

THE
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No. III.

ART. I.—*Select Notices of the present state of Religion and Religious Literature in some countries of Europe.*

H. Alexander

THE progress of religion on the continent of Europe will naturally maintain a high place in the view of American Christians, until the church shall cover the whole earth. Europe must long continue to be the great centre of moral influence upon the rest of the world, and if evangelical truth were once established in its chief countries, we might look for the speedy return of all mankind to God. But there is a large part of Europe which the Reformation never reached; and even in those kingdoms where Protestantism made its first great conquests, the churches which are nominally evangelical have yielded the truth of their fathers for various forms of Pelagian, Socinian and Deistical unbelief.

This has been remarkably the case in Germany. Not many years ago, heresy had become so prevalent that there was scarcely a professor's chair occupied by an evangelical man, and not a single journal which uttered a word in favour of orthodoxy. At present the case is very different, and the number of godly and zealous professors, preachers and editors is increasing. Among other journals we might mention those of Tholuck, Rheinwald, and Hengstenberg, all which,

Charles Hooper
ART. VII.—*The General Assembly of 1836.*

The General Assembly of 1836 convened in the city of Pittsburgh on the third Thursday of May. The opening sermon was preached by Dr. Phillips, the moderator of the last Assembly, from Rom. 1: 17. After the sermon the permanent clerk reported the roll of members, and in the afternoon the Assembly proceeded to the choice of a moderator. The Rev. John Witherspoon of N. Carolina, and the Rev. Dr. Peters having been nominated, the votes were taken, when it appeared there were 110 for the former and 102 for the latter. Mr. Witherspoon accordingly took the chair.

New stated Clerk.

Dr. Ely having resigned his office as stated clerk, Dr. John M'Dowell, Rev. G. Duffield, Rev. Samuel G. Winchester and others were put in nomination. Subsequently, however, the other candidates being withdrawn, Dr. M'Dowell was elected by common consent.

Intercourse with the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

The Rev. Dr. Spring, the delegate of the General Assembly to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, reported that he had attended the meeting of that body, had been kindly and courteously received, and made the bearer of the following resolution, viz.

“Resolved, That highly appreciating the many benefits that have resulted from the interchange of delegates between our churches and those of the United States, this body will attempt to secure the renewal of the advantages and pleasures which have been enjoyed in both countries, through the interchange of deputations this year, by a reciprocal visitation to the churches of England and America at least once in *six years*.”

This report was submitted to Drs. Peters and Skinner to draft a suitable minute to be placed upon the record and transmitted to the British Union. This committee subsequently presented the following report which was amended and adopted.

“1. Resolved, That in view of the reciprocal advantages of the intercourse which has been opened between the General Assembly and the above Union, the Assembly will be happy to continue the intercourse, and to receive delegates from the Union as often as our brethren in England and Wales shall judge it for mutual edification to be thus represented in our body.

“2. Resolved, That it will not be expedient for the General Assembly to re-

peat its appointment of delegates to the above Union oftener than once in three years.

"3. Resolved, That in no case will the assembly send more than two delegates in the same year; and that they bear their own expenses."

On motion of Dr. Neill, the latter part of the third resolution requiring the delegates to pay their own expenses, was, after some debate, stricken out.

The next General Assembly.

The Assembly voted to take up the question of the place for the next meeting. Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, and some other places were nominated. After some discussion, the roll was called, and the votes were for Philadelphia 167, for Pittsburgh 86, for Baltimore 3.

Foreign Missionary Board of the General Assembly.

The last General Assembly appointed Dr. Cuyler, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Cummins, Mr. Witherspoon, and Dr. Edgar, a committee, to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh on the subject of the transfer of the supervision of the Western Missionary Society now under the care of that Synod, to ascertain the terms on which that transfer can be made, and digest a plan of conducting Foreign Missions under the care of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, and report the whole to the next General Assembly. This committee were subsequently 'authorized if they shall approve of the said transfer, to ratify and confirm the same.' They accordingly reported, that in pursuance of their appointment they had conferred with the Synod of Pittsburgh, and agreed upon the transfer on the following terms, viz. 1. That the General Assembly will assume the supervision of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, and carry on its missions, it being expressly understood that the said Assembly will never hereafter alienate or transfer to any other judicatory or board whatever, the direct supervision of the said Missions, or those which may hereafter be established by the Board of the General Assembly. 2. Provides for the appointment of a Board of Missions by the General Assembly. 3. Defines the duties of the Board. 4. Prescribes the duties of the Executive committee. 5. Provides for the holding of funds and other property by the Trustees of the General Assembly. 6. Relates to the seat of the operations of the Board. This report was committed to Drs. Phillips and Skinner, and Messrs. Scovil, Dunlap, and Ewing, who subsequently submitted a report concluding with the following resolutions, viz :

"1. Resolved, That the report of the committee appointed by the last Assembly to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh, on the subject of a transfer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the General Assembly, be adopted, and that said transfer be accepted on the terms of agreement therein contained.

"2. Resolved, That the Assembly will proceed to appoint a Foreign Mission Board, the seat of whose operations shall be in the city of New York.

"(Signed) W. W. PHILLIPS, *Chairman.*

"Agreed to by the committee, except Dr. Skinner."

Dr. Skinner, as the minority of the committee, presented a counter report, which is as follows:

"Whereas the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has been connected with the Presbyterian church from the year of its incorporation, by the very elements of its existence; and whereas at the present time the majority of the whole of the Board are Presbyterians; and whereas it is undesirable, in conducting the work of foreign missions, that there should be any collision at home or abroad; therefore,

"Resolved, That it is inexpedient that the Assembly should organize a separate Foreign Missionary institution."

The question being on the adoption of the report of the majority, Dr. Peters moved its postponement with a view to take up the counter report of Dr. Skinner. A long debate ensued which embraced the merits of the whole question. The principal speakers in favour of the motion to postpone, and consequently against the organization of a Foreign Missionary Board by the General Assembly, were Mr. Jessup, Dr. Peters, Dr. Skinner, Dr. Palmer, Messrs. Wisner, Brainard, Stevens, Ford, &c. &c. Their leading arguments were the following:

1. This Assembly is under no obligation to receive the Foreign Missionary Society, or carry out the compact made with the synod of Pittsburgh, first, because one Assembly cannot bind its successors, and secondly, because a committee sitting after the dissolution of the Assembly had no power to conclude such a compact. A distinction is to be made between the judicial and legislative powers of the Assembly. In judicial matters this is the court of last resort and its decisions are final; in matters which it recommends to the churches it is not a court. Its whole power is either judicial or recommendatory. The present case not being judicial in its nature, was simply a recommendation. The last Assembly recommended the appointment of a Board of Foreign Missions; this Assembly has a right to recall such recommendation, and to proceed further in the business. All power originates with the presbyteries, and as they have not conferred the authority to make such an arrangement it is

not obligatory. You have no right to tack on to the constitution, contracts or other irresistible arrangements till you first go down to the presbyteries and get their authority. As to the right of one Assembly to bind another, there is a distinction to be observed in parliamentary law. The United States Senate never dies, as only one third of the Senators go out of office every two years; and consequently in a new Congress the Senate take up the unfinished business, and proceed with it the same as from one session to another. But in the House of Representatives it is otherwise. Each Congress opens with a new house, and all the unfinished business has to be taken up *de novo*. And no House of Representatives would think of passing a resolution binding their successors. So with the British Parliament. Its committees sit and act during the recess, or adjournment, but when the Parliament is dissolved, as this body is dissolved at the end of its session, the committees are at an end, and the members go home as private citizens. The house may appoint a committee to investigate a subject and report information as the last Assembly appointed a committee to report on slavery. But they cannot clothe that committee with any authority, for no body can communicate that which it has not. Suppose the members of the last Assembly had all come together themselves after the dissolution; would they have had any authority to make such a compact? Plainly not. How then could they do that by a committee which they could not do by themselves?

2. But further, the Assembly has no power to conduct missionary operations at all. It cannot appoint a Board of Missions, because the necessary power has never been delegated by the Presbyteries to this body.* Nobody doubts that it

* This extraordinary argument was first we believe advanced by Mr. Jessup of Montrose. After saying that the powers of the Assembly are derived from the presbyteries, he asks, 'How is it with the subject of Missions? Have the presbyteries clothed us with power to establish Boards for the management of Missions? I find no such power.' *New York Evangelist*, June 4th. According to the *New York Observer*, of June 11th, Dr. Peters said, 'I do not think the Assembly has power to make such an arrangement. I accord with the legal views of the subject given by brother Jessup.' The *Observer* does not enable us to determine what was the point as to which Dr. Peters accorded with Mr. Jessup, but it makes Dr. Phillips say in reply, evidently referring to Dr. Peters, 'It has been said by another member that the Assembly had no power to engage in the business of missions, and on this subject the Act and Testimony has been quoted.' It was Dr. Peters who quoted the Act and Testimony in support of the position that all power was vested in the presbyteries.

We are very glad that the motion to exclude the Editor of the *Evangelist* from

is the duty of the Catholic visible church to spread the gospel through the earth. But that is nothing to the point to prove that this body has power to appoint a Board of Missions. The Catholic visible church it is truly said is not an organized body. It is composed of the individuals that compose it; and they are to promote missions, and extend the gospel in the best way they can. How does this go to prove that the General Assembly has authority to conduct and regulate the missionary efforts that are made by the members of the Presbyterian church? This question of authority is to be proved, not assumed. If it exists in the General Assembly, it has been given by the churches. The whole authority remains in the sessions and presbyteries, unless it has been expressly given to the Assembly. Hence if any new authority is proposed to be exercised by this body, it is necessary to send down the question to the presbyteries for their consent. If it is said we subvert the authority of the Board of Domestic missions. Suppose we do. A precedent is nothing in the face of the constitution. It is a bad argument from one breach of the constitution to plead in favour of another.

3. It is unnecessary to organize another Board of missions inasmuch as the American Board of Commissioners possess and deserve the confidence of the churches. This being the case, it is very unwise to go to the expense of separate action involving a new set of permanent and salaried officers, of travelling agents, &c. &c.

4. The General Assembly is ill-constructed for the work of missions, on account of its fluctuating character and party divisions. Its members are changed every year, whereas in a voluntary association they remain permanently at their post and may thus constantly profit by experience. Besides, the Assembly has too much other and discordant business to transact.

5. If another Board is organized, it will certainly produce

the floor of the Assembly, for a supposed disrespect to the Moderator, did not prevail, for to him the public are indebted for the most satisfactory reports of the proceedings of the house. It is not from the Observer that we or any one else could learn that Mr. Jessup had taken the ground that the Assembly had no right to have a Board of Missions, much less that this extreme position was assumed by the Secretary of the Home Missionary Society. Yet as it appears from the reports given by the Evangelist, this was made one of the chief points in the debate. And it certainly has done as much, to say the least, to destroy confidence, and disturb the harmony of the churches as any thing either said or done during the whole sessions of the Assembly. The argument in support of this novel and alarming position given above, is from the speech of Judge Stevens of Geneva Presbytery, as found in the Evangelist for June 25.

collision and strife through the whole church. The history of the two Boards of Domestic Missions teaches an affecting lesson on this subject. At first it was predicted and promised that there should be no interference, and the Assembly recommended both Boards to the patronage of the churches. But soon there appeared symptoms of reluctance, until at length it was disputed whether it was proper to name the Home Missionary Society, in the annual report of the state of religion. Last year the Assembly very gravely resolved that though they regretted the separate action of the two associations, yet, on the whole, they were persuaded that it was not expedient to attempt to *prohibit*, within our bounds, the operations of the Home Missionary Society.

6. The organization of a Board of Foreign Missions by the Assembly is unfair, inasmuch as such Board would act in the name of the whole church, while it was really preferred by only a part, whether great or small. Unless there is universal preference in the Assembly for an ecclesiastical organization it ought not to be adopted, because those who preferred a voluntary association,* being united by the constitution to the others, were made to lend their sanction to a plan which they do not approve. We are like men in a ship. Where that goes we are obliged to go, however unwillingly. This is unfair, and gives the friends of ecclesiastical organizations an undue advantage. They are enabled to say, 'this Board belongs to the church, if you do not sustain it, you are not a good member of the church to which you belong and profess to be attached.'

7. It was said that there were stipulations between the Assembly and the American Board which stand in the way.†

* It is singular that those who are so strenuous for voluntary associations, should advocate the American Board of Commissioners, which is a close corporation, self elected, and perpetuating itself. Whether it is the better or worse on this account, is not the question, but it is certainly far less a voluntary association than any Board appointed by the General Assembly. The members of that body are elected by the Presbyteries, and comes every year fresh from the churches, and therefore they and their Boards are under the control of the whole church. Whereas the American Board was organized with the express view to prevent that control. Its original members were so much influenced by the fate of Harvard College, which had been made Socinian by the Boston churches, that they were afraid of a voluntary association, and therefore formed themselves into a close corporation, and obtained a charter as such. It is consequently the least voluntary, though it may be the best conducted, body in the country.

† This argument was urged by the same men, who maintained that one Assembly cannot bind another. The N. Y. Observer represents Dr. Peters as

The Assembly of 1826 having sanctioned the union of the United Foreign Missionary Society with the American Board, and recommended that Board, it is virtually bound not to organize a separate Board of its own.

8. We take higher ground. It is with us a matter of conscience. The proper way to propagate religion is by anti-sectarian plans of action. Religion is anti-sectarian. It is not faith in Presbyterianism that we wish to spread, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners. It is not the faith in those peculiarities by which Christians are divided, but the common faith in which Christians are united. The plan proposed is sectarian. Its object is to spread Presbyterianism. The religion which it wishes to spread is Presbyterian religion, when the object should be to spread the common faith of all the saved.

The principal speakers against the motion to postpone and in favour of Dr. Phillips' report, were Mr. Nesbit, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Miller, Dr. Phillips, Dr. M'Elroy, Dr. Neill, Mr. W. Breckinridge, Mr. Ewing, Mr. Boyd, &c. &c. Their most important arguments were the following.

* 1. In virtue of the action of the last Assembly, this body is bound in good faith to appoint a Board of Foreign Missions, agreeably to the contract formed with the synod of Pittsburgh. Though one Assembly cannot by an act of ordinary legislation bind its successors, yet in all cases in which contracts have been formed under the authority of one Assembly, succeeding Assemblies are bound in honour and honesty to execute them. It has been contended on the other side of the house, that this Assembly is bound by even the implied stipulations involved in the transfer, by the Assembly of 1826, of the United Foreign Missionary Society to the American Board, and the recommendation of the latter body to the patronage of the churches, although the Assembly had formally refused to give any pledge against the adoption of another method of conducting foreign missions, should it subsequently be deemed expedient. Yet these same persons deny that this Assembly is bound by a formal agreement entered into by the express authority of its pre-

asserting this principle, and saying, 'You cannot tack on to the constitution contracts and other irresistible arrangements, until you first go down to the Presbyteries and get their authority. I am firm in this conviction,' in the very same column makes him argue that the arrangements of the Assembly of 1826, were binding on this Assembly.

* It is not intended to convey the idea that the arguments which follow were all presented on the floor of the Assembly precisely as they are here exhibited.

decessor, and duly ratified with another party. It is not now the question, whether, this agreement is wise or unwise, expedient or inexpedient, but simply whether it has been actually formed, and formed according to the constitution of the church. As to the first point, there can be no doubt, for here are the documents; first a resolution of the Assembly appointing a committee to confer with the synod of Pittsburgh, in reference to the transfer of the Western Missionary Society; secondly, a subsequent resolution authorizing that committee to conclude the arrangement and "to ratify and confirm the same with the said synod;" thirdly, the report of this committee, that they had; in the name and by the authority of the Assembly, concluded a compact which had been accepted and ratified by the synod of Pittsburgh. Here is surely a formal agreement binding in honour, in morals and in law, which can be vitiated only by proving that the Assembly of 1835, had no authority to make such an agreement, or if they possessed the power that they had no right to delegate it to a committee. Both of these positions were assumed. That however the Assembly had itself the right, is plain from the constitution of the church, and from the nature of this body, as the supreme judicatory. It has the right to agree to do, whatever by the constitution, it has a right to do. It has the right to acquire and to alienate property, to conduct domestic and foreign missionary operations, to found and superintend theological seminaries, and having the right to do these things, it has the right to enter into contracts with second parties in relation to them, which contracts must be binding, in law and conscience, on all future Assemblies. Suppose the last Assembly had solemnly agreed for the purchase of a house or tract of land, for a stipulated price, could the present Assembly with any show of honesty refuse to issue its warrant for the payment of the money, on the plea that their predecessors had made a bad bargain? Could the Assembly of 1836, recall or annul the agreement made some years ago, with the executors of the Hon. Elias Boudinott, on the ground that one assembly is not bound by the acts of another? This is the very doctrine sometimes, though happily for the world, not very often, heard from political men, that one legislature cannot bind its successors, and consequently that the public debts contracted by one generation, are not binding on the following. This doctrine would subvert all our institutions civil and religious. This is a point so perfectly plain that it is impossible to

escape the conclusion that this Assembly is bound by the contract of the preceding one, excepted by assuming the position that conducting missionary operations is beyond the constitutional power of the Assembly, and consequently that this body had no right to agree to conduct them, or to enter into any contract in relation to them. This seems to have been the occasion of the far reaching declaration from the other side of the house that this body 'has no power to engage in missions.' If this is true, then indeed is the contract null and void. This body has no right to organize political parties, to declare war or make peace with foreign nations, and any contract so to do would be of no binding force. And if in like manner it has no right to conduct missionary operations, then it had no right to make this contract with the synod of Pittsburgh. This is evidently a desperate resource. The constitution of the church says, 'the General Assembly may, of its own knowledge, send missions to any part to found churches or to supply vacancies.' Here is the power in express terms and in all its amplitude. It is a power which has been exercised from the very organization of the church, and which has been universally recognized. It is, therefore, sustained by the very letter of the constitution, by long continued and undisputed precedent, by innumerable acts of legislation, and by the uninterrupted assent of the churches. If it is now to be denied and overturned to serve a purpose, then there is nothing in our constitution which may not, by the will of a majority of this house, be voted out of the book, or trampled under foot. If the Assembly had no right to organize a Board of Missions, it has no right to establish theological seminaries, and if the Assembly has no such right, the several synods cannot have it, and the Auburn, Princeton, Pittsburgh, Union, Columbia Seminaries, are unconstitutional excrescences, and must be put down, in order to place them under voluntary associations or close corporations. It is, therefore, in vain to deny that the Assembly has the power to conduct missions, and if it has this power, it has the right to enter into engagements, which from the nature of all compacts are binding, until properly dissolved.

As to the second position, that the Assembly could not enter into such a compact by a committee, it was much more feebly supported. It was maintained principally on the ground that the power not residing in the Assembly itself, could not be delegated; and secondly, that the Assembly not continu-

ing as a permanent body, the doings of a committee, acting after its dissolution, can be of no authority. The former of these grounds has been already considered; and as to the latter, it is inconsistent with all precedent and all analogy. The Assembly has always been in habit of appointing delegates or committees, invested with more or less power, to act after its final adjournment. All its Boards of missions, education, and directors, are committees of this nature. According to this doctrine we can have no stated, and no permanent clerk; the moment the Assembly adjourns, they, and all the directors of our theological seminaries, are out of office, and may 'go home as private citizens.' The compact, therefore, entered into by the committee acting under the authority of the last Assembly, with the Synod of Pittsburgh, relating to a subject within the legitimate powers of this body, and formed in a way consistent with the constitution, cannot in good faith be violated by this body. If this Assembly thinks it altogether inexpedient to enter upon the work of foreign missions, and to adhere to the compact already formed, let them appoint a committee to wait on the Synod of Pittsburgh, and solicit that body to annul it, and to consent to receive again under its care the Western Missionary Society; but do not let them act in the face of their own solemn engagements.

2. The resolution of the last Assembly to conduct Foreign Missions was not only constitutionally formed, but it is reasonable and expedient. It is notorious and acknowledged, that one portion of our churches prefer voluntary associations, and another ecclesiastical organizations, for conducting benevolent enterprises. The former have an organ suited to their wishes in the American Board; it is therefore but reasonable that the others should have one adapted to their wishes, organized by the General Assembly. It has been said indeed, that they might operate through the Western Missionary Society, which is under ecclesiastical control. This would be a satisfactory answer, were they all connected with the Synod of Pittsburgh. But the fact is, they are scattered over the whole country, connected with every Synod, and perhaps every-*Presbytery*, in the church. They need a common bond of union, and this bond can be found only in the General Assembly. This body is their mutual representative, where they can all meet, and through which alone they can combine. They have a natural right to avail themselves of their own system, to give harmony and union to their action. It was therefore ungenerous and unjust for those who do not

wish such an organization for themselves, to say that those who need it, shall not have it. What avails it to say,—we think the American Board is good enough, that it is efficient, that it is wisely conducted, that it has many Presbyterians in its ranks, that we dislike ecclesiastical associations? These may be good reasons for determining the action of those who prefer that Board, but they have no manner of force to show that the opposite class should be forced to agree with them, or why they should be denied the privilege of following out their own plan in the way they think the most efficient. It is said indeed by those on the opposite side of the house, we do not hinder you from having your own plan, we only refuse to renounce our own preferences and co-operate with you in the furtherance of yours. The assembly is one, the church is one. We are all in one ship. If we agree to this Board we virtually say that we prefer it, and are bound to support it. But do these brethren reason thus with regard to the Boards of Education and Domestic Missions? Do they consider themselves as giving a preference to these ecclesiastical organizations, every time they vote for Directors, or order the printing of their reports, or as long as they abstain from putting an end to their existence? Do they not resolutely assert their entire freedom in these matters, and deny that because the Assembly has a Board of Education, they are under obligation to support or sanction it, or to renounce their preference for the American Education Society? When some extreme men urge the fact that the Boards in question are under the Assembly, imposes an obligation on all good Presbyterians to sustain them, do they not spurn at the assumption and deny its truth? With what consistency then do they now maintain that if they allow the organization of a Foreign Board, they are made parties to it; that they sanction it, and are brought under obligations to sustain it? The fact is not so: they themselves are loud and constant in proclaiming the contrary. They never cease asserting that they are not bound to sustain the Assembly's Boards of Education and Missions, but are perfectly free to patronise what societies they please. And they are right. They have this liberty, and the Assembly has no right to interfere with it. But if this is so, then according to their own principles they are not now refusing to sanction the principle of ecclesiastical organization, or to bring themselves under an obligation to sustain a mode of operation which they do not approve of, but they are deliberately refusing to allow their brethren to

have an organization such as they prefer, which they believe to be essential to the right discharge of their duty as a church, and necessary to bring all its resources to bear efficiently on the missionary work. They assume therefore a fearful and gratuitous responsibility, without necessity and without excuse. They are not called upon to compromise their own principles, but simply to allow freedom to others in the exercise of theirs.

3. The Assembly ought to organize a Board of Foreign Missions, because a large portion of our churches desire it. It is no matter whether this desire in itself is reasonable or not, it is sufficient that it exists, to render it obligatory on the Assembly to gratify it. The fact that a very large part of the Presbyterian church does entertain this wish, is evident from the action of the last Assembly, and from the number of members in this house who stand forth as the advocates of the measure. Unless it can be shown that the Assembly has no right to comply with the request, the consideration that a portion of its members prefer a different mode of action, is no sufficient reason for rejecting it. These brethren come forward and say, We feel bound in conscience to appear and to unite as a church in sending the gospel to all nations; we believe that the command of Christ requires this at our hands; we have no desire to interfere with others; we wish merely to do our own duty in our own way; we are so scattered over the country, that no one Synod or Presbytery can unite or direct our efforts; the General Assembly is our only point of union; we wish it to give us a Board, not for the purpose of withdrawing patronage from other societies, or of forcing others to act with us, but simply to enable us to act in the most efficient manner to attain a common object. As we have no right to say to others, you must prefer the Ecclesiastical Board, and send out missionaries through its agency alone; so they have no right to say to us, you must be content with the American Board, or with an imperfect synodical organization which does not embrace the tenth part of our members. The simple question is, how can the spirit of missions be most widely diffused through the church, the zeal of its members excited, its resources called forth, and its efforts combined and directed? Can this be done by an organization situated at one extremity of the country, which a large part of the church, whether properly or improperly, look upon as a foreign body, and which after the trial of twenty years has failed to reach and excite some of the

most dense and important portions of the church? Is it not obvious, that more can be done by allowing free scope to the preference of both classes, by leaving both without excuse for backwardness in this great work, and by adopting two systems, when there are notoriously two sets of opinions or prejudices to be conciliated? What harm can possibly result from this course? To say it is too expensive, is nothing to the purpose. It may show indeed that the desire for a separate organization is unwise, but it furnishes no ground for saying that those who are willing to sustain this expense, shall not be allowed to do it. It is urged as an objection, that collision must necessarily arise from this separate action. But separate action does exist and cannot be prevented; and unpleasant collisions are much more likely to be prevented by mutual concessions, than by an arbitrary determination to resist all compromise, and to refuse to one whole moiety of the church, what they consider an absolute right and a most important privilege. If it was determined to embroil the church, and to alienate its members, a more effectual method could not be adopted, than by refusing to grant a measure which one half of the church has so much at heart. If the spirit which has hitherto guided the operations of the American Board of Commissioners be continued, no unpleasant strife or rivalry need be anticipated. Not the slightest opposition of this kind has yet arisen between that Board and the Western Society, though they operate, in a measure, upon the same ground. No fair inference can be drawn as to this point, from the experience of the two Boards of Domestic Missions. The result was not then arrived at, that there were to be two separate Boards. Constant attempts were made to effect a union, first on one plan and then on another, to which one party was very averse. Separate action was regarded as so great an evil, that it was thought right to prevent it at any cost. While this conflict continued, there was of necessity difficulty. But since the matter has been settled, we hear little of collision. And if it does occur, the blame must lie in a great measure on the personal character and conduct of the agents. There is therefore no valid objection to the proposed plan, and even if the Assembly were not committed and bound by the action of the last Assembly, it would be right and expedient for the accomplishment of the greatest good, that a Board of Foreign Missions should be organized by this body.

4. We feel it to be the duty and privilege of the Presby-

terian church to engage as a church in the great work of evangelizing the world. We find all other denominations thus engaged. The Episcopalians, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Moravians have each their Missionary Societies; why should Presbyterians alone be deprived of a separate organization? What is the object of a church organization? Is it the mere administration of discipline, as has been strangely asserted? Or is it to maintain and promote the truth, to extend and to sustain the preaching of the gospel and administration of ordinances wherever there are human beings to be saved? This unquestionably is the great design of the church; and the attainment of this object demands not only the mission of preachers to the various portions of our own land, but to all countries to which we have access. If this is our high vocation as a church, we must have the necessary organizations for the accomplishment of our work. This is the more necessary because the moral influence of such action upon the church itself and upon the world is eminently salutary. Every organized body has a moral character to sustain and cherish as well as every individual. And that character is its great means of influence. To attain a character which shall enable it to do good, it must appear before the world pure, faithful, intelligent, and active. It must not only be such, but it must be seen as such. It must let its light shine. What is the reason that the Moravians are looked up to with such respect and affection by the whole Christian world? It is because they have, as a denomination, and not merely as individual Christians, stood forth as an humble, faithful, devoted band of missionary men. The world would have lost all the influence of their example had they contented themselves with operating through the established organs of the Lutheran or Reformed churches on the continent, or aided to swell the resources of the London Missionary Society. They have done right in acting by themselves, in perfect peace and love with all other denominations, but still as a separate and independent portion of the universal church. The high moral character attained by a denomination exerts the most happy influence upon all its members. The spirit of the whole diffuses itself through the several parts; every member feels not only the motives which press upon him as an individual, but as a constituent portion of a great benevolent society. He feels himself called upon to act as becomes a Moravian, for example, as well as in a manner becoming a Christian. There is no more effective means of diffusing

life through the several parts, than to maintain an elevated spirit in the organization as a whole. If the Presbyterian church had from its origin been engaged as visibly and as actively in the prosecution of the missionary work, as the Moravians, or if even what its individual members have done through other channels, had been done through its own organs, its praise would now be in all the earth; its moral character would be far higher than it now is; the spirit of its members would be more pure and elevated; and its influence over the world would be unspeakably more salutary.

It has been objected that on these principles we should have a Presbyterian Bible Society, a Presbyterian Tract Society and a Presbyterian Sabbath School Society. This is not a fair inference. There is an obvious principle which should decide the cases in which the union and co-operation of the different Christian denominations are at once feasible and desirable, and those in which they are undesirable and impracticable. Wherever the field of operation is common to all, and the means of operation the same, then all should unite, but not otherwise. With regard to the distribution of the Bible, both these conditions necessary for harmonious union obviously concur. The field of operation is the whole population without the least regard to their being Baptists, Episcopalians, or Methodists, and the means of operation is common to all sects, viz. the authorized English version of the Scriptures. Had the different denominations different versions of the Bible, it would be a very serious obstacle to their united action in the work of its distribution. We have seen the trouble which the different modes of translating one single word has occasioned. The same remarks apply to the Tract Society. The publications of this Society are intended for promiscuous distribution. No tract distributor as he goes from house to house can inquire to what particular denomination its inhabitants belong; he must give to all he meets. It is therefore, essential that there should be a society in which all have confidence and in which all unite. With regard however to the education of the clergy and the formation of churches the case is very different. Here, from the nature of the object to be effected, the points of difference between the different denominations must be taken into the account. Protestants cannot commit the education of their candidates for the ministry to Catholics, or Catholics to Protestants; nor can Episcopalians give this matter up to Presbyterians or Presbyterians to Episcopalians. The idea is preposterous.

As long as men conscientiously differ to such an extent as to give rise to distinct ecclesiastical organizations, they do but stultify themselves by saying that the points of difference are of no account, and are to be utterly disregarded. When all sects are abolished, and Christians are united on some platform broad enough to sustain them all, then, when there is no difference, there will be no need for separate action.

Again, it has been strongly objected to the proposed that it is sectarian. The ground has been assumed that 'the world can never be converted by sectarian movements for propagating, along with the essentials of Christianity, the peculiarities of the various sects. Religion is anti-sectarian. But the plan proposed is sectarian. Its object is to propagate Presbyterianism. The religion which it wishes to spread is Presbyterian religion, when the object should be to spread the common faith of all the saved.' This is an amiable chimaera. The mere illusion of an ardent mind. No such thing exists on the face of the earth as Christianity in the abstract; and no such thing ever has been or ever can be propagated. You might as well talk of colonizing a country with man as a *genus*, while you obstinately refuse to send out any of the varieties of the race. Where is this religion in the general to be found, unless in the person of the amiable enthusiast, who has so eloquently urged this objection? Look around you: every man you see is either an Episcopalian or a Methodist, a Presbyterian or an Independent, an Arminian or a Calvinist, no one is a Christian in the general. Each may possess the common faith of all the saved, but to send out that common faith, you must also send what each has mixed up with it in his head or heart. You cannot get the ethereal essence uncombined, and are therefore reduced to the necessity of either sending nothing at all, or of sending Christianity in some of the forms in which it actually exists. Under these circumstances, it would seem to be wise to send it in that form which you conscientiously believe to be the best. Besides, we would ask the brother, what he proposes to do, when he gets among the heathen? Does he mean to have an organized ministry and external ordinances? Then he will have a sectarian church, with which the pious Quaker can have no fellowship. Does he mean to have the ministers ordain their successors? Then he will be in conflict with the Independent. Does he mean to baptise the children of his converts, after the manner of the apostles? Then he will have a sectarian anti-baptist church. Does he mean to

allow of Presbyterian ordination and extempore prayer? Then he will raise a wall of separation between himself and the Episcopalians. Alas! he will stand alone in his universalism, and be a sect by himself. The primary principle which has led the brother so much astray, is correct and beautiful. He quotes from our standards the maxim, "truth is in order to goodness." But we would have him remember that that is *our* confession; the very one which we are accused of loving even to bigotry. It is because truth is in order to goodness, we are so zealous for it, and that we so much marvel that others make so light of it. But he says, there are some who forget this maxim, and making truth its own end, insist that Christian union, must be an union in doctrinal opinions; while 'others who dwell much on church order consider union to consist in unity of ecclesiastical organization. Those who regard holiness of heart and life as the main thing, consider Christian union to consist in the exercise of love and fellowship towards all who possess this one thing needful. It is perfectly plain that the expectation of union on either the first or second ground is perfectly chimerical. The other is plainly practicable.' With all this we perfectly agree. The brother's error consists in the self-contradictory assumption, that sectarian organizations are unavoidable, yet inconsistent with the Christian union, which he pronounces to be plainly practicable. That is, he would have us believe there is an insurmountable obstacle in the way of an easily attainable end. Now, we avoid this absurdity, by maintaining that diversity of doctrinal belief, and separate ecclesiastical organization are not inconsistent with Christian union. We regard Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists and Moravians, as our brethren, and as constituting with us one body in Christ Jesus. We welcome them to the table of our common Lord. We love them. We rejoice when they rejoice, and weep when they weep. Though they should not acknowledge us, still we acknowledge them, and regard them as belonging to the one fold of the one great Shepherd. How then is this true, vital and only valuable union of Christians to be promoted? Is it by saying to Episcopalians you shall not send out Episcopal missionaries to propagate Episcopalian religion; you must send out Christianity in the general? Is it by laying the same injunction on the Baptist, Moravian, Methodist and Presbyterian? Then nothing will ever be done. You can write a book which may contain nothing to which an Episcopalian or Baptist

would object, but you will not readily find a man who holds to nothing but the common faith of all the saved. Take the brother himself, we doubt not he has that faith, but he has with it such a multitude of positive opinions as to make him more universally antagonistic than any man in the church. He is not a Congregationalist and he is not a Presbyterian. He is not an Episcopalian and he is not a Methodist. He is simply an anti-sectarian. He stands therefore alone, in violent opposition to the whole Christian world. This comes of being over liberal. Such liberality always ends in being denunciatory and exclusive. It is, therefore, a mere chimera to think of sending a Christianity without form or organization through the world. The brother himself pronounces the expectation of the union of Christians in opinion and ecclesiastical organization chimerical. Different denominations must then, according to his own principles, exist. And if they must exist, the best way is to let them alone. The surest way in the world to exasperate their feelings, and widen the breach between them, is for one to interfere with the other, and to undertake to forbid or denounce the propagation of Christianity in the form which they severally believe to be the purest and the best. It is for this reason that we think it so unwise and so unkind in our Congregational brethren, and in those Congregationally inclined, to come here and denounce us as sectarians and bigots because we do, what alone we can do, endeavour to promote what we believe to be truth. We are forbidden to teach Presbyterian religion. <What is Presbyterian religion according to our belief and solemn profession, but the truth of God, truth in order to goodness?> We should be of all men the most besotted, if, with this belief, we did not desire to promote it to the ends of the earth. If then, we are to have Christian union, we must have separate organization and separate action. This anti-sectarian spirit is a mere *monomania*, which may serve well enough to inspire an essay or a sermon, but should have no influence on the deliberations of a grave ecclesiastical assembly.

Dr. Peters has said this measure originated in the celebrated Pittsburgh Convention. This is a mistake. It has been in consideration for years, and has been the subject of long and anxious consultation. It is in vain to attempt to cast odium on the plan. It must be judged by its own merits. So far from originating in the convention of last year, it is almost universally known that the late Dr. Rice prepared, on his death bed, an overture on this subject to be presented to the

General Assembly, embracing every essential feature of the proposed measure. It has not originated in any narrow sectarian policy, nor is it advocated on sectarian grounds. There is no man in this Assembly, who could find it in his heart to stand on the grave of JOHN HOLT RICE, and pronounce the words, sectarian bigot. The overture as prepared by that good man, breathes the very spirit of the gospel, and that overture contains every thing which the most strenuous advocate for ecclesiastical organization desires.*

* As this overture is short, we give it here entire, as the best possible refutation of the charge in question.

“*Project of an Overture to be submitted to the next General Assembly.*—The Presbyterian church in the United States of North America, in organizing their form of government, and in repeated declarations made through their Representatives in after times, have solemnly recognized the importance of the missionary cause, and their obligation as Christians, to promote it by all the means in their power. But these various acknowledgments have not gone to the full extent of the obligation imposed by the Head of the church, nor have they produced exertions at all corresponding thereto. Indeed, in the judgment of this General Assembly, one primary and principal object of the institution of the church by Jesus Christ was, not so much the salvation of individual Christians—for, ‘he that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved’—but the communicating of the blessing of the gospel to the destitute with the efficiency of united effort. The entire history of the Christian Societies organized by the apostles affords abundant evidence that they so understood the design of their Master. They received from Him a command to ‘preach the gospel to every creature’—and from the churches planted by them, the word of the Lord was ‘sounded out,’ through all parts of the civilized world. Nor did the missionary spirit of the primitive churches expire, until they had become secularized and corrupted by another spirit. And it is the decided belief of this General Assembly that a true revival of religion in any denomination of Christians, will generally, if not universally, be marked by an increased sense of obligation to execute the commission which Christ gave to the apostles.

“The General Assembly would therefore, in the most public and solemn manner, express their shame and sorrow that the church represented by them has done, comparatively, so little to make known the saving health of the gospel to all nations. At the same time, they would express their grateful sense of the goodness of the Lord, in employing the instrumentality of others to send salvation to the heathen. Particularly would they rejoice at the Divine favour manifested to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, whose perseverance, whose prudence, whose skill, in conducting this most important interest, merit the praise, and excite the joy of all the churches.

“With an earnest desire therefore, to co-operate with this noble Institution; to fulfil, in some part at least, their own obligations; and to answer the just expectations of the friends of Christ in other denominations, and in other countries; in obedience also to what is believed to be the command of Christ; be it therefore *Resolved*,

“1. That the Presbyterian church in the United States is a Missionary Society; the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world; and that every member of the church is a member for life of said Society, and bound in maintenance of his Christian character, to do all in his power for the accomplishment of this object.

5. We are anxious for the adoption of this measure, because we believe it to be necessary for the accomplishment of the greatest amount of good. This argument has been in a great measure anticipated. It is beyond comparison the most important. Did we not believe that the resources of the church could not be effectually elicited in any other way, we should be less anxious about the result. "It is impossible to bring the Presbyterian church as it is, into general action on any other principle than the one proposed. There are a multitude in this church who will not contribute to the American Board. You can neither persuade nor compel them to do it. The principle that the church ought to act in this behalf is written on their hearts, right or wrong. They are the bone and sinew of the Presbyterian church, and they have taken up this conviction totally unconnected with all questions of temporary excitement or party strife, as a prin-

"2. That the ministers of the gospel in connection with the Presbyterian church, are hereby most solemnly required to present this subject to the members of their respective congregations, using every effort to make them feel their obligations, and to induce them to contribute according to their ability.

"3. That a committee of — be appointed from year to year by the General Assembly, to be designated, 'The committee of the Presbyterian church of the United States for Foreign Missions,' to whose management this whole concern shall be confided, with directions to report all their transactions to the churches.

"4. The committee shall have power to appoint a Chairman, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and other necessary officers.

"5. The Committee shall, as far as the nature of the case will admit, be co-ordinate with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and shall correspond and co-operate with that association, in every possible way, for the accomplishment of the great objects which it has in view.

"6. Inasmuch as numbers belonging to the Presbyterian church have already, to some extent, acknowledged their obligations, and have been accustomed, from year to year, to contribute to the funds of the American Board, and others may hereafter prefer to give that destination to their contributions; and inasmuch as the General Assembly, so far from wishing to limit or impede the operations of that Board, is earnestly desirous that they may be enlarged to the greatest possible extent; it is therefore to be distinctly understood, that all individuals, Congregations or Missionary Associations, are at liberty to send their contributions either to the American Board, or to the committee for Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian church, as to the contributors may appear most likely to advance the great object of the conversion of the world.

"7. That every church session be authorized to receive contributions; and be directed to state in their annual reports, to the Presbytery, distinctly, the amount contributed by their respective churches for Foreign Missions: and that it be earnestly recommended to all church sessions, in hereafter admitting new members to the churches, distinctly to state to candidates for admission, that if they join the church, they join a community, the object of which is the conversion of the heathen world, and to impress on their minds a deep sense of their obligation as redeemed sinners, to co-operate in the accomplishment of the great object of Christ's mission to the world."

ciple of moral propriety and duty. And as to numbers, we are willing to pledge our character for judgment, that at least two-thirds of the whole Presbyterian church, could they be consulted, would give their voice in favour of ecclesiastical action, on a proper system, by the church, through her constituted authorities, for the evangelization of the world."* We regard this measure, therefore, not merely as a means of doing good to others, but as a measure of immense importance for diffusing new life and vigour through our own body. We wish to awaken a missionary spirit, and with it a spirit of universal and active benevolence. Why should this means of grace be denied us? Our brethren are loud in proclaiming its importance. They rejoice in possessing it in a form adapted to the views and wishes of their portion of the church; why should they deny this inestimable blessing to us?

On the conclusion of the debate the vote was taken by *yeas* and *nays*, when it appeared there were 133 for the postponement of Dr. Phillips's report, and 134 against it, being a majority of one in favour of an ecclesiastical organization. The further consideration of the subject was then postponed. When it was resumed at a late period in the session of the Assembly, the plan proposed by Dr. Phillips was finally rejected by a vote of 111 to 106. Against this decision a solemn protest was entered on the minutes, signed by Dr. Miller and eighty-one other members of the Assembly, containing a summary of the reasons previously urged in favour of the formation of a Foreign Missionary Board. This protest was answered by Dr. Peters, as chairman of the committee appointed for that purpose.

Thus ended this important discussion. We fear the result has inflicted a deeper wound on the prosperity of our church, than she has suffered for a long time. It has weakened materially the bands which have hitherto held us together; not so much on account of the nature of the measure rejected, however important and desirable, as on account of the reasons assigned by the majority for that rejection. These reasons have taken the church by surprise, and excited general anxiety and alarm. There are several important points on which our new-school brethren have taken new ground, and renounced their former principles. They have hitherto earnestly contended, that the adop-

* This passage marked as a quotation, is taken from the speech of Dr. Hoge as reported in the New York Evangelist, June 25.

tion of any particular mode of benevolent action by the General Assembly, imposed no obligation on the churches to adopt that mode, contrary to their own preference; and that their allowing free scope to such mode of operation, implied no sanction of its propriety, or at least of its superiority to others. On this principle, they have not only contended for their perfect right to co-operate with the Home Missionary and American Education Societies, in preference to the Assembly's Boards, but they have called upon the Assembly to recommend those societies. It was never supposed, that those who voted for such recommendation committed themselves as to their private preferences or purposes of co-operation. It has been regarded as a settled point, that those who preferred an ecclesiastical organization, and those who preferred voluntary associations, might meet together in the same Assembly, the former recommend the societies of the latter, and the latter uncommitted vote in reference to the ordinary business of the boards of the former. But these brethren have now discovered that all this is a mistake. They have taken the ground that the whole church is committed by the action of the Assembly. They refused to allow the organization of a Board of Foreign Missions, because they would thereby sanction the principle, renounce their own preferences, and stand committed to sustain an ecclesiastical Board. The standing objection was, that it would be unfair to give the sanction and authority of the whole of the church to a part; whereas, according to their old doctrine, the sanction and authority of the whole, it was not in the power of the Assembly to convey or bestow.

The most important and startling principle, however, advanced by our new school brethren was, that the Assembly has no power to appoint such a Board, or to conduct missionary operations at all. This seems to have been in many minds the turning point of the whole matter. Mr. Jessup, Dr. Peters, Judge Stevens, and other leading speakers on that side gave it a prominence which appears to have surprised and alarmed even those who have never been considered men of extreme opinions. Dr. Hoge says expressly, "As the subject has been proposed in other forms, I have always objected. But the question is now brought before us in a new form, and is to be decided on the naked ground of the power and rights of the Assembly to conduct missions. And on this ground, I cannot abandon it while I love the faith and order of the Presbyterian Church." There are several things

in the assumption of this position adapted to create both alarm and sorrow. The first is, its novelty and its inconsistency with the previous professions of its advocates. To the best of our knowledge this is the first time that this principle has ever been advanced in any of our judicatories, and it is now advanced by men who for a long series of years, and in many different forms, have professed a different opinion. When the friends of the Home Missionary Society on the floor of the Assembly, in their public addresses, and official publications have taken the catholic ground that all they wished was that both Boards should be allowed free scope, and both recommended to the churches, they did there by in the strongest manner, acknowledge the Assembly's Board as a lawful institution. Every profession of friendship was an admission of this fact. Every action on their part in the Assembly in attending to the routine of the business of the Board of Missions, involved more or less distinctly the same acknowledgement. The secretary of the Home Missionary Society, has from his station been the most frequent organ in giving utterance to the professions to which we have alluded. He was the active agent also in proposing different plans of compromise and co-operation all involving the admission of the right of the Assembly to conduct missionary operations. Yet he was the leader of the party which now assumes the opposite ground. The men who have hitherto professed most liberality and friendship, are now foremost in avowing a principle of deadly hostility; a principle which demands not merely reform, a change of men, or of measures, but absolute destruction. It is this that has produced alarm. The churches know not what to depend upon, or what to trust to. Mutual confidence is destroyed, when such repeated professions and avowals are forgotten in a moment. The case is the more aggravated because of the weakness of the arguments by which the position in question was defended. Were it matter for which some show of reason could be presented, about which there had been previous diversity of opinion, or with regard to which some new light had sprung up, we might be less concerned. This, however, is not the fact. The power of the Assembly to conduct missions, is asserted to the letter in our constitution, it has always been exercised, it has always been admitted and recognised, and that too by the very men who now deny its existence, without even professing a change of opinion. Under these circum-

stances, the churches feel astounded. They know not when they are safe, not what is to be considered sacred.

It is not, however, so much the novelty of this principle, nor its inconsistency with the former professions of its advocates, nor its untenableness, as its own intrinsic character which makes it alarming to every true Presbyterian. It effects a radical revolution in the whole church. It not only cuts off the Boards of Education and Missions, but all similar Boards, all ecclesiastical seminaries, and gives up the control of all the affairs of the church, beyond mere matters of discipline, to voluntary associations. And by whom are these voluntary associations controlled? By moneyed men. Whatever may be the theory of their operation, this we believe to be practically the fact. These men of wealth, as far as we know are good men, but it is not their goodness, but their wealth which gives them their controlling influence. It is too late in the day now to question the fact, that the men who control the benevolent operations of the church are the men of supreme authority. It is not necessary to suppose either that this influence is a direct object of pursuit, or that it exerts its power through the force of mercenary motives. It results from the nature of the system. The men who have the direction of the education of the candidates for the ministry,* and the location and support of these candidates when ordained, have ten thousand sources of influence in the feelings and associations, as well as interests of those concerned, which render them the arbiters of the destiny of the church. This influence is the more serious because it is invisible, unofficial, and consequently irresponsible. It is acquired in one sphere, and is made to bear on all others. It is created without, yet enters all our church judicatories, decides points of discipline and doctrine, and determines the whole course of ecclesiastical affairs. Whether, abstractly considered, it is better that this influence should be vested in the conductors of voluntary societies, than in the regular officers and judicatories of the church or not, certain it is, it is not Presbyterian. According to the theory and former practice of our system, the education of ministers, the formation of churches, the decisions of matters of doctrine and

* We have no special reference here to the peculiar system of the American Education Society, and its Presbyterian auxiliary, which in our judgment is one of complete and odious vassalage, degrading to the beneficiaries, whom it holds in legal bonds, as well as dangerous to the church. Against this system we have protested from the beginning.—See *BIBLICAL REPERTORY* for 1829,

discipline, rest with the judicatories, composed of the clergy and the representatives of the people. These matters are now virtually, and to a degree, even in form, taken out of their hands, and are effectually controlled by the agents, officers, and leading patrons of a few societies. We are willing to admit that this system is in accordance with the genius of Congregationalism, which, with the forms of popular government, has always had the tendency to place the controlling power in the hands of a few individuals. The Congregational pastor, when in favour with his people, has far more power than the Presbyterian minister surrounded by his session, though when that favour is lost he is more completely at their mercy. It is in ecclesiastical as in political affairs, the freest governments in form are often the most despotic in fact. Now, so long as this influence, of which we have been speaking, had its counterpoise in Boards of the General Assembly; so long as it was admitted that that body had a right to provide for the education of ministers and the formation of churches, and so long as all intention or design of interfering with the institutions of those who preferred Presbyterian modes of action were disclaimed, the great majority of the churches felt contented and secure. But when we see the very men who possess this controlling influence in the church, and who of all others are the most sensible of its extent, rising in the Assembly, and declaring that they must be alone; that the other Boards are unconstitutional; that the principle of ecclesiastical organization is not only unwise, but illegal and of course must be put down, we are brought to a stand. We feel as though a mine, cautiously and secretly constructed, had been suddenly sprung under the very foundations of the citadel. We believe, however, that our new school brethren on this, as on some other occasions, have made a mistake. They have gone too far. They have avowed their ultimate objects too soon. We do not believe that a majority of the churches are prepared to see Presbyterianism abolished, and all judicatories made, as Dr. Peters would have them,* mere courts of discipline. When such men as Dr. Hoge are driven to declare they feel themselves contending for "the

* "We discriminate," he says, "between an organization of the Presbyterian church for church discipline and ecclesiastical order, and for the work of carrying on missions. Her internal organization is for discipline alone." *New York Observer*, June 11th. We had always supposed a church was organized for a much loftier end, the conversion and sanctification of men; or, as our confession expresses it, "for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life, unto the end of the world."

faith and order of the Presbyterian church," against the ground assumed by these brethren, we cannot think the latter can carry the consciences, the approbation, or support of any large portion of our churches with them. Certain it is, they have lost the confidence of many of their former friends, and greatly consolidated the ranks of the opposite party.

Report on Slavery.

The last General Assembly having appointed Dr. Miller, Dr. Hoge, Mr. Dickey, Mr. Witherspoon, and Dr. Beman, a committee to prepare a report on the subject of slavery, Dr. Miller at an early period presented the following report :

"The committee to whom were referred, by the last General Assembly, sundry memorials and other papers touching the subject of slavery, with directions to report thereon to the General Assembly of 1836, beg leave to report :

"That after the most mature deliberation which they have been able to bestow on the interesting and important subject referred to them, they would most respectfully recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following preamble and resolutions, viz :

"Whereas, the subject of slavery is inseparably connected with the laws of many of the states in this Union, with which it is by no means proper for an ecclesiastical judicatory to interfere, and involves many considerations in regard to which great diversity of opinion, and intensity of feeling, are known to exist in the churches represented in this Assembly :—And whereas there is every reason to believe that any action on the part of the Assembly in reference to this subject, would tend to distract and divide our churches, and would, probably, in no wise promote the benefit of those whose welfare is immediately contemplated in the memorials in question :—therefore,

"1. Resolved, That it is not expedient for the Assembly to take any further order in relation to this subject.

"2. Resolved, That, as the *notes*, which have been expunged from our public formularies, and which some of the memorials referred to, request to have restored, were introduced irregularly—never had the sanction of the church—and therefore never possessed any authority—the General Assembly has no power, nor would they think it expedient, to assign them a place in the authorized standards of the church."

In this report it was stated that Dr. Miller, Dr. Hoge, and Mr. Witherspoon agreed; Mr. Dickey presented a counter report, which concluded with the following resolutions, viz :

"1. Resolved, That the buying, selling, or holding of a human being as property, is in the sight of God a heinous sin, and ought to subject the doer of it to the censures of the church.

"2. Resolved, That it is the duty of every one, and especially of every Christian, who may be involved in this sin, to free himself from its entanglements without delay.

"3. Resolved, That it is the duty of every one, and especially of every Christian, in the meekness and firmness of the gospel, to plead the cause of the poor and needy, by testifying against the principle and practice of slaveholding; and to use his best endeavours to deliver the church of God from the evil; and to

bring about the emancipation of the slaves in these United States and throughout the world."

Mr. M'Ilhenny, of Virginia, proposed the following substitute, viz :

"The committee to whom were referred by the General Assembly sundry memorials and other papers touching the subject of slavery, with directions to report thereon to the General Assembly, beg leave to report :

"That after the most mature deliberation which they have been able to bestow on the interesting and important subject referred to them, they would most respectfully recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following preamble and resolution, viz :

"Whereas the subject of slavery is inseparably connected with the laws of many of the states of this Union, in which it exists under the sanction of said laws, and of the constitution of the United States :

"And whereas slavery is recognized in both the Old and New Testaments as an existing relation, and is not condemned by the authority of God ; therefore

"Resolved, That the General Assembly have no authority to assume or exercise a jurisdiction in regard to the existence of slavery."

Dr. Hoge presented the following preamble and resolution, viz :

"Inasmuch as the constitution of the Presbyterian church, in its preliminary and fundamental principles, declares that no judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority ; and as the urgency of the business of the Assembly, and the shortness of the time during which they can continue in session, render it important to deliberate and decide judiciously on the subject of slavery in its relations to the church ; therefore,

"Resolved, That this whole subject be indefinitely postponed."

After some remarks from Mr. M'Ilhenny in favour of his substitute, and from several other members on the merits of the whole question, Dr. Hoge proposed that the vote should first be taken on his resolution for indefinite postponement, and then upon its preamble. This course was finally agreed to, when the resolution was carried, *y eas* 154, *nays* 90. Many of the southern members and many of the abolitionists united in voting in the negative. The question^d was then taken on the preamble and decided in the affirmative, *y eas* 150, *nays* 84. Against this decision several protests were entered by the abolitionists, to which an answer was given by Mr. Pratt of Georgia, as chairman of the committee appointed for the purpose.

Funds of the General Assembly.

The Trustees of the General Assembly having presented an extended report exhibiting the state of the funds, it was

referred to a committee, who presented the following report, viz :

“ The committee to whom was referred the report of the Trustees of the General Assembly in relation to the funds of the church, report—

“ That they have endeavoured to give the important subject committed to them, the consideration which it demanded. That in the discharge of their duties they have examined the books of the treasurer, and find them in perfect order, *exhibiting all the different funds of the church in a clear and perspicuous manner* : That difficulties and perplexities which had arisen from the fact, that for many years the treasurer's books had not been posted up, *are removed*, and the books and accounts now show the transactions of the Board in the management of the funds of the church, in their proper light.

“ During the past year, important changes have been made by the trustees in some of the funds. Under the suggestions made by a previous General Assembly, the Board have made new and much more productive investments, and by means thereof, have not only been able to meet the annual appropriations for the professors' salaries, but have also paid off \$2671 09 of the moneys previously borrowed from the permanent funds, to meet the orders of the Assembly.

“ Of this sum, \$700 has been repaid to the E. D. scholarship. The Directors of the Princeton Seminary, whose report was also referred to your committee, have called the attention of the Assembly to that scholarship; and in relation thereto the committee have only to observe, that in their opinion the loan which was made from that fund ought to be repaid by the trustees, as soon as the state of the funds will admit; and that in future no loans ought to be made from the permanent funds, and in case loans should be necessary under any resolution of the Assembly, they ought to be drawn from other sources.

“ The subject of investments in stocks is much better understood by the Board of Trustees than by your committee, and the committee believe the Assembly may place entire confidence as well in the judgment and skill, as in the prudence of the trustees in relation to this whole subject. They therefore only suggest to them, that while it is of importance to secure the increase of revenue, which the new investments in bank stocks have yielded, and promise to yield in future, yet a due regard is to be had to the safety and permanency of those investments; and taking into consideration the highly important interests dependent upon such security, that greater risk ought not to be run, than would be incurred by a prudent man, whose family, with himself, might be dependent upon the investments.

“ The committee therefore recommend the following resolutions, to wit :

“ Resolved, That the General Assembly approve the proceedings of the Board of Trustees, as detailed in their report of the 10th of May last, and direct the stated clerk to transmit a copy of this report and these resolutions to that Board, as containing the opinion of the Assembly upon the subjects herein mentioned.

“ Resolved, That the trustees be directed, (if it be not inconsistent with the terms and objects of the bequest,) to dispose of the stock held by them in the United Passaic and Hackensack Bridge Co.

“ Resolved, That the report of the trustees be published in the appendix to the minutes.

“ WM. JESSUP, Chairman.”

The Editor of the New York Evangelist having published a series of articles insinuating, if not directly presenting the charge against the Trustees not only of malservation, but of the embezzlement of the funds, he published the above report

with the following remark : ' This report seemed quite satisfactory in regard to the funds of the Assembly in the hands of the Trustees, as at present managed ; and as we have published extensively strictures on the former management, we felt it due to justice to publish the report at full length.'

Desecration of the Sabbath.

On Wednesday, June 8th, Mr. Cleaveland, from the committee to whom had been referred an overture on the desecration of the Lord's day, made a report which concluded with the following resolutions, viz :

" Resolved, That the observance of the Sabbath is indispensable to the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty ; and furnishes the only security for eminent and abiding prosperity, either to the church or the nation.

" That the growing desecration of the Sabbath in our country must be speedily arrested, and the habits of the community essentially reformed, or the blessings of the Sabbath, civil, social, and religious, will soon be irrecoverably lost.

" That in as much as the work of a general reformation belongs, under God, to the Christian church, it is the duty of the church to apply the convictions of a firm and efficient discipline, to all known violations of the Sabbath, on the part of her members.

" That in as much as ministers of the gospel act a conspicuous part in every successful effort to do away this sin, it is their solemn duty to maintain, by faithful preaching and consistent practice, the rule of entire abstinence from all profanations of the Lord's day, uniformly avoiding even the appearance of evil.

" That this Assembly deem it an immorality to journey, or transact any secular business, or give and receive social visits on the Sabbath ; [or to own stock in such establishments as stages, steam boats, rail roads and the like, which are employed in violation of that holy day.] (The part included in brackets above was stricken out, and the amendment proposed by Dr. Miller in the two following paragraphs was adopted :)

" That in the judgment of this General Assembly, the owners of stock in the steam boats, canals, rail roads, &c. who are in the habit of violating the Sabbath, are lending their property and their influence to one of the most wide-spread, alarming, and deplorable systems of Sabbath desecration, which now grieve the hearts of the pious, and disgrace the church of God.

" That it be respectfully recommended to the friends of the Lord's day, as soon as possible, to establish such means of public conveyance as shall relieve the friends of the Sabbath from the necessity under which they now labour, of travelling at any time in vehicles which habitually violate that holy day ; and thus prevent them from being partakers in other men's sins, in this respect.

" That the power of the pulpit and the press must be immediately put in requisition on behalf of a dishonoured Sabbath ; that the magnitude and remedy of the evils, which its violation involves, may be fully understood by the whole community.

" That this Assembly solemnly enjoin it upon the churches under their care to adopt, without delay, all proper measures for accomplishing a general and permanent reformation from the sin of Sabbath-breaking, and all its attendant evils.

" That a committee of one from each Synod under the care of this Assembly be appointed, to hold correspondence with ministers and churches, for the pur-

pose of carrying out and applying the leading principles of the foregoing report and resolutions.

“That the foregoing report and resolutions be published in those newspapers, secular and religious, which are friendly to the observance of the Sabbath.”

This report gave rise to a protracted discussion which had reference principally to the clause pronouncing the owning stock in steam boats, rail ways, &c., which were employed on the Sabbath, to be an immorality. This clause was subsequently stricken out, and the paragraphs proposed by Dr. Miller, as stated above, inserted in its place.

The Western Theological Seminary.

MR. WINCHESTER, from the committee to whom had been referred the report of the Directors of the Western Theological Seminary, made in substance the following report, viz :

“1. Resolved, That the transfer of Professor Halsey to the chair of Ecclesiastical History, and of Professor Elliott to that of Didactic Theology, in said seminary be, and the same is, hereby sanctioned by this General Assembly.

“2. Resolved, That the entire interests of said seminary be and they are hereby transferred to the supervision and direction of the Synod of Pittsburgh, and that the Board of Directors are hereby authorized to accede to such a transfer, whenever the Synod of Pittsburgh shall signify its acceptance of the same.

“3. Resolved, That the sum of four thousand five hundred dollars be appropriated to the use of said seminary.”

It having been stated, that Professor Halsey consented to the proposed arrangement, the report was adopted. It soon appeared, however, that there had been some misapprehension on the subject, and that Professor Halsey was willing to accede to the proposition to transfer him to the chair of Ecclesiastical History, but not to the transfer of himself and the seminary to the supervision and control of the synod of Pittsburgh. The discovery of this fact gave rise to much confusion. A motion was made for reconsideration; Professor Halsey tendered his resignation, and various methods were proposed to get out of the difficulty, when a member fortunately remembered, that according to the plan of the seminary, no alteration could be made in its constitution, without its being proposed at one Assembly and acted upon at the Assembly following, unless by a unanimous vote. This embarrassed the subject at once. It was, therefore, proposed to append a clause to the minutes, declaring that ‘the vote not being unanimous, the whole subject is referred to the next General Assembly.’ This was agreed to by acclamation: and the subject was, with much apparent satisfaction, dismissed.

*Report on the Biennial Meeting of the Assembly.
Amendment of the Constitution.*

DR. SKINNER, from the committee to whom were referred overtures Nos. 8 and 9, proposing that the Assembly hereafter meet once in two years, and that no appeals, except in cases of charges for heresy or unsoundness in doctrine, be taken from the judgments of synods, made the following report, which was adopted, viz :

“That it is inexpedient that the Assembly should meet less frequently than once a year, and that the following overture be sent down to the Presbyteries, for their adoption or rejection, viz :

“Resolved, That so much of the constitution of the church as empowers the General Assembly to issue appeals, complaints and references brought before them from the lower judicatories, except in cases of charges against a minister of the gospel for error or heresy, and of process commencing in the synods, be and the same is hereby amended, that hereafter the synods, except in the cases above mentioned, be the judicatories of last resort.”

Appeal and Complaint of the Assembly's Second Presbytery of Philadelphia.

The Assembly took up the appeal and complaint of the second presbytery of Philadelphia, relating the decisions of the synod of Philadelphia, refusing to grant their petition for geographical limits, dissolving their presbytery, requiring its members to apply for admission into other presbyteries, and declaring that if they refused to do so before a given day, they should be *ipso facto* excluded from the Presbyterian church. The sentence appealed from, the reasons assigned for the appeal and complaint, and the whole record of the proceedings of the synod in the case were read. The parties having been fully heard, the roll was called for the judgment of the members, when the vote was taken first on the appeal, which was sustained by a vote of 116 to 95 ; and on the complaint, which was sustained nearly unanimously, one vote only being heard in the negative. Mr. Jessup then offered a series of resolutions, expressing the judgment of the Assembly on the merits of the case, which gave rise to some discussion. A committee was subsequently appointed to draft a minute which should contain the decision of the Assembly. This committee reported the following minute, which was adopted, viz :

“Resolved, 1st. That the petition of the Appellants be granted.

“2d. That all the ministers and churches now connected with the said presbytery remain in their present relation, until they shall signify their desire to said presbytery to withdraw from it.

"3d. The boundaries of the said presbytery to be as follows: viz. East, a line running from the Delaware along Tenth street, as far as Coates' street, and thence to the township-line road where it intersects Broad street, and along said road to the southern boundary of Montgomery county, including all between said lines and the river Schuylkill; and also the whole of the counties of Berks and Schuylkill, and as much of Chester and Philadelphia counties as lies north of the Conestoga Turnpike road from Morgantown to the Lancaster Turnpike road, and along this latter road to the Schuylkill Permanent Bridge. Provided, that the above shall not be construed to embrace the Ninth church and the Pastor thereof; but the same shall remain a part of the Second Presbytery (Synodical); and provided also, that the Tenth church and the Pastor thereof, be authorized to unite with the First Presbytery, if they desire it.

"Resolved, That the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, defined and bounded as above, be hereafter known by the name of the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia."

*Trial of Mr. Barnes.**

The Assembly at an early period of its sessions took up the appeal of the Rev. Albert Barnes, from the decision of the synod of Philadelphia, suspending him from the ministry. The Rev. Dr. Junkin had presented a series of charges against Mr. Barnes, for error in doctrine, founded on his Notes on the Epistle to the Romans, which were tried before the second presbytery of Philadelphia. The presbytery having acquitted Mr. Barnes, Dr. Junkin appealed from their decision to the synod of Philadelphia. When the appeal came on for trial, the presbytery pled to the jurisdiction of the synod and refused to produce their records in the case. The synod overruled this plea and censured the presbytery for contumacy, and resolved to proceed with the trial. Mr.

* We have deferred this case to the last moment in hopes of receiving some more extended report of the proceedings of the Assembly in relation to it. But we have been disappointed. The Presbyterian, as usual, gives little more than the minutes. The New York Observer and the Evangelist give only the preliminary debates on points of order, and the decision of the House, together with the several protests and counter-protests to which that decision gave rise. We have no outline of Dr. Junkin's argument in support of his charges, nor of Mr. Barnes' defence, nor of the opinions of the members. The case has excited so much interest, that it is to be regretted that the public are not informed of the grounds on which it was decided. The Observer had already gone to so much expense in giving a report of the trial before the synod, and in publishing the previous defence of Mr. Barnes, that its Editors probably feel that they have done enough to satisfy the majority of their readers. And perhaps they have. Still, as the trial before the Assembly was in many respects a very different affair from that before the synod, the report of the one is not a satisfactory substitute for that of the other. We wish to know what ground Mr. Barnes finally took as to his doctrines, and what reasons were assigned by the members for their votes. We hope the editor of the Evangelist will yet publish his notes. We like this imperturbable reporter, who concentrates his feelings, now and then, within brackets, and thus prevents their imparting their own tinge to what he puts into the mouths of others.

Barnes, however, although declaring himself ready for trial, refused to plead on the ground that the cause could not be regularly tried without the records of the lower judicatory. The synod having voted that the refusal of Mr. Barnes to appear in his defence, was no bar to the appeal being heard, proceeded to issue the case by sustaining the appeal of Dr. Junkin, and suspending Mr. Barnes from the ministry. From this decision Mr. Barnes appealed to the General Assembly. When the appeal came on for trial, the records in the case were read, first the appeal itself, and then the records of the synod of Philadelphia. The reading of the records of the presbytery were then called for. At this stage a voluminous document was introduced purporting to be an appendix to the book of records of the second presbytery of Philadelphia, and certified to contain the trial, testimony and final decision of the presbytery in the case of Mr. Barnes. The reading of this document was at first resisted, on the ground that it was not properly a part of the records of the presbytery, and had never been before the synod from whose decision the present appeal was taken. It was however read by the consent of the parties. Mr. Barnes then proceeded with his defence, which occupied part of two days. Dr. Junkin followed in support of his charges, and occupied part of the two succeeding days. The Assembly's second presbytery declined to exercise their right to speak by their committee. Mr. Winchester was then heard in defence of the synod. The parties having been fully heard, the roll was called for the opinions of the court. This occupied the Assembly during the whole of Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Monday morning. When this calling of the roll was completed, Dr. Peters moved, 1. That the appeal of Mr. Barnes be sustained. 2. That the sentence of the synod suspending him from the ministry be reversed. To this Dr. Hoge objected on the ground that 'to vote to sustain in this naked form is equivalent to the approval of every doctrine in that (Mr. B's.) book, which he hoped there was not a majority in the Assembly yet prepared to do. If they should, it would lay the foundation for a protest, of a most solemn and searching character, that would reach and shake the remotest bounds of the church. He preferred the immediate appointment of a committee that should represent all sides on this question, to prepare and bring in a minute that should, as far as possible, harmonize that body.' He therefore moved 'That the appeal of the Rev. Albert Barnes be sus-

tained in part, and that a committee of five be appointed to bring in resolutions expressive of the sense of the House.' Dr. Skinner objected; he said there were some, of whom he was one, who would not vote to inflict, even by implication, a censure on the book of Mr. Barnes, as containing doctrinal errors. Mr. Nesbit offered the following substitute for the resolutions of Dr. Peters: 'Resolved, That the appeal of the Rev. Albert Barnes be sustained so far as relates to that part of the definitive sentence suspending him from all the functions of the gospel ministry.' Dr. Hoge's amendment having been withdrawn, it was moved to postpone the consideration of Dr. Peters' resolution with a view to take up the resolution offered by Mr. Nesbit. This motion was lost; whereupon Dr. Hoge renewed his amendment. After an exciting discussion of two hours and a half, these motions were all withdrawn, on the suggestion of Dr. Phillips that the question should be taken in the naked form prescribed in the book of discipline, *sustain or not sustain*. This suggestion was acceded to and the roll was called, when it appeared the votes were as follows, viz: to sustain the appeal 134, not to sustain 96, non liquet 6.

DR. MILLER then moved the following resolution, viz:

"Resolved, That while this General Assembly has thought proper to remove the sentence of suspension under which the Rev. Mr. Barnes was placed by the synod of Philadelphia, yet the judgment of the Assembly is, that Mr. Barnes, in his Notes on the Epistle to the Romans, has published opinions materially at variance with the confession of faith of the Presbyterian church, and with the word of God—especially with regard to original sin, the relation of man to Adam, and justification by faith in the atoning sacrifice and righteousness of the Redeemer.—The Assembly consider the manner in which Mr. Barnes has controverted the language and doctrines of our standards as highly reprehensible, and as adapted to pervert the minds of the rising generation from the simplicity and purity of the gospel plan. And although some of the most objectionable statements and expressions which appeared in the earlier editions of the work in question, have been either removed, or so far modified or explained as to render them more in accordance with our public formularies, still the Assembly considers the work, even in its present amended form, as containing representations which cannot be reconciled with the letter or spirit of our public standards, and would solemnly admonish Mr. Barnes again to review this work, to modify still further the statements which have grieved his brethren, and to be more careful in time to come to study the purity and peace of the church."

DR. PETERS moved the postponement of Dr. Miller's resolution to take up the following:

"Resolved, That the decision of the synod of Philadelphia, suspending the Rev. Albert Barnes from all the functions proper to the gospel ministry, be, and it hereby is, reversed."

This course being assented to, the vote was taken on the motion of Dr. Peters, which was carried, *yeas* 145, *nays* 78, *non liquet* 11.

Dr. Miller's resolution was then introduced, when Mr. Labaree of Tennessee proposed that it be amended by striking out all after the word 'Resolved,' and inserting as follows:

"That in the opinion of this Assembly there are terms and modes of expression in the first edition of Mr. Barnes' Notes on the Romans, which are liable to misconception, and which have been misunderstood, but we are happy to find that these exceptionable expressions have generally been modified or omitted in the late editions of this book. This Assembly would, therefore, affectionately recommend to Mr. Barnes, in his future publications, to avoid the use of phraseology which is liable to misconstruction."

On this amendment an animated debate ensued. Dr. Hoge, Messrs. Boyd, Weaver, Nesbit, S. G. Davis, complained of introducing the substitute when those who were in favour of Dr. Miller's resolution wished the opportunity of voting directly on the question, and of recording their names. The substitute itself was characterized as good for nothing, as determining nothing, and as virtually an approval of the whole book. Dr. Hoge said he would rather take his departure from the house never to return to it, than vote for such a resolution. He hoped members would pause before they took this step, and see what is before them on the next. They will plunge us into confusion. It is in fact giving up the ship. Mr. Labaree said he had not intended to interfere with the rights of others, but had proposed the amendment in order to express exactly his own views. As it was unsatisfactory to his brethren, he withdrew it.

DR. SKINNER said, in opposition to Dr. Miller's resolution, it goes to condemn and stigmatize the sentiments of those who are called new-school, as heresy, or at least, as materially contrary to our confession of faith. If this resolution passes, New England divinity is branded by this General Assembly. So it will be regarded throughout the church, and by the world. He believed that New England divinity and that Mr. Barnes' book are in all substantial points, in accordance with the confession of faith, and he could never consent to stigmatize that book. It would be easy to pervert even the most qualified censure.

DR. MILLER said, that as to censuring New England divinity he had occasion to know, that if we pass this resolution, we shall rejoice the hearts of hundreds of our New England brethren. I speak not unadvisedly. After much

discussion, the question was taken on Dr. Miller's resolution and the result was as follows: *yeas* 109, *nays* 122, *non liquet* 3. So the resolution was rejected.*

Against this decision a protest was subsequently introduced by Dr. Phillips signed by himself and one hundred† other members of the General Assembly, and which is as follows, viz:

“WHEREAS the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church did by their vote on the 7th instant reject a resolution disapproving some of the doctrinal statements contained in Barnes' Notes on Romans;—which resolution, especially under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the undersigned considered of high importance to the church with which we are connected, to the cause of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to the just exhibition of his grace and truth;

“We, whose names are subscribed, feel constrained, in the name of the great Head of the church, solemnly to protest against said decision, for the following reasons, viz:

“1st. Because we believe the constitutional standards of the church, in their plain and obvious meaning, and in the sense in which they have always been received, are the rule of judgment by which all doctrinal controversies are to be decided: That it is the duty of the church to maintain inviolate her doctrine and order, agreeably to those standards, to bear her decided testimony against all deviations from them, and not to countenance them, even by implication; yet in the above decision, there was, as we believe, a departure from our constitutional rule, a refusal to bear testimony against errors, with an implied approbation of them; and a constructive denial that ministers of the gospel in the Presbyterian church are under solemn obligations to conform in their doctrinal sentiments to our confession of faith and catechisms.

“2dly. Because the errors contemplated in the aforesaid resolution do not consist merely, nor chiefly, in inaccurate and ambiguous expressions, and mistaken illustrations, but in sentiments and opinions respecting the great and important doctrines of the gospel which are utterly inconsistent with the statement of those doctrines made in the confession of faith, and revealed in the word of God. We sincerely and firmly believed that Mr. Barnes has denied (and that in a sneering manner) that Adam was the covenant head of the human race—that all mankind sinned in him, as such, and were thus brought under the penalty of transgression—that Christ suffered the penalty of the law when he died for sin—and that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers for justification. These and similar doctrinal views, we regard as *material* variations from our standards, as dangerous in themselves, and as contravening some of the leading principles of our system, such as man's dependence and the perfect harmony of justice and grace in the salvation of sinners.

“3dly. Because this expression of approbation of his opinions was passed after, as we believe, it had been clearly and sufficiently proved to the Assembly that Mr. Barnes had denied these important truths, and had expressed opinions respecting original sin, the nature of faith, and the nature of justification, which cannot be reconciled with our doctrinal standards; and after—instead of retracting any of his doctrinal opinions—he had declared expressly, before the

* Of the interesting debate on this resolution we have seen no further report than the meagre account given above, which is taken almost word for word from the Evangelist.

† This statement is taken from the New York Evangelist, June 25.

Assembly, and published in the preface to his Notes on the Romans, that he had not changed, but held them still, and was determined to preach them until he died.

“For these reasons, and for the glory of God—that we may preserve a conscience void of offence—we request that this our solemn protest may be entered on the records of the General Assembly.”

Dr. Hoge in behalf of himself and fifteen other members (some of whom join in the preceding protest), presented the following protest, viz:

“The undersigned members of the General Assembly, who were of opinion that the appeal of the Rev. Albert Barnes should be sustained only in part, and that a modified decision should be made, beg leave to present to the Assembly this brief explanation of their views, and desire that it may be entered on the minutes, as their protest against the course which has been pursued in the case.

“1. They explicitly declare that in their opinion the refusal of the presbytery to bring their records before the synod, and of Mr. Barnes to appear and plead in defence when their objections had been overruled, was irregular and censurable; and that although the synod acted in a manner that was questionable, and perhaps injudicious, in trying the appeal of Dr. Junkin, without the records of the presbytery, and in the absence of Mr. Barnes, who had declined making any defence, yet this irregularity was not of such a nature as to annul their proceedings.

“2. They were of the opinion that the charges brought against Mr. Barnes, by Dr. Junkin, were at least partly substantiated, and that on very important topics of the system of doctrine contained in the confession of faith and the word of God; and that therefore the appeal could be sustained only in a modified manner, if at all on this ground, without an implied approbation of his doctrinal views.

“3. Further, they were of opinion, that inasmuch as some of the charges were not fully if at all sustained; and it may be doubted whether the synod ought, as the circumstances of the case appeared to be, to have inflicted the censure of suspension; and Mr. Barnes, during the progress of this trial, exhibited some important alterations of his book, and made such explanations and disavowals of the sentiments ascribed to him as were satisfactory in a considerable degree; the removal of his suspension might be deemed proper and safe: they were therefore willing on this account to concur in this measure, but did not desire to sustain the appeal in an unqualified sense.

“The undersigned therefore desire to place themselves aright, in the discharge of their official duty, before this Assembly, and the church with which they are connected, and the whole Christian church, so far as these transactions may be known; and cannot consent to be understood as giving countenance to irregular proceedings in the judicatories of the church, or those who are amenable to them: or as overlooking erroneous doctrinal sentiments; or as desiring to exercise undue severity towards the Appellant. And they cannot withhold the expression of their regret, that all their efforts to procure a justly modified decision were defeated by the positions occupied by different and opposite portions of the Assembly, in regard to this case; nor will they conceal that they have painful apprehensions that these things will lead to extended and increased dissension, and endanger the disruption of the holy bonds which hold us together as one church.

“*Pittsburgh, June 7, 1836.*”

These protests were committed to Drs. Skinner and Allan and Mr. Brainard, who subsequently reported the following answer, viz:

"In reply to the two protests of the minority from the decision of the Assembly in refusing to censure the first edition of Barnes' Notes on the Romans, the Assembly remark:

"1. That by their decision they do not intend to, and do not in fact, make themselves responsible for all the phraseology of Mr. Barnes; some of which is not sufficiently guarded, and is liable to be misunderstood, and which we doubt not Mr. Barnes, with reference to his usefulness and the peace of the church, will modify, so as to prevent, as far as may be, the possibility of misconception.

"2. Much less do the Assembly adopt as doctrines consistent with our standards, and to be tolerated in our church, the errors alleged by the prosecutor as contained in the book on the Romans. It was a question of fact, whether the errors alleged are contained in the book; and by the laws of exposition, in the conscientious exercise of their own rights and duties, the Assembly have come to the conclusion that the book does not teach the errors charged. This judgment of the Assembly is based on that maxim of equity and charity adopted by the Assembly of 1824 in the case of Craighead, which is as follows, viz: 'A man cannot be fairly convicted of heresy for using expressions which may be interpreted so as to involve heretical doctrines, if they also admit of a more favourable construction. It is not right to charge any man with an opinion which he disavows.' The import of this is, that when language claimed to be heretical admits without violence of an orthodox interpretation, and the accused disclaims the alleged error, and claims as his meaning the orthodox interpretation, he is entitled to it, and it is to be regarded as the true intent and import of his words. But in the case of the first edition of the Notes on the Romans, the language is without violence reconcilable with an interpretation conformable to our standards; and therefore all the changes of phraseology which he has subsequently made, and all his disclaimers before the Assembly, and all his definite and unequivocal declarations of the true intent and meaning of his words in the first edition, are to be taken as ascertaining his true meaning; and forbid the Assembly to condemn the book as teaching great and dangerous errors.

"3. When the Assembly sustained the appeal of Mr. Barnes by a majority of 38; and by a majority of 67 removed the sentence of his suspension and restored him in good standing to the ministry, it is not competent for the same judicature, by the condemnation of the book, to inflict on Mr. Barnes, indirectly but really, a sentence of condemnation as direct in its effects, and as prostrating to his character and usefulness, as if it had been done directly, by refusing to sustain his appeal and by confirming the sentence of the synod of Philadelphia. And what this Assembly has declared that it cannot in equity do directly, it cannot in equity or consistency attempt to do indirectly.

"4. The proposed condemnation of Mr. Barnes' work, as containing errors materially at variance with the doctrines of our standards, after sustaining his appeal and restoring him to good standing in the ministry, would be a direct avowal that great and dangerous errors may be published and maintained with impunity in the church. For if the book does in fact inculcate such errors, it were wrong to attempt to destroy the book and spare the man. If the charges are real, they are not accidental. Therefore should the Assembly decide the alleged errors of the work to be real, it would by its past decisions declare that a man suspended for great and pernicious errors, may be released^d from censure, and restored to an unembarrassed standing in the ministry; a decision to which this Assembly can never give its sanction.

"5. The attempt to condemn Mr. Barnes by a condemnation of his book, after he had been acquitted on a hearing on charges wholly founded on the book is a violation of the fundamental maxim of law, that no man shall be twice put in jeopardy for the same offence. And if it were otherwise, and the

man might be tried in his person and tried on his book, the same process of specification and defence is due to personal and public justice.

"6. So far is the Assembly from countenancing the errors alleged in the charges of Dr. Junkin, that they do cordially and *ex-animo* adopt the confession of our church on the points of doctrine in question, according to the obvious and most prevalent interpretation, and do regard it, as a whole, as the best epitome of the doctrines of the bible ever formed. And this Assembly disavows and would deprecate any attempt to change the phraseology of our standards, and would disapprove of any language of light estimation applied to them; believing that no denomination can prosper, whose members permit themselves to speak slightly of its formularies of doctrine; and are ready to unite with their brethren in contending earnestly for the faith of our standards.

"7. The correctness of the preceding positions is confirmed in the opinion of the Assembly, by a careful analysis of the real meaning of Mr. Barnes, under each charge, as ascertained by the language of his book and the revisions, disclaimers, explanations, and declarations which he has made.

"In respect to the 1st charge, that Mr. Barnes teaches, that all sin is voluntary, the context and his own declarations show that he refers to all *actual* sin merely; in which he affirms the sinner acts under no compulsion.

"The 2d charge implies neither heresy nor error, but relates to the expression of an opinion on a matter, concerning which no definite instruction is contained either in the bible or the confession of faith.

"In respect to the 3d charge, Mr. Barnes has not taught that unregenerate men are able, in the sense alleged, to keep the commandments, and convert themselves to God. It is an inference of the prosecutor from the doctrine of Natural Ability, as taught by Edwards, and of the natural liberty of the will, as taught in the confession of faith, chap. 9, sect. 1. On the contrary, he does teach, in accordance with our standards, that man by the fall hath wholly lost all *ability of will* to any spiritual good accompanying salvation.

"In respect to the 4th charge, that faith is an act of the mind, Mr. Barnes does teach it, in accordance with the confession of faith and the bible: but he does not deny that faith is the fruit of the special influence of the Spirit, and a permanent holy habit of mind, in opposition to a created physical essence.—That faith 'is counted for righteousness,' is the language of the bible, and as used by Mr. Barnes, means not that faith is the *meritorious* ground of justification but only the instrument by which the benefit of Christ's righteousness is appropriated.

"In respect to the 5th charge, Mr. Barnes nowhere denies, much less 'sneers' at the idea, that Adam was the covenant and federal head of his posterity. On the contrary, though he employs not these terms, he does, in other language, teach the same truths which are taught by that phraseology.

"In respect to the 6th and 7th charges, that the sin of Adam is not imputed to his posterity, and that mankind are not guilty, or liable to punishment on account of the first sin of Adam, it is to be observed, that it is not taught in the confession of faith that the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity. The imputation of the *guilt* of Adam's sin, Mr. Barnes affirms, though not as including personal identity, and the transfer of moral qualities, both of which are disclaimed by our standard writers, and by the General Assembly.

"In respect to the 8th charge, that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law as the vicarious substitute of his people, Mr. Barnes only denies the literal infliction of the whole curse, as including remorse of conscience and eternal death; but admits and teaches that the sufferings of Christ, owing to the union of the Divine and human natures in the person of the Mediator, was a full equivalent.

"In respect to the 9th charge, that the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to his people, Mr. Barnes teaches the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, but not as importing a transfer of Christ's personal righteousness to believers,

which is not the doctrine of our church. And where he says that there is no sense in which the righteousness of Christ becomes ours, the context and his own declarations show that he simply means to deny a literal transfer of his obedience: which, on the contrary, he teaches is so imputed or set to our account, as to become the only meritorious cause or ground of our justification.

“In respect to the 10th charge, Mr. Barnes has not taught that justification consists in pardon only, but has taught clearly that it includes the reception of believers into favour, and their treatment as if they had not sinned.”

In the absence of any satisfactory account of the trial, we must content ourselves with a few remarks upon the points of the case as actually presented in the reports. We think every one must be struck by the uncompromising spirit manifested by the new school men in every part of the proceedings. It is almost always the case that when a trial of much interest and difficulty is concluded, a committee is appointed to draft a minute expressing the judgment of the house. This custom is founded on obvious propriety. There are few cases in which a simple answer to the question sustain or not sustain? is sufficient to express the judgment of those who are called upon to answer it. It may well happen when numerous charges are presented, embracing various specifications, that some of these may be proved and others not. Must a man necessarily either be guilty of all charges which are brought against him, or entirely innocent? Is such a case ever so one-sided that a categorical yes or no satisfies the demands of justice, or of a good conscience? Besides, there is almost always a diversity of opinion as to the import or operation of the answer to the question sustain or not sustain? This being the fact, it is absolutely impossible that an answer to that question can express fairly the opinions of the Assembly in the decision of the case. To urge it, therefore, in this form is to present a false issue, and impose upon the church a false result. Thus we find in this trial of Mr. Barnes, Dr Hoge voting one way and Dr. Miller the other on the question of sustaining the appeal. Yet these gentlemen agreed exactly in their views of the 'merits of the case, and of the manner in which it ought to be issued. How is it then that their votes are diametrically opposed to each other? Simply because they differed in their opinion of the import of the question put to them. Dr. Hoge said a vote to sustain was virtually a declaration that the Assembly approved of every thing in Mr. Barnes' book. Dr. Miller, on the contrary, thought that it simply declared that Mr. Barnes had just reason to complain of the action of the synod of Philadelphia, that it decided nothing as to the nature of those reasons. It left it entirely undetermined whether they related to the

mere mode of procedure, or to the substantial merits of the decision. Dr. Miller doubtless considered that every man who said *not sustain*, declared that Mr. B. had no reason for his appeal, either constitutional or otherwise; that the synod did right in proceeding to trial without the records of the presbytery and in the absence of the accused. He was not prepared to sanction these principles. It was impossible for him, taking this view of the import of the question *sustain or not sustain?* to answer it in the negative, without thereby declaring that he thought a trial in a court of review might be constitutionally conducted without the records of the lower judicatory in the case, and without the defence of the accused. This is a declaration which he could not make. He was constrained, therefore, to vote for sustaining the appeal. Had he taken the view of the import of the vote entertained by Dr. Hoge, he would have voted in the negative. Now was it just to present the question in a form which prevented those, who agreed as to the merits of the case, from voting together? What possible objection could there be to following the course sanctioned by usage, and sustained by such obvious considerations of propriety? Would it have been a difficult thing for a committee to prepare such a minute? Might they not have recommended that in view of the irregular mode of the trial before the synod the appeal of Mr. Barnes be sustained? And secondly, that although the Assembly considered the book of Mr. Barnes to contain propositions in conflict with the truth and the standards of the church, yet in view of his explanations, and corrections, the sentence of suspension be reversed, and he be enjoined to make his book harmonize with his defence? Did our new school brethren fear that any compromise would rob them of their disastrous victory, that their only chance of success was to force the question in a form which would secure the votes of foes as well as friends? It is evident that had the vote to sustain been regarded as involving a decision on the whole case, it would have been carried by a much smaller majority. The result, however, has shown that it was a mistake to allow that, and the subsequent resolution reversing the sentence of the synod to pass, in hopes of subsequently censuring the book. The resolution to censure was immediately opposed on the ground of its inconsistency with the previous votes. The fact is, that as far as we know, the sentiments expressed in many passages of Mr. Barnes' book, are considered by all the old-school (and professedly by a large portion of the new-school also), as subversive of the gospel, inconsistent with

the system of doctrines taught in the confession of faith, and entirely incompatible with the honest adoption of our standards. On this point, there is no diversity of opinion among us. The only question is, does Mr Barnes really hold these sentiments? This is the question which it was the object of the trial to determine, and it is certainly one of no easy decision. The fact that his book contains these errors does not settle the point; because it also contradicts every one of them. It is to be remembered that Dr. Junkin's charges were presented not against the Notes on the Romans, but against their author. When, therefore, certain propositions were produced from the book denying the doctrine of original sin, of the federal headness of Adam, of justification on the ground of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer, &c., it was perfectly fair for the accused to bring forward other passages in which he affirms all these doctrines. And when he accompanied these counter passages with a solemn disclaimer of the errors charged, a declaration that he never meant to teach them, and a profession of the opposite truths we see not how it was possible for any one who believed in his sincerity, to find him guilty of still holding them. Under these circumstances, the obvious course of propriety and justice was, for the Assembly to condemn the erroneous propositions, and to acquit the man on the ground of his explanations and corrections. This was the course pursued in the case of Dr. Beecher. His writings certainly contain the doctrines charged against him by Dr. Wilson (except that of perfectionism), with greater precision and consistency than Mr. Barnes' Notes contain the errors imputed to him. Yet when Dr. Beecher came out and renounced these doctrines, declared that he never meant to teach them, and published over his own name a statement of his views in direct opposition to these errors, almost every individual was satisfied. Dr. Wilson withdrew his charges, and the case was dismissed. Dr. Junkin professed his readiness to acquiesce in a similar course with regard to Mr. Barnes. After the conclusion of that gentleman's defence, which was regarded on all sides as a recantation of his errors, and as a full profession of orthodoxy, the prosecutor virtually declared himself satisfied. He said, 'If the concessions which we heard yesterday can be put in a form that is satisfactory, I shall be willing to take a course that will save the time of this Assembly.' This was understood to mean that if Mr. Barnes would do what Dr. Beecher had done, publish with his name what he had said before the Assembly; and if the Assembly

would do as the synod of Cincinnati had done, express disapprobation of the book, all parties would be satisfied. Perhaps some few individuals on either side might have regretted such a result, but that the great body of the Assembly and of the church would have readily acquiesced in it, there can be no doubt. It is publicly stated that some of the most earnest friends of orthodoxy, urged the prosecutor to withdraw the charges at once, on the ground of the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes' defence. Had there been a sincere desire to bring the case to a harmonious and satisfactory issue, had there not, on the contrary, been a fixed determination to press matters to an extreme, would not the fair and conciliatory course, suggested by the prosecutor, been adopted? Mr. Barnes did all he could to prevent such an adjustment, by publicly calling the Assembly to witness that he retracted nothing, and by declaring that he never would retract. This, however, was regarded as a mere manifestation of an unfortunate state of mind. It mattered very little to the Assembly what particular idea Mr. Barnes chose to attach to the word *retract*. To save his feelings they might well dispense with the word, provided they had the thing. If a man publishes in a book that there is no sin where is no voluntary transgression of known law, no moral character before there is moral conduct, because character is the result of conduct, and then comes forward and declares that he adopts the definition of Calvin and Edwards of original sin, that it is an *innate*, and *sinful*, hereditary depravity of heart; if he publishes that the righteousness of Christ is *not* set over to the believer, and then declares, that it *is* set over to him; if he says, the word *impute* means to reckon, to set to one's account, and then says, the righteousness of Christ is not *imputed*, but that it is *reckoned to* the believer, he may say as often as he pleases that he does not, and that he will not retract, others will understand the matter just as well. Though this declaration, therefore, of Mr. B. no doubt gave offence, and diminished the confidence of those who heard his explanations, yet we do not believe it would have prevented the satisfactory issue of the trial, had the leaders of the majority of the Assembly wished to produce such a result. They however would yield nothing. They would make no distinction between Mr. Barnes and his book. They would not allow the question to be put in a form in which it was possible for the friends of truth to unite. They insisted on a course which gave the implied sanction of the Assembly to doctrines which Mr. Barnes disclaimed, and which they

themselves have, as a body, hitherto professed to abhor. The simple vote to sustain the appeal and reverse the sentence, did in the exulting language of the Evangelist dismiss Mr. Barnes and his book without reproach; it accomplished to the letter the wish of Dr. Skinner, that "the slightest censure" might be avoided.

2. Besides this uncompromising spirit there is another aspect of this case which must produce general disapprobation and concern. It is universally known and admitted that there are three theological parties in the Presbyterian church, the old-school, the Edwardean (or Hopkinsian as it is popularly but incorrectly called), and the New Haven. The last being very inconsiderable as to numbers. It is no less generally known that the members of the second class, constituting the great body of the new-school party, have been, if possible, more violent in their opposition, and more severe in their denunciations of New Haven men and New Haven doctrines than any other men in the church. Certain it is that the most serious professions of abhorrence and apprehension that have ever come under our notice of the 'new divinity' have proceeded from men of this class, and some of them members of the late General Assembly. Now the complaint is that these men, by insisting on the simple vote to sustain the appeal and reverse the sentence without any expression of disapprobation of Mr. B's book, have, contrary to their own professions, endorsed these very doctrines, and given them the sanction of the General Assembly. The justice of this complaint rests on the fact that the Notes on the Romans have almost universally been regarded as teaching the New Haven theology. All that was desired on the one side was that these doctrines should be condemned. The acquittal of Mr. Barnes was a matter of no moment, any farther than it involved a sanction of these opinions. When he came forward and renounced them, no one wished for his condemnation, provided the opinions which he was supposed to teach in his book were condemned. This the new-school men refused to do, and by this refusal lent all their weight to their support. That Mr. Barnes' book has been generally understood to teach the New Haven doctrines cannot be denied. It is notorious that the New Haven men openly and constantly claim him as belonging to their side. Several articles in the *Christian Spectator*, universally attributed to Mr. Barnes, distinctly advocates some of their peculiar opinions. The Philadelphia brethren have, from the beginning, declared that their opposition to Mr. Barnes arose 'not from

the comparatively trivial errors of Hopkinsianism, but the more serious ones of Drs. Murdock, Taylor and Fitch.' The Unitarian Examiner understands him as denying "a strictly and fully vicarious atonement," as spurning "the idea of hereditary depravity," as treating the imputation of Adam's sin "as a scholastic absurdity;" and as saying, "of the figment of Adam's federal headship, and the condemnation of men for partnership in his sin, 'there is not one word of it in the bible.'" The Christian Intelligencer of the Dutch Reformed church, speaking of the Commentary by Prof. Stuart, and the Notes by Mr. Barnes on the Romans, says, 'Both are equally devoted to the new-school theology in its extreme, of the New Haven school.' The Watchman, published at Hartford Connecticut, and edited by the Rev. Mr. Harvey, which is the organ of the class of theologians to which Dr. Tyler, Mr. Nettleton, Dr. Hewett &c. belong, after speaking of Dr. Miller's remark in reply to Dr. Skinner's assertion that to condemn Mr. Barnes' book would be to stigmatize New England divinity, viz. 'if we pass this resolution, we shall certainly rejoice the hearts of hundreds of our New England brethren,' uses the following decisive language: 'the remark of Dr. Miller is doubtless correct. We deny that the sentiments contained in the book of Mr. Barnes is New England divinity. Dr. Miller's resolution expressed precisely the views of many in New England. Mr. Barnes has stigmatized his own book by introducing into it *sentiments subversive of the gospel*, and it is a stigma from which no apology of Dr. Skinner nor vote of the General Assembly will wash it clean.* Was it, then, an unreasonable request that the Assembly, when acquitting Mr. Barnes on the ground of his concessions and explanations, should express their disapprobation of such a book? Was it too much to expect that those who were so zealous in private in condemning New Havenism, should abstain from endorsing a work which was thus universally regarded as teaching that very system? What must we think of the men who objected to 'the slightest censure,' who complained of Mr. Barnes as 'too orthodox,' and especially what impression must such language as the following, from the lips of Dr. Peters, make, 'When I heard the sentence, I regarded it as a blow struck at one half of the Presbyterian church. The doctrines held by brother Barnes, he has proved to be substantially in accordance to the Confession of Faith. I shall

* WATCHMAN, June 27, 1836.

not vote to restore him on the ground of *toleration*, he has a right to be a minister in our connexion. If any one is to be *tolerated* it is the prosecutor, who says, that man has in no sense ability to love God. Yes, sir, the time has come, when the question is, whether such men are to be tolerated in the Presbyterian church. . . . No, sir, I do not even condemn his indiscretions! It is time to have the question settled, whether in this nineteenth century we may not exercise the liberty of using language adapted to the age. I do not only approve of the doctrines, but of the *language employed*, while I may not agree with every word spoken or written by any man.* To hear such language uttered of a book which Unitarians hail as rejecting the doctrines of original sin, the federal headship of Adam, &c.; which a standard paper in New England denounces as containing 'sentiments subversive of the gospel,' is sufficiently startling; and to have it virtually sustained by the General Assembly is still worse. Had these brethren contented themselves with declaring their conviction that Mr. Barnes did not hold the doctrines ascribed to him, there could be no ground of complaint, because his book furnishes no sufficient data to decide what his real opinions are. It is a complicated web of contradictions. And on the principle that every man has a right

* The above account of Dr. Peters' remarks is taken from the Presbyterian of July 2, and are given by a member of the Assembly from notes taken on the spot. As this gentleman writes over the initials of his own name, and in his communication identifies himself distinctly, his report is certainly worthy of as much confidence, to say the least, as those of the other reporters. The few sketches which he has given shows the importance of having the opinions of the members, as given on the calling of the roll. We must, therefore, again beg the editor of the Evangelist, who says he has full notes, to give us light. Let the churches see what they have to depend upon.

As to Dr. Peters' objection to the sentiment expressed by Dr. Junkin, it is to be presumed that the word *ability* is used as it is by President Edwards in its natural and proper sense, for *sufficient power*. And if Dr. Junkin is to be turned out of the church for denying that men have ability to love God, what is to become of President Edwards? He asserts that, to say that mankind have "a sufficient power and ability to do all their duty, and to avoid all sin," makes the redemption of Christ needless. He ascribes this opinion to Dr. John Taylor, of whom he says, "he insists upon it, that 'when men have not sufficient power to do their duty they have no duty to do.'" After quoting a few more such passages, he adds, "These things fully imply that men have in their own natural ability sufficient means to avoid sin, and to be perfectly free from it; and so form all the bad consequences of it. And if the means are *sufficient*, then there is no need of more; and therefore there is no need of Christ dying in order to it." *Original sin*, Part III. ch. 1, § 4. The time is come, it seems, when the question is to be settled, whether such sentiments are to be *tolerated* in the Presbyterian church!

to explain himself, and state what he does and does not believe, there can be no objection to allowing Mr. Barnes to pass for perfectly orthodox, if he chooses to endorse only the orthodox portion of his work. But when we are told the book itself does not contain censurable propositions, that even its language is not to be found fault with—language which has led so large a portion of its readers to the conclusion that its author teaches the very doctrines he disclaims—we cannot wonder at the feeling of surprise and indignation which has been excited.

3. What is to be said of the Answer to the protests which we have given above? Is it not wonderful to hear it moved by Dr. Skinner, seconded by Mr. Duffield, and voted, as it would seem without dissent, by the whole majority, 1. THAT THE ERRORS ALLEGED IN THE CHARGES OF DR. JUNKIN ARE NOT TO BE TOLERATED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. 2. THAT UNREGENERATE MEN ARE NOT ABLE TO CONVERT THEMSELVES TO GOD. 3. THAT FAITH IS ONLY THE INSTRUMENT BY WHICH THE BENEFIT OF CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS APPROPRIATED. 4. THAT ADAM IS THE COVENANT AND FEDERAL HEAD OF HIS POSTERITY. 5. THAT THE GUILT OF ADAM'S SIN IS IMPUTED TO ALL MEN. 6. THAT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST IS IMPUTED TO HIS PEOPLE—THAT HIS OBEDIENCE IS SO IMPUTED OR SET TO THEIR ACCOUNT AS TO BECOME THE ONLY MERITORIOUS GROUND OF THEIR SALVATION. Now it cannot be that these brethren are disingenuous in all this; that they mean to 'palter with us in a double sense; and keep the word of promise to our ear, and break it to our hope.' It cannot be. That men acting in their highest character, as members of the supreme court of the church to which they belong, in a solemn official document placed on permanent record, are guilty of such duplicity is too monstrous to be believed. All the bands of society would be loosened, if sincerity on such occasions were not to be taken for granted. Strange, therefore, as this document appears; strongly as it seems in conflict with the previous declarations of its authors, we cannot allow ourselves to doubt that it expresses their real sentiments. If this is not the case, the Presbyterian church should be clothed in sackcloth, and hide itself in the dust from the face of men for ever. We cannot express our sense of the enormity of trifling with the truth of God, in the solemn and official acts of a judicial body. It is the duty, therefore, of every man to dismiss all suspicions of this kind from his mind, and to reconcile as he best can, the statements of this document with the known facts of

the case, and the avowed opinions of its authors. There is one thing to be remarked in the illucidation of this point, which seems to us of importance. The majority state in this answer, "It was a question of fact whether the errors alleged are contained in the book (Notes on Romans); and by the laws of exposition, in the conscientious exercise of their own rights and duties the Assembly have come to the conclusion that the book does not teach the errors charged." This is a fair statement and a fair issue. But how did the Assembly reach the conclusion at which they arrived? They answer, "By a careful analysis of the real meaning of Mr. Barnes under each charge as ascertained by the language of his book, AND THE REVISIONS, DISCLAIMERS, EXPLANATIONS AND DECLARATIONS which he has made." Here is the origin of the difficulty. To ascertain whether the book contains the errors charged, and whether Mr. Barnes holds or avows them are two very different points, which the Assembly have unfortunately confounded. To determine the former, the only proper way is to take the language of the book, and explain it by the laws of exposition. Here Mr. B's *disclaimers, explanations* and *declarations* have nothing to do. The question is not what he believes, but what the book teaches. When, however, the other point is under consideration, his explanations and disclaimers are all important. Had the majority of the Assembly merely arrived at the conclusion that Mr. B. disclaimed these errors, no one would have been surprised. This was the conclusion to which every one seems to have been led. The Presbyterian informed the public, "It is said his defence was a virtual recantation of all his errors, and that he seemed anxious to prove that he was orthodox almost to ultraism." It is no wonder, therefore, that the Assembly were led to the conclusion, that he disclaimed the errors charged. It should, however, be remembered that the point they undertook to prove was, that his book does not contain them. They seem to have forgotten that they were not called upon to state why they did not condemn HIM; but why they did not condemn his BOOK.

It is easy to see the effect of the confusion of these two points, or the whole of the extraordinary document under consideration. It asserts that Mr. Barnes' book does not contain the doctrine that "all sin consists in voluntary action;" yet it contains such passages as the following: "In all this and in all other sin man is voluntary," p. 249. "The passage (*sin is not imputed where there is no law*) states a great and important principle, that men will not be held

guilty unless there is a law that binds them, of which they are apprized, and which they voluntarily transgress," p. 118. Again, "This (Rom. 9: 11) is a very important passage in regard to original sin. It proves, 1. That as yet they (Jacob and Esau) had no moral character. They had *done* nothing good or bad, and where that is the case, there can be no character, for character is the result of conduct." This according to the common "laws of exposition" seems to mean, that until there is actual sin, something bad *done*, there is no moral character; and the passage is said to be important in relation to *original sin*. Yet the Assembly say, "the context, and his own declarations show that he refers to all *actual* sin merely, in which he affirms that the sinner acts under no compulsion." We know no match to this, but Dr. Beecher's declaration that when he said, "A holy or depraved nature is impossible," he meant, "in respect to *actual* depravity."*

* Beecher's Trial, p. 57.

How much better it would be for Dr. Beecher and Mr. Barnes both, instead of asserting that when they said black they meant white, to come out manfully and say they were mistaken. Every one sees that they were mistaken, and that their present explanations and declarations are irreconcilable with their previous statements, and they may as well admit it at once. The fact is, New England men have been so long accustomed to regard the six eastern States as the whole world, and to consider the works of Edwards, West, Bellamy, and a few others, as the only theological writings extant, that when they come to extend their views they find there are many more things in theology than they in their philosophy had dreamt of. Dr. Beecher very ingenuously confesses his surprise at finding the fact that man is a free agent was known in the church, with any distinctness, before the time of Edwards. (Trial, p. 46.) We have ourselves been exceedingly shocked on hearing him from the pulpit attribute the opposite doctrine to old Calvinists, and pronounce it the means of causing the broad stream of souls to set into hell for ages. We certainly did consider him as uttering slander on a very large scale. He now admits that he was mistaken, that the Reformers, Turretin, and old Calvinists taught no such thing, but held the truth. It would cost very little more to acknowledge that he was equally in the dark as to several other matters in the opinions of the same class of men, as, for example, original sin, imputation, &c. When he and others, under erroneous impressions of the old doctrines, put forth round denials of them, and then come to discover that these doctrines are very different things from what they imagined, they should at once say so, and not attempt to make a denial an affirmation. If a man supposed that the Reformers taught the doctrine of physical depravity, that the substance of the soul is corrupt, and that sin is a created essence, and, with a view to disprove this doctrine, should maintain that there can be no depravity "without understanding, conscience and choice;" no sin without voluntary transgression of known law; no moral character before moral conduct, it is a great deal better to retract these sweeping declarations, than to say they relate to *actual* sin and free agency. Whatever they were intended to deny, they do in fact deny the very doctrine of original sin which those who uttered them profess to hold.

These trials have had one good effect. They have set men to studying a

It asserts that the book does not deny that Adam was the covenant and federal head of his posterity. Yet it contains such passages as the following: "Various attempts have been made to explain this. The most common has been that Adam was the representative of the race; that he was a covenant head, and that his sin was imputed to his posterity, and that they were held liable to punishment for it as if they had committed it themselves. But to this there are great and insuperable objections. 1. There is not one word of it in the Bible. Neither the terms, representative, covenant, or impute are ever applied to the transaction in the sacred scriptures. 2. It is a mere philosophical theory; an introduction of a speculation into theology, with an attempt to explain what the Bible has left unexplained," p. 128. Again, "A comparison is also instituted between Adam and Christ in 1 Cor. 15: 22—25. The reason is, not that Adam was the representative or federal head of his race, about which the apostle says nothing, and which is not even implied, but that he was the first of his race; he was the fountain, the head, the father; and the consequences of that first act introducing sin into the world, could be seen every where. The words *representative* and *federal head* are never applied to Adam in the Bible. The reason is, that the word *representative* implies an idea which could not have existed in the case—the consent of those who are represented. Besides, the Bible does not teach that they acted in him, or by him; or that he acted *for* them. No passage has ever yet been found that stated this doctrine," p. 120, 121. Yet this document affirms that Mr. Barnes no where denies "that Adam was the covenant and federal head of his posterity"!

With respect to the imputation of Adam's sin, it is admitted that the book does deny the doctrine, but "the imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin" it is said, "Mr. Barnes affirms." The question then is, does the book teach or deny the imputation of Adam's sin? What is the meaning of the question? What does Mr. B. understand by the word *guilt*? On page 82 of his Notes he says, "It (*guilty*) is never used to denote simply an obligation to punishment, but with reference to the fact that the punishment is personally deserved." According to this definition of the word *guilt*, we are at

little. We see evident traces of progress even in Professor Stuart (though very little, we confess, he moves in a circle), more in Mr. Barnes, and still more in Dr. Beecher. We think there is truth as well as humour in the remark attributed to good old Dr. Wilson of Cincinnati, that 'if we have a few more prosecutions, the new-school men will become more orthodox than the strictest of us.'

a loss to know what the phrase imputation of the guilt of Adam's sin means. Does it mean the imputation of Adam's personal obligation to punishment, his personal criminality? In his defence, however p. 196, Mr. B. says, "To impute *sin itself* to a man is one thing; to impute the *obligation to punishment* is another thing. The latter is the doctrine of the standards; the former is not." Again, "The confession is explicit. It does not say that the first SIN of Adam is changed on his posterity, but that the GUILT of that sin is so charged on them," p. 217. Well, then, does Mr. Barnes' book teach that the guilt of Adam's sin, i. e. *an obligation to punishment* on account of it, is charged on all men? On p. 10. the book denies, "that men are held responsible, [i. e. bound to suffer punishment] for a deed committed thousands of years before they were born;" on p. 128, it is denied that men are "held liable to punishment for it;" on p. 123, it is affirmed there is no reason to believe that men "are held to be guilty of his sin, without participation of their own, or without personal sin." It frequently asserts that the word *impute* is "never used in the sense of transferring, or of *charging that on* one which does not properly belong to him," or "which ought not to be charged on him as a matter of *personal right*."

Finally, this document affirms that Mr. Barnes teaches "the imputation of the righteousness of Christ," "his obedience," he teaches, "is so imputed or set to our account as to be the only meritorious ground of our justification." Yet the book contains such passages as the following: "When therefore, it is said that the righteousness of Christ is accounted or imputed to us; when it is said that his merits are transferred and reckoned as ours, whatever may be the truth of the doctrine, it cannot be defended by *this* passage of scripture," p. 95. This is an intimation at least. What follows is more distinct. "I have examined all the passages (in which the word for *impute* occurs), and as the result of my examination, have come to the conclusion that there is not one in which the word is used in the sense of reckoning or imputing to a man that which does not strictly belong to him; or of charging on him that which *ought* not to be charged on him as a matter of personal right. The word is never used to denote imputing in the sense of transferring, or of charging that on one which does not properly belong to him. The same is the case in the New Testament. The word occurs about forty times, and in a similar signification. No doctrine, of transferring, or of *setting over to* a man what does not properly belong to him, be it sin or

holiness, can be derived, therefore, from this word," p. 95. "But if the doctrine of the scriptures, was that the entire righteousness of Christ was *set over* to them, was transferred to them *in any sense*, with what propriety could the apostle say that God justified the *ungodly*?" p. 96. The declaration repeatedly occurs that the word *impute* never means to set to a man's account what does not properly or personally belong to him; and as the righteousness of Christ is of course not personally or properly the believer's own righteousness, the book denies the imputation of that righteousness. Indeed in the last quotation given above, it is expressly denied that *it is set over* to the believer.

It is certainly a very unhappy thing that the solemn official declarations of the General Assembly should seem to be in such direct contradiction to obvious and notorious facts. The explanation which we have suggested, we have no doubt is the correct one. The Assembly have in fact told us what Mr. B. according to his *explanations, disclaimers and declarations* before them, professed to teach, and this they have inadvertently confounded with what his book teaches. We do not doubt that Mr. Barnes professed his faith in all these doctrines, and did retract his errors, but every impartial man must admit that his book does contain plain, pointed, and argumentative denials of the several points which we have specified. Now if these errors are in the opinion of this General Assembly not to be *tolerated* in our church, if the book contains such assertions respecting them, if it is notorious, that in all parts of the country, and by all classes of theologians, it has been understood distinctly to avow these errors, was it too great a concession for the Assembly, to condemn at least these assertions? Ought not those men who professed their willingness to stay in Pittsburgh all summer, and fast and pray, to prevent a division of the church, to have paused before they dismissed this book "without reproach?" Should they have disregarded the earnest appeal and remonstrance of Dr. Hoge, warning them that such a course would convulse the church to its very centre?

Good, however, often comes out of evil. The protests against the course adopted by the majority, called forth this Answer which goes much farther than Dr. Miller's resolution; farther than the famous Act and Testimony; farther than the much decried resolutions of the Assembly of last year. It goes farther in support of orthodoxy, and in condemning new school theology in every form, than any act of any Assembly, with which we are acquainted. Let the churches,

for their consolation, listen to this. "So far is the Assembly from countenancing the errors alleged in the charges of Dr. Junkin, that they do **CORDIALLY** and **EX-ANIMO** adopt the Confession of Faith of our church, on **THE POINTS OF DOCTRINE IN QUESTION** according to its **OBVIOUS AND MOST PREVALENT INTERPRETATION.**" Some of these points of doctrine are original sin, ability, imputation and justification. Let us hear the language of the confession, "By this sin (eating the forbidden fruit) they (our first parents) fell from their original righteousness, and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body. They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descending from them by ordinary generation. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly *indisposed, disabled,* and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions," ch. 6. Again, "Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man being altogether averse from that which is good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into a state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so as that, by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil." "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man; who is *altogether passive therein* until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it," chs. 9, 10.

Again, "Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by *imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ* unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, it is the gift

of God." "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf. Yet, inasmuch as he was given by the Father for them, and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice, and rich grace of God, might be glorified in the justification of sinners," ch. 11.

All this beautiful and precious truth the Assembly solemnly declare they "do cordially and ex-amino adopt," according to its "OBVIOUS AND MOST PREVALENT INTERPRETATION," and farther, that the errors contrary thereto are not to be *tolerated* in the Presbyterian church. We hold them to their bond. They have thus digged the grave of new school theology, and declared it to be unfit to remain on the face of the earth. What an unexpected termination to this long struggle!* We do not see how the new-school men are to survive this affair. If they are sincere in their declaration, then they have struck their flag and become orthodox; if they are not sincere, they must forfeit the confidence of every honest man in the community.

The length of the preceding discussion precludes the possibility of our entering very fully into any reflections on the present aspect of the affairs of our church. They have been brought to a crisis by the action of the late Assembly. There is great need, therefore, of mutual instruction and conference, and especially of much prayer for divine direction. The question forces itself on every mind, and is repeated from every quarter, what ought to be done? Without attempting to answer this question either definitely or in detail, there are some obvious principles which it may not be useless briefly to state.

1. In the first place, nothing, in so momentous a concern, should be done under the sudden impulse of even good feeling. A zeal for truth, a sense of wrong, a conviction of danger to the best interests of the church may be so excited by

* "They digg'd a pit, they digg'd it deep,
They digg'd it for their brother,
And for their sin, they did fall in
The pit, they digg'd for t'other."

Sternhold and Hopkins.

It is currently reported that it was Dr. BEECHER, who thus converted the whole Assembly, led them back into the strong holds of orthodoxy, and then turned the key upon them—that he was the main author of the wonderful document presented by Dr. Skinner, and adopted by the majority. If this is so, we owe him many thanks. It is certainly the greatest exploit of his life.

recent events, as to urge even wise men to measures, which in cooler moments neither their judgments nor conscience would approve.

2. Nothing should be done on vague or indefinite grounds. Men are very apt to satisfy themselves of the propriety of taking almost any course, not obviously immoral, if they feel that they are actuated by good motives. It is not enough, however, in such matters, that we should desire to promote the purity of the church, or the general interests of religion; we must have some definite principles, which will commend themselves to the understanding and conscience, and which will bear the scrutiny of posterity and ——— of the bar of God. We must be able to give a reason for our conduct which shall satisfy the impartial and competent, that it is right and wise; that it necessarily results from our principles. We consider this a matter of great importance. Every day affords melancholy examples of the confusion and inconsistency which arise from acting on the mere general ground of doing what seems to make for truth and righteousness. Measures involving precisely the same principles are opposed or advocated by the same individuals, as they happen to make for or against the cause or the party which seems to them to be the best. We see constantly in our public judicatories, the power of the courts extended or contracted, the rules of procedure enforced to the letter or construed away to nothing, as the occasion requires. This is not always, nor, we trust generally, the result of dishonesty. It is the result of the want of fixed principles. Hence this inconsistency; this justifying to-day, what was condemned yesterday; this applauding in one man what is censured in another. If so much evil results from this source, in matters of ordinary routine, what must be the consequences of random action, on occasions which threaten organic changes, whose effects are to last for ages?

3. Nothing should be done by a part, which affects the interests of the whole. The church is not a voluntary society, which one may enter or withdraw from at pleasure. It is an army, of which the several portions are bound to each other and to their common head, by very strong bonds, not to be lightly severed. It is obvious that the reasons must be very strong indeed to justify one division of an army engaged in a perilous campaign, in withdrawing from its associates and seeking its own ease or safety. It is not enough to authorize such a step, that it is dissatisfied with the conduct of the commander, or that it supposes it can provide more effec-

tually for its own interests by itself. * The consequence of such defection, however, may be to bring ruin on the whole, and can never be justified except in those extreme cases, which are a law unto themselves. We doubt not that our southern brethren feel that they would be in many respects more secure if separated from the north; that they would be more unembarrassed in their efforts for the good of the coloured population; freed from the necessity of vindicating themselves from the change of a fellow feeling with some of their ecclesiastical associates, they would have more leisure and more power for their own appropriate work. Admitting, however, what we are very far from believing, that their peculiar interests would be more effectually promoted by a separate organization, the duty or propriety of such separation is not thereby established. Would the good of the whole be promoted by it? Would the best interests of the church and the country be thereby advanced, not for the present merely, but for the long uncertain future? Alas, who can tell how pregnant with future woes, such an event might prove. Again, there are portions of the church which are so compact in their geographical limits, so homogeneous in their population, so harmonious in their theological opinions, as to be tempted to believe they would have much greater peace, security and prosperity, by being entirely disconnected from all the rest. Suppose all this is true, would they be justified in withdrawing? What then would become of the rest? Is it wise to take the balance wheel out of a rapidly revolving machine, and let the whole go to ruin, for the sake of the supposed and doubtful benefit of that one wheel? It surely cannot be denied that the constituent parts of such a body as a great ecclesiastical society, organized as one church, with common standards and a common constitution are under very strong moral obligations to each other and to the whole; that no one part has a right to dictate to the rest, nor to consult exclusively its own interests, nor make its own opinions the rule even of its own action. It can have no right to bring irreparable evils on others for its own sake, nor to jeopard the interests of the whole by acting on its own views, as though it were a whole by itself. Whatever therefore is to be done should be done with the concurrence and co-operation of all those interested in the result. Such concurrence cannot be secured unless there be mutual forbearance, concessions, and confidence. There must be a determination on the part of all, to yield their private opinions or judgment to the majority of those concerned, whatever that may

prove eventually to be. Unless God gives us grace to be humble, it is very plain we are ruined.

4. There can be no doubt that the separation of a church is an extreme measure, to be justified before our Supreme Judge, our own conscience, and before the world, by absolute necessity alone. We are obviously bound by our mutual engagements to submit to the regular operation of our own system, and abide by the decisions of our own judicatories, except in those cases which justify revolution. This being the fact, it is incumbent on those who assume that such a case has arisen, to make it out; to present and establish the principle on which the separation of a church becomes a duty; for when not a duty, it is a crime. A preliminary point, therefore, absolutely necessary to satisfy the judgment and conscience of the church, in this momentous concern, is to ascertain and establish this principle. What is it? We acknowledge ourselves ignorant of the views of the brethren on this subject. It can hardly be that the opinion sometimes presented, is very prevalent, that any portion of the church has a right to separate from the rest, when its own peculiar interests may thereby be better promoted. We have already remarked that this opinion is founded on an entire forgetfulness of the relation of the several parts of the church to each other, and the duty of each to consult not its own good merely, but the greatest good of the whole. Others may take the ground that whenever a church consists of such discordant materials that there is frequent collisions between them, it is best for them to separate. But this is obviously much too indefinite. It is a mere matter of opinion which every one must decide for himself, whether the evils of collision are in any given case, greater than the evils of separation. Men accordant in their theological views, in all their personal feelings and plans of operation, may well come to opposite conclusions as to such a question as this. It affords no principle of division. It may separate the most congenial. It binds no man's conscience. Besides, where is it to end? Is collision from whatever source it arises, to be perpetually a ground of separation? If so, we shall have to divide and subdivide until we are reduced to our original elements. We had better renounce our principles, and become congregationalists at once. And then if any man should start up and apply to the congregation, the rule that had been applied to the church as a whole, we know not what is to become of us. Were the same principle to be applied to civil communities, society could not hold together at all.

Others may be disposed to take the more plausible ground that when the majority of a church has become unsound, it is the duty of the minority to separate; either by secession, or by assuming to be the true church and disowning the other portion. There are two things to be here determined, before this can be practically applied to our case. First, the soundness of the principle itself, and secondly, the proof of the fact that the majority of the Presbyterian church is unsound. Both of these points must be made out before the churches can be expected to act in the case. It would require far more time and space than we can command, to do any thing like justice to either of these points. We shall, therefore, say only a few words on each, inverting their order. First, then, is the majority of the Presbyterian church unsound? It might be difficult to decide on what is to be considered the test of soundness. If the *cordial* and *ex-animo* adoption of the confession of faith, according to its obvious and most prevalent interpretation, is to be the test, since the late Assembly we are all sound. We are saved much trouble, however, on this point by the frequent admissions from the most zealous men amongst us, that the majority of the church is substantially sound, that all that is needed is to rouse it to a sense of the necessity for action. These declarations were made previously to the Assembly of 1835. The character of that body greatly increased the confidence of all concerned in their correctness. If the contrary is to be now assumed, it must be on the evidence afforded by acts of the Assembly which has just closed its sessions. The question then is, do those acts furnish such evidence of this fact as to satisfy the churches and make them feel the necessity for a separation? Assuming, what is surely as much as can be asked for, that all who voted against the formation of a Foreign Missionary Board, against the resolution to censure Mr. Barnes' book, or displacing the old members of the Board of Missions, are to be considered unsound, what is the result? The first vote on the Foreign Missionary Society was 134 in favour of it, to 133 against it. A majority of *one* on the right side. It is evident, that such a question is no fair test. When the second vote was taken it was decided in the negative, by a vote of 110 to 106; that is, 110 men finally rejected a measure for which 134 had previously voted. This is a greater evidence of a dereliction of a duty on the part of the orthodox in not remaining to the close of the sessions, than of the unsoundness of the majority of the house. On Dr. Miller's resolution, the vote stood 122 to 109. This was in the absence of the synod of Philadel-

phia; and at most it exhibits only 122 votes out of 270, the whole number of the Assembly, of whom from 134 to 140 had voted with the opposite party. On the election of the Board of Missions the vote stood about 140 for the old Board to 125 for the new. It appears, therefore, taking the worst possible view of the case, that every question which has seriously agitated the church was decided by a comparatively small minority of the whole Assembly. Is this to be considered decisive evidence that the majority of the Presbyterian church is unsound? Besides, the character of the majority of any particular Assembly, is obviously a most fallacious test of the state of the whole church. The character of the Assembly depends upon a multitude of circumstances, which it must be next to impossible to estimate. The Assembly of 1835 was strongly old school: that of 1836, for a part of the time at least, was the reverse. Has the state of the church, however, materially changed, during the last twelve months? This cannot be pretended. Those, therefore, who now contrary to their belief a year ago, would assume that the majority of the case is unsound, must produce some better evidence than the relative strength of parties in the late Assembly, before the churches will yield to the melancholy conviction. The character of the answer to the protests presented by Drs. Phillips and Hoge, furnishes a far better index to the state of the church than any vote of the General Assembly. That answer yields every thing, and professes every thing for which the most orthodox have ever contended. Those who believe its authors perfectly sincere, must of course admit that the battle is won; and those who can find it in their hearts to question their sincerity, must at least see that those authors themselves felt that the public sentiment of the church is orthodox, and demands the profession of the most thorough orthodoxy from its representatives. Take it, therefore, either way, it goes to prove the soundness of the church. Our faith in the orthodoxy of the great body of the Presbyterian denomination, much as we disapprove of the acts of the majority of the late Assembly, remains unshaken; and we feel satisfied that it requires nothing but wisdom, union, and efficiency, on the part of the orthodox, to make the fact abundantly evident.

As to the second point, the correctness of the principle itself, that when the majority of a church is unsound, it is the duty of the minority to separate, we are not prepared to say that there may not be some extreme cases in which it may be correct. There may be instances in which the majority

is so great, their conduct so oppressive, and the defection from the truth so serious as to render separation a duty. But these cases are exceptions, and are not, properly speaking, included in the simple principle under consideration. The principle itself, as a general rule, we think incorrect, for the following reasons: 1. The minority do not in fact profess, and are not regarded by other churches, or by the world, as professing or in any way sanctioning the opinions of the majority. They profess the doctrines contained in the standards of the church to which they belong. The Episcopalian professes his faith in the Thirty-nine Articles, and is not in conscience bound to leave his church, because he may think a majority of its members are Arminians or Pelagians. The Presbyterian professes to believe the Westminster Confession, and not the varied and contradictory opinions of those who may be associated with him in the same denomination. When the defection of the majority is from the very essentials of the gospel, so that they cease to be a Christian church, and where our association with them is such as to involve an admission of their Christian character, the case is altered. But this, as before remarked, comes under a different principle. A minority, therefore, is not bound in conscience, and if not bound, is not authorized, to separate from the church to which it belongs, on the ground that it is responsible for the opinions of the majority. 2. The name, the character, the influence, the institutions, the various resources of a church are a sacred deposit held in trust, for the secure keeping and safe transmission of which all its members are jointly and severally responsible. Any mode of separation that would throw this deposit entirely into hands which, in the judgment of the minority, would use it for purposes foreign to its original design, must be regarded as virtually a breach of trust. They are responsible for the right use of these various sources of influence, and consequently are bound to do all in their power to secure their proper management. Is it to be supposed that the founders of our seminaries would have entrusted their money to men, who they imagined would on the first defeat in the Assembly, abandon the trust into hands which were never intended to receive it? This is a very serious view of the subject, as it relates to a question of moral obligation. The evil is scarcely less, if any course should be taken which would make the property of the church a subject of protracted and doubtful litigation. 3. The evils attending such separations are incalculably great. The division runs through every judicatory, through individual congregations, and even

through families, producing discord, alienation and rivalry in its course. It almost always greatly promotes the power and permanence of error. In our own case, it is doubtful whether human ingenuity could devise a scheme more certain to render Pelagianism prevalent in the Presbyterian church, perhaps for generations, than the defection of the orthodox party. We do not mean to say that any considerable portion of the new-school party is now Pelagian. But this is the tendency of the age; and the leaning of the leaders of that party. When once separated from the stricter portion of the church, in what a condition would they be placed! Discordant among themselves, with no principle of union, except the negative one of general license of opinion and measures,* is it not to be feared their career would be most disastrous for the church and the country? Shall the name, the character, the resources of the Presbyterian church be surrendered to promote such results? Shall every thing be given up to advance the very cause we are so anxious to oppose? Besides, if division once begin, where is it to end? Is there not danger that when the name, the associations, the bond of sympathy, are given up, we shall break into numerous and inefficient bodies, and become the wonder and pity, instead of the admiration and blessing of the country. 4. All experience is against the course we have been considering. This might easily be shown from the history of the church, but it is too wide a field for us now to enter upon. The conduct and triumph of Witherspoon and his associates in the kirk of Scotland, are at once a guide and encouragement for those, in our own church, who profess to admire his principles. 5. It would be now more unwise than ever, because the prospect of the triumph of correct principles is better now than it has been for years. The action of the late Assembly has consolidated and thereby strengthened the ranks of the friends of truth and order. The new-school men have placed themselves in a false position. They at first refused to condemn a work which the public sentiment of the church unquestionably disapproves of; and then went to the opposite extreme of adopting the very language of the *ultra orthodox*, as they have been accustomed to call them. To give up now would be to turn back when we have the goal in sight. All that we need is Presbyterianism—let our own system have its way—

* We infer from the frequency with which the sentiment is quoted, that any man who does not deny the ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY, they would admit even under the present constitution of the Presbyterian church.

it is able to stand worse times than these. If faithful to their principles, if prayerful and active, the friends of the Presbyterian church have no reason to fear the result.

We cannot see, therefore, how any set of men can with a good conscience, desire to effect the division of the church until they are called upon to profess what they do not believe, or required to do what they cannot approve. This, as far as we can see, is the only principle which can bear the test; which will acquit us in the sight of God and man, for tearing asunder that portion of the church of Christ committed to our care.* We know not how good can result. Instead of producing peace; it will probably increase discord. Instead of promoting truth; it will probably render error triumphant. Instead of advancing the interests of Presbyterianism; it will probably destroy its influence. In taking a step involving the interests of so large a portion of Zion, and affecting generations yet unborn, how much wisdom, humility and prayer are needed! May He in whom are all our hopes, guide his people in the right path.

We conclude these remarks as we began, by saying, that whatever is done should be done with the concurrence as far as possible of all concerned. The few should yield to the many. If the church is to be divided, though we disapprove of the principle and deprecate the consequences, the responsibility will rest with those who effect it. Let it, if possible, be done harmoniously. Let some fair principle of separation be established, and when the deed is done, every man will have his choice where to pitch his tent.

* That it may not be supposed that this is the opinion of men who have often been considered too moderate, we quote the following passage from an article in vindication of the Act and Testimony, published in the Presbyterian for Dec. 4, 1834, and signed R. J. B. "As long as our standards remain such as we can from our hearts approve them—at the same time that we have liberty to preach and live by them, and testify against those who do neither—we have no sufficient ground to secede, nor any thought of doing so. Secession is indeed an easier work than reformation; but the latter is our present duty."