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ART. I.—*An Appeal in behalf of the views of the eternal world and state, and the doctrines of faith and life, held by the body of Christians who believe that a new church is signified (in the Revelation, chapter XXI.) by the New Jerusalem, embracing answers to all principal objections.* By the Rev. S. Noble, minister of the New-Jerusalem church, Hatton Garden, London.

ON the 29th of January A. D. 1689, according to himself, but in 1688 according to others, there was born at Stockholm in Sweden a man, who is known to the world by the name of Emanuel Swedenborg. He was the son of a Bishop in Sweden, was himself a good scholar, made considerable attainments in science, rose to the order of nobles in the kingdom, travelled extensively over Europe, exhibited amiable dispositions, was kindly treated by his monarch, Charles XII., wrote voluminously, and at last died in the city of London in the year 1772, aged either 82 or 83 years and 2 months. During the earlier parts of his life he made some important contributions to science and the arts; but that which has given him the most notoriety, was

ART. IV.—*General Assembly of 1848.**Organization of the House.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, met in the First Presbyterian church in the city of Baltimore, on Thursday, the 18th of May, and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Thornwell on the text—“And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.” Acts xvii. 32.

After sermon the moderator took the chair and opened the sessions with prayer. The permanent clerk, from the standing committee on commissions, reported the roll of the Assembly. The stated clerk reported the organization of the New Synod of Memphis, which was accordingly recognised. After the appointment of a committee on Elections, the Assembly adjourned until half-past four in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, after the minutes of the morning session had been read, the assembly proceeded to the election of Moderator, and the roll being called, it appeared that the Rev. Alexander T. McGill, D.D., had received a majority of votes, and he was, thereupon, declared duly elected. The Rev. D. V. Maclean was elected temporary clerk. After the appointment of the usual standing committees, the Assembly assigned certain hours for hearing the reports of the several Boards of the church.

We propose to present a brief record of the more important decisions and acts of the Assembly.

Death of the Reverend Doctors Green and Matthews.

On the second day of the sessions of the Assembly, the Rev. Dr. Cuyler announced in an address replete with feeling, that he had just received the intelligence that the venerable Doctor Green had on the morning of that day expired at his residence in Philadelphia. Dr. Cuyler gave a brief sketch of the life and services of this venerable patriarch of the church, and concluded by moving the appointment of a committee to report to the General Assembly a minute in relation to the death of Dr. Green, and that the Assembly do now adjourn as a further mark of respect. This motion was adopted, and the committee subsequently

reported the following minute, which was approved and entered on the records of the Assembly—

“The decease of the Rev. Ashbel Green, DD. LL.D, of Philadelphia, at 6 o'clock, on Friday morning, the 19th of May, having been announced to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America, it was ordered that the following record be entered on their minutes, as expressive of their high esteem for his character, and of their gratitude to God for his long continued and eminently useful life, the greater part of which has been spent to the glory of God in the service of our beloved Church.

“Dr. Green was born at Hanover, in the state of New Jersey, on the 6th of July, in the year of our Lord 1762, so that he died far advanced in his eighty-sixth year. He was the son of the Rev. Jacob Green, the pastor of the Presbyterian church of that place.

“Of the events of his early life, we know little. He probably received the rudiments of his education from his father; and while it was in progress, he was, for a short time, actively engaged in the war of the American Revolution. He completed his literary course at Princeton College, New Jersey, during the presidency of the late Dr. Witherspoon. Not long afterwards he became successively a tutor and professor in the same institution. From this field of usefulness, he was called, in the winter of 1787, to the pastoral office in the second Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, as a colleague to the late Rev. James Sproat, D.D., whom he succeeded as sole pastor upon his demise in the autumn of 1793. His ordination took place in the month of May, 1787. In this relation he continued till he was called to the Presidency of the same college, in the autumn of the year 1812. This call he accepted, and he continued to discharge the important duties of that office till he resigned it, in the year 1822. He then returned to Philadelphia, where he resided till the time of his death.

“While the Congress of the United States, held its sessions in Philadelphia, Dr. Green and the late Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, officiated as its chaplains.

“Dr. Green was, for many years before his death, the only surviving member of the Convention which framed the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. Ar-

dently attached to the doctrines and order of this Church, he not only firmly maintained her cause in trying times—and always in the spirit of the Master—but had the happiness of assisting until his death, and of witnessing the successful operation of the institutions of this Church, in whose inception he so largely participated, and the strength of her constitution to conduct and sustain her efficiently and triumphantly through the various important crises which have distinguished her career. He was also one of the Trustees of the General Assembly, having been for many years before his death, the only surviving member of the Board named in the charter, and continued to fulfil the office until his death.

“His time, after returning to reside in Philadelphia, was principally occupied in editing the *Christian Advocate*, which was, for several years the leading exponent of the faith and practice of the Presbyterian Church. Among its contents we find the first imprint of his lectures on the Shorter Catechism, since published in two duodecimo volumes by the Presbyterian Board of Publication—a work by which he may be fairly judged as a practical writer and an accomplished theologian. After he discontinued the publication of the *Christian Advocate*, he occupied himself, for some time, very laboriously, in preparing the works of Dr. Witherspoon for the press, together with an extended memoir of his life, and several of his works—neither of which have yet been published. He has also spent much time in revising his diary. These literary labours will constitute a valuable legacy to the Church he loved and served so well. After his return to Philadelphia, he never had a pastoral charge, although he frequently preached, and at one time stately, in the First African Church, Philadelphia, for a year or two.

“He was, to a very late period of his life, a diligent and successful student. He also read much for his own edification. Among other devotional reading, he was wont to read a chapter in the Greek Testament in connexion with Scott's practical remarks every day. His habits were eminently devotional. He spent hours daily in secret prayer and communion with God, in which he delighted; and to be deprived of the opportunity of which, evidently gave him pain.

“His decline was very gradual, and he suffered but little pain of body. Generally speaking, he enjoyed a calm and comforta-

ble frame of spirit, although he was not permitted to pass away without enduring some of the fiery darts of the adversary. Generally, however, he could appropriate the divine promises and enjoy the grace they contain, and find delight in prayer and praise. Being asked a few days before his departure, how the prospect before him appeared—"Glorious," was his prompt reply. Thus has he lived, honoured and useful, and died in Christian comfort, sleeping in Jesus. May his death be blessed to the Church which he loved.

"*Resolved*, That this General Assembly affectionately sympathize with his bereaved family; and that the stated clerk transmit an attested copy of this minute to them."

On the sixth day of the sessions of the Assembly, the death of the Rev. Dr. Matthews, of the New Albany Seminary, was announced by the Rev. Daniel Stewart, and a committee was appointed to prepare a minute expressive of the sense of the House of the greatness of the loss the church had sustained in the death of this excellent man. The minute reported and adopted in reference to this event, is as follows:

"The decease of the Rev. Dr. John Matthews, Professor of Theology in the New Albany Theological Seminary, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, which occurred on the evening of the 18th ult., having been announced to the General Assembly, a Committee was appointed to bring in a suitable minute. In accordance with this action, the following minute is respectfully submitted.

"The peculiar circumstances of Dr. Matthews' early history, give a deep interest to the distinction to which he afterwards attained as a preacher of the everlasting gospel, and an expounder and teacher of the doctrines of the Church. He was born in Guilford county, North Carolina, in the fall of 1771, where he devoted himself, until advanced to manhood, to a secular occupation, the evidences of which are yet to be seen. The pulpit of the old church in Orange county, where his mind was first turned to the subject of religion, is still pointed out as the handiwork of Dr. Matthews.

"His academical and theological studies were prosecuted under the direction of the well known Dr. Caldwell, of Guilford, North Carolina, and his license given him by the Presbytery of Orange, in the Month of March, 1801, at the age of twenty-nine years.

Until 1803, he travelled in Tennessee as a missionary, enduring many privations, when he was called to become the pastor of Nutbush and Grassy Creek churches, Granville county, North Carolina. In this situation he continued until 1806, when he removed to Martinsburg, Virginia, and thence to Shepherdstown, on the removal of Dr. Hoge to Hampden Sidney College.

"In this field of labour Dr. Matthews earned a most enviable reputation from the abundance and quality of his ministerial services. His preaching at the commencement of his career as a minister, was of a fervent, awakening description. This he afterwards exchanged for a more composed and didactic mode, characterized by great perspicuity and logical arrangement. There is reason to believe that his labours, about this time, were much blessed to the conviction and conversion of sinners.

"From this field of labour and usefulness, where he is yet held in grateful remembrance, he was called to fill the chair of Didactic Theology in the Theological Seminary, then located at South Hanover, Indiana, now at New Albany. In responding favourably to this call, there is evidence to believe that he was actuated by a disinterestedness which shrunk not from the prospect of future trials—'I am called by God,' said he to a near friend, who was expostulating with him against the acceptance of the invitation—'to an unpleasant mission, like Jonah, and if I do not go, I shall expect Jonah's punishment.' He left an affectionate people, whose affections he fully reciprocated, for a position in which he was called to endure privations until the close of his days. In the spirit of a true disciple, he went forth counting nothing dear to him, so that he might finish the work which was given him to do. Happy for the Church, if all her ministers were of like spirit.

"The same perspicuity which marked his preaching, the intellectual vigor which characterized his work, 'The Divine Purpose,' which has so often been studied with profit by the inquiring soul, were manifested in his duties as Professor. And though advanced to the age of seventy-seven, he continued with great vigour of mind, though in great feebleness of body, to attend on all the exercises of the Lecture-room. He continued to discharge all his duties as Professor until one week before his decease—when he who had so long and so implicitly listened to his Master's voice, as to his earthly abode, was summoned to his

mansion of rest on high. He rests from his labours, and his works do follow him.

"In connexion with this minute, the Committee recommend the adoption of the following resolution, viz:

"*Resolved*, That we deeply sympathize with the bereaved family of the deceased, and that the Stated Clerk be directed to furnish them a copy of this action."

The right of church members to withdraw from the communion of the Church.

An overture from the presbytery of Montgomery, was presented, asking whether church sessions have the right, under the constitution, to allow members to withdraw from the communion of the church who are not guilty of any immoral conduct, and who do not manifest an intention to connect themselves with any other Church. The committee on Bills and Overtures, reported through their chairman, the Rev. Dr. Thornwell, that this question ought to be answered in the affirmative. This report was objected to, and an amendment offered that it be answered in the negative. This gave rise to an animated debate, and the previous question having been moved and seconded, the amendment was cut off, and the vote taken on the report of the committee, which recommended an affirmative answer, when said report was rejected by a decided majority. Of the debate on this subject we find the following report in the New York Observer.

"Rev. Dr. Humphrey, of Kentucky, moved to strike out the word *affirmative* and insert *negative*. He contended that there are three modes only by which a member could be separated from the church. 1. by regular trial, 2. by dismissal to another body, and 3. by death. If any other way is recognised by the constitution, he should like to have it stated by the committee. The obligation which a man takes upon himself is a vow to God, and God only can absolve him from it. It is a fundamental principle of Protestantism, that while the church cannot be the *Lord* of the conscience, neither can it interfere to relieve the conscience of its responsibilities. The very nature of the relation makes it an affair with which the church may not interfere unless immorality shall render it necessary.

"Rev. Dr. Scovill agreed with these sentiments and although a member of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, he was

not present when the recommendation was made and he disapproved of it.

“Other members followed enforcing these views and illustrating the case by facts and examples.

“Rev. Dr. Thornwell. The point of the overture is entirely misapprehended. It is asked whether persons may withdraw from the Church who have been received unadvisedly, and are now satisfied that they are not converted persons, yet are regular in all their private and public duties. It is the custom of the church when members absent themselves from the communion, to visit them by committee. Suppose a member gives as a reason for staying away, ‘I am satisfied that I am not a member of Christ, and when the pastor charged all those to retire who had not knowledge to discern the Lord’s body, I was constrained in conscience to obey the command.’ What is to be done? Will you discipline him? For what? For doing the very thing which you required him to do, and which if our principles are true, he was solemnly bound to do. What is the object of a trial? Is it not to ascertain whether a man is or not a member of Christ’s body? But if he confesses that he is not, it is the best evidence that can be given, and the session may declare the fact to the church. It was the doctrine of Erastus that the church was the channel of grace, and had no right to excommunicate members for any cause. But this is not the doctrine of any Christian church at the present day. Now we hold that union with Christ is the basis of union with the church, and a credible profession simply declares the fact. Will any church session undertake to affirm that a man is and shall be a member of the church, when he tells them that he is not a member of Christ? Certainly not. It is now proposed that in such a case the session shall place him in the same position with the baptized children of the church, and not make him a heathen and publican.

“Another point. The Protestant church knows no man unless he is voluntarily subject to her authority: and the vow of subjection is binding no longer than he feels that he has a right to submit to them. The Roman Catholic view is that a man is every where bound by his vow to the church, and that once a virgin, bound by vow, always a virgin, once a monk always a monk. But with us the vow is not to the church, but to God, and he will be the judge. We propose no innovation, but the

assertion of a right that is inherent in our church, and ought to be distinctly set forth. Thus we shall separate the chaff from the wheat, purify the church, and publish the fact to the world.

“The church has been spoken of as a voluntary society, but there was this obvious feature: A voluntary society prescribes its own rules, but the church has its laws from its head: they are not to be altered or amended.

“Judge Hepburn compared the union of the church and members to the marriage relation, which is not to be dissolved at pleasure, and which should be protected with the most sacred care. He spoke with much energy against the recommendation of the committee.

“Dr. Lord said that if the new principle were adopted it would be a virtual declaration that absence from communion is no offence, and any man who wishes to get out of the church would simply stay away, and then withdraw. He urged that great evils would be introduced by making the door of exit so wide, and he begged the Assembly to pause before they sanctioned this doctrine.

“Dr. Thornwell replied to the analogy from the marriage contract by showing that the *invisible* church, the whole number of believers wherever found, in Presbyterian, Episcopal or Romish communions are the bride, the Lamb’s wife, and no organization that may embrace believers and unbelievers is to be spoken of as in such union with the Saviour. He would have the church session take all possible means to ascertain whether such vital union subsists between any individual member and Christ, and if it did not exist, he would have the professed union dissolved.”

The discussion was still further continued by Messrs. Ogden, Fraser, Platt, D. V. M’Lean, Webber and others.

“Rev. B. M. Smith of Virginia made an extended and able argument against the report of the Committee contending that abstaining from the Lord’s table is a disciplinable offence, and a proper ground of exclusion from the church. So is professing Christ when not a Christian, and these truths ought to be held forth to the world. They would prevent hasty applications for admission into the church, and thus save the necessity of casting out. He would make the way out of the church the more difficult that unworthy persons might be deterred from coming in.

“Mr. Banks moved to postpone the whole subject indefinitely.

“Rev. Dr. Cuyler called for the previous question and it was ordered by the house.

“This brought the house to a direct vote upon the report of the Committee, and the motion to adopt their report was lost.

“So the Assembly decided against the right of sessions to allow church members to withdraw at their own pleasure, unless to go to some other church.”

We should judge from this report that there was no essential difference between the parties to this debate; that Dr. Thornwell would not deny that a man's relation to the church cannot be dissolved at pleasure, and that the opponents of the report of the committee would not deny the justice of his remarks. The difference seems to lie in the use of terms. What is meant by withdrawing from the church? If it means simply abstaining from the communion table, then we see not how Dr. Thornwell's arguments are to be resisted. It is the duty of all who hear the gospel, to commemorate the death of Christ in the manner which he has appointed. Some, however, have not the qualifications which he has commanded his church to require in those whom she receives to the Lord's supper. Others are prevented by illness, by providential hindrances, or by scruples of conscience. Now if the question is whether a church member may absent himself from the Lord's supper, without justly subjecting himself to suspension or excommunication, we presume no one would be disposed to answer in the negative. He may be in a state of spiritual darkness; he may seriously doubt his own conversion: he may have erroneous views of the qualifications for that service. In all such cases he should be tenderly instructed, admonished, and borne with in all long-suffering and patience. But if he keeps aloof from this ordinance through indifference, or a worldly spirit, he is certainly deserving of censure, first of admonition, and if that prove ineffectual, of suspension. We should therefore be disposed to side with Dr. Thornwell in saying that there are cases in which a session would be fully justified in permitting a member to absent himself from the Lord's supper. But we would not call this withdrawing from the church. This mode of expression is derived from the congregational theory of the church, which makes the regenerate the materials and confederation the formal cause of a church. A covenant into which

certain believers enter into with each other, according to this doctrine, makes them a church. This is a voluntary compact and association, from which any man may withdraw, or from which he may be excluded. But according to the Presbyterian doctrine a man can no more withdraw from the church, than he can withdraw from the moral government of God. The church consists of all those who profess the true religion together with their children. Such children are baptized because they are church members. The only possible way in which they can cease to be members, is either by open apostacy, or excommunication. Suspension from church privileges is not exclusion from the church, but simply a refusal to allow the full benefits of church communion to certain persons for a season, just as a father may withhold from a disobedient son, the privileges of the family circle for a season without disowning him as a child. According to the Presbyterian theory of the church therefore, no man can withdraw from it. He cannot cease to profess the true religion, except by denying its doctrines, for which he should be cut off. He cannot free himself from the obligation of submitting to the discipline of the church, of communing with it, and of discharging all the duties of a church member, any more than he can free himself from the obligation of the moral law. If he neglects his duties, he should be dealt with for his disobedience; tenderly admonished, suspended, or excommunicated as the case may be. Being born within the church, or professing in baptism the true religion, he has incurred obligations and responsibilities from which he can never free himself, he has assumed a yoke which he can neither cast off, nor have removed by any human hand. The church is a voluntary society not in the sense that a man may enter and withdraw from it, at pleasure; but because no one can be forced to enter it, or coerced to remain in it. In the same sense obedience to the moral law must be voluntary. But it does not follow that because a man cannot lawfully be forced to profess the true religion, he may cease to make that profession without censure. While therefore we agree with the majority of the Assembly in saying no man can be allowed to withdraw from the church, we agree with Dr. Thornwell in thinking he may, in certain cases, be allowed to absent himself from the Lord's table, without incurring the sentence either of suspension or excommunication.

The case of the Rev. Dr. Skinner.

The Rev. John Skinner D.D., came to this country from Scotland, and was installed as pastor over the church in Lexington, Virginia. After having served that church about seven years, dissatisfaction with his preaching began to manifest itself among a portion of the people, and a certain number of them addressed him a letter apprizing him of the fact. Dr. Skinner then made a communication to the Presbytery tendering his resignation of his pastoral charge, with the view that Presbytery should institute an investigation into the state of the congregation. When the Presbytery met they heard Dr. Skinner, and the commissioners of the congregation, and dissolved the pastoral relation between him and the church in Lexington. From this decision, Dr. S. appealed and complained to the Synod of Virginia. The Synod decided that the appeal could not lie, as the decision from which it was taken was not of a judicial nature. The complaint they referred to the General Assembly. From the decision of the Synod refusing to entertain his appeal from the judgment of the Presbytery, Dr. Skinner appealed to the General Assembly. He subsequently published a pamphlet purporting to be a history of the proceedings of the Presbytery in his case. On this pamphlet the Presbytery founded certain charges, of which, after a protracted trial, he was pronounced guilty, and suspended from all the functions of the gospel ministry. From this decision of the Presbytery Dr. Skinner appealed immediately to the Assembly. He came before the house therefore, on three separate causes. 1. His appeal from the judgment of the Presbytery, by which he was pronounced guilty of certain charges and suspended from the ministry. 2. An appeal from the judgment of the Synod of Virginia, refusing to entertain his appeal from the previous decision of the Presbytery, dissolving his pastoral relation to the church in Lexington. 3. His complaint against the Presbytery for the said decision, which complaint was referred by the Synod to the Assembly. These causes were tried in the order here mentioned—

First, Dr. Skinner's appeal from the judgment of the Presbytery.

The following is the sentence pronounced against the accused by the Presbytery of Lexington. "The Rev. John Skinner, D.D., having, after a protracted and careful investigation of his

case, been declared guilty of three charges preferred against him, viz. 1. Libel and defamation; 2. Palpable misdemeanor and falsehood; 3. Manifestation of an unchristian spirit, therefore, from a sense of what is due to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ over which we are appointed to watch, *Resolved*, That the said Rev. John Skinner, D.D. be and he hereby is suspended from all the functions of the ministry of the gospel, until he make suitable confession of his sins, and give satisfactory evidence of repentance." After reading Dr. Skinner's appeal from this decision, and the records of the inferior judicatory, including all the testimony in the case, which occupied the greater part of the sessions of several days, the parties were fully heard, and then required, contrary to what we understood to be the usual practice of our church courts, literally to withdraw from the house. The roll having been called for the judgment of the members, the vote stood for sustaining the appeal 41; for sustaining in part 56; for not sustaining 66.

We see that some objection was made to this mode of taking the vote, it being supposed that the decision of the house should be expressed by saying simply sustain, or, not sustain. This objection appears to us unfounded. The Book expressly provides that "the decision may be either to confirm or reverse, in whole or in part, the decision of the inferior judicatory." How can this be done unless the members of the higher court are allowed to vote to sustain in whole or in part, as they see fit. Besides, the judgment of the lower court may cover many distinct charges, as in the present instance. Some members of the higher court may think that all have been proved, others that a part only have been sustained, and others that no one of them has been adequately established. It would do violence to the consciences of those, who considered that some only of the charges or specifications had been made good, to force them to vote either that all or none had been proved. The judgment of the presbytery was that Dr. Skinner was guilty of libel, defamation, palpable misdemeanor, falsehood, and the manifestation of an unchristian spirit. Those who voted to sustain that judgment declared him guilty on all these charges. How then could those who believed that he was guilty of some and not of others of these offences, vote that he was guilty of all? It would not only be a violence to the consciences of the judges, but a gross injus-

tice to the accused, to restrict the court to the simple question, sustain or not sustain. The question was not whether Dr. Skinner deserved suspension from the ministry; but whether he was guilty as charged. The question as to his suspension, was still an open question, after the calling of the roll was completed. Those who voted to sustain in part, had yet to express their judgment, whether the charges which they deemed sustained, were such as to justify suspension or not. In other words the calling of the roll was not to express the final judgment of the house, but to get the requisite light to frame that judgment. The committee appointed to bring in a minute expressive of such judgment, might have reported that enough had been proved to call for the continuance of the sentence of suspension: or they might report that the accused merited nothing beyond a solemn rebuke and admonition. They did bring in a minute to the latter effect, which was adopted by the house, and is in the following words, viz.—

“The appeal and complaint of the Rev. John Skinner, D.D. against the decision of the Presbytery of Lexington, is sustained, *pro forma*; the sentence of the Presbytery is reversed, and the appellant restored to all the functions of the ministry of the gospel.

“The complaint of the Rev. William Calhoun and others against the same Presbytery is dismissed.

“While the Assembly do fully restore the appellant to the functions of the of the ministry, and take pleasure in recording that for about seven years he exhibited talents and zeal well adapted to edify the Church of God; and while they trust that he will hereafter show the same ability and fidelity in the Master’s cause, they are constrained to express their deep concern at the uncharitable temper and litigiousness exhibited by him before the inferior judicatory; and their disapprobation of his course in printing and circulating his Lexington speech, pending his complaint to the Synod of Virginia.

“Wherefore, he is hereby solemnly admonished in relation to these matters, and warned carefully to avoid them in future.

“The Assembly regret, moreover, that they find no evidence that any of the parties have, at any stage of this unhappy controversy, resorted to the more private and fraternal methods of

making peace among brethren, which are suggested in the word of God.

“And the Assembly do now affectionately and solemnly enjoin on all concerned, to cultivate a spirit of charity and forgiveness, to study the things that make for peace, and to seek by importunate prayer, the influences of the Holy Spirit, that the wounds inflicted in the progress of this painful case may be healed, and the kingdom and glory of Christ may prevail in the region where these brethren are called to labour.”

This minute was adopted by a vote of ayes 87, nays 29. The moderator handed to the clerk a communication from the Rev. John Skinner, which had been put into his hands. The paper was read, and proved to be a representation touching the above minute charging him with an uncharitable spirit. The paper was unanimously directed to be returned to the writer without notice on the minutes.

Dr. Skinner's appeal from the decision of the Synod of Virginia.

This was an appeal from the decision of the Synod refusing to entertain Dr. Skinner's appeal from the decision of the Presbytery, dissolving his pastoral relation to the church in Lexington. After hearing the parties, viz., Dr. Skinner and the commissioners of the Synod, the vote was taken by calling the roll, for sustaining the appeal 42; for not sustaining 59. So the appeal was not sustained.

The accounts of the debate on this case published in the papers, are so brief, as to leave us at a loss as to the grounds of this decision. In one paper (New York Observer, June 10th), it is said, the Synod “refused to entertain the appeal, as the Presbytery had acted on his own request, and that of the people” in dissolving the pastoral relation between Dr. Skinner and the Lexington church. If this were the ground of the Synod's action, then the decision of the Assembly does nothing more than sanction the correctness of their judgment. It involves no constitutional principle. But in other places it is stated that the Synod refused to entertain the appeal in question, because the decision of the presbytery was an executive act, and not a judicial sentence. If this was the ground assumed by the Synod, then the action of the Assembly would seem to sanction the principle that no appeal can lie except in strictly judicial cases.

We presume this is the correct statement of the case, both from the drift of the reports in the newspapers, and from the fact that the former reason, though a very good one for refusing to sustain Dr. Skinner's appeal from the action of his presbytery, was no reason for refusing to entertain it.

Though this is so, we are slow to believe that the Assembly deliberately intended to sanction the doctrine that appeals are a remedy confined to strictly judicial cases. A member of the House informs us that several members who voted with the majority told him, that the only point they intended to decide by their vote was, that Dr. Skinner ought not to be restored to his relation as pastor of the Lexington church, that they did not mean to sanction the general principle as to appeals. We see also in the list of those who voted to sustain the action of the Synod, the names of brethren who we know do not hold, unless their opinions have been suddenly changed, the doctrine that appeals can lie only in judicial cases. We trust that this decision, made under such circumstances, may not be pleaded as authority for that doctrine. As this is a subject which has been repeatedly discussed in this journal, we shall not trouble our readers with any extended argument on it now. We beg leave merely to submit the following remarks—

It must be allowed to be a great evil when the action of the Assembly is inconstant and contradictory on important constitutional principles. Such inconsistency not only tends of necessity to impair confidence, but it is in itself a very serious evil. All courts are governed and should, to a great extent, be governed by precedent. Long established usage has the authority of law. People have the right to depend upon it. It works manifest injustice, when a party avails himself of a remedy, which a court for years and generations has recognised as appropriate, and he is suddenly and unexpectedly, by a new construction of the constitution, refused a hearing, because he has put his case in a wrong form. It is an undoubted fact that the highest judicatory of our church, in accordance with the uniform usage of other presbyterian churches, has for an hundred years, uniformly recognised the right of appeal in an aggrieved party, in any case whether judicial or executive. There is, as far as we know or believe, but one solitary decision of the Assembly to the contrary, and that preceded and followed by a multitude of cases of

an opposite character. It is still more humiliating and injurious when we see men who one year or in one judicatory, take ground that an appellant shall not be heard unless the case be strictly judicial, and in the following year and on other occasions quietly entertain such appeals without a whisper of disapprobation. The only way to avoid these evils, to maintain the dignity and authority of the Assembly, and to deal justly with those who appear at its bar, is to adhere rigidly to the established interpretation of the constitution.

But if this new construction is against all precedent, it is, as it seems to us, no less clearly against the express language and obvious interest of the constitution. "Every kind of decision," it is said, "which is formed in any church judicatory, except the highest, is subject to the review of superior judicatory, and may be carried before it in one or the other of the four following ways." This cannot mean, that one kind of decisions can be carried up in one way, and another kind in another; for it is admitted that every kind may be brought up by review of records, by reference, and by complaint; and, therefore, the passage must mean that the several remedies enumerated, are applicable to any and every kind of error or injustice. But in this enumeration appeals are included, and therefore as any kind of case can be carried up by review, reference, or complaint, so it can be by appeal. This is the plain meaning of the passage as it has ever been understood and acted upon.

In the third section of that chapter it is said, "An appeal is the removal of a cause already decided, from an inferior to a superior judicatory, by a party aggrieved." In the language of our Book *a cause* is a case, an act or decision of a court, about which diversity of opinion may exist, or in which different interests may be involved. Thus it is said in the next section. "Another method by which a cause which has been decided by an inferior judicatory, may be carried before a superior, is by complaint." Here *a cause* is any decision. This is admitted, for no one contends that complaints are limited to judicial matters. As then any decision or cause may be carried up by complaint, so also by appeal.

Again it is said, "The necessary operation of an appeal is, to suspend all further proceedings on the ground of the sentence appealed from. But if a sentence of suspension, or excommuni-

cation from church privileges, or of deposition from office be the sentence appealed from, it shall be considered as in force until the appeal shall be issued." The plain meaning of this is, that an appeal suspends the operation of the decision appealed from. *except in judicial cases.* Suspension, excommunication and deposition are all the judicial sentences known to our constitution, unless mere admonition be added, which last, from its nature, does not admit of being suspended, for the vote to admonish is the admonition itself. Here then the constitution expressly and most justly provides that an appeal suspends the operation of a decision, except in judicial cases, and therefore by necessary implication, admits that there are other than judicial sentences from which an appeal may properly be taken.

Our Book makes two and only two distinctions as to complaints and appeals. The one relates to the persons entitled to avail themselves of these remedies, the other to their operation. Any one can complain of the decision of a church court who thinks that decision is unconstitutional or injurious. It is the right of any member of the judicatory or of the church, to see that an evil, as he deems it, may be examined into and redressed. But no one can appeal but "an aggrieved party." If he does not see fit to arrest the operation of the decision, no other person has the right to interfere and prevent the will of the judicatory taking effect. An appeal, therefore, differs from a complaint, in being a remedy confined to those who consider themselves aggrieved or injured by the decision of the lower court. It differs also from a complaint inasmuch as the latter does not suspend the operation of the decision complained of. When however our Book says, That "every kind of decision" can be carried up from a lower to a higher court, by appeal, it does not mean every decision, but what it says, "*every kind of decision,*" because the interests of parties may be most deeply implicated by every kind of act of a church court, executive, legislative, or judicial. Appeals, from their nature, are confined to cases of real or supposed grievance.

This suggests the main reason after all for insisting on this right of appeal. It is essential to our system. Neither ministers nor church members will ever submit to give it up, and put themselves entirely in the power of a session or presbytery. The denial of the right is an arbitrary stretch of power. There

are innumerable cases in which a complaint would afford no redress. The evil is consummated before the remedy can be applied. Suppose, for example, a presbytery should decide that a congregation should be divided, and the people, or a portion of them, feel aggrieved by the decision, what good would it do them to complain? The sentence would take effect; two churches would be constituted and organized, and might both have pastors, before the synod could hear the complaint. It would be a mockery to tell such people, after the evil was all done, they might complain about it. They have no redress, unless by appeal they can arrest the decision, until the higher courts have decided on its wisdom or justice. The same remarks apply to other cases. A presbytery may dissolve the pastoral relation between a pastor and his people; the people may consider themselves deeply aggrieved. If they cannot appeal there is no remedy. Their pastor is gone, installed over another church, before their complaint comes to be heard. Or the pastor may be the aggrieved party, but if he can only complain, his place may be supplied by another pastor, before a final decision is had on the question whether he is to be removed or not. How unreasonable and unjust is this. A sentence is allowed to take full effect, before the competent authorities have decided whether it shall have any effect at all. We are persuaded the churches will never give up the right of appeal; the right of arresting the operation of decisions which they regard as disastrous or unjust, until the court of the last resort has given its judgment. It is a primary principle of justice that no sentence should take effect, until all who have a right to sit in judgment in the case, have decided that it shall be carried out. This is "the necessary effect of an appeal," says our Book. It is the righteous provision of our standards that an injury shall not be inflicted, before it be finally determined that it is unavoidable or deserved. The exceptions made as to the application of this principle in judicial cases, is plainly a sacrifice of the individual to the whole—it is better that one person should suffer for a while under an unrighteous sentence, than that the whole church should be disgraced and injured by an unworthy member or minister, until an appeal can be carried through all our courts. The fact is that so far from appeals being confined to judicial cases, those are precisely the cases where they are of the least

importance. They have in such cases no advantage over a complaint—they do not arrest the operation of the sentence, and they do not bring it more effectually under the review of the higher court.

There is another remark we cannot refrain from making. The action of the Assembly in this case involves a contradiction. They decide that an appeal cannot lie in a particular case, while in the very act of entertaining such an appeal. If the Synod were right in refusing to entertain Dr. Skinner's appeal from the Presbytery, how could the Assembly entertain his appeal from the Synod? If the case was not a judicial one before the Synod, it was not a judicial one before the Assembly. It could not change its character by passing from one court to the other. The only consistent course for the Assembly, would have been, the moment the appeal was reported, to refuse to hear it, because the decision against which it was entered was not a judicial sentence. This was what the Synod did. But instead of this, the Assembly gravely entertain an appeal from a non-judicial decision of the Synod, resolve themselves into a court, hear the parties, deliver as their judgment that they have no right to do what with so much solemnity they are actually engaged in. They say appeals are confined to judicial cases, while engaged in trying one from an executive decision. So deeply wrought into the consciousness of the church, is the conviction that the right of appeal is a right sacred to every aggrieved party, no matter under what form the grievance may be inflicted. If Dr. Skinner had no right to appeal from the decision of the Presbytery, he had no right to appeal from a similar decision of the Synod, and the Assembly in hearing his appeal from the latter, contradict their own decision that the Synod did right in refusing to hear him as an appellant from the Presbytery.

Some of the special advocates of liberty of speech and opinion, are apt, when in the majority, to find out that it is very heinous to express any dissent from the decision of the General Assembly. This is not Protestantism; nor is it Christianity. It is perfectly consistent with all due deference and obedience, for any member of the church to express without reserve his opinions as to the wisdom or justice of any decision of our ecclesiastical courts. Least of all can the exercise of this right be dis-

puted, when the decision in question is opposed to the established usage of the church, and the previous decisions of almost every Assembly since the first organization of that body. We do not however believe that the Assembly, whatever may be the legal import of their decision, consciously intended to sanction the new doctrine on appeals; we believe they simply meant to say that Dr. Skinner ought not to be restored to the pastoral office over the church in Lexington. A decision, we presume, in which all parties concur.

Dr. Skinner's Complaint.

This case came up by reference from the Synod of Virginia, to whom the Rev. Dr. Skinner had complained of a decision of the Presbytery of Lexington, dissolving his pastoral relation.

The complaint of Dr. Skinner, the decision of the Presbytery, and the records in the case were then read, and the Assembly proceeded to hear the parties. The parties having been heard, the roll was called for opinions and votes. The Rev. Dr. Krebs offered the following resolution as a minute expressive of the judgment of the house, which was adopted; yeas 65, nays 25.

“*Resolved*, That had the Presbytery of Lexington been requested, *simpliciter*, to visit the Church of Lexington, in the preliminary stages of this business, for the purpose of investigating the state of things, which, according to the allegation of Dr. Skinner, induced him to ask leave to resign his pastoral charge, or had the Presbytery, in view of that allegation, proceeded of their own motion to make such investigation, those things which seem to have produced the great excitement which manifestly existed in this case, might not have occurred—nevertheless, in view of the actual state of the case, as it appeared to the Presbytery, in the last stages of it, the Presbytery could do no otherwise than to agree to the dissolution of the pastoral relation, and that their final decision in the premises be, and it is hereby sustained.

“Rev. Dr. Thornwell gave notice of a dissent for himself and others, from the above minute. He went for sustaining the Presbytery to the fullest extent, and he had therefore, voted in the negative, in order to be able to enter his dissent.

“Rev. Mr. Webster entered his dissent to the decision in the case of Dr. Skinner. He asked that it be entered on the pro-

ceedings of Assembly, but, after some discussion, this was refused, and it was ordered to be filed. He then presented a protest against the decision keeping his dissent from the proceedings, which was ordered to be entered.

“The Rev. James Lillie and others entered their protest against the decision in the case of Dr. Skinner, for the following reasons:

“First, Dr. Skinner, did not resign his pastoral charge.

“Second, Dr. Skinner did positively, and in the most solemn manner, protest against being regarded as having resigned.

“Third, Dr. Skinner’s separation, therefore, from the Lexington church, was an ejection from his charge. And

“Fourth, consequently a very severe sentence was carried into effect against a minister of the highest reputation, unaccused, untried, and uncondemned.

JAMES LILLIE,

G. T. SNOWDEN,

C. C. CUYLER,

R. TAYLOR,

JOSEPH F. FENTON,

JAMES BLACK,

JOHN P. VANDYKE,

WM. A. GRAY.

“The following dissent was offered, and admitted to record, viz:

“We the undersigned, beg leave to record our dissent from the minute adopted in the case of Dr. Skinner’s complaint against the Presbytery of Lexington. We believe that the conduct of the Presbytery, complained of, was constitutional and wise, and that the Presbytery adopted the only course which could be adopted, to promote the interests of that congregation. The language of the minute seems to us to evade the main point in dispute.

DAVID STERRETT,

M. D. FRASER,

DANIEL MACK,

G. MANWARING,

GEO. DAVIDSON,

J. H. THORNWELL,

J. S. BERRYMAN,

BENJAMIN OGDEN,

HENRY L. DOOLITTLE,

JOHN H. TOWNLEY,

J. A. LANCASTER, JR.,

SAMUEL MAHAFFEY,

Appeal of John Cathey.

This was an appeal from a decision of the Synod of North Carolina, sustaining the action of the Presbytery of Concord, and of the session of the Paw Creek Church, by which he, the

said John Cathey, was suspended from the communion of the church, for marrying the sister of his deceased wife. The Rev. Dr. Krebs was appointed to act in behalf of the appellant in his absence. The papers having been read, and the parties heard, the roll was called, and 51 voted for not sustaining the appeal, 26 for sustaining it, and 3 *non liquet*. So the appeal was dismissed.

Overture on Temperance.

The committee of Bills and Overtures reported the following paper, viz :

“ A preamble and resolution submitted by the Executive Committee of the American Temperance Union to the General Assembly for its adoption, to which may be added an Address of the New York City Temperance Society, organized on Christian principles, transmitted to the Assembly by a Committee of the Society.

“ The Committee would recommend, in reference to this whole subject of Temperance Societies, and all other secular institutions for moral ends, the adoption of the following minute :

“ The Church of Jesus Christ is a spiritual body, to which have been given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world. It is the great instrumentality of the Saviour, through which, by his eternal Spirit, he dispenses salvation to the objects of his love. Its ends are holiness and life, to the manifestation of the riches and glory of Divine grace, and not simply morality, decency, and good order, which may to some extent be secured without faith in the Redeemer, or the transforming efficacy of the Holy Spirit. The laws of the Church are the authoritative injunctions of Christ, and not the covenants, however benevolent in their origin and aim, which men have instituted of their own will; and the only ground of obligation which the Church *as such* inculcates, is the authority of God speaking in His word, and not pledges of honour which create, measure, and define the peculiar duties of all voluntary associations. In this kingdom of God the holy scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners, and no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws which shall bind the conscience, or to issue recommendations which shall regulate manners without the war-

rant, explicit or implied, of the revealed will of God. It is hence beside the province of the Church to render its Courts, which God ordained for spiritual purposes, subsidiary to the schemes of any associations founded in the human will, and liable to all its changes and caprices. No Court of Christ can exact of His people to unite with the Temperance, Moral Reform, Colonization, or any other society which may seek their aid. Connexion with such institutions is a matter of Christian liberty. Their objects may be, in every respect, worthy of the countenance and support of all good men; but in so far as they are moral and essentially obligatory, the Church promotes them among its own members—and to none others does its jurisdiction extend—by the means which God has ordained for the edification of his children. Still, in the exercise of their Christian liberty, as good citizens, as patriotic subjects of the State, from motives of philanthropy, and from love to God, Christian people may choose to adopt this particular mode of attempting to achieve the good at which all moral societies profess to aim. They have a right to do so, and the Church, as long as they endorse no false principles and countenance no wrong practices, cannot interfere with them. Recognizing these propositions as the truths of the word of God, this General Assembly, as a Court of Jesus Christ, cannot league itself with any voluntary society, cannot exact of those who are subject to its discipline to do so, but must leave the whole matter—where the scriptures leave it—to the prudence, philanthropy, and good sense of God's children, each man having a right to do as to him shall seem good. These societies must appeal not to Church Courts, but to church members. When they proclaim principles that are scriptural and sound, it is not denied that the Church has a right, and under certain circumstances may be bound to bear testimony in their favour; and when, on the other hand, they inculcate doctrines which are infidel, heretical, and dangerous, the Church has a right to condemn them. In conformity with these statements, the General Assembly has no hesitation in cordially approving of abstinence from intoxicating drinks as a matter of Christian expediency. According to the words of the Apostle, in *Rom. xiv. 21*: 'It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak;' and in expressing its affectionate interest

in the cause of Temperance—and would recommend to its ministers and elders, who have become connected with Temperance Societies, to use every effort to prevent the introduction of any other principle as the ground of their pledge, and to throw around these institutions those safeguards which shall be the means of rescuing them from the excesses, to which they are liable from influences opposed to, or aside from the gospel of Christ.

“After the reading of the above Report, on motion of the Rev. Dr. Krebs, it was unanimously adopted.”

Report of the Board of Foreign Missions.

The report of the Board having been presented the following resolutions were offered and adopted, viz :

“*Resolved*, That in the Report of the Board of the General Assembly, we see much cause for thanksgiving and gratitude to God, for the wide field of usefulness opened to the Church, for the encouraging state of the different missions among the heathens, as seen in the increase of Church members, in the healthful state of the mission schools, in the efficiency of the printing presses, and of the facilities afforded of thus preaching the everlasting gospel publicly, and from house to house. And they would take encouragement, that in the enlargement and advance of the missionary work, the increase of the receipts has sustained the increased expenditures of the year.

“*Resolved*, That in the midst of so much that is encouraging, there is cause of deep humiliation in the sight of God, that so many of our members and ministers manifest so little interest in the state of the benighted heathen; and the General Assembly, whilst they reprove such indifference to this great duty, must affectionately exhort the churches, and every individual member, to unite as one man in sending to the destitute the knowledge of the Saviour’s name.

“*Resolved*, That in the early death, by the hands of violent men, of one of their highly esteemed and useful missionaries, in a field comprehending one-third of the inhabitants of the globe, while engaged in his Master’s work, the General Assembly would view the hand of God; and whilst they would humbly submit to this mysterious and distressing providence, they would hear the voice of God speaking to the Church in rebuke, for past

unfaithfulness in the great work of sending the gospel to the perishing heathen.

Resolved, That the General Assembly would ever recognize the insufficiency of all human agency, apart from the blessing of the Holy Ghost, and they would affectionately exhort the whole Church to be much engaged in prayer to God for his blessing on the labours of all his servants, at home and abroad, and that all his professing people may have much of the spirit that was in Christ.

Resolved, That all our churches be most earnestly exhorted to attend to the monthly concert and collection, and that, if practicable, the collections be taken on the Sabbath.

Resolved, That the Report of the Board be approved, and referred to the Executive Committee for publication."

These resolutions were ably advocated by Dr. Cuyler, Dr. Thornwell, and Messrs. Wilson of Northern India, and Ramsay, of the Choctaw mission. Walter Lowrie, Esq., secretary of the Board, gave very interesting details concerning the operations of the Board and the condition of the several stations. The amount received during the last year, together with the balance on hand, was \$108,756 71; the expenditures have been \$109,186 66. The receipts for the last year exceeded those for the year preceding by \$13,000.

The following preamble and resolution were then offered by the Rev. John C. Lord, D.D. as an addition to the foregoing, when the whole were adopted unanimously:

Whereas, In the divine Providence, an effectual door for the propagation of the gospel in France, is now opened by the recent revolution in that great State, while the monetary embarrassments resulting from the political convulsions in Europe, have seriously crippled the resources and the efforts of the Evangelical Societies who are engaged in the work of circulating the scriptures, and disseminating the gospel in that country, therefore

Resolved, By the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, that it be recommended to all congregations in our connexion, to take up a collection on the 3d Sabbath in June next, or as soon thereafter as may be convenient, to be paid over to the Assembly's Board of Foreign Missions, for the purpose of aiding in the work of evangelizing France."

Board of Domestic Missions.

The report of the committee on the statement of the Board of Domestic Missions, was then taken up, and adopted. It is as follows :

“The committee to whom was reported the report of the Board of Domestic Missions, report that they have examined the same, and recommend the adoption of the following resolutions, viz.

“1. That this report be adopted, and published under the directions of the Board, and that the Board furnish the stated clerk of the Assembly with an abstract to be published in the Appendix of the Minutes.

“2. That in view of the unusual prosperity of the Board during the present year, the General Assembly do express their gratitude to the great Head of the Church, for his blessing on a cause so precious, and so deeply interesting to his people.

“3. That in view of the magnitude of the work, the immense field to be occupied, and the vast importance of the cause, advancing with the rapid increase of the population of our country, we earnestly exhort the churches under our care, to make this cause the subject of special prayer.

“4. That it be earnestly recommended to the churches to make annual collections for the Board of Domestic Missions, and that the Synods, and Presbyteries do adopt such means, as in their judgment may best secure this object.

“5. That it be recommended to all the churches under the care of this Assembly to aid in the work of Church Extension, and that annual collections be made for this object, distinct from that of Domestic Missions. Whilst we rejoice that this work is advancing, we express our regret that so many of our churches have failed to co-operate in it.

“6. That in the present state of the work of the religious instruction of the coloured population in the southern states, and its prospects, there is much that is gratifying and encouraging; and the Assembly expresses the conviction that this important work calls for increasing attention, and a more enlarged effort.

“7. That in view of the vast importance of Domestic Missions, a sermon be delivered on this subject during the sessions of each Assembly, by some one previously appointed by this body.

That part of the above report, relative to church extension par-

ticularly, was advocated by Dr. Cuyler, the Rev. Mr. Frazer, of Illinois, and the Rev. Mr. Stewart, of Philadelphia.

Rev. Mr. Bishop moved as an addition to the report, that the Board of Domestic Missions and the agency at Louisville, be removed to Pittsburg, and the business hereafter be transacted there.

A proposition to postpone it indefinitely being made, Mr. Brownson hoped, if the Assembly were not ready to act upon it, that it might be only postponed, as the Assembly meet next year in Pittsburg, and they could then see for themselves. He gave his reasons in favour of the removal.

Rev. Dr. Harding conceived there would be just as much reason to remove the Foreign Board to India as the Domestic Board to Pittsburg, so far as the argument of greater efficiency was concerned.

Rev. Dr. McDowell, Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, by permission, addressed the Assembly, giving his reasons why there should be no removal. He believed the operations could be carried on with more efficiency at the East—and the natural consequence of removal would be to create a separate organization for the East.

Several other gentlemen spoke to the same effect, and the resolution was indefinitely postponed.

Rev. Dr. Scovel proposed a resolution to appoint a western agent to forward the business of Church extension, which was referred to the Board of Domestic Missions.

Board of Education.

The Committee on the report of the Board of Education, made a report, which was amended, adopted, and is as follows, viz.

“The committee to whom was referred the report of the Board of Education, beg leave to submit the following resolutions, viz.

“1. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly, believing that the children of the Church are a trust committed to the Church by the Lord Jesus Christ, and having confidence in the power of Christian Education, to train them, with the divine blessing, ‘in the way they should go,’ do cordially recommend their congregations to establish primary and other schools, as far as may be

practicable, on the plan sanctioned by the last Assembly—of teaching the truths and duties of our holy religion in connexion with the usual branches of secular learning.

“2. *Resolved*. That this Assembly heartily approve of the plan of establishing academies or schools, male and female, under the supervision of the Presbyteries, for the purpose of securing a thorough education, religious and secular, to those of their youth who may desire to pursue branches of knowledge not taught in the sessional schools.

“3. *Resolved*, That colleges, as an integral part, and in their wide-spread relations to the best interests of society, a vitally important part of a complete system of Christian education, demand the fostering care of the Church; and that the Board of Education be and hereby is authorised to assist in the promotion of the cause of collegiate education, by means of any funds that may be given for that purpose.

“4. *Resolved*, That inasmuch as one (or more) of the Theological Seminaries of the Church, during the temporary interval of its endowment, is in a condition that needs assistance, the Board of Education be and hereby is, authorised to apply such funds as may be appropriated by the donors to advance the interests of theological education.

“5. *Resolved*, That in view of the decrease in the number of candidates for the ministry, which has occurred during the year, according to the statistics furnished to the Assembly, the Church is called upon to continue zealously the use of all proper means, that are adapted to waken the attention of her whole communion to the duty enjoined by the Saviour, of preaching the gospel to every creature; and especially that prayer to the Lord of the harvest, to send forth laborers into his harvest, should ascend with more fidelity and constancy from the closet, the family altar and the sanctuary.

“6. *Resolved*, That for the purpose of invoking, in a special manner, the blessing of God upon the measures for the Christian education of the rising generation, which are in progress throughout our Church, under the recent action of the Assembly, and, also for the purpose of uniting our common supplications in behalf of an increase of faithful laborers in the field of the world, it be recommended to our churches to observe the first Sabbath of November next, as a day of special prayer; and it is further,

recommended, that our ministers preach on that day, on some topic connected with the consecration and religious education of the children of the church.

“7. *Resolved*, That it be enjoined upon the Presbyteries to use great vigilance in the examination of all who present themselves as candidates for the ministry, especially in cases where there has been a deficiency of early Christian education; and that the Presbyteries are solemnly urged to continue a strict and affectionate supervision over their candidates during the entire course of their preparatory studies for the ministry.

“8. *Resolved*, That it be enjoined upon the Synod to appoint a Synodical agent in behalf of the cause of education, whose duty it shall be to confer with similar Presbyterian agents, and cooperate with the Board in having this important cause more fully presented to all our churches.

“9. *Resolved*, That the Annual Report be committed to the Board for publication.”

Board of Publication.

The committee on the Report of the Board of Publication, made a report, which was amended, adopted, and is as follows, viz :

“The committee to whom was referred the Report of the Board of Publication, having examined the same, together with an exhibition of the plans and operations of the Board, would recommend for the adoption of the General Assembly the following resolutions, viz :

“1st. *Resolved*, That the object of this Board—to furnish for the churches under our care, in cheap and substantial form, well selected books, sound in theology, and rich in practical and devotional matter, is one so important, that it cannot be neglected without great loss to the Church and the world.

“2d. That while we recommend that special care be taken to accommodate the distant and more feeble parts of the Church, the cautious manner in which the funds of the Board have been managed, meets the cordial approbation of the Assembly.

“3d. That it be recommended to the Board to publish translations of other works of a doctrinal and devotional character in the German language.

“4th. That it earnestly recommend to the Synods and Pres-

byteries that have not already acted in this matter, speedily to establish depositories, and by an efficient system of colportage, under their own direction, to aid the Board in securing a wide circulation for their books.

“5th. That every friend of truth and godliness be entreated to aid the Board in establishing a fund for Agency and Colportage—a fund for supplying the West with books—for aiding Foreign Missions in this department—for supplying needy ministers, churches, and Sabbath schools with libraries—and also a fund for reducing the price of particular books by stereotyping or otherwise.”

Report on the Finances of the Board.

The General Assembly in 1847 appointed a committee to examine into the manner in which the several Boards were conducted, and to enquire whether due regard to economy was had in their modes of operations. Dr. Plumer, the chairman of that committee, performed the duty assigned him, in a thorough manner, and presented an elaborate report, approving of the mode in which the Boards conducted their operations. This report was referred to a committee of which Judge Hepburn was the chairman, who subsequently brought in a report recommending various retrenchments, such as reducing the number of offices, lowering salaries, abolishing travelling expenses, &c.

Judge Hepburn said, in support of his report, that he was not hostile to the Boards; but he thought they needed reformation. For example, the *Board of Publication* ought not to have both an editor and a publishing agent. He thought that the Executive Committee ought to do the work of editing. This would save annually the salary of editor, which was \$1200. As to the *Board of Education*, he thought that its two agencies ought to be both abolished, as there was no good gained by them. Besides, he had two charges against the General Agent, which were sufficient for his removal. One was, that he had insisted upon offering a salary of \$200 to a western agent, and had said by way of argument, that the opinion of the Board in regard to his receiving it was like that of the Medes and Persians, unalterable. The other charge was, that the General Agent, or the Board, had added to the travelling expenses of one agent for the purpose of concealing the large amount which belonged to

another; for it appeared that one agent, whose travelling expenses were \$16.75, was put down as expending \$100.12½. He had, also, known a case where an agent visited one church on Saturday, returned home on Monday, and then went back to another church in the same neighbourhood on the next Saturday. As to the *Board of Domestic Missions*, why should the Corresponding Secretary have so large a salary? Moreover, in the west, the expenses of the agents were not so much as those of the east. This showed either that the western agents did not travel enough, or that those in the east were very prodigal of the Church's money. Why these disproportions? He believed that all these travelling expenses ought to be done away with altogether. They were unknown any where else except in the Church. As to the *Foreign Board*, some of their expenses were unreasonably high. One of their agents had a larger salary than the Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and yet had large travelling expenses paid besides. In short, he thought a reformation was necessary.

The question first came up on consolidating the offices of Editor and of Publishing Agent in the *Board of Publication*.

Dr. Krebs thought these two offices should not, and could not, be united. The Executive Committee could never attend to the selection and editing of books, without the aid of an Editor. This last office was one that could not possibly be dispensed with. The pastors on that committee could not attend to this work, in the midst of their other avocations.

Dr. Lord, of Buffalo, said that our Boards were the representatives of the Church principle in conducting benevolent operations, and he hoped they would be models of economy. But we must be careful not to agitate these matters in an ill-advised way. He agreed with Dr. Krebs on the particular point in question.

Dr. Cuyler said, the consolidation of these two distinct offices was an impracticability.

A motion was made that a committee be appointed to report on this whole subject to the next Assembly.

Walter Lowrie, Esq., hoped that this would not be the course adopted. The report from the committee contained distinct charges of extravagance, as well as undefined charges of the same kind. An attempt had been made to sustain these charges in a speech of some bitterness for such an Assembly. It was due

therefore to the best interests of the church, and to the individuals concerned, that the General Assembly hear and decide this matter. Let us look at the history of this investigation. Last year on the last day of the session, and as the minutes show, the very last thing that was done, a resolution was offered and adopted to examine into the pecuniary state of the Boards. With such haste and looseness was the resolution adopted, that only the chairman could be ascertained, the others were merely called Mr. A. and Mr. B., and to this hour it is not known who they were. The chairman, Dr. Plumer, took up the investigation, called on the several Boards, and left a series of interrogatories, which were all fully answered. From those answers he had submitted to the Assembly an able and full report. It has been read to the house, and not being satisfactory to Judge Hepburn, the latter gentleman moved to have it referred to a committee. That committee has made its report, and a speech has been made in its support. Now the motion is to refer that report and the whole subject to the next Assembly. To this Mr. Lowrie seriously objected. If the waste and extravagance charged exist, let the Assembly so decide, and let the unfaithful men be discharged and others put in their places. If these charges have no foundation, then let that fact be known. It is due to individuals and to the church that unfounded charges be not hung up for a whole year. If these matters are postponed now it will be unjust to the officers of the Boards. In that case, he added, it is not for me to say what they may deem it their duty to do, but certainly if they do not possess the confidence of the churches, the sooner they leave your service the better.

The motion for the appointment of a committee to report to the next Assembly was then withdrawn. JUDGE HEPBURN arose and said he was satisfied that his suggestion about the Board of Publication, ought not to be adopted, and requested leave to withdraw it, which being unanimously granted, he added that his principal objection to the Boards was the allowance of travelling expenses to their agents.

The question now coming up in reference to the recommendations of the report relating to the Board of Education, Dr. Van Rensselaer, the corresponding secretary of that Board, on motion addressed the house, as follows:

“He said that so far as the Board of Education was concerned

the recommendation of the committee was very different from a question about travelling expenses. It proposed to abolish all their agencies. It, therefore, struck directly at the very foundation of all their principles of administration. The Chairman had brought two charges against the General Agent. As to his having insisted that a Western agent should take a salary, the offer was made under peculiar circumstances. The Western agent was doing a laborious work for the Board, in visiting the churches of the Synods of Wheeling and Pittsburgh; and besides, had an academy, where one or two young men under the care of the church were receiving their education gratuitously. While on his agency, he hired a teacher to assist him at the academy. He could ill afford to make these sacrifices; and the Board could not in justice and decency ask him to do so. Under these circumstances, the General Agent was right in urging his brother to accept the salary proffered by the Board. The remark about the laws of the Medes and Persians was a playful one; but the Board acted in this case under a law far more authoritative than that of the Medes and Persians—a law which declared that ‘the labourer was worthy of his hire;’ and ‘thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.’ As to the other charge, of falsifying the accounts about travelling expenses, the General Agent had no more to do with it than the man in the moon. It was a mere mistake of the clerk of the office, who was suddenly called upon to make out the statement, and who had to search into the pecuniary matters of two agents, whose accounts were mixed up together, they having co-operated in the same field. When the error was pointed out, the unintentional injustice to one of these respected brethren was immediately corrected, and explained to his entire satisfaction. And yet these two charges are here publicly thrown out against the General Agent, one of them involving deep moral turpitude, when both of them could have been explained, if the chairman had requested an explanation from any one connected with the Board. Sir, did you ever hear of an investigating committee in Congress, or elsewhere, proposing the most serious charges and changes, without ever having called before them the heads, or clerks, in the offices? This mode of proceeding was not only unjust to the Board; it was unjust to the church, to the General Assembly, and to all parties concerned.

“As to doing away with agents, the Secretary said *we must*

have executive officers. The resolutions of Synods and Presbyteries were generally of little account. They would indeed assist the Board sometimes very much; but without agents, the churches did not generally show a disposition to take up collections. To be sure, agents could not visit all the churches; but they could visit a great many, and could make arrangements with voluntary agents to visit others. The experience of other benevolent institutions, as well as our own, proved that a wise system of agency was attended by the most beneficial results. If the Presbyterian Church should adopt the Scotch plan, and assign particular Sabbaths for the different benevolent objects, and enjoin upon the inferior judicatories to carry on their operations in this systematic way, perhaps after a time we might dispense with agents. But this committee propose to abolish our agencies, and yet they give us no substitute. The Board of Education, moreover, required agents as much, and perhaps more, than any other Board; because the community were in various quarters prejudiced against it, and needed instruction on education topics, and because the young men under their care needed to be visited. Especially at this time was it unwise to think of destroying our agencies, when the Board were just commencing to carry forward the system of Parochial schools. This whole work, so vastly important, would be endangered by introducing any radical change in the present mode of conducting our operations.

“In regard to the second point, which was the *economy of administration*, the subject of *salaries* was made prominent in the committee’s report. The Secretary said that he should not have uttered one word on this subject, if there were not particular circumstances which demanded it. For himself, he had no personal interest whatever in the matter. He did not want any salary, and his intimate friends knew that he was opposed to receiving any. He finally consented to take it as a trust, and to expend it in advancing the interests of education, and of the church. He was induced to take it, because its refusal would be placing his fellow-labourers in an unfair position, especially the individual who should succeed him; and because it would be acting upon the principle that a man’s salary ought to be lowered, or abolished, in proportion to his private property. Besides, taking it would be a stimulant to his own sense of personal responsibility. There were three principles in regard to salaries which he thought were

reasonable. 1. Salaries of the officers of the Boards should be in proportion to those of ministers in the place where the offices are located. 2. They should fairly remunerate the officers. 3. They should bear a proportion to what the same men could reasonably expect in doing other service in the church or community. Although the present salaries are a fair compensation, yet they are not equal to what some of these officers received in the places from which they were called. Mr. Lowrie of the Foreign Board, received as Secretary of the United States Senate, the sum of \$3000, and the Board originally offered him this same salary to take charge of their affairs, but he declined receiving more than \$2000, which the other Boards were giving at that time. Dr. McDowell was receiving \$2500, as pastor of a church in Charleston, S. C., when he was called to his present office at a salary of \$2000.

“As to *travelling expenses*, the committee propose to abolish them entirely, and as a reason for it, the chairman says, that he is not aware that such an allowance exists ‘in any other organization than that of the church.’ This, sir, is an astonishing statement. Does not Congress pay for the travelling expenses of their members, and pay liberally? Do not many of the state legislatures do the same? Does not every merchant, who sends his clerks to any place to do his business, do the same? Are not witnesses paid to attend a court? Does not our General Assembly pay the travelling expenses of its members? It has been said, indeed, that the judges in some states do not receive travelling expenses on their circuits; but these judges do not travel as *far* or as *constantly* as agents;* and besides they have their profession as counsellors to rely upon; and, moreover, few will doubt that they ought to be paid better than they are. The committee seem to think that the payment of travelling expenses is a temptation to travel too much. There is no foundation for the idea. The temptation is all the other way. It a great self-denial for an agent to leave his home a great part of every year, and to endure the self-denials of an arduous and ungracious service. If a man’s principle is ever severely exercised, it is when he must be con-

* It came out in the course of the debate that the Judges in Pennsylvania, to whom reference was made, did receive in the form of a *per diem* allowance, in addition to their salaries three or four times as much as the agents of the Board received for their travelling expenses.

tinually "on the go," from week to week. Those who think agents have easy times, have no adequate conception of the nature and duties of the office. As for himself, he had never taken anything for travelling expenses, for reasons which were satisfactory to himself; and he therefor spoke with the more freedom on this point.

"The general economy of the Board of Education was proved by a comparison with other benevolent institutions. The average expense of six or seven of the principal voluntary societies, was, last year, about twenty-three per cent. of their income, as appears from Dr. Plumer's report, whilst the expense of the Board of Education was twenty per cent.

"The Boards submit cheerfully to the supervision of the General Assembly, and will of course comply with all their orders; but they hope the Assembly will protect them from unreasonable agitation, and unfounded and injurious imputations. Let us have investigation according to the usual forms of law and equity, and every facility will be offered by the Boards to any committee they may appoint."

WALTER LOWRIE, ESQ., Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, said it was only at the earnest request of several brethren, that he said any thing on this report. He was always in favour that the fullest examination should be made in this Assembly, and had once and again suggested that a committee consisting of one elder from each Synod should be appointed at each session of the Assembly to examine these matters.

There are two questions involved in this report.

1st. Can the Assembly manage these details?

2nd. Are the charges and complaints well founded?

The report objects to the travelling expenses of officers and agents.

The report objects to their present salaries.

The report objects to the entire system of agents.

If the travelling expenses of the officers and agents were every year alike, then they might be discontinued, and a fixed salary allowed for both. But these expenses are different in different years. The agents go where they are sent by the Boards, and if they travel 5000 miles, they incur more expense than if they travel but 1000. In my own case my traveling expenses have varied very much. One year \$40, another \$75.

One year I spent seven months in the south, and the expense was \$500, which however, I paid myself. Last year I was three months visiting the Indians, the expense was \$165. This was paid from another source. These variations show that a fixed sum would not meet the case.

It was with pain I heard the remarks made on the salary and expenses of Mr. Wilson, representing him as trying to get both his hands into the treasury of the Board.

Judge Hepburn.—I did not name any one, nor did I use that expression.

Mr. Lowrie.—As to the name, the brother read from a printed report, in the hands of the members, where the name is given. The expression is my own, nor was it too strong for the effort made to prove extravagance in the case of this agent. Now what are the facts of this case. Mr. Wilson reached this country, last fall was a year. As soon as he arrived, the Colonization Society offered him \$2000 a year, if he would become their agent. His wish was to take charge of a church, but with some reluctance he accepted an agency from the Foreign Board. His salary for the first year was just one half that had been offered from the Colonization Society. It was found that a residence in Winchester was inconvenient for his field of labour, and it was deemed best that he remove to Philadelphia, and that his salary be \$1500. This sum is less than the average salaries of the pastors in that city. It is still \$500 less than he could have received. The travelling expenses amount to a large sum, but the distance travelled is large, being 8596 miles, from Georgia to Western New York. Ten years ago Mr. Wilson was an agent for a short time in our service. Some of the brethren here recollect the meeting at the Synod of Philadelphia, in 1836. At that time this young brother subscribed \$1000, all the money he had, in aid of this cause. He has manifested the same spirit now, and yet this is one of the men, held up before this Assembly, and a crowded gallery, as extravagantly using the funds of the church.

The case of Mr. Rogers, as an agent, is very similar. At first he would not take more salary than \$600, believing that he could support his family on that sum. It was found too low and it was raised to \$800, which is still low. His field is large,

and the travelling expenses must be large or he cannot reach the important points.

As to the salaries of the secretaries, I have very little to say. I have not the least objection to their reduction to \$1800. Nominally that will take \$200 from my salary: but in reality it is no reduction at all. Generally I have drawn the \$2000, but I have paid back again more than the \$200. Dr. Van Reusselaer has stated the principle on which his salary is paid. Although drawn from the Board it is all returned. I cannot go so far as that, but cheerfully act on the same principle. It is to me a matter of deep regret that we have to refer to these things thus publicly.

The chairman of this committee calls for explanation on one item in the treasurer's account. The travelling expenses of officers of the Board and voluntary agents, \$173.32. I can give the substance of each item, even here; at the office the exact sums are kept; \$100 of this sum is for an able agent employed in the Synod of Georgia, for his expenses merely. Most of the balance is for my own expenses—for a journey to meet the Synod of Pittsburg—a visit to the Indian department at Washington, and a visit to Baltimore—to send a missionary to Africa. The chairman of the committee says it is not his place to seek for this information, it ought to be furnished. Mr. Moderator, let me call his attention to some things which he seems to have overlooked. All these items of expense, as well as all other expenditures come before the Executive Committee. Who are the men forming that committee? Mr. Lowrie read the names. These men surely are competent to decide whether this \$173.32 is right or not. The laymen on the Executive Committee are among the most liberal contributors you have. Few of your Synods contribute as much as they do. Sir, if I had taken the course suggested by the chairman, and when I met you and the other brethren here, had commenced an explanation of this item, you would have thought I was deranged. This report, Mr. Moderator, strikes at the entire system of agency. If the Assembly adopt it, every agent will resign. I am not going to discuss this question. But I call upon the Assembly to meet the responsibility which will then rest upon them. For the Foreign Board we need a larger amount of funds than at any previous time, and I trust the Assembly will not disturb existing arrangements, without providing other measures equally efficient.

I know, Mr. Moderator, how precious is the time of this Assembly. I could add much more, but I forbear. It is an easy matter to find fault. It is easy to furnish excuses to those who are unwilling to give any thing to support the Saviour's cause. We find difficulties enough in conveying forward these great interests, without meeting with unmerited rebuke and injustice here.

After the further discussion of this subject by different members of the house the previous question was called for and the following resolution moved by the Rev. D. V. Maclean, was adopted with only two or three dissenting voices, viz.

"*Resolved*, That after a full investigation of the affairs of our Boards, and especially of their financial arrangements, this Assembly express the highest confidence in their respective managements, and in the faithful and economical service of their respective officers; and we do hereby earnestly recommend the Boards and their officers to the confidence and patronage of the Church."

After this matter was disposed of, a motion was made to transfer the Board of Missions to Pittsburg. A western member in discussing this question, said that those who were so desirous to get the Board west, were men who had come from the east; the real western men were willing it should remain where it is, and that the eastern churches should experience the full truth of the declaration, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Dr. Wm. McDowell, Secretary of the Board, being called upon for an expression of his views said:

"*Mr. Moderator*—This call to address the Assembly is altogether unexpected, and as my brethren well know, I speak with difficulty, and under some peculiar embarrassments. The motion before the house, as I understand it, is, "to remove the Board of Missions, or the seat of their operations, to Pittsburg." In the few remarks I have to make, I shall not enter into the argument for or against this proposition, but simply state to the Assembly, and will do it with great frankness, what I am persuaded would be the natural and necessary result of such a measure.

"It is admitted by all, that *the West* is the *great missionary field* in this land. In regard to this there is no difference of opinion. The Board are fully sensible of the strong claims of the west. They have given unequivocal evidence of their interest

in the great West. To supply the west with an intelligent, devoted ministry, has always been with them a leading object, and this has been the strongest ground of their appeals to the churches.

“While it is admitted that the West is the *great field* of operation, it is by no means the *whole field*. East of the mountains there is a very extensive, and a very important missionary field. Including Wisconsin and Michigan, and extending on the Atlantic coast to the Gulph of Mexico—lies an immense field, with extensive moral wastes. And the ministers and churches east of the mountains, while they feel a deep interest to the west, and are ready to aid in sending the gospel to the whole west, do not, and will not, feel at liberty to *neglect the destitutions on their own side of the mountains*; they cannot do it in faithfulness to their solemn trust. The field is one, and the whole, and all parts of it demand our attention.

“Although the *geographical centre* of this great field is west of the mountains, the *business centre* is east. And while this is the case, every business man knows, there is an advantage in having the seat of operations near, or in the centre of business. There is no difficulty in managing your missionary operations for the whole west, in any well chosen point east of the mountains. And while the west need the men and the means of the east, there is an important advantage *to the west*, in having the seat of operation in the east, where the surplus men and means are to be found. My decided conviction is, if a change must be made, which I certainly do not consider either necessary or wise—but, if you must change, *for the benefit of the west*, go east. Go to New York. The interests of the west I am persuaded would be much more effectually promoted by going to the city of New York, than by removing to any point which could be selected west of the mountains. While the operations in the west can be managed without difficulty, and with advantage, in any of our eastern cities, we ask how the missionary operations on the whole Atlantic coast, are to be managed from any point west of the mountains? Every man of practical good sense, who is at all conversant with the matter, must answer—*It cannot be done to advantage*. The men, and the means for this whole field, east of the mountains, are here, not in the west; and the whole business is done, not in the west, but here. The operations east of

the mountains, cannot be managed in the west without much loss, and great embarrassment. What, then, must be the natural and necessary result of a removal? The answer, to my mind, is plain and obvious—*a separate organization for the Atlantic slope.* The brethren east will be compelled, in self-defence, and to supply their own immense destitutions, to adopt some such plan. Surely this is not to be desired. The field is one, and we should all be willing, and anxious to adopt the plan which will concentrate the strength of the whole Church, to bear with most advantage on each and every part.”

Such was the result of this protracted debate. We have no doubt it will do great good. It must indeed be very trying to the patience of the laborious and self-denying servants of the Church, who are engaged in a thankless office, sent to solicit money, and exposed to constant mortifications and difficulties, to be arraigned on vague rumors, and charged with serious negligence if nothing worse, before the whole Assembly, but the opportunity thus afforded them of vindicating their conduct removes many smothered misgivings, and calls forth the expression of the real estimate in which they are held by the church, and the attachment felt by the great body of our ministers and members to the work in which they are engaged.

Reports on the Theological Seminaries.

The report of the Board of Directors of the Western Theological Seminary having been read was referred to a committee, who subsequently presented the following report, which was adopted unanimously; viz.

“*Resolved,* That the said report (viz. of the Directors of the Western Seminary) be approved and printed in the appendix to the minutes of the assembly.

“*Resolved,* That the General Assembly learn with great pleasure that the labours of the distinguished and faithful professors of this institution continue to be crowned with success and that students highly respectable not only in number but also in piety, talents and attainments avail themselves of those valuable labours.

“*Resolved,* That with unmingled satisfaction, the Assembly are informed that this seminary has lately passed in safety through a threatening crisis in its affairs, and that now no reasonable doubt can exist as to the speedy completion of the plan

of endowment which for several years has so worthily engaged the efforts of the churches in the region of its location.

“*Resolved*, That the General Assembly have no hesitation in recommending the endowment and support of this seminary, as objects worthy of the liberal pecuniary contributions not simply of the Synods which have heretofore nobly borne the burden, but also of all other portions of the Presbyterian Church which appreciate sound and thorough Theological training as well as cultivation of ministerial and missionary zeal.”

The report of the Directors of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, was referred to a committee, who presented a report which was amended, adopted and is as follows:

“The committee appointed to examine the Report of the Directors of Princeton Seminary, beg leave to say, that this document appears to have been prepared after the manner of previous reports. The whole report covers less than five small letter sheet pages, openly written, of which nearly three are mere lists of names. It is impossible from the report to form any idea concerning the presence or absence of a missionary spirit amongst the students; of the general spirit of piety, during the last year in the Seminary; or, indeed to form any correct opinion whether the students now in the Seminary promise usefulness in the pastoral office, or the contrary. It is currently reported and believed that regular instruction is given in the Hebrew language, in the Seminary, by one person upon whose character and qualifications the Assembly has not passed; yet no allusion is made in the report to this important fact. The Assembly considers such an omission as improper, and such action in reference to the appointment of a Hebrew teacher, without the knowledge of this body, as inconsistent with the laws of the Institution, and with the relations in which it stands to the General Assembly.

“From the number of young men reported to be members of the Seminary, and from the proficiency accredited to the students by the Examining Committee, *we infer* that this important school of the prophets maintains its high position, and was never in a more prosperous state.

“It is however to be regretted that the Directors have not favoured the Assembly with more of that information in regard to the Seminary which ought to be expected and received. We are constrained to regard it as an exceedingly grave defect, when

a report from such a source, and upon such a subject leaves the Assembly so much in the dark, with regard to the vital matters of the trust, nor does it seem to us to be expedient that the church should be left, as in this instance, to general rumor for its knowledge of what is officially done by the Directors of the Seminary."

The General Assembly is so exalted a body, it has so much dignity as the representative of our whole church, it is clothed with so much authority, and is entitled to so much deference as "an ordinance of God,"* that its censures fall with tremendous weight. Those on whom they fall cannot fail to be deeply pained by the infliction. A very grave responsibility, therefore, is assumed by those who put words of rebuke into the mouth of such a body, and by those who sanction them without due consideration. No such assembly, however, is infallible. They may err through want of information, or error of judgment, and it is at once the right and duty of all concerned, to subject their decisions, especially when they affect the character and conduct of such a body of venerable men, to a respectful and candid examination.

The first ground of the censure passed on the Princeton Directors, is the meagerness of their report. This Board are rebuked for not giving more definite information as to the internal condition of the Seminary, the degree in which the missionary spirit and spirit of piety prevail among the students, and of their general proficiency and promise. The Assembly, it is said, are left "*to infer*" that the institution is in a flourishing state, but it is noticed as "a grave defect" that the report of the Directors gives no definite information on this subject.

In reference to this point, it may be remarked, that the present report is as full in relation to these matters as any presented to the Assembly for the last twenty or thirty years. If a change in the manner of reporting was desired, the Board might not unreasonably expect that some intimation of such desire should be given, instead of censuring them for a mode of reporting which had met the approbation of the Assembly, for a long series of years. Besides this, the report from the Directors of the Western Theological Seminary, was received with cordial and unanimous approbation. That report, however, is scarcely

*See Westminster Confession, chapter on Councils.

one third the length of the report under consideration. It is a mere business document. It does not say a word about the religious condition of the institution committed to the care of those Directors. The question must suggest itself, why is the one of these reports received with unanimous approval, and the other with rebuke? They are, as to this ground of censure, precisely alike. They stand side by side in the columns of the Presbyterian; where our readers may compare them, and see if they can discover any reason why the one should be censured for its silence as to the internal state of the Seminary, and the other cordially approved. If the one Board deserved no censure for silence on this point, where is the justice of so severe a rebuke for a like silence in the other?

The second ground of censure is presented in the following passage: "It is currently reported and believed that regular instruction is given in the Hebrew language, in the Seminary, by one person on whose character and qualifications the Assembly has not passed; yet no allusion is made in the report to this important fact. The Assembly considers such an omission as improper, and such action in reference to the appointment of a Hebrew teacher, without the knowledge of this body, as inconsistent with the laws of the Institution, and with the relations in which it stands to the General Assembly."

If this means that the Board of Directors were bound to report their action on this subject, to the General Assembly, it is readily admitted. It is to be remembered however that the Board have two methods of reporting. The one is by a general abstract of their proceedings, in the form of an annual report, and the other is by placing their whole records on the table of the House. One of the provisions of the plan of the Seminary is, "The secretary of the Board, shall keep an accurate record of all the proceedings of the Directors; and it shall be his duty to lay these records, or a faithful transcript of the same, before the General Assembly annually, for the unrestrained inspection of all the members." Article 4, § 4. It will be perceived that this is made the duty of the secretary, independently of any order of the Board. The Directors have nothing to do with it. Without their action, and in spite of their prohibition, the secretary is bound to place the full record of their proceedings before the Assembly. An organic provision is thus made for the

fullest kind of report being annually presented of every act and resolution of the Directors. The Board therefore were entitled to assume that all their proceedings had been officially communicated to the Assembly.

If on the present, or any other occasion, the minutes of the Directors were not exhibited, that was no fault of the Board. They knew nothing of it. It was by no neglect or connivance on their part. They were no more to blame in the matter, than a Synod would be for failing to send up their records, when that failure was occasioned by the mail or the forgetfulness of their stated clerk.* That the appointment of a Hebrew teacher, was not mentioned in the annual report, is a matter of surprise and regret. It was no doubt an oversight arising from the manner in which the subject came before the Board, no name being mentioned, but authority given to employ such an instructor. Everything however, was published to the world in the annual catalogue of the Seminary, and the Directors could have small hope of keeping the knowledge of such a public fact, from the Assembly, if any one can suppose such was their intention.

The passage just quoted, however, may mean not merely to censure the Directors for not reporting the appointment of a Hebrew teacher, but to assert that they had no right to make such an appointment. If this were its intention, it involves a perfectly novel interpretation of the constitution of the Seminary, and of the relation of the Directors to the Assembly. That relation is in a great measure analogous to that which is sustained by the other Boards of the church. The Board of Missions, for example, is appointed for the conduct of our missionary operations. They receive their appointment from the Assembly; from that body they derive all their powers, and to it they are responsible for all their acts. They are the representatives and agents of the Assembly for a specific work. The Assembly itself does not conduct the missions, that office is delegated to the

* We do not intend to make any reflexion on the Secretary of the Board, who for thirty-six years has so faithfully performed the duties of his office. The Board meet on the Monday preceding the opening of the Assembly. He has but one day at command to transcribe his minutes. When the Assembly meets at a distance from the residence of the Secretary, it is difficult for him to forward the records. All the delegates are already on their way to the place of meeting, so that it is impossible for him to have his book on the table of the assembly, at least at the opening of its sessions.

Board. In like manner the Directors of our Theological Seminaries, are appointed by the Assembly for the actual management of those institutions. They derive all their powers from the Assembly, and to it they are responsible for all their acts. But they can act within their legitimate sphere. The Assembly does not and cannot exercise the task of immediate supervision, any more than it immediately conducts the work of missions. It never meets in the places where the Seminaries are located; it never has the professors before them; it never calls on them to report their mode of instruction; it never examines the students. This is a task which it has committed to the Directors. It is indeed the peculiar advantage of those Seminaries which are under the care of the General Assembly, that the ultimate appeal in all cases is to the representatives of the whole church. Those Seminaries therefore, cannot become materially corrupt, until the majority of the whole church is unfaithful to its trust. This is an invaluable safeguard; and no true friend of those institutions would wish to see them removed from the control of the Assembly, or the vigilance of that body in the least degree relaxed. At the same time it is apparent, from the very nature of the case, that the immediate conduct of them must be committed to their respective Boards.

The relation however of the Directors to the Assembly is not left to be inferred from analogy and the general principles of propriety. It is clearly determined by the written constitution of the Seminary. According to that constitution, the Assembly has reserved to itself the right to appoint all the principal officers, of determining salaries, of sanctioning their laws, prescribing the course of study, and of altering the constitution. To the Board of Directors is committed the right of making their own bye-laws, of directing the professors as to the subjects of their instruction, so far as the same is not prescribed by the Plan or by the orders of the Assembly; of inspecting the fidelity of the professors, of reporting or suspending them from office, if unfaithful or incompetent; of watching over the conduct of the students; making temporary arrangements for their instruction; examining into their proficiency; and of recommending to the Assembly any measure they deem expedient for the benefit of the Institution committed to their care. See *Plan*, Arts. 1 and 2.

The Assembly in reserving the right to appoint the "princi-

pal officers" of these Seminaries, and expressly giving the Directors authority to make temporary provision for their instruction, has in the Plan itself conceded the right to the Board of appointing subordinate temporary teachers, as circumstances may require. This interpretation of the powers of the Directors has been sanctioned by the Assembly so often, as to be perfectly established. In 1826 the Directors of the Seminary at Princeton appointed Mr. John W. Nevin, teacher of Hebrew during the temporary absence of the professor of that department. In 1833 they appointed the Rev. Austin O. Hubbard, to the same service; afterwards the Rev. Mr. Jacobus, now of Brooklyn, was employed in the same way. The Western Board have had occasion still more frequently and extensively to act upon this interpretation of their powers, and have always been borne out in so doing. In the year 1827, Dr. Janeway not having immediately accepted his appointment as professor in the Western Seminary, the Directors on their own authority appointed their secretary and the Rev. Mr. Stockton to conduct the instruction of the students. In 1830 they inform the Assembly they had been "so felicitous as to obtain the services of the Rev. John W. Nevin, in the department of Oriental and Biblical Literature." Mr. Nevin acted under this appointment of the Board for a number of years. In 1840 the Directors say: "The Board have to report that the Rev. John W. Nevin, D.D. has resigned his chair of Oriental and Biblical Literature for the purpose of accepting the presidency of the German Reformed Theological Seminary at Mercersburg, Pa. Thus a very important vacancy has been occasioned in our Institution, which the Board are anxious to have filled as soon as a suitable person can be obtained. In the meantime, the department vacated by Professor Nevin, will be attended to, according to a private arrangement of the Board, by some of the ministers resident in Alleghany city." In 1838 among the list of the officers of the Seminary, appears the name of the Rev. A. D. Campbell, "as teacher of Church Government and general agent." In the report for the year 1842, it is said: "At a meeting of the Board of Directors, held September 8th, 1841, it was unanimously agreed to invite the Rev. Alexander T. McGill, of the Presbytery of Carlisle, to become an instructor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in our Institution, until such time as the General Assembly should fill the

chair of that department of study with a regular professor; and during the winter session Mr. McGill has been connected with the Institution in the office to which he was invited by the Board, whose duties he has fulfilled with very great acceptance. The Board now request the General Assembly, during their present session, to fill the chair of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government." Dr. McGill, was agreeably to this request elected by the Assembly. It is also understood that a converted Jew was for some time employed as teacher of Hebrew in that Seminary, of which fact we find no record on the minutes.

We now submit whether the Board of Directors of the Princeton Seminary transcended their powers in appointing on an emergency, a temporary assistant teacher of Hebrew. Could they reasonably have anticipated a rebuke for doing what the Plan of the Seminary seems so plainly to authorize, and which they had repeatedly done before with the subsequent sanction of the Assembly? Could they have expected to be censured for what they knew the Western Board had been allowed time after time to do, without the slightest manifestation of disapprobation? We are persuaded that this report would neither have been proposed nor adopted, had its author or the Assembly had the facts of the case fairly before them.

We understand that when this report was first introduced, it was on motion of Judge Hepburn, placed on the docket, and when towards the close of the sessions of the Assembly, it was again called up, that gentleman proposed a number of amendments reflecting severely on the Board, which amendments were not adopted. Of the debate on those amendments we have seen no report. It is deeply to be regretted that while the debates of political bodies, and of religious meetings in our own and other countries, are so fully reported, we have the most meagre accounts of the discussions in our Assembly. The whole church takes a deep interest in those debates. They are in a high degree instructive, and very often parties concerned in the action of the house, are left ignorant of the views of their brethren, which it may be a matter of no small moment for them to know. We have heard that some member on the floor was disposed to deny to the Board of Directors the right of even making recommendations of instructors in our Seminaries. It is to be presumed that member never read the Plan or constitution of those institutions. It

is there said, "The Board of Directors may recommend such measures for the advantage of the seminary, as to them may appear proper." Is not this a recognition of the right in question? It is a right which has been acknowledged time after time by the Assembly. In 1833 the Western Board resolved, "That it is expedient to appoint an additional professor, and the Rev. Ezra Fish, D.D. be recommended to the Assembly and that they be respectfully requested at their next meeting to appoint him to the professorship of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government." In 1836 the same Board recommended, that Dr. Halsey should be transferred to the chair of Ecclesiastical History, and Dr. Eliot to that of Theology. The Assembly did not resent these recommendations, as an unauthorised interference with their own prerogatives, but kindly entertained them, and as they met their approbation gave them effect. In 1840 the Princeton Board resolved, "That the Assembly be requested to make the following change in the titles of two professors, viz., that Dr. Hodge be made Professor of Exegetical and Didactic Theology, and that the title of Dr. Alexander hereafter be, Professor of Pastoral and Polemic Theology." This recommendation the Assembly adopted by an unanimous vote.

Is there any thing wrong in this? If the youngest man on the floor of the Assembly may recommend whom he pleases, is it wrong that thirty ministers and elders set to preside over an institution, should have the same privilege? Are they less likely to be wise and conscientious in their recommendations? Can any one believe that truth and piety would be better promoted by denying this reasonable privilege to our Boards? Is it not conceded that refusing to bodies of men their legitimate influence, is the surest way to throw that influence into the hands of individuals, who have no special claim to its exercise? Of one thing we presume every one is satisfied, and that is, that no true friend of either of our Seminaries would wish to see a man introduced to them as a professor, who had not the confidence of the whole church, and who was not the unbiassed choice of the General Assembly. The only question is, how to prevent that choice from being unduly biassed.