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ART. I.—*Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews, from the Church of Scotland, in 1839.* Eighth thousand. Edinburgh, 1843. 12mo. pp. 555. *J. W. Alex. an der*

OF this most interesting volume we would gladly see a reprint in America; but as we are aware of no proposals for this, we shall endeavour to furnish our readers with some of its statements. That these will be welcome to many, we are the rather inclined to believe, because we cannot close our eyes to the fact, that renewed attention is beginning to be paid to this department of missions, and that the expectation of a return of God's ancient people to their own land is becoming more general.

Of the origin of the enterprise no better account can be given than that which opens this volume.

“The subject of the Jews had but recently begun to awaken attention among the faithful servants of God in the Church of Scotland. The plan of sending a deputation to Palestine and other countries, to visit and inquire after the scattered Jews, was suggested by a series of striking providences in the case of some of the individuals concerned. The Rev. Robert S. Candlish, Minister of St. George's, Edinburgh, saw these providences, and seized on the idea. On the part of our church, ‘the thing was done suddenly,’ but it soon became evident that ‘God had prepared the people.’ The Committee of our General Assembly, appointed to consider what might be done in the way of setting on foot Missionary operations among the Jews, were

that the best qualities of the present Scotch establishment are the product rather of assimilation to the other party, than of traditionary derivation from the Moderatism of the eighteenth century ; and lastly, that the Free Church of the present day is proved by history to be what she claims to be, the genuine original natural Scotch Church of the Reformation and the Revolution.

Our sole design in the foregoing pages has been to trace the progress of Moderatism through the history before us, in closing which we have been led to give even the substance of only a small part of the work, into a more general analysis of which we cannot now enter. It will be sufficient to commend it to our readers as the only complete accessible popular record of the Scottish Church History. The intrinsic interest of the subject is of course increased by late events, under the influence of which we doubt not that the whole will be extensively read, and with a satisfaction only marred by the bad taste which the author now and then exhibits, in exchanging the simplicity of the best historical models for an awkward, yet ambitious redundancy of style. This rhetorical blemish, whether it has arisen from false principles of taste, from the undue influence of unworthy models, or from the transient excitement of the circumstances under which the last part of the book was written, will not perhaps impair its popularity, and cannot nullify its substantial value.

Charles Hodge

ART. V.—*The General Assembly of 1844.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, convened in the First Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky, May 16th, 1844, and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Gardiner Spring, D. D., from Matthew xxviii. 20. "Lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

The Rev. George Junkin, D. D. was chosen moderator, and, in the absence of Dr. Krebs, the permanent clerk, the Rev. Benjamin Gildersleeve, of Charleston, was appointed to supply his place *pro tempore*; and the Rev. Joseph M. Ogden was chosen temporary clerk.

Church Extension.

The first subject of general interest which occupied the attention of the Assembly, was church extension. Dr. Hoge as chairman of the committee appointed by the last Assembly, made on that subject the following report, viz :

“ The committee to whom was referred by the General Assembly of 1843, the Overture respecting the erection of churches in feeble congregations by the aid of their brethren who may be able and willing to contribute for this purpose, have considered the subject with attention and present the following report as the result of their deliberations. The maintainance of evangelical truth and practical piety is the primary duty of the church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And next to this, and inseparably connected with it, is the great work of extending this divine religion, until it shall fill the whole earth. For this purpose it is necessary to plant churches wherever they do not exist, and thus to secure the administration of the word and ordinances of Jesus Christ. In fulfilling this part of her duty, the Presbyterian church in this land has acted rightly, in sending forth the ministers of the gospel to preach, to gather and organize churches and to nourish them with spiritual food, that they may grow up to maturity and abound in the works of faith and labours of love. This indeed is indispensably necessary, and ought to engage the first and chief efforts of the church, yet it is certain that in a subordinate but very important sense, the erection of suitable houses of worship is necessary. The former has been accomplished to some extent by our portion of the church catholic in her associated capacity, the latter has been generally left to the unaided efforts of congregations when gathered, however weak they may be.

That each society should, if able, erect its own house of worship, is altogether proper, even as it is right that the minister should be supported by those to whom he ministers, and it should never be regarded as a burden by any, although effort and self-denial should be required in order to effect either object. But as it has been determined that the united ability of the church ought to be employed in sending the minister to preach the gospel to the destitute, in aiding weak congregations in sustaining their pastor, is it not equally proper to aid those who need help in building houses for public worship? We think that this is proper for several reasons :

1. A church of adequate size, and respectable appearance, is of great importance to every congregation. The want of such accommodation produces indifference, and discouragement in those who are connected with the congregation, and has a repulsive influence on others.

2. There are many places in which the members and friends of the Presbyterian church are too few and poor to build such houses as would accommodate themselves, and that portion of the people in the vicinity who might be induced to attend on the ordinances of the gospel but as yet are disposed to give little or no pecuniary aid. In these circumstances our feeble churches are discouraged, and do not attempt to build a house; or they build one which is insufficient and unattractive; or they become involved in debt which they are

unable to discharge. Several hundred instances of one or other of these cases may be found. How important would assistance be to a congregation in these circumstances.

3. Many unsuitable churches are erected, and much money is wasted, it is confidently believed, for want of necessary information. If well-digested plans and estimates could be procured at once, with little or no expense, proportionate to the number of members of the congregation, and other circumstances, once accompanied by advice respecting the construction and arrangement, and finishing of the building, both externally and internally, it would be an advantage, equal, in very many cases to considerable pecuniary aid.

We may next inquire, whether the members of our church would probably be willing to add this to their other good works for the promotion of the cause of the Redeemer. This inquiry we may safely answer in the affirmative. Although we, as a church, fail greatly to contribute as we ought, of that worldly substance which the Lord has entrusted to us for religious purposes; yet many, on good grounds, believe that not a few of our people would gladly throw their benevolent offerings into this channel of beneficence, if a well-arranged plan were presented to them. They are now frequently and urgently solicited to give for church building, or for the payment of debts already contracted, in cases of which they know little or nothing, and can have no assurance that their donations will be well applied. Considerable sums are collected in this way, every year: and it may be reasonably concluded that much more would be willingly given, on some well digested system of operation. And in what way may the collection and application of money for this purpose be most easily and safely carried into effect?

The General Assembly has adopted, with the general approbation of the church, the policy of a special Board for each particular object that is designed; and this may be done, in the present instance, or if not now, yet at a future time, if it shall appear to be expedient. But at this time, it may be sufficient to commit the management of this work to the Board of Missions. Thus, all needed information will be collected; and in the light of experience, a future Assembly will mature a different plan of operation if it shall appear that a change is expedient.

For referring this business to the Board of Missions, the following reasons may be deemed sufficient:

1. It is, in its nature, intimately connected with the Domestic Missionary work.

2. In its present stage, it can be transacted by them with less time and expense than by a separate organization.

3. The Board already possesses, or can readily procure, such information as may be needed.

The committee therefore recommend to the consideration of the General Assembly, the following plan:

I. It is expedient and highly important to promote the extension of the Presbyterian church in this nation, by aiding systematically in the erection of churches wherever they are needed.

II. The direction and oversight of this work shall be committed, until otherwise ordered, to the Board of Missions, who shall, in the management of it, be subject, in all respects, to the directions of the

General Assembly, and shall annually report to the Assembly their execution of this trust.

III. The Board shall annually appoint a committee on church extension, consisting of five persons, who shall have charge of appropriating the moneys which may be received for this purpose, and of procuring and furnishing at cost, or gratuitously, plans and estimates for churches in answer to applications which may be made to them.

IV. The Board shall also make regulations for the government of the committee, in receiving applications for aid, raising funds, and making appropriation of money; shall examine the proceedings of the committee, and shall appoint such officers or agents as the General Assembly shall direct.

V. It is distinctly recommended to all our congregations to make a collection for this purpose, once in each year, and transmit the amount directly, or through the Presbyteries respectively, to the Treasurer of the Board of Missions.

VI. It is recommended to all the Presbyteries, to take such order on this subject as they may deem best, and that they appoint a committee on church extension at each autumnal meeting of the Presbytery, and applications for aid in building shall be received and acted on by the Board through this committee, and with their explicit recommendation.

On that part of the overture referred to them, which proposes that licentiates shall be *required* to serve as missionaries for some definite time, the committee respectfully say, that in their opinion, however desirable and profitable such service might be, such a rule would interfere with the rights of licentiates and of Presbyteries, in a manner which is not consistent with the constitution of the church, or with the powers and duties of the Board of Missions, and therefore ought not to be adopted. In behalf of the committee.

JAMES HOGE, *Chairman.*

The following additional resolution was also proposed by Dr. Hoge, and adopted, viz:

Resolved, That while it will be proper that the Board of Missions receive and appropriate, during the present year, any moneys which may be contributed for church extension, they are requested speedily to collect all the information they may be able to obtain, and report fully on the whole subject to the next General Assembly, with a view to further maturing and perfecting the plan of operation."

This report with some unimportant modifications was finally adopted. Those who more or less decidedly objected to the plan, were Dr. Spring, Dr. Brown, Mr. Boardman, Mr. Smith, Dr. Young, and some others. These brethren took very different grounds, some objecting for one reason and some for another. The principal difficulties suggested were the following. First, that the church was already burdened with schemes of benevolent operation to the full extent of its willingness, if not of its ability to give. To organize another plan for systematic and continued demand for money, would produce dissatisfaction, and lessen the re-

sources of the existing boards of the church. Second, that the difficulty we had to contend with, is not the want of buildings but the want of preachers. Wherever a congregation can be collected, a house can be built adequate to their real necessities; and to organize a plan to assist in erecting churches is to destroy the self-reliance of the people, and lead them to look to others for what they should do for themselves. Third, some of the brethren seem to think that the report was too secular, that church extension was not to be secured by erecting houses, but by spiritual means; that Rome and Lambeth might take the lead in secular agencies for enlarging the church, but Presbyterians must rely on preaching the gospel. Fourth, it was objected that the Board of Missions was not the proper body to whom to refer this business. They had already enough to do, and especially enough to do with money matters and agencies. It was undesirable to concentrate in their hands either more of the duties which belong to private christians, or more influence. It was the duty of individual christians to answer the occasional calls of feeble congregations for aid, and other than occasional calls should not be encouraged.

The plan was advocated by Dr. Hoge, its author, by Dr. Rice, Mr. Hall, Mr. Yantis, Dr. Potts, of St. Louis, by Dr. Maclean, Dr. Plumer, Mr. Scovel, and others. These brethren proved that the object, which the plan designed to accomplish, was desirable and important, and that the means proposed for attaining that object, were good. It was not denied either that the preaching of the gospel, is the great means of securing the extension of the church, or that a people who need a place of worship, should do all they can to erect it. But it was proved that in a multitude of cases the great difficulty in collecting a congregation, is the want of a convenient building, and that still more frequently the people, though willing to contribute, are unable by themselves to erect a suitable edifice. The evidence of these facts consists in the testimony of the brethren in the more destitute portions of the church, and in the frequency of the applications made for aid. It cannot, therefore, be denied that great and crying necessity does exist for the erection of suitable places of worship in almost every part of the church. This demand is so extensive and so urgent that it must be met, and the only question is as to the best means of meeting it. The means now employed, is for the pastor of the feeble congregation to leave his church and travel about,

usually in one well trodden path, to solicit assistance. The objections to this plan are obvious. It takes the man away from his post whose presence and labours are most necessary to the success of the enterprise. It presents the application under the least imposing form. The churches have no information on which to act, but the testimony of the pastor, who is unavoidably more impressed by wants which come under his own immediate cognizance, than by those of which he has no personal knowledge. And besides this, the applications are in this way confined to a few congregations, or individuals, who are thus subjected to incessant and often unreasonable demands. This is an effectual answer to the objection urged against the plan submitted to the Assembly, that the churches were already taxed to the extent of their willingness to bear. The question is not whether money must be raised for this purpose, for it is raised, but how it can be most economically, justly, and efficiently collected? Shall it be by private and unauthorized applications to a limited number of individuals? or shall it be by a regular plan which shall in the first place secure proper evidence that the case is one which calls for assistance, and then look for that assistance not to a few men, but to the whole church? The Assembly with great unanimity ultimately decided in favour of the latter method. In this we greatly rejoice; we believe this to be one of the most important decisions at which our highest judicatory has for a long time arrived. It is a step towards the practical recognition of that brotherhood of Christians, which in words we are all ready to acknowledge. We admit that the church is one body, and that unless we feel a real sympathy with all the members of that body, we can have no good evidence that we ourselves belong to it; yet one pastor has more than he can spend, while another must labour with his hands; one congregation is sumptuously accommodated, while others have no place in which to worship God. We are not so sanguine as to imagine that this diversity will ever be entirely obliterated, and we are far from supposing that exact equality either in the salaries of ministers or in the style of church edifices, is, in the present state of the world, either possible or desirable. But we are fully persuaded that the diversity which now exists is far too great; that the great evil under which we labour is the want of that brotherly love which would make the different parts of the church feel that they are all members of the same body; that it is no less a privilege than a

duty that the abundance of one part should be for a supply for the want of another. This has always been the case when the church prospered, and it is one of the most effectual means of securing that prosperity. We greatly rejoice, therefore, that the Assembly has sanctioned this plan which will call into exercise, and by the exercise strengthen the sympathy of every part of the church with every other. We are certainly behind many other denominations in this respect, not to speak of the compact organization of Popery, which, animated by one spirit, is bringing the resources of the whole body to bear on the extension of their system of delusion, where, without such aid from abroad, it could not exist, many protestant churches are setting us an example in this respect. The fact that the Methodist church in this country now numbers more than a million of communicants is to be attributed to no one cause so much as to the real union which has hitherto subsisted among them; to the fact that they make common cause in every thing, and sustain men and build houses by the contributions of the whole body, in places where the gospel could in no other way be sustained. That Dr. Hoge's plan when first submitted, considering its comprehensiveness and importance, should call forth the expression of doubt and misgiving from many excellent brethren, is not to be wondered at; but the fact that it was finally adopted "without a count," shows that its merits soon became convincingly manifest. We are thus encouraged to hope that it will meet with the general approbation of the churches.

Appeal and Complaint of R. J. Breckinridge and others.

The Rev. R. J. Breckinridge, D. D. presented to the Synod of Philadelphia, at its late meeting, two papers expressing dissent from the decisions of the General Assembly of 1843, touching the constitution of the quorum of presbyteries, and the right of ruling elders to join in the imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers, and proposing that the Synod should overture the Assembly to reverse these decisions. The question being on the adoption of the said papers, the Synod decided not to adopt; and thereupon Dr. Breckinridge and others appealed and complained to the next Assembly. The papers connected with this subject having been referred to the judicial committee, the Rev. S. B. Wilson, chairman of that committee, reported that they had examined the same, and that, in their opinion, the deci-

sions complained of were not, according to our Book of Discipline, matters of appeal or complaint, and recommending that the papers be returned to the parties who presented them. When this report came up for consideration, James C. Baker, Esq. of Virginia, moved that it should be adopted. The Rev. J. L. Yantis, of Missouri, moved a postponement of that motion with a view to grant leave to the appellants to be heard in the Assembly in support of their right to appeal. The motion to postpone was advocated by the mover, by Dr. Young, James Stonestreet, Esq., Rev. N. H. Hall, and others. It was opposed by Rev. A. O. Patterson, Dr. Hoge, Rev. A. Williamson, Rev. N. L. Rice, &c.; and rejected by a vote of 119 to 55. The following day the report of the Judicial Committee again came up, when the Rev. J. Allison, of Tennessee, moved that it be postponed with the view of taking up the following resolutions, viz :

1. *Resolved*, That while this Assembly accord with the views of the Judicial committee, as far as appeals are concerned, it is believed that according to our constitution it is the privilege of any member to complain of any decision of our lower judicatories.

2. *Resolved*, That the Judicial committee be directed to prepare and arrange the papers in the case of the complaint of R. J. Breckinridge and others, in order that said complaint may be regularly issued by the Assembly.

On motion of Dr. Maclean, the motion to postpone was laid on the table, and the way was thus opened for the discussion of the report of the Judicial Committee. The adoption of that report was advocated by Dr. Wilson, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Elliot, Messrs. A. O. Patterson and N. L. Rice; it was opposed by Dr. J. C. Young, Mr. Junkin, Mr. Stonestreet, Mr. Gildersleeve, and others. After a protracted discussion the vote was taken and resulted as follows, *Ayes: Ministers* 88, *Elders* 53—total 141. *Nays: Ministers* 21, *Elders* 26—total 47. Thus the report was adopted,* and the Assembly decided that, in the case before them, there was no ground on which either an appeal or complaint could rest.

Until within a comparatively recent period there was no diversity as far as we know either of opinion or practice, in our church, on the legitimate grounds of appeals and complaints. At present it would seem that there are no less

* The Presbyterian reports the *ayes* as 143, and *nays* 47. The Protestant and Herald makes the *ayes* 142, *nays* 45.

than four different views more or less prevalent on the subject. The first is that any decision of a lower, may be brought up before a higher judicatory by either an appeal or complaint, at the option of those concerned. The second opinion goes to the opposite extreme, and denies the right of either appeal or complaint except in cases strictly judicial, i. e. cases in which there has been a trial and a sentence. The third opinion is, that appeals are limited to judicial cases, but that complaints may be entered against any decision of a lower judicatory. The fourth, which we believe to be sustained by the plain doctrine of our Book, and the uniform practice of our own and of all other Presbyterian churches, is that taken by the Rev. N. L. Rice and we presume by a great majority of the late Assembly, viz. that appeals and complaints may lie not against any decision, but against *any kind* of decision of a lower court. That is, it matters not whether the act be judicial, legislative, or executive, it may be brought under the revision of a higher court by either of the methods mentioned. But as both appeals and complaints are measures of redress, they from their nature suppose a grievance, a wrong done or charged, and therefore cannot possibly lie in any case where no grievance or wrong-doing is supposable.

It is somewhat remarkable that after nearly a century and a half of practice, during which appeals and complaints have almost yearly and often many in the same year been brought up and decided, it should still be a matter of debate when a man has a right to avail himself of this mode of redress. To the best of our knowledge there never were two opinions on this subject until the year 1834, when the late Rev. Mr. Winchester, in defending the Synod of Philadelphia against the complaint of the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia, took the ground that no appeal or complaint could lie except in a judicial case, a case of trial and censure. At that time the Synod which he defended repudiated that ground of defence, for they themselves referred to that very Assembly, an appeal from an executive act. The following autumn, however, the Synod, under the lead it is believed of some of the present appellants, took the ground, that no appeal, complaint or even protest could lie except in cases of a strictly judicial character. This, however, was a momentary delusion, for the members of that Synod without the least hesitation or objection joined in entertaining and issuing, the following spring, an appeal of Thomas Bradford

and others from a decision of a Presbytery to divide the Fifth Church of Philadelphia, contrary to the wishes of the people. It was found by the very authors and advocates of the new doctrine that it would not work, without destroying the rights of the people and subverting the constitution. In the case of Mr. Bradford's appeal, the church with which he was connected considered themselves not only aggrieved, but their title to their property jeopardized by the act of the Presbytery, and they had therefore the clearest right not only to have that act reviewed, but its operation arrested, until its constitutionality and justice were passed upon by the highest judicatory of the church. Neither a complaint nor a review of records could afford them redress, for it was necessary that the operation of the act of the Presbytery should be suspended, or the evil would be past remedy. This doctrine therefore was abandoned, and in 1836 there were several cases of appeals or complaints from other than judicial decisions; another in 1837, and in 1838 no less than four or five cases of the same kind; one a complaint by the Presbytery of Wilmington, another a protest and complaint of R. J. Breckinridge and others; another an appeal and complaint of J. Campbell and others; another an appeal and complaint by certain persons claiming to be the church of St. Charles, against a decision of the Synod of Missouri that they were not said church. The whole church therefore went on after this new doctrine was started just as it did before, hearing and issuing appeals and complaints, as in duty bound, from all kinds of decisions. In 1839 however a complaint was presented to the Assembly by A. D. Metcalf and others against the Synod of Virginia for deciding that appeals may lie in cases not judicial. This complaint the Assembly sustained. This was the origin of the modified form of the new doctrine, viz. that appeals are confined to cases of trial and sentence but that complaints have a wider range, which is the third of the four opinions on this subject mentioned above. This decision of the Assembly is against all precedent. It is no disrespect to that body to think and say that it is more probable that they erred in their judgment, than that all other Assemblies that ever sat in this country were mistaken. We beg leave to refer our readers to the account of that case in our volume for 1839, where they will find the precise doctrine on the subject, which we are now advocating, stated and defended. We may be excused for making the following brief extract from our history of

the Assembly for that year. "Our constitution says, 'That every kind of decision which is formed in any church judicatory, except the highest, is subject to the review of a superior judicatory, and may be carried up in one or the other of the four following ways: 1. General review and control; 2. Reference; 3. Appeal; and 4. Complaint.' The question is, what is the meaning of this plain declaration? It does not mean, because it does not say, that every individual decision, but *every kind* of decision may be carried in either of these four ways. These different forms of redress contemplate different circumstances, and are not all available in every particular case. A reference, for example, must be made by the body itself, and not by an individual member, but the body may refer any kind of case. An appeal supposes an aggrieved party, but he may appeal from any kind of decision which directly affects himself. A complaint supposes some kind of impropriety in the act complained of, but it may be entered against any kind of act alleged to be improper. So that any kind of decision may regularly be brought up in each of the several ways specified above."* We make this extract and reference to the article whence it is taken, because we understand that our pages were frequently referred to on the floor of the Assembly, and quoted in support of the right of the appellants in the case then before the house. It will be seen however that the doctrine taught in our pages is not that every particular decision may be made the subject of appeal or complaint, but that these modes of address are applicable to every kind of decision. It is not only when a man is tried and suspended from the church or the ministry that he has the right to appeal, but if dismissed from his pastoral charge, against his will, or in any way personally aggrieved by the act of a church court, he has the same right. The difference between an appeal and complaint is, that a complaint does not arrest the operation of the decision against which it is entered, and secondly, that an appeal can be made only by an aggrieved person; whereas a complaint may be made by any member of the court who considers the decision unjust or unconstitutional.† If a presbytery divide a congregation against its will, it is only the people who have a right to

* *Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review*, for 1839. p. 433.

† *Repertory*, 1839. p. 435.

appeal, but any member of the presbytery may complain of the act. Our doctrine, therefore, on this subject is the common doctrine of our church, viz: that any kind of decision of a judicatory can thus be brought under the review of a higher court. No man can appeal from a decision that does not affect himself, and no man can complain of a decision which is not wrong either actually or supposably; which is not charged with having violated some rule of the constitution or of justice. As a complaint is a mode of redress, where there is no grievance there can be no complaint.

We fully agree, therefore, with Dr. Young and Mr. Stonestreet, in the main drift of their able arguments before the late Assembly, as far as we can judge from the reports given in the papers. Those gentlemen argued to show that the fact that the decision of the Synod of Philadelphia from which Dr. Breckinridge appealed and against which he complained, was not a judicial sentence, was no legitimate bar in the way of the Assembly's entertaining the case.* We differ from them, however, in thinking that that

* In looking over the report of the proceedings of the two General Assemblies that met in Edinburgh in May last, we noticed some eight or twelve cases of appeal from decisions of presbyteries to translate a minister from one church to another, or to install him notwithstanding the objections of a part of the people. In all such cases the right to appeal is essential to the protection of the interests of those concerned. If a congregation object to have a man ordained over them, and the presbytery decide to do it, unless their decision is arrested by an appeal, the man becomes their pastor no matter how iniquitous the act may be. The argument originally urged by Mr. Winchester was, and it has often been presented since, that an appeal is a judicial process, as is evident from the use of the words trial, cause, sentence, testimony, &c. and being a judicial process is only applicable a judicial case. The fallacy of this argument is, that it overlooks the fact that any executive act may become the subject of judicial investigation. A presbytery resolves to divide a congregation, the people appeal. Then the propriety of the act is judicially investigated. You have the sentence appealed from; you have the testimony to show that the decision was made and what were the facts in the case; you have the parties, one affirming and the other denying the propriety of the decision. Take for illustration one of the many cases which came before the last Scotch Assembly. The Free "Assembly took up the appeal by the congregation of Maryburgh against the decision of the Presbytery of Dingwall, agreeing to translate the Rev. George Macleod from Maryburgh to Lockbroom. Parties being called, Mr. Kennedy appeared for the Presbytery of Dingwall, and Mr. Lomond for the congregation of Lochbroom. There was no appearance for the congregation of Maryburgh. The reasons of the appeal were read by the clerk." The reasons are given at length; then follows the pleading of the parties, and when they had been heard, it is said, "The parties were now removed," and the house proceeded to give judgment, when it was resolved "to dismiss the appeal, affirm the judgment, and order Mr. Macleod to be translated to Lochbroom with

principle covered or even touched the case before the house. Had some ruling elder claimed the right in the Presbytery of Baltimore to join in the imposition of hands in the ordination of a minister, and been refused by a vote of that body, he could have complained to the Synod, and if the Synod sustained the Presbytery, he might complain to the General Assembly. Or if the Synod had passed a resolution prohibiting elders from taking part in such service, any member of the body would have had a right to complain. But the case before the Assembly was of a very different nature, and was properly dismissed.

The principle just adverted to, viz: that a complaint supposes a grievance can hardly be called into question. Does any man complain of any thing which he does not think wrong, or injurious? Does not the nature of the act imply a charge against the body complained of, that it had no right to do the thing in question, or that it infringed on the rights of others? Does not our Book say that a "complaint is a representation," that "a decision by an inferior judicatory has been irregularly or unjustly made?" Of course where there is no room for the charge of irregularity or injustice there can be no room for a complaint. If the decision is not charged with being in violation of any rule, or with inflicting any injury on those concerned, it is preposterous to assert that there is a right of complaint. A body cannot be summoned to a higher court for the exercise of its acknowledged rights, in accordance with the constitution, and in cases subject to its own discretion. If a presbytery elects A. B. instead of C. D. moderator, no one can complain since the presbytery has a right to choose their

all convenient speed." [Edinburgh Witness for May 28, 1844.] One such case, and hundreds of the same kind, might be cited from our own records and from those of the Scottish church, is a complete refutation of the whole argument in favour of confining appeals to judicial cases. It shows that all the prescriptions of our Book are applicable to appeals from executive acts. We are the more anxious to call attention to this point because we fear lest it should be inferred from the action of the Assembly that the appeal and complaint of Dr. Breckinridge were dismissed on the ground that the decision appealed from was not in the strict sense of the term a judicial sentence. The Assembly in their answer to the protest of Dr. Young and others, place their decision on entirely different grounds, and are not to be considered as in any way sanctioning the restricted doctrine of complaints and appeals, which we believe to be contrary to the constitution, the practice, the rights and interests of the church. We do not enter anew on the discussion because this point was not involved in the case before the Assembly, and because it has been repeatedly discussed in our pages. See *Repertory* for 1835 and 1839.

own moderator, and, within the limits of the constitution may choose whom they please. They may choose the oldest man or the youngest man, the wisest or the weakest, and no man may call them to account because in his judgment they might have made a better choice. If such an act is made a ground of complaint, it must be charged that it was irregularly or unjustly or corruptly performed. The complaint must rest not on the act itself, but upon the assumption that it violates some rule which the judicatory was bound to observe, or that it affects unjustly the rights or interests of others. There are then certain acts which are purely discretionary, which a judicatory have a perfect right to do or not to do at pleasure, which cannot possibly be made the ground of a complaint, unless they can be charged as unjust or irregular.

The only question then is whether the act of the Synod of Philadelphia was such an act. To determine this point we have only to ask what the act was, and secondly whether it can be charged or supposed to violate any rule or to infringe any right. As to the act itself it was a simple refusal to adopt an overture. Dr. Breckinridge presented two memorials condemning in strong language the decision of the Assembly of 1843 as to the constitution of a quorum of presbytery and the right of elders to join in the imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers, and calling upon the synod to overture the Assembly to rescind the obnoxious resolutions and to adopt others of a contrary import. This the synod refused to do. Now the only question is whether a Synod is bound to adopt any and every overture presented to it; or whether any right is infringed by their refusing to do so. This question has nothing to do with the correctness or incorrectness of the views contained in the overture. It may assert self-evident or acknowledged truths, still it is a matter entirely within the discretion of the body to receive or reject it. Because a synod may present overtures to the Assembly, it does not follow that it is bound to do so. It may if it chooses call upon the Assembly to assert that Calvinism is true and Romanism false, but it cannot be forced to make such a call, or charged with acting unjustly or irregularly for refusing to make it. This is plain from the nature of the case, for such an overture is a petition, and it is absurd to say that a body can be forced to petition. It is clear, therefore, that the act of the Synod was purely discretionary. It is equally clear that the

Synod's act violated no right, it inflicted no grievance, because no member of a body has a right to make that body adopt his sentiments, or if they hold them, publicly avow them, or to call upon a higher judicatory to avow them. If a man wishes the Assembly to avow certain doctrines, let him make the request, but what right has he to force others to join in that request or to charge them with acting unjustly or irregularly for refusing to do so? All this is so perfectly plain that Dr. Young and other advocates of the appeal and complaint were forced to assume that the Synod had decided adversely to the doctrine of the overture. They felt the absurdity of complaining of the mere refusal to adopt a certain paper, and therefore were forced to assume that the refusal to adopt was an expression of an opinion contrary to the contents of the paper. But this is obviously a gratuitous and unwarranted assumption. Had the whole Synod agreed with Dr. Breckinridge and with every word contained in his overtures, they might with perfect consistency have rejected them. If a man present a long paper to a Synod, asserting the doctrine of the Trinity and calling upon the Assembly to join in affirmation of the doctrine, do they deny the doctrine because they refuse to adopt the overture? There may surely be other reasons than the incorrectness of its doctrines to lead a Synod to reject such a paper. It may be unnecessary, or uncalled for, or so obviously true as to make the assertion of its sentiments by the body unwise or undesirable. It is therefore obviously a false assumption, contrary to the very face of the record, to say that the Synod of Philadelphia decided that the presence of ruling elders is not necessary to a quorum of presbytery, or that elders may not join in the imposition of hands in the ordination of ministers. They made no such decision; they neither affirmed nor denied any thing, they simply refused to adopt Dr. Breckinridge's overture, which cannot be charged with violating any rule or infringing any of his rights. Of course their action afforded no ground for appeal or complaint.

That this is a correct exposition of the doctrine of our Book is obvious if we ask what is the design of appeals and complaints. They are intended to redress some grievance or secure the censure of those who inflicted it. Suppose then the complaint before the house had been taken up and sustained, what would be the operation of such a vote? One or the other of two things; either to reverse the decision

of the court below, or to censure them. If the former, then the Synod would be required to rescind their vote refusing to adopt Dr. Breckinridge's overture, and ordered to adopt it. Would not this be absurd? One Assembly order a Synod to petition another Assembly to condemn the act of a previous Assembly! Or if sustaining the complaint was to amount to a censure on the Synod, what were they to be censured for? Why for not joining in a petition. Is this not again absurd? It is plain therefore the complaint could not be taken up, because to sustain it, could work no effect which would not be ridiculous or nugatory.

Another legitimate ground on which this extraordinary appeal and complaint were opposed was, that the mere entertaining of it would work a great injustice, if it was to have any effect at all. Properly speaking the complaint would not have brought up any other question than this, Did the Synod do right in refusing to adopt Dr. Breckinridge's overture? But the propriety of their action did not depend on the correctness or incorrectness of the sentiments the overture contained. The Synod neither affirmed nor denied any thing as to that point. They simply refused to adopt. The truth of the doctrines taught in the overture, therefore, would not fairly have been brought into discussion by considering the appeal. That was not the way to bring up that point, for the Synod was not complained of for having denied those doctrines, but for having refused to petition the Assembly to avow them; and as remarked in the preceding paragraph, to sustain such a complaint would not be to affirm the doctrines of the overture, but to censure the Synod or to reverse its vote. But if the merits of the question were to be brought up in that way then an obvious injustice would be wrought. For what was the question? It did not relate to the administration but to the meaning of the constitution. But with what colour of justice could one of the largest of the synods of the church be debarred from taking part in deciding *in thesi* what is the meaning of the constitution? The object professedly sought was to get the judgment of the highest judicatory of the church as to the principles of our constitution. Why then not ask the whole judicatory? What fair end could be answered by bringing up the question in a form to exclude from all participation in the decision so large a part of the body? They had no more prejudged the matter than other

synods and other members of the house, and the injustice of excluding them would have been flagrant.

Again, if the principle on which this appeal and complaint were advocated, should be sanctioned, then any man in the church could at any time force the General Assembly to consider any abstract question he might choose to propose. The control of the house over its own time and over the subjects that should come before it, would be destroyed. If one of our modern abolitionists, for example, were to overture a Synod to request the General Assembly to declare that no slave holder should be admitted to church communion, the Synod would be bound to present the petition, or be subject to be arraigned at the bar of the Assembly for refusing to do so. And then the Assembly would be bound to consider not the propriety of the Synod's action but the merits of the question. Thus any and every abstraction in theology, morals, politics, or polity might be forced upon the house, and its time consumed and the peace of the church destroyed by any man who chose thus to trouble his brethren. No church court could act on this principle; and if our constitution allowed of such complaints, it would work our ruin or a change in a very short time. Such were the principal arguments urged against the propriety of entertaining Dr. Breckinridge's appeal and complaint, as they are embodied in the answer drawn up by Rev. N. L. Rice, to the protest of the minority, and, as we have seen, the house by a majority of nearly one hundred, pronounced them valid.

Overtures on the Elder Question.

Rev. Dr. Spring as chairman of the committee of Bills and Overtures, reported Overture No. 3, it being on a memorial from the Presbytery of Cincinnati, asking this Assembly to reverse the decision of the last, respecting the right of ruling elders to impose hands in the ordination of ministers, and respecting the necessity of the presence of ruling elders to constitute a quorum of Presbytery; and an Overture from the Presbytery of Indianapolis on a branch of the same subject; and also an Overture from the Presbytery of South Alabama, respecting an amendment of the Form of Government so as to provide that ruling elders shall be necessary to a quorum. On these overtures as relating to similar important points in the government of the Church, the committee submitted the following resolutions, viz:

“1. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Assembly, the

last Assembly in determining that Ruling Elders are not authorized by the Form of Government to impose hands in the ordination of ministers, did not depreciate the office of Ruling Elder, nor did they in any respect contravene the letter or the spirit of the Constitution, or the principles and practice of Presbyterian churches in Europe or America since the Reformation, but in conformity with both the principles and practice of our own and other Presbyterian churches, they did decide that as the right of ordination is simply a declaratory, ministerial act, the laying on of hands as a part thereof belonging properly to ordained ministers, while to Ruling Elders is left unimpaired and unquestioned the full and rightful power of ordering the work of ordination, and of judging in the discipline of ministers, in common with those Presbyters who labour in word and doctrine as in all other cases.

“2. *Resolved*, That the last Assembly in determining that three ministers are a quorum of the presbytery, when ruling elders are present, did not detract in any degree from the dignity and importance of this office; nor did they question the perfect right or duty of elders to be present and take part in all acts of government and discipline; but only declared that according to the true intent and meaning of our constitutional rules, their absence does not prevent the presbytery from constituting and transacting business, if three ministers are present, and this decision is based upon the fact that ministers are not only preachers of the gospel and administrators of sealing ordinances, but also ruling elders in the very nature of their office.

“3. *Resolved*, That this Assembly in re-affirming those decisions of the last Assembly which have been called in question, design to maintain the purity, order, and peace of the Church, and the continued and faithful observance of those principles and regulations which have heretofore been found to consist with true christian liberty, and secure the common welfare of all classes in the church; also they re-affirm and maintain the scriptural authority of the office of Ruling Elder, and the great importance and solemn obligation of the attendance of Elders on the meetings of the judicatories of the church, and of their equal participation in the exercise of government and discipline.”

A minority of the same committee communicated a counter report as follows:

“A minority of the committee of Bills and Overtures is

constrained to differ from the majority in the decision to which they have come in regard to the Quorum and Elder Questions, and he therefore begs leave to report the following for the consideration of the Assembly, viz: 1st. On the Quorum question. Whereas the last Assembly decided that any three ministers of a Presbytery being regularly convened are a quorum competent to the transaction of all business, agreeably to the provisions contained in the Form of Government, chap. x. sec. 7; and whereas the following facts and circumstances in relation to this decision appear to be true, viz: 1st. It was not demanded by any exigence or necessity of the church. 2d. It was not required by any ecclesiastical body large or small, but appears to have been overtured at the request of a single individual. 3d. The decision has given rise to a vast amount of discussion, diverting the minds of our people from more important interests. 4th. A very considerable portion of the church doubt the correctness of the decision. 5th. Many honestly believe that the Assembly had no authority to make such a decision, it having the effect to change, as they suppose, a constitutional rule, which the Assembly is forbidden to do, chap. xii. sec. 6 of the Form of Government, which declares 'before any overture or regulation proposed by the Assembly to be established as constitutional rules, shall be obligatory on the churches, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and receive the returns of at least a majority of them in writing approving thereof.' In view of the great diversity of sentiment, and with a desire to harmonize views and allay agitation, be it *Resolved*, 1st. That the decision of the last General Assembly in regard to Overture No. 20, be and it hereby is rescinded, but that in their rescinding the same, this General Assembly expresses no opinion upon the merits of the question. *Resolved*, 2d. That the following two forms of section 7, of chap. x., be submitted to the Presbyteries with the request that they shall send up their approval of one or the other, and that form which shall receive the approval of a majority of all the Presbyteries, shall be adopted by the next General Assembly as a part of the Form of Government, viz: 1st. Any three ministers of a Presbytery being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business; or 2d. Any three ministers and two or more elders of a Presbytery being met at the time and place appointed, shall be a quorum competent to proceed to business. And in regard to

the Elder question embraced in Overture No. 14 of the last Assembly, he would for similar reasons respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

"1. That whereas the constitution provides before any overture or regulation proposed by the Assembly can become a constitutional rule, it must be sent down to the Presbyteries for their concurrence, chap. xii. sec. 6, the decision of the last General Assembly on Overture No. 14, therefore can only amount to a mere expression of opinion, and is in no other sense to be regarded as binding on the Presbyteries.

"2. That a Presbytery consists of all the ministers and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district.

"3. That in Presbytery all the members meet on terms of parity, and are competent to vote and unite in all and every Presbyterian act of the Presbytery, without any exclusive rights or privileges being possessed by one member more than another. Signed A. A. Campbell, minority of committee on Bills and Overtures."

After a discussion extending through five days, the first resolution reported by the majority of the committee, was, on motion of Dr. Maclean, adopted, *Ayes* 151, *Nays* 24. Of the *ayes* 59 and of the *nays* 12 were elders.

The principal speakers in support of the report of the majority were Dr. Hoge, Dr. Plumer, and Mr. N. L. Rice, and on the opposite side Mr. Stonestreet and Dr. Young.

This question has been so long and so often discussed, that we presume our readers and the church generally are heartily tired of it. The whole argument, we understand, was fully brought out in the able speeches made upon the floor of the Assembly, though we have not seen any report of the debate, and therefore cannot give any abstract of it. When it is remembered that this elder question has been agitated for a number of years; that the church has been literally flooded with publications advocating the new theory; that the most stirring appeals have been made to the *esprit du corps* and to all the feelings good and bad of the eldership; that the matter was debated at length, in the Assembly of 1843 and decided, the ordination question, by a vote of 138 to 9, and the quorum question, by a vote of 83 to 35, adversely to the new doctrine; again debated by the first men of the church, for days together, in the late Assembly, met in Kentucky, away from all adverse influences, and again decided in the same way by a similar

overwhelming vote, we think the church has earned a right to be quiet. If any action can evince the clear and settled conviction of the brethren, ministers and elders, on this subject, the votes of the last two Assemblies must do it. And we believe that the public sentiment of the church will forbid that one half of the time of another Assembly should be consumed in discussing a matter, which in itself is of no importance, and which becomes of consequence, only because the principles on which the innovation is advocated, are destructive of our whole system of government. The fact that after all the efforts made to persuade the elders that they are ill-used, only twelve in so large an Assembly, sanctioned by their vote on the ordination question, the new theory, proves decisively that they understand the nature of their office. They evidently feel, that being the representatives of the people, and appearing in the name of the people in all church courts to take part in the government of the church, they have an office of high honour, of divine sanction, and of great power, and that it would be to renounce that office should they claim the right to preach, to administer the sacraments or to ordain, functions which the word of God and our constitution represent as inseparable, and which Christ has committed to ministers of the gospel.

Scotch Church.

The Rev. George Lewis (who was afterwards joined by Rev. Mr. Chalmers) a delegate from the Free Church of Scotland to the evangelical churches of America, attended the sessions of the Assembly. He was introduced to the house by the Rev. Dr. Spring, when on motion of Dr. Plumer, the following minute was adopted :

Whereas the Free Church which has proved herself worthy to be successor to the church of Scotland in the days of the martyrs, has, by the grace of God, taken so signal and glorious a stand in favour of Christ's crown and covenant, therefore, *Resolved*, That the Assembly do unanimously and most cordially and joyfully welcome the Rev. George Lewis of the Scottish deputation, to the deliberations of our body, and affectionately invite him to take part amongst us as a corresponding member.

Resolved, That the papers of Mr. Lewis be referred to the committee of Bills and Overtures to make such presentation of the object of his visit as they may deem most suitable.

It was made the order of the day for Friday morning to hear those gentlemen, and when the hour arrived the Rev. Mr. Lewis and Rev. Mr. Chalmers advanced to the moderator's table and were introduced to the Assembly as delegates to this body from the Free Church of Scotland.

“The Rev. Mr. Lewis was first heard; and in an impressive and appropriate speech of about an hour's length, he gave the origin and history of that great principle, to wit: the kingly office of Christ, for the stern maintainance of which, the Kirk of Scotland, that is about six hundred congregations of that church, were, on the 18th of May, 1843, compelled to resign the national establishment, and seek them houses of worship and ministerial support as best they could. An appeal in their behalf had been successfully made to the churches in England and Ireland, and it was the object of his mission to make a general representation of their present sufferings and toils, with the hope of gaining assistance from the churches in America.

“The moderator then took occasion to remark on the value of the federal and representative principle of the Presbyterian church, which the powers of the British government, civil and ecclesiastical, had never yet been able to drive out of the land of Scotia; and which were the foundation of the civil institutions of this country. The recent events in Scotland proved, to his mind, that the battle was not yet done; and as the Scottish Church was in the lead, and had thrown her banner to the wind in the great cause, he called to her assistance the church in this country, whose boast it was to be counted the offspring of that stern and rugged mother. At the same time, unrolling to the Assembly the Protest of the Scottish divines, and pointing at the head of the list of signers, to the name of Thos. Chalmers, the moderator said that he considered it a circumstance of peculiar felicitation, that it was permitted to him, in his capacity as the presiding officer of the house, to introduce another member of the delegation from the church of his fathers, who was of the same name and of the same spiritual, if not of the same earthly family, of the venerated Dr. Chalmers.

“Whereupon the Rev. Mr. Chalmers arose, and occupied about an hour and twenty minutes, upon the achievements, triumphs, secession and suffering of the Church of Scotland, in a most classic strain of fervid eloquence and burning zeal—being once or twice interrupted by the overflow of a kindred feeling, which he most successfully imparted to the Assembly and the whole auditory.

“Dr. Spring, after remarking upon the peculiar fitness of the Church of Scotland to stand in her lot of trial for asserting the true priestly office of the Messiah, and the great principle that Jesus will be king in Zion, offered a resolution to the following effect :

“*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Assembly be presented to our beloved brethren of the Scottish delegation, for their faithful presentations of the object of their mission ; and that the subject thereof be referred to a special committee.

“Mr. Boardman had heard this subject presented before, but at this moment he confessed that he felt in his mind a growing sense of its magnitude and importance. And it was his opinion that the period had not arrived when the present operations of the Church of Scotland could be fully understood and appreciated. There was a moral grandeur in these events, which seemed to require that they should be viewed from a distance. It would not be, perhaps till another generation should occupy our places, and the minor difficulties that were distracting us now, should subside into their native insignificance, that the glory of these events would properly loom up in the eyes of men, and stand out before the world, in all their grandeur.

“Mr. B. rejoiced, as a Presbyterian, that since the conflict for the crown-right of the Redeemer was to take place, it had pleased our covenant God to call to this conflict, and place in the front rank, a Presbyterian Church. Being the parent branch of the Reformation, there was none better qualified to sustain the shock than the Church of Scotland ; and, as it always had been the case, under God, she had come off victorious. But while the conquest is her's, a share in its happy consequences belongs to the Presbyterians of America ; identified with her in faith and affection, as a child with its parent, we will glory with her in this living, growing, triumphant example of the power of the Cross.

“He spoke of the events of the 18th of May last, as of the most potent efficacy in dissipating the skepticism of North Britain, and in proclaiming to all the faithful that they might go forth to the service of God in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, free and untrammelled by the civil power. It was a glorious event, and one that would deeply mark itself on the history of nations. Mr. B. had no doubt, that God, in his providence, would subject his church to similar trials and dangers in every part of the world ; separating the faithful from the unbelieving—gradually uniting heart to heart in

the great interests of the church—clothing her friends in the habiliments of righteousness, and placing in the hands of her standard-bearers the banner of the Redeemer's sovereignty.

“Mr. B. desired to be excused for detaining the house; because he had felt that he could not well suppress the utterance of these sentiments. He would most cordially second the resolution offered; and he trusted that the report of the committee to be created under it, would diffuse the spirit, now in our hearts, to the utmost extent of the church. It had pleased the brethren, (Mr. Lewis and Mr. Chalmers,) to speak lightly of their privations in the mother church, in consequence of these events, rejoicing themselves that they have been counted worthy to suffer for the Cross of Christ. And Mr. B. recounted some particular instances of privations of the congregations of the old Kirk, concluding with the expression of his confidence, that our people would not be slow to let the appeal be made in the behalf of the brethren over the water, and that it would be promptly and suitably responded to.

“Hereupon, at the request of the moderator, the Rev. Mr. Chalmers favoured the audience with the story of Janet Frazier's church, and then the resolution was adopted, and the committee appointed. The impression made by these exercises was one of a deep and solemn character.” *Protestant and Herald*, May 30, 1844.

The committee appointed under the above mentioned resolution, made the following report which was unanimously adopted.

“The General Assembly has heard with the warmest interest the eloquent addresses of the Rev. brethren Lewis and Chalmers, relative to the recent movements of the Free Church of Scotland with a view to preserve her spiritual purity and independence.

“By the sacrifices she has already made in the relinquishment of every temporal advantage conferred upon her by the civil power, and by her noble resolution in reliance on the divine grace and providence to encounter all the difficulties which may impede her in the prosecution of the work to which God has called her, the Free Church of Scotland has borne a most noble testimony in favour of her devotion to all that is sacred in the rights of conscience, and precious in the principles and privileges of the gospel; of her deep conviction of the superior importance of the approbation of her Lord and Master over the favour of earthly

princes and nobles, and the treasures of his grace to the treasures of the world.

“By this truly manful and Christian course, this church has acquired a just and strong claim upon the admiration and sympathy of all evangelical Christians, and has set before the world a noble example of integrity and self-denial. The conduct of our fathers and brethren, as well as of the people under their care, recalls forcibly to our recollection the glorious struggles of the Church of Scotland in days gone by, when she stood for years against the fierce and persevering assaults of a bigoted hierarchy and tyrannical monarchy, *taking joyfully the spoiling of her goods, and resisting even unto blood*, that she might transmit to posterity unimpaired the spiritual *liberty wherewith Christ had made her free*.

“While we rejoice to recognise in her' present struggles, the same principles and the same spirit which animated our Presbyterian forefathers in Scotland and made the history of their persecution and endurance so interesting and glorious, we cannot refrain from expressing our gratitude to Almighty God, both that the present sons of the Church of Scotland show themselves worthy of their pious and honoured ancestors, and that, by the blessing of God, the principles of civil and religious liberty have been so far established, as to prevent ungodly men inflicting on those who now contend for spiritual freedom, the same extremities of sufferings which were endured by its defenders in former days. Therefore,

“*Resolved*. 1. That this General Assembly express, in behalf of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, our deep sympathy with our brethren of the Free Church of Scotland, in the sacrifices they have been called to make, and the trials they have yet to endure in defence of their spiritual liberties.

“*Resolved*. 2. That we hail the present movement of the Free Church of Scotland as an evident token from God of good to his people every where, and we would render to Him, as the giver of all grace our sincere thanks and praises for the spirit of boldness, self-sacrifice and devotion to his holy cause, manifested by our brethren during their recent struggles and present difficulties.

“*Resolved*. 3. That we cordially recommend the Free Church of Scotland in all her interests and trials, to the sympathies and prayers of all the churches under our care.

“*Resolved.* 4. That we recommend to all those ministers, elders and churches under our care, who have not yet assisted these suffering brethren, to solicit contributions in behalf of the Free Church of Scotland.

“*Resolved.* 5. That this Assembly propose to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland to open a friendly correspondence by the mutual interchange of commissioners to attend each other’s sessions, at such times as may be deemed most suitable.

“*Resolved.* 6. That the thanks of this Assembly be tendered to brethren Lewis and Chalmers for the deeply interesting intelligence communicated to us by them in relation to the affairs of the Free Church of Scotland.”

The only thing we regret in the manner in which this subject was disposed of, is that the want of a more distinct call upon the churches to contribute to the fund in aid of our struggling brethren. If instead of an exhortation to those churches that had as yet done nothing, there had been a definite appointment of a collection in all our congregations, we should anticipate a more gratifying result than we now expect. As far as the facts of the case are known, there is a sincere and warm interest in the cause of the Free Church. But to a great extent the facts are not known, and our clergy, unless their attention be particularly called to the subject, will not bring the matter before their people, and make them feel that this is an occasion which calls for the sympathy, prayers and assistance of all the people of God in this country and especially of all Presbyterians. We may say that we have a great work to do ourselves. This is true, but we may be assured that not one church the less will be built in this country, not one minister the less sustained, not one blessing of our divine Redeemer withheld for all we give to the Church of Scotland. Their difficulties are exceeding great. They have arrayed against them the whole force of the government, of the aristocracy and of the establishment. They have every thing to do at once, and unless they can get fairly started, unless they can be provided with the necessary conveniences for carrying on the work of the church, the danger is imminent that a large part of their people will be scattered. It is of immense importance not to them only, but to the world, to the cause of Christ everywhere, that this great assertion of truth, should be not merely sustained, but triumphantly vindicated; that the efficiency of a Free Church in which Christ reigns should be made conspicuous to all men.

No one can read the account of the proceedings of the late Assembly at Edinburgh, without being convinced that a more remarkable revival of religion has not for centuries occurred, than is now in progress in Scotland. We see in that body the clearest evidences of the presence of the Spirit of God, in the harmony which reigns among its members; in their readiness to uphold and assist each other, to make sacrifices for the benefit of others, and for the common cause; in the absence of all indications of jealousy, envy, or party feeling, and in the facility with which favourite plans are relinquished or modified in accordance with the views of the brethren. There is the same ardour in all that relates to the spiritual duties of the church, that has been so remarkably evinced in vindicating its rights and asserting the truth committed to her custody. The spirit of devotion seems to pervade all their meetings, and to animate all their acts. The reader too cannot fail to remark the extraordinary sagacity and practical wisdom which mark all their plans. There is nothing extravagant, nothing visionary or unfeasible in any of their schemes. They see their end, and they take the most direct and practicable way to attain it. The surprising energy however with which they press on their plans and the liberality manifested by all classes, ministers, elders and people, will probably be more effective in producing a conviction of the strength and purity of the motives by which they are governed than any thing else. They have raised £68,000 for the sustentation fund, enough to give a salary of £150 or 750 dollars to each of their ministers, no matter where located, had not a large portion of that fund been appropriated to buildings and other necessary purposes. As it is, they have divided £100 or 500 dollars to each of their 483 ministers, or in that proportion, as their yearly salary; besides paying the subscriptions to the widow's fund of all who were subscribers thereto, and assigning as an equivalent £5 to all who were not. They have raised £224,000 for building new churches, about £32,000 for missionary and other benevolent operations; £40,000 by church-door collections, £52,000 for parochial schools, in all upwards of £420,000. If to this be added what has been contributed by the several congregations "to supplement" the salaries of their own pastors, the whole amount, as publicly stated by the Rev. Dr. Brown, will not fall much below half a million sterling, or not far from two millions and a half of dollars. This includes indeed all the contributions

from other churches. But those contributions do not amount to more than between two and three hundred thousand dollars. So that the Free Church has raised for its own support and extension and to diffuse the gospel among the Jews and heathen, considerably more than two millions of dollars within the past year. This is a manifestation of the power of godliness which few churches have ever exhibited. To aid a people who are making such exertions in the cause of God, and the honour of Christ our common Lord, is a far greater blessing to those who give, than to those who receive.

Board of Education.

The report of the Board shows that its operations during the past year have been conducted with wisdom and efficiency. The number of new candidates received is ninety-nine. The whole number under the care of the Board is four hundred and eight, viz :

Pursuing their Theological course,	135
In twenty-four Colleges,	184
In twenty-nine Academies,	55
Under private tuition,	9
Teaching temporarily,	25

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The treasurer's report shows that the resources for the year were \$33,419. The payments for the same time were \$31,080, leaving a balance of \$2,338. There are drafts due however more than sufficient to absorb this balance. The number of candidates has increased from 218 to 408, and the receipts from \$19,000 to \$31,000 in three years. The thanks of the church are certainly due to the executive officers of the Board, especially to Messrs. Hope and Chester, for the zeal and talent they have so successfully devoted to this work. It is to be regretted that notwithstanding their efforts, and notwithstanding the gratuitous assistance of more than forty ministers in temporary agencies, more than half our churches have contributed nothing to the support of the cause. As the agency thus employed was gratuitous, it shows that the difficulty is not in "paid agents," "but in the state of the churches themselves, and in the unwillingness of their officers to permit the several schemes of benevolence to be presented to the people." How far this is right, every one must answer for himself to his own conscience and to God.

The report urges upon the attention of the brethren two points, first the duty of instructing the people from the pulpit on the origin, history and claims of our various schemes of benevolence ; and secondly, the formation of some plan to secure personal application to all our members for contributions for their support.

This report, on motion of Dr. Cuyler, was adopted and ordered to be printed under the direction of the Board. The Rev. Mr. Yantis then offered the following resolution, which was also adopted, viz :

“ *Resolved*, In the prosperity of our Church, and especially in the great work of Church extension, nothing under God is more vitally important than a great increase of ministers of eminent talents and apostolic spirit.

“ On motion of Mr. Backus, the following resolution was adopted, viz.

“ *Resolved*, That while the General Assembly feel and proclaim the importance of praying and labouring for an increase of labourers, they do at the same time express their unhesitating belief that men of a high order of talents, character and training, are now more needed than mere numbers of inferior men, and they therefore cordially approve the sentiments expressed, and the measures adopted by the Board in regard to this subject; and they do most earnestly recommend all the Presbyteries to resist kindly, but firmly, the recommendation to the Board of unsuitable candidates, and also to discourage the propensity to hasten into the ministry without a full course of preparatory study.

“ On motion of the Rev. Dr. Young the following preamble and resolution were adopted.

“ *Whereas* the number of candidates under the care of the Board of Education has greatly increased through the Divine blessing ; and whereas it appears from the annual report of the said Board that only a small proportion of our churches and a still smaller proportion of our church members have made contributions in aid of this cause, now therefore,

“ *Resolved*, That in the deliberate judgment of this Assembly it is the privilege of all the members of all our churches, to be instructed from the pulpit in regard to the claims of this great cause, and their duty to sustain it regularly and systematically by their prayers and contributions.”

In connection with this subject should be mentioned a

memorial from the Synod of Cincinnati, and another from the Synod of West Tennessee, on the subject of the rule of the Board, requiring every beneficiary to pursue a course of three years study; and a communication from the Board itself on the same subject. Upon these papers the committee of Bills and Overtures recommended the adoption of a resolution to the following effect: "That the Board be required to permit the Presbytery under whose care the candidate may study, to be the judge of the length of time which shall be occupied in his theological studies."*

This resolution was opposed by Dr. Maclean, Dr. Junkin, the moderator, Mr. Boardman, Dr. Elliot, and others. Mr. A. O. Patterson, Mr. Williamson, Dr. Plumer, and others, supported the recommendation of the committee. Dr. Cuyler proposed a substitute to the effect that the General Assembly, being deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of a thorough course of preparation for the ministry, urge upon the Presbyteries to endeavour to elevate the standard of theological attainments by the students under their care, and that the pledge exacted by the Board of its beneficiaries, does not conflict with the constitution of the church.

This substitute was adopted. We are not aware that the rule of the Board requiring their beneficiaries to study theology three years, was objected to on the ground that a shorter course of study was sufficient or desirable. It seemed to be the general sense of the house, as it has been the uniform sentiment and practice of the church that as thorough a theological education as is attainable should be imparted to all candidates for the ministry. In the earlier periods of our history there was greater temptation than at present to lower the standard of ministerial education; but all attempts to effect that object were defeated. And to the honour of the Synod of Kentucky, it should be remembered that they submitted to the secession of the body now called the Cumberland Presbyterians, rather than yield to such demands. It is to this steadiness in requiring that men who are to teach others, should themselves be adequately taught, that the prosperity and usefulness of our church is in no small degree to be ascribed. There is however a constant tendency both on the part of young men and presbyteries to shorten the term of study. The calls for labour are so urgent; the dif-

* Protestant and Herald, May 23, 1844.

faculties of support are sometimes so numerous; and it must be confessed, in some cases, the conviction of the need of much study, is so weak, that it often happens that young men hurry or are hurried into the ministry but half prepared for their work. This is a great calamity to them and to the church. It is purchasing a temporary good, at the expense of a permanent evil. No man who has any just appreciation of the work of the ministry, would dare to assume its responsibilities, after a hurried course of two years study. He would feel that the danger he ran of perverting the truth through ignorance, or of failing to defend it when attacked, was too serious an evil to be lightly incurred. All experience teaches us that ignorance, next to sin, is the most fruitful source of error, and that a few able, well furnished and faithful ministers, are far more efficient for good, than a multitude of uneducated though zealous men.

The objection to the rule adopted by the Board which seemed to influence the members who took part in the debate, was that it conflicted with the rights of presbyteries. The constitution permits a presbytery to ordain a candidate after two years of theological study. The Board require the beneficiaries to study three years. This, it was urged, they had no right to do. It was not contended that the Assembly itself, much less the Board, has authority to limit the discretion of the presbyteries in this matter. If a presbytery choose to license or ordain a candidate, when he has studied two years, they can do so without censure. The rule of the Board does not apply to the presbyteries, however, but to the young men. The Board do not say to the former you must allow your beneficiaries to study three years; but it says to its own beneficiaries you must agree to study at least that length of time. Any individual has a right to say to a young man: I will aid you during your theological course, provided you consent to study three years; and the Board, which represents a number of individuals, who act and speak through the General Assembly, have surely the right to say the same thing. It is only a condition which the donors attach to their contributions. If they are dissatisfied they can through the Assembly rescind the restriction, or if in the minority, withhold their contributions. There is neither assumption nor injustice in this. It cannot be doubted that the great majority of the contributors to the Board of Education are in favour of requiring a three years course of study, and for a minority to say they shall not give

at all unless they give in a way which they think injurious to the church, is surely unreasonable. The Presbyteries are left at perfect liberty; they may license whom they please and when they please, within the limits of the constitution, but the Board as the organ of the donors and under the direction of the Assembly, may make a contract with the young men not to apply for licensure until they have completed their course of studies. A very important object is thus gained, without trenching on the rights of others.

Board of Foreign Missions.

The receipts of this Board from all sources during the past year were \$74,374 07, of which \$3,000 were received from the American Bible Society, and \$3,300 from the American Tract Society. The expenditures of the year exceeded the receipts \$200. Of the *Missionary Chronicle* 4,700 copies, and of the *Foreign Missionary* 15,000 copies have been circulated, a falling off as to the former of 400 copies, which is much to be regretted, as the information communicated by the *Chronicle* is one of the best means of diffusing and maintaining a missionary spirit.

Five ordained ministers, one physician, one printer, and one teacher, have been commissioned as missionaries; and five ordained missionaries are expected to sail for China during the summer. Four of them have taken their departure since the rising of the Assembly.

The Board have three missionaries in Texas. Among the Creeks they have two missionaries, labouring under very encouraging circumstances, though greatly embarrassed for the want of additional buildings and means for supporting schools. Among the Iowa and Sac Indians there is one minister, one teacher, and a farmer. The Indians themselves have appropriated 2000 dollars for a boarding school. Among the Chippewas and Ottowas there are two missionaries, who are labouring successfully in their work. In Western Africa the Board have three coloured ordained missionaries, two coloured teachers, and Mrs. Sawyer, the widow of Rev. R. M. Sawyer, whose death has so deeply afflicted the friends of Africa. The resolution of his heroic widow to remain at her post, and labour almost unattended in the instruction of the native children whom she could not bring herself to forsake, has excited the admiration of the friends of missions, and will, we trust, awaken new interest in the cause.

In Northern India the Board have several missions. The Lodiana Mission, 1170 miles from Calcutta, includes four stations, six ministers, a printer, a teacher, one native licentiate and several native assistants. The Allahabad Mission, on the Ganges, 475 miles from Calcutta, has five ministers and several native assistants. The Furrukhabad Mission, on the Ganges, 750 miles from Calcutta, has five ministers, one teacher, one native licentiate, and other native assistants. In all these stations, by preaching, printing, and teaching, the missionary work has been assiduously prosecuted during the past year.

The mission to Siam is conducted by the Rev. William P. Buck, with whom Rev. R. Way is, it is hoped, by this time associated. In China, in addition to Rev. W. M. Lowrie, there are Drs. Hepburn and McCartee, and Mr. Cole, printer. With these brethren five ordained missionaries are to be associated during the summer. It is contemplated to establish missions at Hong Kong, Amoy, and Ningpo or Shanghai.

The Report suggests that increased zeal and effort in the collection of funds are absolutely necessary to sustain these missions. The present resources of the Board are inadequate to sustain their present operations, and of course preclude the possibility of extending their missions in any measure in proportion to the facilities which the Providence of God are every where presenting. It remains for the churches to decide whether they will incur the guilt of withdrawing their hand, and leave the plough in the half finished furrow.

Board of Domestic Missions.

The Report was read by the Secretary, the Rev. William McDowell, D. D.

“The Board employed 315 missionaries in the last year, who laboured in 22 States and Territories of this country. Supplied 900 waste places with the word and ordinances, and on this wide field have performed an amount of labour equal to 250 years. They have organized 60 new churches, erected 70 houses of worship, and gathered about 4,000 into the communion of their churches. They have taught 25,000 children and youth in Sabbath schools and Bible classes, and have spread a blessed influence over the immense surface to which their labours have been extended.

“Upon the reading of the report of the Board of Domes-

tic Missions, Dr. McDowell proceeded to state, that he had been Secretary of this Board 11 years, and never yet recollected to have detained the Assembly in the way of remark; and that now, as this, perhaps, was the last report he should ever present to the Assembly, he felt anxious, in a single word, to bear his testimony to the magnitude and the importance of the work of missions in our country. His own observation confirmed him in the persuasion, that the Presbyterian Church has never yet realized, to a proper extent, the obligations under which God has placed us, with reference to supplying the word of life to the destitute portions of the land.

“Am I not right, Moderator, continued Dr. McDowell, in the opinion that the moral destiny of the destitute portions of this land, are especially entrusted to the Christians of this land? That it is both our duty and privilege, to send the gospel into every country, is most true; but in regard to the enlightenment of our own land, we have a special trust which others are not expected to share with us. We do not expect the Christians of Europe, to supply the gospel to the destitute in America. We must attend to our own destitutions. We have undertaken to do this, and I repeat, it is a work of the greatest magnitude, bearing deeply on the destinies of all lands—a work of unquestionable, unspeakable importance. Look at the vastness of the extent of this country—if we look over it, from the point we now occupy, from the very centre of the field, we cannot but conclude it is the most important field on the globe. Unroll the map of the world, and you can’t find a country, in point of interest and promise, that can be compared to it. And this is our field. Shall we suffer the millions upon it to go down to the grave and the judgment, untaught and unblest of our efforts in the gospel? But, Moderator, it is not my intention to proceed in this strain. Indeed, I dare not trust myself to proceed further. I had intended simply to give a word of explanation of one portion of the report read, but whenever I touch upon this subject, my heart overflows, I am filled with the interest it presents, and, indeed, the subject is overwhelming.

“My point of remark is, that the supplying of feeble churches with ministers, is a very important part of the duty of your Board. We feel that such churches ought to be cherished and strengthened, till they can stand alone, and help others in their turn. This duty is theirs as well as

that of occupying new ground, planting churches and extending their boundaries. Thus are doors opened for their operations on every side, and, Moderator, there are many valuable ministers in the Presbyterian Church, who could and would gladly go in at these doors and occupy, had your Board the means upon which they could venture to send them. But your Board has never yet had the means of carrying forward this part of the work. They have been struggling hard to maintain their posts. Shall this continue to be the case, my brethren? or may we not rather hope, that God, in his providence, has directed that this convocation of the Assembly should be held in the centre of this great domestic missionary field, in order that, from this point, all the church may look on and see for themselves, those important openings for effort; and that seeing may affect their hearts and rouse their energies for action? Should this be the result—should a new impulse be thus given to the great work of spreading the gospel throughout our land, you and I may live to hear the expression of gratitude for the meeting of this Assembly in Louisville. Let us pray then that such an impulse may now be given, as God may be pleased to own, and bless, and continue, till our churches shall be built up in every valley and our beloved land shall overflow with gospel intelligence.”

The importance of the work to which this Board is devoted, was urged on the attention of the Assembly by Rev. Drs. Potts and Rice, and the Rev. Mr. Gurley.

Board of Publication.

After reading the report of this Board, it was referred to a committee, at whose recommendation, the Assembly ordered it to be printed and circulated among the churches. 2. It was resolved that the Assembly approve of the fidelity of the Board during the past year. 3. They recommend that a copy of the publications of the Board be given to each of the theological seminaries connected with our church, and it was urged on the presbyteries to take such measures as would secure the publication of the entire minutes of the General Assembly.

We regret that we have no means of giving any account of the operations of the Board during the past years, as the report has not yet been published, and we have seen no abstract of its contents. We notice that the Free Church of Scotland, in their late Assembly, refer with commendation

to this department of our operations, and propose to imitate our example in providing a cheap theological literature adapted to the wants of their people. Dr. Candlish threw out a suggestion which it may perhaps be worth while for our Board to consider. He thought it would be well to obtain a number of annual subscribers for the publications of such a Board, and entered into some calculations to show how many works might be published on the basis of a list of a given number of subscribers. Thus 1250 subscribers at four shillings sterling, say one dollar, would authorize the publication of two volumes 12mo. of 352 pages, and leave a surplus of £78; 2000 subscribers would enable the Board to publish three such volumes, and leave £22 surplus, and 5000 subscribers, eight volumes and leave £1,302 surplus. In this way it was hoped the people might be supplied at a cheap rate, with many of the standard evangelical works.

Memorials on Slavery.

Several memorials in relation to Slavery were referred to the committee of Bills and Overtures. Dr. Spring, as the organ of that committee, reported that they had taken the memorials into respectful consideration, and recommended that the subject be dismissed. Mr. Bushnell presented a minority report recommending that the memorials be read, and referred to a committee. Dr. Spring read a paper which he proposed as a substitute for the report of the majority. Dr. Plumer moved that the whole subject be laid upon the table. This motion prevailed, *ayes* 117, *nays* 67. A protest against this decision was entered, signed by six ministers and two elders.

We presume the signers of the protest included all the abolitionists, properly so called, in the house, the sixty-seven, who voted against laying the whole subject on the table, comprise all who for any reason objected to such a summary mode of disposing of the subject.

Dr. Hoge as chairman of two committees appointed by the Assembly of 1843, presented two elaborate reports, the one on the method of raising funds, the other on the marriage question, but so much time had been consumed in the discussion of other matters, that these important subjects were laid over to the next Assembly, which is appointed to be held at Cincinnati on the third Thursday of May, 1845.