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**A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE UNITED SYNOD OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.**

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Presbyterian Church, etc.

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CHAPTER I.

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CHAPTER II.

GENERAL ACCOUNT.

THE United Synod was organized during the years 1857 and 1858. Its membership was altogether Southern. It was composed of Presbyteries and Churches which, up to 1857, had been in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, New School. After its organization as an independent body, it maintained separate existence until 1864. In that year it united with the "Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America." The body into which the United Synod had thus debouched, had been formed in 1861 by the Presbyteries and Churches previously constituting a part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Old School. In 1865 it changed its name to "The Presbyterian Church in the United States." It is popularly known as the "Southern Presbyterian Church."

We propose in the following paper, to set forth more particularly: *first*, the source of the United Synod in the New School body; *second*, the organization of the Synod as an independent ecclesiastical body; *third*, its growth, and the development of its several agencies, during the period of its separate existence; *fourth*, its union with the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, which, for convenience, we shall usually refer to as "The Southern Presbyterian Church"; and *finally*, the results of this union observable in the united body.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOURCE OF THE UNITED SYNOD.

IN 1838 the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America split into two bodies mutually independent. One of the resulting bodies bore the popular designation of "The Old School Presbyterian Church"; the other was similarly called "The New School Presbyterian Church."

The predisposing causes of the division had been several. 1. Doctrinal "unsoundness" in many ministers of the New School party and the toleration of that "unsoundness" by a large element in the undivided church. 2. Continuous departure from the Presbyterian polity, by the substitution in our church courts for regularly elected and ordained elders the delegates of the Congregational system. 3. The effort was also made by the New School element to prevent the development of the Church's peculiar agencies for the education of the ministry, for the conduct of the foreign and domestic missions, and so forth. They preferred to support corresponding voluntary societies already in existence and, for the most part, under the control of the New England Congregationalists—such societies, for instance, as the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the American Education Society.

These causes themselves may be traced, in greatest part, to the adoption of the Plan of Union of 1801, the original parties to which were the General Association of Connecticut and the Presbyterian General Assembly. The *Plan* was intended for application in the new settlements of the country wherein resided both Congregationalists and Presbyterians. According to *it*, a congregation of either denomination, or

one composed in part of members of one persuasion, and in part of members of the other, could call a minister of either; and the discipline of these congregations might be administered according to the preferred polity of the offender and the prosecutor, or in case of their inability to agree as to the form of polity under which the case should be conducted, by a council composed of Presbyterians and Congregationalists in equal numbers.¹

This was an illustration and practical application of the broadest broad-churchism.

Under the operation of the Plan no less than four considerable Synods, with *quasi*-Presbyteries came into existence. They were a mighty power working for the virtual abolition of Presbyterian rule and for latitudinarian doctrines. In many of these *quasi*-Presbyteries the conditions of ordination were very much more lax than in the majority of the real Presbyteries. However, it is to be observed that in accord with, and perhaps to some degree in consequence of, the latitudinarian act of the Assembly in establishing the Plan of Union, many of the old and genuine Presbyteries were showing laxity in the reception of new members.

By these agencies—the *quasi*-Presbyteries and some lax Presbyteries under the lead of theologians and ecclesiastics who had drunk deeply of New England Theology—many men of views very unacceptable to the Old School party were brought into the Church. The new-comers not only made themselves at home; they undertook to reconstruct the body into which they had come. Hence, that three-fold war on the Church—war on her old-fashioned Covenant and Calvinistic theology, war on her Presbyterian polity, and war on her developing agencies. Hence, also, the split of 1838.

Irenical historians try to belittle the differences between the Old and New School parties prior to the division. Especially do they minimize the differences in theological doctrine. But their effort is futile. In the language of the moderate as well as “courtly and diplomatic” Dr. Samuel

¹ Baird's *Digest*, pp. 570, ff.

Miller, of Princeton, "If *Pelagian* and *semi-Pelagian* sentiments existed in the *fifth century*, here they are in all their unquestionable and revolting features. More particularly in regard to the denial of *Original Sin* and the assertion of the doctrine of *human ability*, Pelagius and his followers never went further than some of the advocates of the doctrines above recited. To attempt to persuade us to the contrary, is to suppose that the record of the published language and opinions of those ancient heretics is lost or forgotten."¹ Dr. Lyman Beecher in his "Sermon on the Native Character of Man"; Mr. Finney in his "Sermons on Important Subjects"; Mr. Duffield in his book on *Regeneration*—each of whom was a light in the New School party—taught the Pelagian doctrine of Sin.² Nor had these men a small body of sympathizers in matters of doctrine. Many of the ministers of the New School party had been educated in New England, and were the theological disciples of Hopkins, and Taylor of New Haven. They naturally, therefore, held and taught many other theological doctrines than Pelagian and semi-Pelagian doctrines of sin, which were sorely displeasing to the Old School party in the Church. Nor were the New England Schools the only fountains of such doctrines. The natural heart is Pelagian. And it is notorious that some of the leaders of the New School thought were not from New England institutions.

But while it is a well attested fact that among the leaders of the New School party there were many who favored an anti-Calvinistic theology; and while it is equally certain that they had a considerable body of sympathetic followers among the New School ministers, it is also fair to say that there was a good deal of only apparently Arminian teaching by New School men who were really Calvinistic. In times of such conflicts men tend to emphasize one set of truths at the expense of others. Dr. Lyman Beecher was charged by Dr. Porter with exalting "*human agency* so as virtually to

¹ From Dr. Miller's letters to Presbyterians, quoted on page 55 of *Old and New School Theology*, by Jas. Wood, D.D.

² Compare Jas. Wood, *Old and New School Theology*, pages 64, ff.

lose sight of human dependence." In his reply, among other things he said: "The preaching of dependence by hyper-Calvinists has been so disproportioned, as to require the reiterated inculcation of free agency and ability, to obviate prejudice, gain a hearing, and give the relative proportions of truth to minds accustomed to disproportionate and distorted views."¹ These bold words from the adroit apologist may not avail to make us regard him, the avowed sympathizer with Taylorism, as a thorough-going Calvinist; but they may suggest an explanation of preaching so one-sided as to look Arminian, though really Calvinistic.

Nor must it be forgotten that for other reasons, subsequently to be hinted at, many went with the New School Party who did not even appear to have any sort of sympathy with the New Theology current among the leaders of the party and their more immediate followers.

Even irenical historians commonly assert that the Old School party was justly aroused by the incessant attacks made upon the Church's polity by the New School leaders. New School broad-churchism was about to be followed by utter subversion of Presbyterianism and the erection of practical Congregationalism. And if it is certain that her polity was endangered, it is no less an admitted fact that the New School party opposed the development of those agencies necessary in order to the Church's doing her own Foreign Mission, Home Mission, and Educational work.

The Assembly of 1837 had an Old School majority. It had a vivid impression of the dangers threatening the Church; and under a sense of these dangers abrogated the Plan of Union. And, not satisfied with that, it excised the four Synods which had come into existence on the basis of that plan. This was revolutionary action. The Old School party judged themselves justified in it, however, by the condition of affairs. They knew that it was revolutionary, but they believed that revolution alone could save the Church. But a large number of the rulers of the Church could not be made

¹Dr. Beecher's reply to Dr. Porter's Letter in the *Presbyterian*, February 11, 1837.

to see that such measures were called for. They regarded the proceedings on the part of the Old School party in the Assembly as highhanded. Hence, many who had been neutral, and some who had inclined to the Old School, now aligned themselves with the New School as the wronged body. They went out with them when the secession occurred in 1838; and that too after equally highhanded measures had been employed by the New School party in their endeavors to capture the Assembly previous to their withdrawal. They could excuse the party of their choice on account of their provocations of the past year. Thus many went out with the party who had no sympathy with the New Theology; and no sympathy with the effort to substitute the Congregational for the Presbyterian polity; and as little with the effort to smother the Church's own missionary and other agencies by independent voluntary societies.

The New School party, now a separate denominational organization, seems to have been sobered by the schism it had made. It became nervous lest it should appear to the world generally to be un-Presbyterian and un-Calvinistic. It paid earnest attention to Presbyterianizing the four Congregational Synods. It stopped talking about replacing the Westminster Confession of Faith by a short Creed destitute of Calvinism. It developed the agencies for its own body, the like to which in the undivided Church it had fought in the interest of voluntary societies. And there were some significant departures, as if in failure and disgust, of some of the more pronounced advocates of the distinctly New School views, out of the now reforming Church (New School) back to Congregationalism, or into other more congenial ecclesiastical climates.

Thus under a sense of deep responsibility, awakened by their schism itself to the consciousness of previous tendencies, and perhaps influenced to a degree by a somewhat High-Church spirit once more beginning to prevail in British and American Churches, the New School Church began to grow more Presbyterian, more churchly, and more Calvinistic.

Yet it was slow in becoming uniformly Presbyterian throughout its bounds; while Semi-Pelagian and kindred doctrines continued to maintain themselves among part of the ministers and elders.

For several years the growth of the New School body was slow. Its first work was to effect its organization. Subsequently it entered upon a course of relatively rapid expansion. But the body was destined itself to division.

In the first New School Assembly, that of 1838, memorials were presented on the subject of slavery. Owing to the pressure of other questions, however, they were withdrawn.

But in 1839, in 1840, in 1843, in 1846, in 1850, in 1851, in 1852, in 1853, in 1856, and in 1857, the Assemblies of the Church discussed slavery with ever-increasing warmth. The Assembly of 1846 resolved that "The system of slavery as it exists in these United States, viewed either in the laws of the several States which sanction it, or in the actual operation and results in society, is intrinsically an unrighteous and oppressive system, and is opposed to the prescriptions of the law of God, to the spirit and precepts of the Gospel, and to the best interests of humanity."¹ The Assembly of 1849 resolved, "That it is the 'duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day,' to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors, as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and, if possible, throughout the world. This General Assembly do most solemnly exhort all under our care to perform this duty, and to be ever ready to make all necessary sacrifices in order to effect a consummation so much to be desired."² In 1850 the Assembly resolved, "That the holding our fellow-men in the condition of slavery, except in those cases where it is unavoidable, by the laws of the State, the obligations of guardianship, or the demands of humanity, is an *offence* in the proper import of that term, as used in the Book of Discipline, Chap. I., sec. 3, and should be regarded

¹ *Minutes of General Assembly (N. S.)*, 1846, pp. 28, 29.

² *Ibid.*, 1849, p. 187, 188.

and treated in the same manner as other offences.”¹ The same Assembly then “referred the whole subject of slavery as it exists in the Church . . . to the Sessions and Presbyteries to take such action thereon as in their judgment the laws of Christianity require.”²

In 1855 a committee was appointed to report to the Assembly of 1856 “on the Constitutional power of the Assembly over the subject of slaveholding in our churches.”³ The Assembly of 1856 followed in the wake of preceding Assemblies in treating slavery as an offence in the sense in which the term is used in the Book of Discipline, though it is not stated to be such in the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church. Yet while ready thus to make law in an illegal way, it was not ready to trample on the constitution by undertaking to discipline slave-holders by an immediate process, and in disregard of the plainly marked prerogatives of the lower courts.

Matters now, however, were rapidly approaching a crisis. The actions of the Assemblies referred to had not been unanimous. Protests had been entered repeatedly by a small minority, chiefly of Southern members. The Southern Presbyteries did not take the Assembly’s view of the relation of slavery; and the Assembly of 1857 received “official notice” that at least one of these Presbyteries proposed to disregard the Assembly’s position as unscriptural. Therefore the Assembly expresses its deep grief “That a portion of the Church at the South has so far departed from the established doctrines of the Church in relation to slavery, as to maintain that ‘it is an ordinance of God,’ and that the system of slavery existing in the United States is natural and right.” Against this new doctrine it says, further, “we feel constrained to bear our solemn testimony. It is at war with the whole spirit and tenor of the Gospel of love and good will, as well as abhorrent to the conscience of the Christian world. We can have no sympathy or fellowship with it; and we expect all our people to eschew it as serious and pernicious error.

¹ *Minutes of General Assembly (N. S.)*, 1850, p. 325.

² *Ibid.*, p. 325.

³ *Ibid.*, 1856, p. 197.

“ We are especially pained by the fact that the Presbytery of Lexington, South, have given official notice to us that a number of ministers and ruling elders, as well as many church members in their connection, hold slaves ‘ from principle ’ and ‘ of choice, ’ ‘ believing it to be according to the Bible right, ’ and have without any qualifying explanation, assumed the responsibility of sustaining such ministers, elders, and church members in their position. We deem it our duty, in the exercise of our constitutional authority, to bear testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any Church, Presbytery, or Synod to disprove and earnestly condemn the position which has been thus assumed by the Presbytery of Lexington, South, as one which is opposed to the established convictions of the Presbyterian Church, and must operate to mar its peace, and seriously hinder its prosperity, as well as bring a reproach on our holy religion ; and we do hereby call on that Presbytery to review and rectify their position. Such doctrines and practices cannot be permanently tolerated in the Presbyterian Church.”¹

Against this action on the part of the Assembly twenty-two Southern ministers and elders entered a righteous protest on the following, among other grounds, viz. : that it was such an assertion of the sin of slavery as degraded the whole Southern Church ; and that the assertion was not warranted by the Word of God nor by the organic law of the Presbyterian body ; that the act under the current conditions had virtually excinded the South ; and that such indirect excision was unrighteous, oppressive, and uncalled for, a usurpation, and destructive of the unity of their Church.²

The Southern brethren justly looked on the Assembly as having made law additional to the Bible and contra-Biblical ; and as having judged them as unworthy of fellowship because they were not ready to receive and apply this new doctrine—as usurping the prerogatives of the great head of the Church who is her sole legislator. Thenceforth they could contemplate but one course in relation to their Assembly, viz. : to withdraw all connection with it.

¹ *Minutes of General Assembly (N. S.), 1857, pp. 403, 404.* ² *Ibid., p. 406.*

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED SYNOD.

IN May, 1857, the Southern delegates of the Assembly at Cleveland, Ohio, "Felt themselves constrained, for truth and conscience' sake, to withdraw together from that body, and to recommend" a convention of the Southern Brethren to be held during the following summer. Their design in petitioning for a convention was to secure concerted and harmonious action on the part of all the Presbyteries, in formally withdrawing all connection with the Assembly, and taking the necessary measures in order to the erection of a new church, or pursuing such other course as might seem good. With a view to winning the "Presbytery of the District of Columbia," Washington, D. C., was at first pitched upon as the place for the Convention. It was called to meet there in August. But from the start the pastors in Washington seem to have been unanimously opposed to the Convention being held in that city. They fought holding it in Washington, on the ground that in August most of the pastors of the place were absent from their charges, and upon the more intelligible ground that they disapproved of the calling of the Convention at all. This Presbytery grew rapidly in antagonism to the secession of the Southern brethren. Drs. Smith, Sunderland, and Mr. Carothers were at the boiling point of antagonism. Accordingly the place for the meeting of the Convention was changed to Richmond, Va. It met there on the 27th of August, 1857. It remained in session for five days. There were 152 members in attendance. The presiding officer was the Honorable Horace Maynard of Knoxville, Tenn. Other leading men in the Convention

were the Rev. Drs. A. H. H. Boyd of Winchester, Va., Frederick A. Ross of Huntsville, Ala., Charles Reed of Richmond, Va., J. C. Stiles of Richmond, Va., the Hon. John Randolph Tucker of Winchester, Va., and others. The spirit exhibited in all the discussions was very fine, and conversions are said to have attended the devotional exercises conducted by the members of the Convention.

There does not seem to have been any question in the Convention as to the propriety of withdrawing from the mother church. The constant agitation of the slavery question, and the Assembly's assuming, against the Constitution, to pronounce sentence of condemnation upon the lower judicatories or individuals prior to their being brought before it in the constitutionally prescribed mode, had provoked these men beyond the point of endurance. The time for discussing whether they should stay in the Assembly had passed. The business of the Convention was to determine on the proper course after withdrawal from the Assembly.

Before the Convention two great proposals were laid, viz.: One was to secede from the Northern New School Assembly and to form a separate and independent New School body. The other was for the seceding body to unite with the Old School Presbyterian Church. This latter proposal had strong advocacy. Mr. Tucker was a distinguished protagonist for the union with the Old School. But the views of his party were not destined to prevail in the Convention. Some men of foresight anticipated a struggle in the Old School body on the same question of slavery. Dr. Charles Read of Richmond said: The Old School Assembly has behaved well on the subject of slavery hitherto. But it is only from policy, not principle. It will soon be treating Southern Old School men as our Assembly has been treating us.¹ Some old war horses, too, could not forget their former hostilities. A few leaders who were unsound in doctrine, for that reason opposed uniting with the Old School. The Old School men were, moreover, cold and distant in bearing towards these perplexed New School brethren.

¹ Dr. Dabney's letter, September 30, 1895.

Such men as Dr. R. J. Breckenridge were insulting to the New School men who approached them on the subject of Union. The strongest antagonist of union in the convention was Dr. Boyd of Winchester. Says Mr. Tucker: "There was a strong sentiment in the direction of union, but the views presented with great ability by my old pastor and kinsman, the Rev. A. H. H. Boyd, D.D. in which he declared that with his views it would be impossible for him to unite with the Old School Church had great effect on the body, and the determination to secede from the Northern New School Church and to form a Synod of the South was determined upon."¹

After a full and free discussion the following platform was adopted by the Convention :

"Whereas all acts, resolutions, and testimonies of past General Assemblies, and especially of the actions of the last General Assembly, whereby suspicions and doubts of the good standing and equal rights and privileges of slaveholding members of the Church, or imputations and charges against their Christian character, have been either implied or expressed, are contrary to the example and teaching of Christ and of his Apostles, and are a violating of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.

"And whereas the relation of master and servant, *in itself considered*, or further than the relative duties arising therefrom, and slavery as an institution of the state, do not properly belong to the Church judicatories as subjects for discussion and inquiry.

"And whereas in the judgment of this Convention, there is no prospect for the cessation of this agitation of slavery in the General Assembly so long as there are slave holders in connection with the Church; therefore :

"*Resolved, 1:* That we recommend to the Presbyteries in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America to withdraw from said body.

"*Resolved, 2:* That in the judgment of this Convention nothing can be made the basis for discipline which is not specifically referred to in the constitution as crime or heresy.

¹ J. R. Tucker, private letter marked Lexington, Va., October 8, 1895.

“*Resolved, 3:* That the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has no power to pronounce a sentence of condemnation on a lower judicatory, or on individuals for any cause unless they have been brought before the Assembly in the way prescribed by the constitution.

“*Resolved, 4:* That the Convention recommend to all the Presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church which are opposed to the agitation of slavery in the highest judicatory of the Church to appoint delegates in the proportion prescribed by our Form of Government for the appointment of commissioners to the Assembly, to meet at Knoxville, Tenn., on the third Thursday in May, 1858, for the purpose of organizing a general Synod, under the name of ‘The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.’¹

“*Resolved, 5:* That the members of this convention adhere to and abide by the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, as containing the system of doctrines taught in the Holy Scriptures; and that we adhere to the Form of Government and Book of Discipline of said Church.”²

During the succeeding months the Synods and Presbyteries in the South, for the most part, acted upon the recommendation of the convention. The Synod of Virginia, for instance, at its meeting in Washington in the fall of 1857, passed the following resolutions, viz.:

“That the Synod of Virginia approve, as a whole, of the Resolutions adopted by the Convention of a portion of our Church, which lately met in Richmond, Va. And that we will cordially co-operate in the organization of the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church which is to meet in Knoxville, Tenn., on the first Thursday in April next.”³

In further pursuance of the Convention’s recommendations commissioners appointed by a number of Presbyteries met in the Second Presbyterian Church of Knoxville on

¹ Dr. J. D. Mitchell of Lynchburg, was advocating the use of the term Synod instead of *Assembly* as the name of the highest court of the Prospective Body as early as July, 1857. Private letter to Dr. A. H. H. Boyd, July 16, 1857.

² Alexander, *Digest*, p. 404. *Cp. The United Synod and the State of the Country*, pp. 6, 7.

³ Written Records of the Synod of Virginia, p. 325.

April 1, 1858, and after a sermon by the Rev. Dr. J. D. Mitchell, of Lynchburg, Virginia, proceeded to constitute the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church.

There were twenty-one commissioners in attendance, from twelve Presbyteries, located in four different States. Among the more prominent ministers were the Revs. A. H. H. Boyd, D.D., Charles H. Read, D.D., J. D. Mitchell, and Frederick A. Ross, D.D.

Dr. Boyd was not behind the foremost of them in talent, culture, and Christian character. He had been born to an inheritance of one hundred thousand dollars. He had fine political prospects. All these he sacrificed for the ministry, in which he most liberally used his fortune, giving freely to various objects.¹ He had trained himself not only by study at home but by a course of study abroad. And such was the sprightliness, acuteness, balance, and vigor of his mind that he was regarded as the best equipped debater in either Church on theological topics.² He possessed also moral intrepidity in the highest degree. Dr. Charles Read was a fine ecclesiastic, an instructive preacher, a vigorous writer, and an affable gentleman. Dr. Mitchell was best known for his evangelistic work. Dr. Frederick A. Ross was brilliant, but erratic, widely known but not influential in his Church relations, without power as an ecclesiastic or a theologian.

Dr. Read was elected the Moderator of this first United Synod.

After the election of the other necessary officers a motion was adopted that this body should be styled, "The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." This act was followed almost immediately by one declaring, "That this United Synod do adhere to and abide by the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and that we adhere to the Form of Government, and Book of Discipline of said Church."³ Later on steps

¹ Rev. P. B. Price, letter marked Buchanan, Dec. 10, 1895.

² Hon. J. R. Tucker, letter marked Lexington, Va., Oct. 8, 1895.

³ *Minutes of the United Synod*, 1858, p. 5.

were taken to make the slight changes in the Standards rendered necessary by the chosen name of the Supreme Court of the Church just setting up; and to increase the size of the United Synod by changing the numerical basis of representation—one ministerial commission to every six ministers in the Presbyteries.¹

Among the most important acts of this Synod was the adoption of a *declaration of principles* which set forth the reasons for withdrawing from the General Assembly and forming a separate ecclesiastical body, and which were, in their judgment, “in accordance with the Word of God, and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and essential to the peace, unity, and permanent prosperity of the Presbyterian Church in this land.” The substance of the Declaration is as follows:

1. They declare their agreement in and approbation of the standards of faith, polity, and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States; and they state in what sense they adopt the Confession of Faith, viz.: That of “the Adopting Act of 1729.”

2. They assert that it is a fundamental principle of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, “That no judicatory, minister, or private member, can be censured, condemned, or excluded from Church privileges” without a process of trial such as is prescribed in the Constitution.

3-5. They affirm that according to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church the General Assembly is an advisory and judicial body, and has no legislative power in the proper acceptation of the term; and that, therefore, this United Synod “disclaims the right to legislate or make laws upon any subject that will be binding upon the lower judicatories, or upon any portion of the Presbyterian Church,” that “Presbyterians profess to be governed by *Constitutional Law* as it is developed in the Confession of Faith, and not by the opinion of a Presbytery, or a Session, or a Synod, or General Assembly, further than they act in a judicial capacity with respect to matters distinctly

¹ *Minutes of the United Synod*, 1858, p. 13.

referred to in the said Confession ” ; that “ a departure from this principle, and the recognition of the right of an Ecclesiastical judicatory to decide what is heresy or crime, when there is no allusion in the Confession of Faith to that which is so regarded, would be tantamount to making the judicatory, instead of the Confession of Faith, the standard of truth and morality, and as the decision of one judicatory cannot bind another, there might be as many different opinions in reference to the supposed heresy or crime, as there are judicatories in the Church ; that “ The United Synod, therefore, deny the right of any judicatory of the Presbyterian Church to make anything the subject of discipline ” which is not made so by the standards taken according to the “ manifest intent ” of the framers.

6. They maintain that “ as slaveholding or the relation between master and slave, is not referred to in the Standards either directly or indirectly as an offence, it cannot *in itself considered* in any case be made the basis of discipline in the Presbyterian Church.”

7. They declare that it is usurpation of authority for any court to make slaveholding a bar to Communion.

8. That as Jesus Christ and his apostles did not intimate that slaveholding was sinful and did not remove slaveholders from the Church by legislation or by testifying against it ; and further that as the system of slavery is an institution of the State,¹ the discussion or agitation of slavery in the judicatories of the Church, except so far as respects the moral and religious duties growing out of the relation of master and slave, is inappropriate to said judicatories ; and is to be excluded from the Church courts.

9. They invite Presbyterians *from every section of the Union* to cast in their lot with them.²

In response to recommendations of the Richmond Convention that the Synod when formed and duly organized should invite the General Assembly (O. S.) to a fraternal

¹ *Minutes of the United Synod*, 1858, pp. 8 *et seq.*

² *The United Synod and the State of the Country*, pp. 7-10, and *Alexander's Digest*, p. 405.

conference on the subject of Union between itself and the Old School Church, the Synod appointed the Rev. Dr. C. H. Read and the Rev. M. M. Marshall to visit New Orleans and to confer with a committee of the Old School Assembly, in the event of that body's appointing one for the purpose, with reference to a union of the two bodies.¹ But for reasons to be indicated in the sequel that action found little favor in the Old School Assembly.

This Synod also took steps looking to obtaining from the Legislature of Tennessee a suitable charter in order to secure to itself "all the rights and immunities possessed by the General Assembly in the United States."²

It recommended "to the Presbyteries the necessity for a Theological Seminary to be under its care," leaving the Presbyteries themselves to determine "through the Synod all things pertaining thereto."³ It appointed permanent committees to take charge of its educational work and its work of church erection; and it established a "Board of Missions" to conduct its foreign missionary interests, and to "*sustain missions amongst our slaves.*"

At this time there were already in existence in the Synod of Virginia "a domestic missionary board, styled the "Domestic Missionary Society of Hanover and Piedmont Presbyteries, and also a Committee of Foreign Missions, both actually and successfully carrying on missionary work in their respective fields. These agencies had each expressed a desire to become organs of the United Synod. Accordingly the Synod erected "a Board of Missions to consist of all the members of the Board of Domestic Missions of Hanover and Piedmont Presbyteries, and of the Committee of Foreign Missions, and of one minister and ruling elder from each Presbytery in the connection." This Committee was to be styled "*The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Board of the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.*"

¹ Alexander's *Digest*, p. 405. *Minutes United Synod*, 1858, pp. 14, 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

The Executive Committee of the Board was to consist of the members of the former Presbyterial Board and of the old Committee on Foreign Missions. Further measures were taken looking to securing the united action of the Church in mission work.

Thus the new Church equipped itself for work along with other bodies of God's people. Its beginning was modest, but not unworthy.

CHAPTER V.

THE GROWTH OF THE SYNOD AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS SEVERAL AGENCIES DURING THE PERIOD OF SEPARATE EXISTENCE.

BEFORE the meeting of the United Synod, in 1859, two other Presbyteries were ready for reception into the body. The minutes of that year, accordingly, show that the Synods and Presbyteries embraced in the United Synod were as follows:

I. Synod of Virginia—Presbyteries: Winchester, District of Columbia (?) Hanover, Piedmont.

II. Synod of Tennessee—Presbyteries: Union, Holston, Kingston, and New River.

III. Synod of Mississippi—Presbyteries: North Alabama, Clinton, Lexington South, Newton, Texas, Osage.

The Synod of the South had in connection with itself at this time 108 ministers, 187 churches, 8 licentiates, 27 candidates for the ministry, and 10,877 communicants.¹ In 1861 it had in connection with it 121 ministers, 199 churches, 4 licentiates, 18 candidates for the ministry, and 11,581 communicants. It continued to enjoy a measure of growth in 1862, but the conditions of the Church's environments—in which war was stalking furiously—forbade any rapid progress. In 1864 there were about 120 ministers, 190 churches, 12,000 communicants.

In 1859 an important change was made in the Board of Missions. Its members were reduced to eighteen, five of

¹ *Minutes of United Synod.*, 1859, p. 90. The figures as stated in the Minutes are larger, owing to counting the Presbytery of the District of Columbia, which never joined the United Synod.

whom should constitute a quorum, and one third of whom should go out of office annually but be eligible for reëlection. The Board was thus reduced to a more efficient size and it was properly subordinated to the Church. It continued while possible to support the one Foreign Missionary of the Synod—Mr. Kalopothakes. He had been sent two years before by the Virginia Committee on Foreign Missions. As time passed, and owing to the fortunes of war it became impossible for the Board to care for Mr. Kalopothakes, he was committed to the American and Foreign Christian Union. The Rev. P. B. Price, of Richmond, Va., remained the devoted Secretary of the Board.

In addition to aiding candidates in securing an education, the Church gave attention to efforts to establish educational institutions. Maryville College was turned over to the United Synod by the Synod of Tennessee in 1859. And the next year the Rev. J. J. Robinson, D.D., its president, was appointed financial agent.

Steps were taken in 1859, also, for the founding of a Theological Seminary. The Seminary was to be located in the "vicinity of the University of Virginia." One hundred thousand dollars were to "be raised for the purpose of providing the necessary buildings and library, and of endowing not less than three professorships, each professorship to have an endowment of not less than \$25,000.¹ The Synod elected a Board of Directors, a Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, and ordered its Board of Directors "to elect a professor of Ecclesiastical History and Biblical Literature as soon as the endowment fund subscribed" should amount to \$50,000.² The Rev. Jos. C. Stiles, D.D., was chosen the Professor of Theology. In 1860 over \$70,000 had been subscribed and partly paid in. After the Union with the Old Church South, such money as had been paid toward the Theological Seminary was for the most part diverted to Hampden Sidney College.

¹ *Minutes of United Synod*, 1859, pp. 54, 55.

² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNION WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA.

WE have already seen that in the Richmond Convention there was a strong party of the New School in favor of union with the Old School Church of the country; and that the Constituting Synod at Knoxville, in 1858, sent a committee to the Old School Assembly then in session at New Orleans, to confer with a similar committee of the Old School, if such should be appointed, concerning organic union. "This committee was directed to propose certain terms as indispensable to an honorable union on the part of the United Synod. These terms were seven in number, being in the main a repetition of the position above given in the Declaration of Principles." One term asked was that both bodies agree that it is consistent with the requirements of the Westminster Confession to receive said Confession according to the Adopting Act of 1729. Another was that the examinations should be relaxed in the reception of ministers from the United Synod.¹

The Assembly appointed the Rev. C. Van Rensalaer, D.D., the Rev. B. M. Palmer, D.D., and the Rev. Mr. Cunningham a committee to meet and confer with the committee of the United Synod.

This Assembly's committee subsequently laid before the body the "terms of union" submitted by the United Synod, and also its proposal to establish mutual correspondence between the two bodies in case union should not be determined on, with the recommendation that they should

¹ Alexander's *Digest*, p. 405.

be put upon the docket. This was done. When the matter came before the body for consideration, the Rev. R. J. Breckenridge submitted a paper which was unanimously adopted. In this paper the Assembly said that the official papers from the United Synod did not afford a basis of conference on which it was able to see that there was any prospect of advancing the interest of Christ's Kingdom, in general, or those of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, or those of the United Synod in particular. The Assembly further expressed itself as thinking that the acceptance of terms would appear to involve a condemnation of itself and the renunciation of the rich and peculiar favor of God upon it in the matters which had led to the secession of the New School body from it twenty years before.¹ There are with individuals often reasons for a given course of actions which they will not give, as well as reasons which they do give. And individuals are not peculiar in this respect. Corporate bodies are often quite as much influenced by unnamed reasons as by those offered. Such was the case of the Old School Church in the present instance. She was not only tenacious of reputation for strict construction in theology, she had in the main kept clear of partisan and Un-Biblical discussion of the relation of slavery. She did not propose to excite such discussions at once by taking into her own communion a body with such a history as the United Synod had.

After the split of the Old School Church in 1861, on occasion of the Spring Resolutions, one barrier, therefore, to union between Old School South and New School South was gone. The Old School South felt too, her loneliness, albeit she was the greatest body of Presbyterians in what were then the Confederate States; and in her first Assembly, December, 1861, expressed her earnest desire for a cordial union with all those who agreed with her in doctrinal principles and Church polity.² Southern Old School men had never

¹ *Minutes General Assembly (O. S.)*, 1858, pp. 289, 290. *Cp. Alexander's Digest*, p. 405. *Minutes of United Synod*, 1859, pp. 46, 47.

² *Minutes General Assembly, South*, pp. 36, 37.

been suspicious of any widespread doctrinal unsoundness in the Southern segment of the New School body. A few New School ministers were known to hold distinctive New School doctrines, or at least doctrines distinctly hostile to Old School Theology, and freely tolerated in the New School party. But these men might have been counted on the fingers of one hand, perhaps. Dr. J. D. Mitchell preached now Arminianism and now Calvinism. He was very inconsistent; but without doubt believed that his theology differed from the Old School. In a letter to Dr. A. H. H. Boyd of Winchester, Va.,¹ he referred to his Church's having for its doctrinal basis an *unlimited atonement*.² Dr. A. H. H. Boyd held a view of the atonement akin to that taught by Dr. John Brown of the Secession Church in Scotland—a view that the atonement was for all in such a sense as that all *may have life*.³ He was, says Dr. Dabney, “frankly a semi-Pelagian.” To anticipate, when the time came for his Synod to discuss the Articles of Union between the United Synod and the Presbyterian Church Old School South, Dr. Boyd said *substantially*: “The articles are thoroughly Calvinistic; though stated with moderation they do not express my theology. But you ought to accept them and join the Southern Church Old School. The difficulties of your position dictate such a course. I know that I am in a small minority, even in my own United Synod. I do not wish to hamper the Synod by obtruding my peculiar views.”⁴ When Dr. Frederick A. Ross taught Arminianism it was probably from lack of

¹ The letter is marked Lynchburg, Va., June 9, 1857, and is the property of Mr. E. Holmes Boyd, Winchester, Va.

² The Rev. Prof. Dr. C. R. Vaughan says that Dr. Mitchell did not know what he believed, that sometimes his preaching was so Arminian that his New School elders would remonstrate with him; that on such occasions Dr. Mitchell would express his surprise that he had been preaching anything but good Calvinism; would propose to make reparation on the first opportunity, and would on his next appointment retract everything Arminian and preach a very good Calvinistic discourse. The truth is that Dr. Mitchell was a man of feeling and impulse rather than intellect.

³ See *Central Presbyterian*, May 5, 1864.

⁴ Letter from R. L. Dabney, marked Victoria, Texas, Sept. 30, 1895.

accurate knowledge. He did not know what he was doing ; he seems to have regarded himself as a Calvinist.¹ The few other men who in its early years had been known for teaching New Theology were Northerners destined in the early years of the war to betake themselves North. This was the history of Dr. Arthur Mitchell of the Third Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Va. He was a disciple of Dr. Edwards A. Park of Andover.² But in 1861 he had gone back North. Other instances might be given of the flight of migratory birds to their Northern home. Thus the Church had been reduced to theological homogeneity of the Calvinistic type, with the exceptions named, and possibly a few others more obscure.

Indeed the New School people in the South seem never to have been generally charged with a prevalent leaning toward New School doctrines. They went with the New School party at the split of 1838 because of their friendship for New School men ; because of the peculiar ecclesiastical moves of the Old School men, 1837-1838 ; and because of the extreme and unjustifiable representations made of the New School party by such men as Drs. Plummer and Breckenridge. The supposed wrongs of the New School party largely swelled their seceding ranks. Between 1861 and 1863 mutual confidence of the two bodies in one another grew. Especially among the "laity" and ruling elders desire for union was enkindled into a strong flame. Such men as John Randolph Tucker and Edwin Edmunds among the New School body ; and J. T. L. Preston of Lexington, Va., and T. J. Kirkpatrick, of Lynchburg, Va., among the Old School, began to agitate for union. Such was the source of that desire for union which culminated in 1864 successfully.³

In 1863, the Assembly in session at Columbia was over-
tured to take such steps as its wisdom might suggest "to
bring about a union between the Old and New School Pres-

¹ R. L. Dabney, letter marked Victoria, Texas, Sept. 30, 1895.

² P. B. Price, letter marked Buchanan, Va., Dec. 10, 1895.

³ *Minutes Assembly (O. S.) South*, 1863, p. 137.

byterians in the Confederate States,"¹ In response the Assembly recognized the fact that union between these bodies "had engaged the earnest attention of a large number of our ministers and people, especially in the regions in which the respective parties are brought into most frequent contact with each other." It expressed its sense that probably the time for union had approached near, and that owing to their common afflictions both the parties concerned had been brought into that condition in which union could be profitably discussed. Finally, with a view of ascertaining whether such a union could be formed upon any basis that "should be satisfactory to both parties" and "should offer reasonable grounds of hope for permanent harmony and co-operation," it appointed a committee to confer on the subject with any committee that should be appointed by the United Synod, and report the result of such a conference to the next Assembly.²

The gentlemen appointed on this Committee were the Rev. R. L. Dabney, D.D., Rev. J. N. Waddel, D.D., Rev. Wm. Brown, D.D., Rev. J. B. Ramsey, D.D., Rev. E. T. Baird, D.D., Col. J. T. L. Preston, and F. N. Watkins.³

In like manner the United Synod of 1863 was overtured and memorialized to take steps looking toward union with the Old School Church South; and the Synod appointed a committee "to arrange for such a formal union of the Presbyterian Churches of the South, upon the basis of the Confession of Faith, as in its spirit and terms" should be "honorable and acceptable and as in its provisions and arrangements" should "promise the enlarged prosperity of Christ's Kingdom within our respective bounds," and to report to the Synod the results of the fraternal conference at its next annual meeting. The members of this Committee were the Rev. Joseph C. Stiles, D.D., Rev. Charles H. Read, D.D., Rev. J. D. Mitchell, D.D., Rev. J. J. Robinson, D.D., and Elder J. F. Johnston.

¹ *Cp.* Col. Preston's speech (in *Central Presbyterian*, Nov. 10, 1864).

² *Minutes Gen. Assembly, South*, 1863, p. 137 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

In July, 1863, the committees of the bodies met in Lynchburg, Va. After prayer the two committees were informally resolved into one interlocutory committee. For a little while there was a constrained silence. Then Dr. R. L. Dabney rose with "shoulders shrugged up" and "both hands in his breeches pockets," "trying to look as much like a clod-hopper," says Dr. McGuffey, "as he could." He began: "Well brethren, as nobody seems ready, I would like to try to talk a little." He then went on, continued Dr. McGuffey, "and made the most adroit speech possible and one of the best I ever heard from him." Dr. J. C. Stiles then rose and said that if the magnificent justice outlined by Dr. Dabney prevailed in his General Assembly, every obstacle to union was removed; and so forth.

The discussion which followed was conciliatory. And as a result the two committees concurred in recommending to the Southern Assembly and the United Synod a plan of union embracing two great features, viz.: 1st, A brief doctrinal declaration clearing up the supposed differences of doctrine on the essential points of Calvinistic and Covenant Theology.¹ 2d, A statement of a plan for consolidating the Synods and Presbyteries and such congregations as might desire it without disturbing any property rights, pastoral relations, or ministerial standing in the united Presbyteries.

That Dr. Dabney wrote the doctrinal article was enough to give assurance that it was characterized by a strong and thoroughgoing Calvinism. In a certain quarter of the Church, however, no small opposition was made to it. The editor of the *Southern Presbyterian* waged hot war against it as containing a mass of heresy. He threw open his columns, however, to Dr. Dabney, who ably and adequately vindicated the article as free from heresy.

The Article in question read as follows:

"The General Assembly and the United Synod declare that they continue to sincerely receive and adopt the Con-

¹ This doctrinal statement passed easily through the Committee's hands. It teaches clearly the kind of Calvinism taught in the Westminster standards and tacitly repudiates that false Calvinism which offends by extreme statement.

fession and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures and approve of its government and discipline.

“Inasmuch as some have been supposed to hold the system of doctrine and Church order in different senses, the General Assembly and the United Synod do further adopt the following *Declaration*, touching former grounds of debate, in order to manifest our hearty agreement, to remove suspicions and offences, to restore full confidence between brethren, and to honor God’s saving truth.

“1. Concerning the *Fall of Man and Original Sin*, we faithfully hold, with the Confession of Faith, that our first parents, by their first act of disobedience, ‘fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties of soul and body; that they being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed to all their posterity, descended from them by ordinary generation; and that from this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.’

“This imputation of the guilt of this sin of our first parents, we hold in this sense: that thereby their posterity are judicially condemned by God on account of that sin, and so begin their existence in that corruption of nature and subjection to wrath into which our first parents fell by their first sin. And we mean that the guilt of their sin which is imputed, is, according to the constant usage of theology, ‘obligation to punishment,’ and not the sinfulness of the act itself, which latter cannot by imputation, be the quality of any other than the personal agents.

“Touching the moral corruption of Adam’s posterity, we believe that it is entire, and also native and original; that all actual transgressions do proceed from it as their source, and not merely from imitation of evil example as the Pelagians vainly affirm, and that this native tendency to sin is itself morally evil, deserving of God’s righteous wrath, and requiring, both in infants and adults, the righteousness of Christ to justify from its guilt, as well as His regenerating grace to overcome it. We do also believe that because of this original corruption men have wholly lost all ability of will to choose spiritual good for its own sake, or to regenerate, convert, or sanctify their own hearts. But we equally reject the error of those who assert that the sinner has no

power of any kind for the performance of duty. This error strips the sinner of his moral agency and accountableness, and introduces the heresy of either Antinomianism or Fatalism. The true doctrine of the Scripture as stated in our Confession, keeps constantly in view the moral agency of man, the contingency of second causes, the use of means, the voluntariness of all the creature's sins and his utter inexcusableness therein. It teaches that while the Fall has impaired and darkened all the faculties of man's soul, and inclined his free-will to evil only, it has not destroyed in him any capacity of understanding or conscience, whereby the holy creature knows and serves God, and on which free-agency and responsibility depend. And touching God's permission of the entrance of sin among His creatures, we reject the doctrine of those who assert that He had no power efficiently to prevent it in consistency with man's freedom and responsibility, and we believe that God permitted the introduction of sin for wise and good reasons which He has not revealed.

"2. Concerning *Regeneration*, we hold that this act doth essentially consist, not of a change of the creature's purpose by himself as to sin and holiness, but a change of the dispositions of souls from which such purposes do proceed, and in which change all regenerating power is of the Holy Spirit. But yet all the acts of soul, wherein the sinner turneth from his sins unto God and holiness, are by the instrumentality of God's truth, and are as rational and free as those which are performed wholly of his natural powers.

"3. Concerning the *Atonement* of Jesus Christ, we hold that He, being very God and very man in one person, was our Substitute under the Law; that the guilt of men's sins was imputed to Him, that His sufferings were borne as the penalty of that guilt, and were a vicarious yet true satisfaction therefor to the justice of God, and without this, God's perfection would forbid the pardon of any sin. This Atonement, we believe, though by temporary sufferings, was, by reason of the infinite glory of Christ's person, full and sufficient for the guilt of the whole world, and is to be freely and sincerely offered to every creature, inasmuch as it leaveth no other obstacle to the pardon of all men under the Gospel, save the enmity and unbelief of those who voluntarily reject it. Wherefore on the one hand we reject the opinion of those who teach that the atonement was so limited and equal to the guilt of the elect only, that if God had designed to redeem more, Christ must have suffered

more or differently. And on the other hand we hold that God the Father doth efficaciously apply this redemption through Christ's purchase, to all those to whom it was His eternal purpose to apply it and to no others.

"4. Concerning the believer's *Justification*, we hold that Christ not only bore the penalty of their guilt, but fully obeyed the law as their Substitute; and that the righteousness of His suffering and obedience, imputed unto them that believe, is the sole ground for which God pardoneth all their sins, and accepteth them as righteous in His sight. And we account the agency of the believer's faith in this justification to be only instrumental and not meritorious.

"5. Holding these views of the doctrine of Grace, we believe that the Church is dependent, under God, for the revival of her spiritual life, and the implanting of it in sinners, on the work of the Holy Ghost through the truth. Wherefore, we hold that the proper means for promoting revivals are the labours of holy living and teaching through the Word and Sacraments; and on the other hand we testify, from our observation, and the Word of God, that it is dangerous to ply the disordered heart of the sinner with a disproportionate address to the imagination and passions, to withhold from his awakened mind Scriptural instruction, and to employ with him such novel and startling measures as must tend to impart to his religious excitement a character rather noisy, shallow, and transient, than deep, solid, and Scriptural. But on the other hand, we value, cherish, and pray for true revivals of religion; and wherever they bring forth the permanent fruits of holiness in men's hearts, rejoice in them as God's work, notwithstanding the mixture of human imperfections. And we consider it the solemn duty of ministers to exercise a Scriptural warmth, affection, and directness in appealing to the understandings, hearts, and consciences of men.

"6. We hold that God has organized His *Church Visible*, to be 'the pillar and ground of truth,' 'for the gathering and perfecting of the saints in this life to the end of the world'; that hence it is the duty of every member and officer of the Church to further this work by his personal labors in his appropriate sphere, and by stated oblations of his worldly goods unto God; and that their common and concerted efforts for this end (which is the proper end of the Church in this world) are by God committed to the Presbyters and Deacons thereof, whom He has appointed as her officers. Whence it follows that the associated and organized acts of

the people of God for the conversion of the world unto Christ, are the proper functions of these officers, or of Church-courts constituted of them. Those who seek the world's conversion by societies of voluntary and human origin, distinct from the branches of Christ's visible Church, therefore ought not to ask the officers and courts of the Church to relinquish these labours to them. We bid them God-speed in all their sincere efforts to diffuse the true word of God, and we concede to the members of our churches full liberty to extend to them such personal aid as their Christian consciences approve."¹

In connection with the report of the committee the Rev. E. T. Baird, who was not able to attend the meeting in Lynchburg, and who did not see his way clear to signing the report, addressed a communication to the General Assembly. In this letter he says that "he believes that in probably three different places the language is liable to misapprehension, and might become the cause of trouble among ourselves hereafter; and that he does not believe that any series of doctrinal articles could be framed which would not be obnoxious to the same objection;—that moreover he felt that the Assembly had no right to make anything the basis of union but the Constitution itself."²

The discussion in the General Assembly over the proposed terms of union deserves to rank with the foremost debates in the history of our Church. Dr. Adger led the opposition. He had for his second the distinguished and eloquent Dr. B. M. Palmer. They were opposed by Dr. Dabney supported by Drs. Hoge and Kirkpatrick, *et al.* Dabney spoke for three hours and won for himself a name far above his previous reputation. The two hours which he spent in the defence of the doctrinal statement drew forth for him the most enthusiastic admiration of the body.

After this discussion, however, the Assembly decided to omit the doctrinal propositions on the following grounds, viz.: That believing the approval of these propositions by the Committees of Conference and extensively among both

¹ *Distinctive Principles*, p. 37, ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

bodies, has served a valuable purpose, by presenting satisfactory evidence of such harmony and soundness of doctrinal views as may ground an honorable union, the Assembly does yet judge that it is most prudent to unite on the basis of our existing standards only, inasmuch as no actual necessity for other declarations of belief in order to a happy union now exists.¹

The second part of the plan for union was modified, "so as in every case to require the reception of the Presbyteries under the care of the United Synod into the Synods of this Assembly, so as to preserve the undoubted succession of the latter."² After further but unessential modifications the terms of union proposed by the Committee were adopted by the Assembly, the vote being 53 for and 7 against, including Drs. Adger and Palmer, against their adoption.

The United Synod was to have met at New Dublin Church, Pulaski, Va., May, 1864. But owing to a Federal raid in that region at the time it could not convene. Thereupon the Stated Clerk called for a meeting of the Synod to be held in Lynchburg, Va., on the last Thursday of August, 1864. The Conference Committee submitted at that meeting the plan of union drawn up by the Committee in joint session recently in the same city. The plan of union as amended and adopted by the General Assembly in May, 1864, was unanimously adopted August 26, 1864. Thereafter the Synod ceased to act independently—ceased to exist as a separate body.

The reunions that followed of Presbytery with Presbytery, and Synod with Synod, were among the most cheering events in the, to the South, dreary year of 1864. At the reunion of the two Synods of Virginia in October, 1864, one of the speakers said: "When we look at the circumstances of the country, as the tide of war rushes by, as all without us is turmoil—here all is peace. I doubt if there is anywhere in the Confederacy as much peace. Blessed be God for it."³

¹ *Minutes of General Assembly (S. O. S.)*, 1864, p. 273.

² *Distinctive Principles*, p. 46; *Minutes of General Assembly*, 1864, p. 271.

³ Colonel J. T. L. Preston, *Central Presbyterian*, November 10, 1864.

CHAPTER VII.

NO TRACE OF A NEW SCHOOL PARTY IN THE REUNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SOUTH.

PRIOR to the meeting of the General Assembly in 1864, Synods and Presbyteries in both the Churches had adopted the proposed plan of union sent forth by the Committees of Conference. The great mass of the Synod of the South had thus previously expressed its adoption of the proposed plan including the doctrinal article.

It was safely predicted that a body which had intelligently embraced that article would prove to be Calvinistic by the test of subsequent history. Sagacious Old School men comforted themselves, too, with the thought that all the theological institutions would be in the hands of Old School men. Dr. Boyd was to have been a professor in the Seminary which the New School men had been on the point of founding near the University of Virginia. With such a man in a theological seminary trouble to the Church would have been inevitable. But upon union all thought of a separate theological school in Virginia was abandoned. Sagacious Old School men generally saw that all students for the ministry would pass through Old School Seminaries; and hence foretold that upon the passing away of the advocates of the New School doctrines their places would be supplied by men sound in the faith.

The subsequent history of the United Church shows that these predictions were well grounded. Since their reception into the Old School Church the New School men have never manifested a tendency to draw together and keep together. It is impossible for a man of the present generation to distinguish between New School men and Old School men

among his elder brethren, save by the aid of history. And when the investigator has discovered a New School man and mentions the fact to him, his first remark is apt to be: "Yes; but I never had any sympathy with the New School Theology and Polity. My being a New School man is explained on other grounds."

So far as can be seen nothing but good has come of the union of the New and Old School, South. It was a union safe to the Old School and highly honorable to both parties. It has been the occasion of great and multiform blessings to Presbyterianism in the South.