith,\* the vote seems to have taken a still wider range. If, therefore, the representatives of not only so large a geographical and numerical part of the church, but of so many of its different doctrinal divisions, united in support of the report in question, is there not reason to conclude that the base of the edifice which the late Assembly has erected is broad enough to give it permanence and strength?

There is another consideration of no little weight. The opponents of the report were, on the most important points, evidently in a false position. They were driven by stress of circumstances to take ultra high-church ground; to advocate the cause of consolidation, the power of ecclesiastical courts, the passive obedience of the several parts to the whole, &c. They declaimed about Congregationalism and Independency; they warned the Assembly that, by the adoption of the first resolution, they were plunging into these dreadful evils. It must be admitted, that this is strange language for our New School brethren; and we happen to know, that the more strict of the Scotch seceders agreed with them. This, we say, is a false position for New School men; it is not one to which their principles naturally lead them, and therefore it is not one which they can long retain. We know not, therefore, where to look for continued, much less for successful opposition to the principle of the first resolution, "the great conservative principle of Presbyterianism." That principle being estab-

\* We understand the Assembly to refer to these errors as they are numerically stated in the Memorial in distinct paragraphs, and not to every form of expression adopted by the drafter of that document. For example, in amplifying the consequences of the error of denying "the necessity of the agency, the omnipotent agency of the Spirit of God in the conversion of the soul," he says, it is affirmed that "faith is an act of the mind, and nothing but an act of the mind." We should be sorry to think that the Assembly had denounced this as "a pestiferous error," for we confess ourselves guilty of the opinion. We cannot conceive what faith is but the act of believing; it is one of the manifestations of that *principle* of holiness which we believe to be the result of the Spirit's operation upon the heart. We presume, however, the resolution of the Assembly had no reference to such details, but to the errors as stated in order, viz. 1. The denial of the federal headship of Adam:—2. The denial of original sin:—3. Of the imputation of Adam's sin:—4. Of the imputation of Christ's righteousness—and so on to the end.

lished or admitted, and the errors specified in the Memorial being declared inconsistent with the honest adoption of the Confession of Faith, a declaration which seems not to have been opposed, the church may be considered as fairly under way again, clear of the breakers, and on a calm, broad sea.

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*Alber! B. God*

ART. VII.—*Lectures on Revivals of Religion.* By CHARLES G. FINNEY. New York, Leavitt, Lord & Co. Boston, Crocker & Brewster. 18mo. pp. 438.

*Sermons on Various Subjects.* By REV. C. G. FINNEY. New York, Taylor & Gould.

WE congratulate the friends of truth and order on the appearance of these publications. We have never had any doubt what would be the decision of the public mind respecting the new divinity and new-measure system of our day, if its distinctive features could be brought out to the light and exposed to general observation. History warrants us in cherishing this our confidence. The truth is, that this system contains but little that is *new*. It is mainly, if not entirely, composed of exploded errors and condemned heresies. The church has already once and again pronounced judgment upon it; and we have no doubt therefore, that the same sentence of condemnation will be repeated by the Presbyterian church of the present day, whenever the case is fairly presented for decision. The chief reason why the condemnation of this system has at all lingered, is, that its true character has not been generally known. Its advocates, when charged with teaching certain obnoxious doctrines, and, in their religious meetings, violating the sobrieties of good sense as well as of Christian order, have evaded or denied the charge, and complained piteously of misrepresentation. Much has been done to blind the minds of those who were not able to bear the things they had to say, to the undisguised character of the doctrines they have taught in the lecture room and the chapel. We rejoice, therefore, in the publication of Mr. Finney's sermons and lectures. The public can now learn what the new system is, from the exposition of one of its chief promoters. He has stated his