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No. III.

Art. I.—Three Sermons upon Human Nature, being the first, second, and third of fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel. By Joseph Butler, LL.D., late Lord Bishop of Bristol; as published in two volumes at Glasgow, in 1769.

DURING a long period after the commencement of philosophical inquiries concerning morals, it seems to have been taken for granted, that all motives to action in men, as in mere animals, originate in regard for self, and the natural tendency of all sensitive beings to self-preservation. The appetites, the desires, and even in most instances the social affections were resolved into modifications of self-love. The instinctive pursuit of self-gratification was the principle to which all action must be reduced; and somewhere in that sort of transmuted essence the elements of morals were presumed to reside. No sentiment was entertained, by some of the most popular philosophers, of the reality of moral distinctions. Law and morality were considered as mere suggestions of interest, changing with circumstances. And by those who, with Grotius, recoiled from this revolting degradation of man's moral nature, the highest point of approximation towards a satisfactory theory of morals was the

Charles F. Johnson

ART. VI.—*The General Assembly of 1840.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, met agreeably to appointment in the Seventh Presbyterian church, in the city of Philadelphia, on Thursday, the 21st of May, A. D. 1840; and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Joshua L. Wilson, D.D. the moderator of the last Assembly, from 1 Cor. 11: 19. ‘For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.’

The Rev. Wm. M. Engles, D.D. was elected moderator, and the Rev. Sylvester Scovel, temporary clerk.

Correspondence with other Churches.

The following letter was received from the General Synod of Ulster.

“BELFAST, July 4th, 1839.

“Dearly Beloved Brethren,

“Your kind and brotherly communication bearing date the 1st of June, 1838, was this day laid before us. It is truly delightful and refreshing to us to hold intercourse with brethren in the Lord of any country; but as many of the inhabitants of the Western Continent are our brethren by blood as well as by baptism into one body, we feel ourselves in a more than ordinary degree interested in all that regards their religious condition and prospects.

“We have been much distressed by the distractions and divisions in the Presbyterian Church of the United States, an account of which you have communicated to us in your esteemed letter. We sincerely sympathise with you, beloved brethren, in the difficulties which have arisen out of those divisions; and we shall continue to implore the Prince of Peace, the Great King and Head of the Church, who alone is able to bring order out of confusion, that he may deliver His Church among you from all error and schism, and re-establish it in peace and truth.

“In relation to our own condition and prospects, we have reason to thank Almighty God that he has been steadily bringing us back to the sound principles established by our reformed and covenanting fathers; and we have unbounded cause to bless him for the prosperity and success which he has bestowed upon us in following out those principles. We have now nearly three hundred churches, the greater number of which are planted with active and faithful ministers. We have a Home Mission under the superintendence of the Church, in successful operation, by which new churches are rapidly rising in the several provinces of this island. At our present meeting, we have had the inexpressible pleasure of receiving into communion and under our jurisdiction and care, a Roman Catholic priest, together with his whole congregation, who after due and deliberate inquiry, had embraced the doctrine and worship of the Presbyterian church. We have also resolved upon a Mission to India, and trust that the Giver of all good and perfect gifts will enable us to carry it soon into effect.

“We confess, dear brethren, that these are but “small things.” Compared with the splendid operations of the American churches, they must appear insig-

nificant. But it must be recollected that we are comparatively a small body ; and that it is but a few years since the commencement of the emancipation of our Synod from prevalent error, and of the revival of pure and undefiled religion within our churches.

“ Since the return of our Synod to the principles held by the venerated founders and fathers of the Scottish Church, and of her branches both in Ireland and America, we have had the high privilege of being re-admitted into ministerial communion with our parent Church in Scotland, from which we have already experienced great benefit and advantage to the common cause of our faith and our Church. We have also reason to entertain the delightful hope that, at no very distant period, an ecclesiastical union may be expected to take place between our Synod and the highly respectable branch of the Secession Church long established in this country. The foundation of this auspicious revival of love and unity among the Presbyterian churches of Britain, is the maintenance of that invaluable Confession which was, two centuries ago, adopted as the basis of uniformity in religion throughout these kingdoms. To the Westminster Confession of Faith, and to the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as received by the Church of Scotland in the years 1647 and 1648, we adhere without limitation or exception ; and by frequent and strict examinations we carefully guard against the admission of any ministers who do not cordially believe the doctrines of those standards.

“ Notwithstanding the professed maintenance of the same standards by our sister Church in America, we have heard, dear brethren, with great pain, that some dangerous errors upon the all-important doctrines of original sin, the atonement of Christ and the efficacy of Divine grace ; and in relation to the internal organization of the Christian church, have been laid to the charge of ministers and congregations among you bearing the name of Presbyterian. We would fondly hope that such serious errors are confined to a very few ; and that now, when public attention has been directed to the subject, they will soon be altogether removed, and the truth in its scriptural purity, as set forth in our common Confession, be happily re-established in the American Presbyterian Church.

“ It is some time ago since rumours of those alleged errors and irregularities being prevalent among members of your Church, reached our ears ; and it occasioned us no little uneasiness, especially when respected brethren, members of your venerable Assembly, have appeared at our Synods. Under such circumstances we felt ourselves not to be at liberty to invite them to sit with us. We take this opportunity of assuring you, beloved brethren, that this apparent neglect proceeded from no want of esteem or affection for our American brethren. But not possessing adequate knowledge of the nature of those errors or disorders, or of the religious opinions of individual members, we were very reluctantly compelled to suspend, on those occasions, ministerial intercourse with a Church to which we have been ever accustomed to look with fraternal and profound respect.

“ That the God of all truth and peace may enable you to return heartily and unanimously to the sound doctrines and principles of the Reformers, that He may make you strong by union in the truth, and greatly prosper his own cause by your instrumentality, and that there may be a cordial renewal of ministerial intercourse between your venerable Assembly and our Synod, will be the constant and earnest prayer of your affectionate brethren in the Lord, the ministers and elders of the General Synod of Ulster.

“ Signed in the name, and on the behalf, of three hundred ministers and elders, assembled in Synod at Belfast, in Ireland, this fourth day of July, 1839.

“ JAMES DURHAM, *Moderator.*

“ JAMES SEATON REID, D.D., *Clerk of Synod.*”

Letters were also received from the United Secession Sy-

nod of the Secession Church of Scotland, and from the Congregational Union of England and Wales, to all of which answers were returned.

A communication from the General Conference of Maine, proposing a correspondence with the General Assembly was received, and referred to a special committee, consisting of Messrs. M'Pheeters, Doolittle, and Sterrit. This committee subsequently made the following report, which was adopted, viz: "Although the subject referred to the committee has respect only to one ecclesiastical body, yet your committee are of opinion that the action of the Assembly in the premises, whatever that action may be, will naturally involve principles bearing on any similar case.

"While, therefore, your committee is of opinion that there is no ecclesiastical body in the land with which the Assembly could more profitably and cordially correspond and fraternize than with the General Conference of Maine, yet as the whole question which relates to correspondence with other churches at home and abroad, is one, in some of its aspects at least, of much interest, and concerning which there exists considerable diversity of opinion, your committee respectfully recommend that the communication from the General Conference of Maine be laid upon the table, subject to the call of any member of the house, and with the understanding that when called up, the whole subject of ecclesiastical correspondence shall, on motion, be open for discussion, and for the action of the Assembly." The subject was afterwards called up, and it was *Resolved*, That the invitation from the General Conference of Maine, proposing the renewal of correspondence, be accepted. The Rev. Reuben Smith was elected the delegate to that Conference. Dr. Spring was appointed as his alternate.

We greatly rejoice in this decision. Our church has suffered so much from allowing the bridge of her discipline to be broken down, and permitting those who did not even profess to adopt our standards of doctrine and order to enter our communion, not merely as correspondents, but as full and governing members of the church, that we do not wonder at some manifestation of a disposition to go to the opposite extreme. As we have suffered from too intimate union, some are prepared for absolute non-intercourse. It seems, however, very plain that no intercourse with our fellow Christians ought to be repudiated, which does not endanger the doctrines or discipline which we are pledged to sup-

port. And it appears no less plain that our doctrines and discipline are secure, as far as this matter is concerned, so long as we do not admit to a participation in the government of the church those who do not adopt our standards, and submit to the government which they help to administer. The friendly intercourse kept up by an interchange of delegates between independent evangelical bodies, is a testimony before the world of union in all the essential principles of the gospel. It is a public recognition of a brotherhood, which no one hesitates to acknowledge in private. It is an answer to the cavils of papists and infidels arising from the dissensions or sects of Protestants; and it tends to promote the feeling of which it is the expression. In other words, it tends to promote true religion, and the glory of God. It moreover serves to remove prejudices and to diffuse correct information between the different portions of the great family of evangelical Christians. We, therefore, greatly rejoice that the General Assembly seems disposed to accept the hand of every follower of Christ, proffered to it as the expression of confidence and brotherly regard.

In reference to the Association of Connecticut, Dr. Spring moved the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted: "*Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to revise the articles of correspondence between this General Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut, with a particular view of ascertaining whether the certificates given to ministers and candidates from the state of Connecticut, shall not hereafter be required from the Pastoral Union, and not as heretofore from the General Association; and that this committee report to the next Assembly." Messrs. Gardiner Spring, William W. Phillips and John M. Krebs were appointed the committee.

Judicial Cases.

The first case of this kind which occupied the attention of the Assembly was an appeal of the Rev. W. S. Frazer, from a decision of the Synod of Illinois, confirming the sentence of the presbytery of Kaskaskia, by which he was suspended from the gospel ministry. This case occupied much of the time of the Assembly, and was finally determined by a vote in favour of appellant; seventy-nine members voting to sustain the appeal, and forty-one against sustaining it. A committee was appointed to prepare a minute on this case, who presented the following: "While the Assembly cannot re-

frain from expressing their deep concern that the spirit which has been exhibited in the prosecution of this appeal, both by the prosecutor and the appellant, in the matters complained of, appears to have been very far from that discretion and high minded Christian deportment which are honorable to the ministerial character; yet in the judgment of this Assembly the appeal is sustained, both on the ground of irregularity in the courts below, and for the want of sufficient testimony. The Assembly do moreover affectionately and solemnly enjoin it upon the prosecutor and the appellant, and all the parties concerned, to cultivate a spirit of brotherly love; to seek to heal the wounds this unhappy controversy has inflicted; and to unite their efforts and prayers for the extension and power of vital godliness in the destitute regions, where the Lord of the harvest has called them to labour."

The minority of the committee presented as an amendment the following paragraph, to be inserted after the words "for the want of sufficient testimony," viz: "And particularly in regard to the transaction involved in the third specification, while it is admitted Mr. Frazer may hitherto have retained in his own hands, a sum of money, which he received from a subscriber to the funds of McDonough college, without any dishonest intention, the Assembly are constrained to express their decided disapprobation of the act, as unjustifiable and peculiarly calculated to bring reproach on the Gospel ministry; and their full conviction that he ought immediately to pay over the money to the institution for which it was originally intended, or (as he received it when no longer acting as an agent of the college) to restore it to the subscriber." This amendment was cut off by the *previous question*, and the minute as originally proposed was adopted.

A second judicial case was what is called the "appeal and complaint" of Samuel Lowrie against the decision of the Synod of Illinois, refusing to sustain his complaint against the presbytery of Peoria, for recognizing a second church in the town of Peoria. This case was taken up and regularly issued by the Assembly. It is twice or oftener called on the minutes an appeal, as well as a complaint. The presbytery of Peoria, it seems, had formed or recognized a second church in the town of Peoria, which act Mr. Lowrie, believing to be irregular or injurious, complained of to the Synod of Illinois. The Synod decided against sustaining his complaint; from this decision he appealed to the General As-

sembly, and complained at the same time. This is in perfect accordance with the uniform practice of our church; though we are not sure that it is consistent with the decision of the Assembly of 1839, which we believe stands without a precedent on the records, that appeals must be confined to strictly judicial cases; cases in which there are an accuser, defendant, and a sentence of condemnation or acquittal. It is however perfectly consistent with the constitution and practice of our church, and of all other Presbyterian churches, that the propriety or constitutionality of an executive act of a session or Presbytery may be submitted to a judicial investigation. Thus in the present instance; the executive act of the Presbytery of Peoria, in forming or recognizing a second church, was by the complaint of Mr. Lowrie brought under the judicial review of the Synod. They pronounced the act proper and regular. From this decision Mr. Lowrie had the right of appeal, or complaint. He seems to have availed himself of both modes of redress, as both terms are used in the minutes with regard to the case.

The Assembly having heard the documents and the parties, referred the whole matter to a committee to prepare a minute expressive of the judgment of the house. We call attention also to this familiar and proper method of proceeding, because its propriety has sometimes been questioned. Our readers may remember that in the case of Mr. Barnes, the appointment of a committee to draft a resolution which should express the judgment of the house was strenuously resisted, on the ground that the only question which could properly be submitted, was, sustain or not sustain? It was in vain urged that in a multitude of cases the decision of that question would not express the judgment of the house, who might be disposed to sustain in part, and not in whole; sustain as to a point of order, but not on the merits; therefore it was indispensable in order to the ends of justice that a minute should be formed, stating exactly wherein the appeal was sustained, and wherein it was refused. Thus in this case of Mr. Lowrie, before any decision of the case, the matter was referred to a committee to prepare a minute which should state how far the Assembly thought the complaint ought to be sustained, and how far the Synod and Presbytery were justifiable in what they had done. This committee made the following report, which was adopted by the house: "The Assembly after hearing the documents and the parties in the case of the complaint of Mr. Lowrie, against the deci-

sion of the Synod of Illinois, by which they affirmed the decision of the Presbytery of Peoria, establishing a second Presbyterian church in the town of Peoria, do judge that the complaint of Mr. Lowrie be, and it hereby is, sustained *pro forma*, it having been regularly conducted, and there appearing just grounds of complaint on account of irregularity, and also on account of allegations made against Mr. Lowrie, some of which have been disproved, and others not sustained by evidence. But it is not intended by this manner of sustaining the complaint, to reverse the decision of the Synod, inasmuch as the Assembly believes that the better way of redressing the evils which have arisen there is not to dissolve the said second church, but to adopt some mode of pacification, and prevent if possible the recurrence of similar disorders.

“The Assembly therefore fix the seal of their disapprobation upon the following irregularities, namely:

“1. The conduct of the Rev. Mr. Keller, in dividing the church of Peoria, by which he did not make a separation from the great body of the Presbyterian church, but a schism in the body, contrary to the word of God, and the government of the church, which allow of the division of the church universal into separate congregations only when the people of God are too numerous or too remote from each other to assemble in one place to worship God. This procedure of Mr. Keller was the more culpable, as the party he organized into a church endeavoured to assume the name and take the place of the regular church of Peoria.

“2d. The presbytery of Peoria are culpable for not calling Mr. Keller to order when he disregarded their advice to desist from preaching in the town of Peoria.

“3d. The Synod of Illinois have not discharged their duty. They ought to have spread upon their records every thing which influenced their judgment in the case, and also to have sent to this Assembly authentic copies of the whole proceedings, with all the documents which had been regularly before them. They also seem to have overlooked the irregularity of the presbytery in dividing a congregation, when there was no request from the people on the subject.

“It is manifestly lawful, but deemed by the Assembly inexpedient to dissolve the second church in Peoria; but in order to bring matters back to a state of order and harmony, the General Assembly hereby direct the Synod of Illinois, at its first meeting, to appoint a committee composed of men known to be of sound judgment and pacific in their charac-

ters, and not obnoxious to either of the churches now established in that town, to visit those churches as soon as practicable, and use their best endeavours to bring them in one harmonious body: that they may not, as separate and feeble sections of the same body, remain a reproach among their adversaries. In the mean time, the Assembly enjoin it upon the members and officers of the said churches to exercise mutual forbearance and Christian kindness, that they may be prepared to profit from a visit by the committee of synod."

Another complaint was that presented by the presbytery of Blairsville against the synod of Pittsburgh, in reference to the condemnation or non-approval of the decision of the said presbytery, made October 2d, 1839, on an overture in the following words: "To whom belongs the right of deciding when an addition to the session is necessary, and how many are to be added?" To this question, it seems the presbytery gave an answer, which, when it came under the review of the synod, this latter body disapproved of. Of the expression of this disapprobation the presbytery complained, and the Assembly, after hearing the parties, sustained the complaint, and adopted the following minute on the subject: "The Assembly deem it proper, in sustaining the complaint of the presbytery of Blairsville, to declare that they do it on the ground that the decision of the synod of Pittsburgh disapproving of the act of the presbytery, if carried into effect, would render it necessary for the churches in that presbytery, and any other in the bounds of the synod, whose practice may be the same, to change their usage as to the manner of electing ruling elders, which by the constitution is left to be regulated by the mode most approved and in use in each church. At the same time, the Assembly, in coming to this result, have no design to establish a uniform mode of electing elders throughout the church, which is designedly left by the constitution, to be regulated by the usage of each particular church. And it may be added, that in those churches in which the usage has prevailed, for the existing eldership to determine when and how large an addition shall be made to the session, the church has an effectual security against the abuse of that power, in the right of appeal or complaint, secured by the constitution." It appears then that the Assembly recognises the right of appeal from the decision of a session, refusing to admit of an election of additional elders. It would be rather hard, if, after thus recognising this right as secured by the constitution, the Assembly should dismiss a

church from its bar which had availed themselves of the privilege, on the ground that an appeal cannot lie except in a judicial case.

Against the decision sustaining the above complaint, the following protest was presented, and entered upon the minutes: "The undersigned do hereby protest against the decision of this Assembly, sustaining the complaint against the synod of Pittsburgh, in the case of the presbytery of Blairsville, chiefly because this decision prevents any church from changing their usages in their mode of electing elders; although the usage may conflict with the constitutional right of each and every church member to say who and how many elders the interests of the church may require. See Constitution, ch. i. sec. 6th. The Assembly refer to a redress by a complaint to presbytery. We ask, will the presbytery, or can the presbytery suffer a complaint to lie, looking to this decision of the Assembly, when the election has been had according to usage? We consider this kind of redress illusory; and cannot forbear to record our solemn protest against the aforesaid decision. John L. Belville, William D. Jones, Joshua L. Wilson, B. C. Jones, A. D. Montgomery, W. M'Gookin, H. J. Core, A. J. M'Ilvaine."

Thirdly, a complaint was presented by several members of the church of Crab-apple against the synod of Pittsburg, for reversing a decision of the presbytery of St. Clairsville, in reference to the organization of a church at New Athens. After a part of the documents in this case had been read, at the desire of the complainants, the matter was referred back to the presbytery of St. Clairsville, with instructions to take the case up *de novo*, new testimony having been produced since their decision.

Deacons.

A memorial was presented from the presbytery of Miami, praying the Assembly to take some action in relation to the office of deacon, which has sunk extensively into disuse in the Presbyterian church. This subject awakened an animated discussion, some contending that, as the subject was before the last Assembly, and the memorialists had been referred to the constitution, nothing more was necessary. On the contrary, it was urged that the constitution declares that deacons, as well as bishops and ruling elders, are "the ordinary and perpetual officers in the church," and that notwithstanding the civil institutions make provision for the manage-

ment of the temporalities of the congregations, and the support of the poor in general, the duty still rests on the church to take care of her own poor, especially her poor widows and orphans, for whose particular guardianship the office was instituted; and that to pronounce the office unnecessary is equally contrary to the constitution and the word of God. After much discussion, the following resolution was adopted with great unanimity, viz:

Resolved, That it be enjoined upon all presbyteries under the care of the General Assembly, to take such order on this subject, as shall secure the appointment of deacons in all the churches, with the exception of those in which it is impracticable from the paucity of male members.

The question was also raised, whether it was proper for the same person to hold, at the same time, the offices of a deacon and ruling elder. With regard to this point, the Assembly decided: "That while it is important and desirable that the several offices in the Christian church should be kept distinct, and be sustained by different individuals, wherever a sufficient number of competent men can be found; yet, in the opinion of this Assembly it is not inconsistent with the constitution of the Presbyterian church, nor with the precedent furnished in filling the office of deacon, at its first institution, that where a necessity exists, the same individual should sustain both offices."

Trustees of the General Assembly.

On motion of the Rev. D. V. MacLean it was, "*Resolved*, That the treasurer of the trustees of the General Assembly be, and he hereby is requested to present a special report, during the sessions of the present Assembly, showing the whole amount of receipts and expenditures in the recent law-suit in which the Assembly has been involved, specifying the amount paid by each presbytery, and by individuals and congregations towards the special fund. And that he also report those presbyteries which have failed to make any contribution to this fund."

From the report made in answer to this call, it appears that the presbyteries responded promptly to the request for pecuniary aid, and with few exceptions had furnished their respective proportions.

Whole amount received,	-	-	\$6,293 80
Entire expense of the law-suit,	-	-	4,204 82
Paid claim of the Associated Reform Church,			1,401 17
Leaving a balance on hand,	-	-	687 71

In connection with this subject, should also be mentioned the following gratifying letter from the Hon. John Sergeant, addressed to the stated clerk, and laid before the Assembly:

“PHILADELPHIA, June 3, 1839.

“Rev. and Dear Sir,

“I have received your note of this date, and the accompanying extract from the minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. You may readily believe how much we must be gratified by the resolutions which relate to us who were counsel, in the late interesting trial, for the General Assembly, and to the character in general of the profession to which we belong. For myself, I can truly say that nothing has occurred in my professional life for which I feel more thankful than that my health was sufficiently restored to enable me to take some part in the case, and to entitle me to participate with my colleagues in the kind expressions of the reverend and respected gentlemen whose resolutions you have transmitted to us. Be pleased to accept for them my earnest wishes that their labours for the good of their fellow men, may always be crowned with like success.

“Yours, very truly,

“JOHN SERGEANT.

“REV. DR. M'DOWELL, *Stated Clerk.*”

In addition to their usual annual report, the trustees felt it necessary to call the attention of the Assembly to the duties and powers of the board in relation to the reception and management of funds. The attention of the board was called to this subject, by certain resolutions of the Board of Education, and the Boards of Missions, requesting the Board of Trustees to act as agents for them in relation to certain legacies bequeathed to those boards. The trustees state, that they did not feel authorized to accede to this request, and considering the limited amount which, by their charter, they are authorized to hold, they deemed it inexpedient that the Assembly should confide to them any funds not immediately belonging to themselves. This report was referred to a committee, who proposed the adoption of the following resolutions, which were agreed to. The resolutions are as follows:

“*Resolved*, 1. That the Board of Foreign Missions be authorised to apply for an act of incorporation to the proper authorities of the state of New York, and the said board shall specify the number of trustees, the mode of their election, their duties and time of service.

“*Resolved*, 2. That in case an act of incorporation as aforesaid cannot be obtained, then the trustees designated and chosen as the Board may direct, shall act in the premises under such direction and instruction as they may receive from time to time from the Board; and all property, houses, lands, tene-

ments and permanent funds belonging to said board, shall be held by said trustees, in trust for the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America.

“*Resolved*, 3. That the Board of Education and the Board of Missions be authorized to take such measures as by them may be deemed best for the purpose of procuring an act of incorporation, in accordance with the laws of the state of Pennsylvania, and that these boards also be authorized to appoint two individuals who shall constitute these respective trusts, and also specify the duties to be by them performed.”

Resolutions.

On motion of the Rev. Dr. Janeway, it was Resolved, “That the General Assembly recommend to all the churches under their care to observe the first Sabbath in January next with special reference to the conversion of the world; and on that day to offer up fervent and united prayers for the blessing of God on the operations of our several boards, that they may subserve the great ends for which they have been appointed, the diffusion of the light of the gospel at home and abroad; that our whole church in its organized form may become a missionary church; and that other churches of other denominations may become animated with a true missionary spirit, and do their parts in accomplishing the great work to which the Head of the church is now summoning all his people, the work of enlightening, reforming and converting the world, that He may reign over all nations in the fulness of his grace and glory; and that it be recommended to all the churches to take up on that day collections for the Board of Foreign Missions.”

The Rev. Dr. Spring offered the following resolution, which was adopted:

“As the American Bible Society has had from its commencement and still retains unabated the confidence of this body, Resolved, That the ministers and churches of our connexion be requested to co-operate efficiently with said institution, in supplying, within their respective states and counties, destitute families, emigrants, Sabbath, and common schools with the Holy Scriptures; and also in furnishing means to prepare and circulate the sacred volume in foreign countries, where in the providence of God, the way is now extensively prepared to receive it.”

The following preamble and resolution were adopted in

reference to the presbytery of Newburyport: "Whereas, the last General Assembly adopted a resolution, directing the presbytery of Newburyport to take such order as shall, on the plan adopted by the Assembly of 1838, secure a continued and indubitable connexion with the Presbyterian church in the United States of America; And, whereas, the presbytery have, by their communication to this Assembly, declared that they are not prepared to comply with that direction, therefore, Resolved, That the presbytery of Newburyport having thus virtually separated from us, are not any longer recognized as a constituent part of the Presbyterian church of the United States, and that the synod of Albany be directed to remove their name from its roll."

Messrs. J. L. Wilson, Low, Williams, Mitchell and Auchincloss were appointed a committee to inquire into the expenses of the several boards, and to ascertain, 1. Whether the agency system can be dispensed with or improved? 2. Whether the expenses of the boards can be advantageously diminished? This committee made a report, which gave rise to a long debate, of which we regret that we have no report. At its conclusion, on the motion of the Rev. Mr. Boardman, it was resolved, "That it is the deliberate conviction of this Assembly, formed as the result of much experience, that an efficient system of agencies, by which the churches of our connexion may be visited from year to year, is, in the present condition of Christian feeling and knowledge on the subject of benevolent operations, absolutely indispensable."

We can heartily respond to the sentiment expressed in the above resolution. If the church was what it should be, there would be no need of agents; but the same may be said of Sabbath schools, and in a certain sense even of the pastoral office, which is designed to bring the church to the full measure of the stature of Christ. But the question is, Is the church in the length and breadth of our land, in such a state that we can rely on the spontaneous contributions of the faithful, or on the spontaneous agency of church officers, for the resources necessary to sustain and extend the various benevolent operations in which we are bound to engage? We cannot hesitate a moment to answer this question in the negative. We know of no evidence that it is in such a state, but we have abundant evidence to the contrary. Neither the Bible Society, nor the Tract Society, nor the American Board of Foreign Missions, nor the Colonization Society, nor

our Theological Seminaries, have to our knowledge ever been originated or sustained by any such means. The experience of the church is all on the other side. And it consists not merely in the absence of all proof that spontaneous action and voluntary agency are a sufficient dependence, but in positive proof to the contrary. That is, in the fact that where for a series of years abundant contributions were raised by the continued efforts of agents, little or nothing was contributed when those efforts were intermitted or withdrawn. Contributions from certain congregations soon sank from thousands to hundreds, and from hundreds to tens. Even in Boston, the seat of the operations of the American Board, the residence of its permanent officers, where every month the people are addressed by one or the other of those officers, and new information and new appeals constantly presented to them, the receipts fell off one half when they were left to voluntary contributions. A reference to our own feelings and experience will convince us, and we fear, almost all our ministers and people, that we need a direct personal application, to secure regularity and certainty in our contributions to objects, the importance of which we readily acknowledge. This is the object to be attained; direct personal application to all our people; and it matters not how this object is secured. If our pastors and sessions would appoint collectors for this purpose and receive and transmit the collections, the great end would be attained. But to bring the pastors and sessions to this point and to sustain them at it, requires constant exertion and pressure from without. At one time there were no less than sixteen hundred missionary associations in connection with the American Board; now there are hardly more than six hundred; and the great reliance, under God, of that useful institution, is the revival of these associations by means of agents. When formed, it requires comparatively little labour to sustain them. And in like manner, if our churches were once brought up to the point of regular benevolent organization, so as to have a faithful system of personal application to every member, comparatively little effort from general agents would be required. We may learn many useful lessons from our Methodist brethren on this whole subject.

If in New England, where the churches have been so long formed, where they are so compact, and where the habit of giving has been so long cultivated, a system of agencies is found to be necessary, we need not wonder that it should be

indispensable in our new and scattered congregations, who live at a distance from the sources of information, and who have not yet contracted the habit of regular and liberal contribution to religious enterprises.

Though there are undoubtedly evils connected with the present system, it should not be forgotten that there are great benefits associated with it. The incidental good done by a pious and eloquent advocate of any great cause, is perhaps as important as that which flows from the accomplishment of his more immediate object. Such a man wakes up pious feeling wherever he goes, diffuses a healthful glow through all the churches, and expands the hearts and views of the people wherever he labours. We are satisfied, therefore, that in the existing state of the church, a more effectual method to prostrate all our boards, and to paralyse our benevolent operations, could not be taken than to discard the system of agencies.

Annual Reports.

Foreign Missions. The reception of the report of the Board of Foreign Missions was made the order of the day for Tuesday the 20th. of May. The report was read by Mr. Walter Lowrie, the secretary of the board, when, on motion for its acceptance, highly interesting addresses were made by Rev. Wm. C. Anderson, and Rev. Henry R. Wilson. These addresses were followed up with remarks by several members of the Assembly, which were listened to with uninterrupted attention till the hour of adjournment. We understand that this meeting, for devotional feeling and animating spirit, was one of the most interesting anniversaries on which the Assembly ever attended.* The report was referred to a committee, who presented the following resolutions:

“ 1st. Resolved, That the General Assembly acknowledge, with joy and with devout gratitude to God, the smiles of his favour on this great cause, and that there is great occasion for thankfulness in view of the many effectual doors thrown open to the Foreign Missionary efforts of the church.

“ 2d. Resolved, That we notice, with deep interest, the condition of schools among the heathen, and the increasing devotedness of missionaries in this arduous department of labour, and that we do earnestly recommend to the churches to make these schools more than ever the special object of prayer, and liberal contribution.

“ 3d. Resolved, That the Assembly revolt with anguish from every part of the melancholy alternative which the want of funds will force upon us, if not

* We regret that, as the report is not yet published and the papers are silent on the subject, we are unable to notice the operations of the board during the past year.

speedily remedied, and that we all respond to the board '*we cannot give up any part of the field described in their report.*'

"4th. Resolved, That the loud call to the churches for help, cannot be disregarded by any, without criminal apathy toward the perishing heathen.

"5th. Resolved, That no financial embarrassment of the country should be suffered to discourage pastors and agents from cogently presenting this cause to the people; for the Spirit of God has graciously added to the church within this season of unparalleled derangement in the country, a multitude of such as we hope shall be saved, and of course a multitude of willing hearts and hands to supply, and more than supply, with their abundant mites, the lack of fortunes which have been broken or diminished.

"6th. Resolved, That it be recommended to every pastor and session to circulate the *Missionary Chronicle* diligently among the people, and to make every member of the church feel, by direct and personal appeal, that it is a duty and a privilege to help this cause, and that the Assembly address a circular letter to all the churches under our care, affectionately inviting and urging them to entertain deeper sympathies, to offer more ardent and unceasing prayers, to make immediate, regular, and vigorous efforts to collect funds for this object, and that it be read from the pulpits of every church at a suitable time."

Domestic Missions. The report of the Board of Missions was read by the secretary, from which it appeared that in the course of the past year two hundred and fifty-six missionaries, twenty-five of whom are itinerants, had been employed in six hundred congregations and districts, in twenty-three states and territories; six in Texas, where four churches have been organized, and three or four houses of worship erected. The number of communicants added to the churches aided by the Board, during the year, is on examination, one thousand and six hundred and fifty; on certificate, one thousand three hundred and fifty; total reported in all the churches, twenty thousand. Fifty new churches have been organized, and seventy houses of worship erected; there are four hundred sabbath schools and two hundred and eighty Bible and catechetical classes, connected with these churches. In some cases whole congregations have been formed into catechetical classes. Fifteen thousand families have shared in the labours of the missionaries. Total receipts, including the balance of last year, \$40,774 75; expenditures, nearly \$39,000. On motion for the acceptance of the report, addresses were made by Rev. Robert Dunlap, Rev. John M. Krebs, and Rev. Sylvester Scovel, and by several members of the Assembly. The report was referred to a committee, who proposed the following resolutions, which were adopted, viz.

"1. Resolved, That the Assembly, having heard from the report of the Board of Missions of the continued and increasing prosperity of the cause of Domestic Missions in the Presbyterian church, would record their grateful acknowledgements to the Head of the church for these signs and tokens of his favour.

"2. Resolved, That whereas the present position of our country and the exigencies of the church, demand greatly increased efforts in the cause of Domestic Missions, and whereas, from the report of the board, it appears they have already made large engagements, and contemplate much more extended plans of operations, to meet, as far as practicable, the pressing demands from all portions of our land, and especially, from the west, the south, and the southwest, including also Texas; and whereas to carry forward efficiently these extended operations, will require the united and cordial co-operation of the churches, the General Assembly do most earnestly urge the claims of this board on all their ministers and churches.

"3. Resolved, To secure the attention of ministers and churches to this important object, the Assembly renew the recommendation of the last Assembly, that 'inasmuch as the report, when published, although sent to every minister, cannot be generally circulated among the members of the churches, it be recommended to the pastors of churches to spread before their people the substance of this report, by reading it, or portions of it, from their pulpits, at such time as may be convenient for taking up an annual collection on behalf of this cause.'

"4. Resolved, That the agents employed by the board be recommended to the confidence and cordial co-operation of the pastors and churches; and in portions of the church in which the board may have no agent, the Assembly would earnestly recommend the individual agency of every minister and session in forwarding the interests of the cause.

"5. Resolved, That the Assembly have heard with deep interest of the number of itinerant missionaries now in the employment of the board, and of the good success which has attended their labours, and while they would enjoin on the board to continue as heretofore to aid the feeble churches in the support of pastors, they would at the same time renew the expression of their deep conviction of the great importance of itinerant missionary labourers among the more destitute districts and the newly settled portions of our country, and would urge on the board and on all our ministers and churches, in the language of the report, 'to unite their prayers, their influence, and their effort, to fill all the dark places of our land with the light of God's salvation.'

"6. Resolved, That the board be authorized to apply to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania for such an incorporation as the laws of Pennsylvania have given them power to grant."

Board of Education. The report was read by the corresponding secretary, from which it appeared that the board had two hundred and seventy beneficiaries under their care during the last year. The receipts, including the balance on hand, at the close of the preceding year, were \$27,468; the expenditures, \$26,199. Addresses were delivered by Dr. Spring, Dr. Rice, Messrs. Anderson, Marshall, White, Latta, Redington, R. Smith, and others. The topics principally insisted upon were, the importance of a proper selection of candidates for the ministry; the strength of the church from the increase of laborers, depending not so much on the number as on the fitness of the men; the importance of parental consecration of children, and the education of them with an humble and prayerful reliance on the Spirit of all grace, that they may be qualified for the sacred office; and the obligation of ministers and churches to select

and bring forward suitable young men for the service of the Lord.

Assuming that one in forty of our ministers die annually, and that one seventh of the beneficiaries of the board enter the ministry every year, the present number of beneficiaries is about adequate to supply the places of those who die. What is to become then of our rapidly increasing population? What provision is made for the increasing demand for foreign missionaries? It is true, that all the candidates for the ministry in our church, are not beneficiaries of the Board of Education; yet so large a proportion of them are as to show that the number of candidates is altogether inadequate to the just demands of our country and of the heathen world upon the Presbyterian church. If every congregation, able to sustain the burden, were to select and educate one candidate, we presume the number, instead of being below three hundred, would be near one thousand. This is a subject which calls for the prayerful attention of the churches.

Board of Publication. The report was read by the corresponding secretary. The receipts of the board for the year, were \$12,239 85; the expenditures, \$8,360 59. The above sum does not include any of the moneys received since the first of April. It appears from the treasurer's report, in the Presbyterian, that the amount received during the month of May last, was \$12,078 39. The Assembly appeared to take much interest in the proceedings of this new and important board, and to look forward with pleasing anticipations to its future usefulness. On the recommendation of the committee to whom the report was referred the following resolutions were adopted:

"1. Resolved, That the report of the Assembly's Board of Publication be approved, and referred to the board for publication at their discretion.

"2. Resolved, That the number of the members of the board be increased to one hundred and four.

"3. Resolved, That it be recommended to the presbyteries to take such order as to them may seem best adapted to secure the establishment of depositories, and the circulation of the publications of the board through their bounds.

"4. Resolved, That it be recommended to the board to have its claims brought before all the churches, which have not contributed to its funds; and that the distribution of its publications in foreign lands be presented as an important ground for their application for aid.

"5. Resolved, That the general agent of the Board of Publication, be ex-officio a member of the executive committee."

This important board, though yet in its infancy, gives the promise of extensive usefulness. Its task is, no doubt, a very

delicate and difficult one. In the two great departments of its labours, the selection of proper books and the extensive circulation of them, it will have to conciliate so many conflicting opinions, that universal satisfaction can hardly be anticipated. With regard to the former of these two objects, there can scarcely be any question that it will be wiser to publish a few good books than many indifferent ones; and that in general the republication of works the character of which is already established, will be more likely to give satisfaction and to prove useful to the church than the production of new ones. The field, however, it has to cultivate is so extensive, that there is room for both classes, original and selected. Its larger and more important works may be selected, while those of a more popular character, or designed for sabbath schools, may often advantageously be original. Any one can see how delicate a thing it must be for the board to give its imprimatur to important doctrinal works, which have not in some way been submitted to the churches and gained their confidence.

The other matter, the circulation of the books when printed, is more an affair of business, in which the board have the advantage of the example and experience of the Methodist book concern, the volume department of the American Tract Society, and of other similar institutions. The experience of these societies has, we think, clearly established one point, and that is, that it will never do simply to publish books, and store them in Philadelphia and a few other places, and wait till they are called for. Some method must be devised for bringing them before the people, to their houses. It is in this way that the hundreds of thousands of volumes of the Tract Society have been circulated through the south and west, which, without such efforts, would be cumbering the shelves of the ware-houses in New York.

Memorial of the Presbyteries of Louisville and Salem.

A memorial was presented from the abovenamed presbyteries, requesting the appointment of a co-ordinate executive committee of Missions at Louisville. After the various documents in the case had been read, the Rev. S. Scovell was heard in support of the measure, and the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Missions in opposition to it. The previous question was then called for, and the call being sustained, the main question was then put, shall the prayer of the memorial be granted? The ayes and nays were called

and the question decided in the negative—ayes 3, nays 109, and one *non liquet*. A committee was appointed to draft a minute expressive of the Assembly's reasons for the above decision. This committee presented the following report, which was adopted, viz.

“That in the view of this Assembly, the change proposed in these memorials in the plan for conducting missionary operations in the West, if adopted, would not only be of no advantage, but decidedly and seriously injurious, both to the cause of missions and to the great interests of the Presbyterian church.

“The Assembly fear it would hazard, if not destroy, that unity of purpose and action which imparts strength and vigour to the operations of their board; that it would almost necessarily open the door for similar applications from other portions of the church, and eventually lead to the appointment of sectional, independent missionary committees in the several sections of the church. Nor would the evil probably be limited to our missionary operations. The plan proposed, if adopted, we fear would be extended to the other boards of the church, and might eventually hazard the unity of the church itself.

“And as it regards the West, for whose special benefit the measure is proposed, the Assembly have serious doubts, whether the plan proposed, if adopted, would not be injurious, rather than beneficial to the missionary cause in the West; while all the advantages proposed by a change, they believe can be secured by a wise and vigorous prosecution of the missionary work on the plan now in operation. For the reasons specified, which cannot be enlarged upon in a minute, the Assembly have felt themselves called upon to decline the request in these memorials.”

State of Religion.

The annual narrative on the state of religion, informs us that the past year has been distinguished for the peace and harmony of the churches, a growing attention to the religious education of children, and especially to their instruction in the Catechism; the enlargement and increased efficiency of Sabbath Schools; more vigorous and systematic labours for the spiritual improvement of the coloured population in the southern states; an increased attendance on the means of grace in nearly all our churches; a rising standard of liberality; and a cordial attachment to the boards intrusted with

the management of our benevolent operations. The year past has also been to a considerable extent a year of revivals, especially in our large cities, as Troy, Albany, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Mobile, New Orleans, and others. About one hundred churches, it is believed, have shared in these special manifestations of divine mercy. As these, however, constitute but one eighteenth of the whole number of our churches, there is reason for humility and lamentation, as well as for gratitude, in the above statement. The Assembly also lament that the violation of the Sabbath prevails so extensively in many parts of our country, and enjoin upon all the ministers, sessions and members of the church to use their best endeavours to counteract this evil. With regard to the subject of temperance, fear is entertained lest that important interest is in some parts of our church on the decline, though it seems to be gaining ground in others; and the opinion is expressed that its partial decline is to be ascribed more to the culpable apathy of its friends, than to the opposition of its enemies.

Jas. W. Alexander.

ART. VII.—*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, by T. Babington Macaulay.* Boston: Weeks, Jordan & Company, 1840. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 456 & 496.

To the religious world, Mr. Macaulay is chiefly known as the son of the late Zachary Macaulay, by whom the Christian Observer was founded and for many years edited, and who during a long life devoted his powers to the abolition of the Slave Trade. To political inquirers, the younger Macaulay is distinguished for his parliamentary services, his civil trusts in India, and his place in the Cabinet. But with men of letters, and we suppose it may be said with posterity, he will be remembered as one of the most brilliant and effective writers among the Edinburgh Reviewers. It may be questioned whether any of that formidable corps have brandished the satiric thong with more trenchant strokes, or any scattered the gems of literature more widely, or any brought out greater wealth from the deep mines of recondite erudition. Mackintosh was more methodical, philosophic and accurate, but he was cold and stiff in the comparison. Sid-