

# JOURNAL

OF THE

## PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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### THE DEBT OF THE PRESENT TO THE PAST: ITS PAYMENT.

#### THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

BY THE PRESIDENT,  
**HENRY C. MCCOOK, D. D., Sc. D.,**  
January 10, 1901.

Can the Presbyterian Historical Society be commended to the serious consideration of those who have money, time and influence to give for the advancement of the cause of Christ, and the perpetuation of that testimony for which the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches have always stood? We may answer unhesitatingly, "Yes."

#### I.

##### OUR OBJECTS.

1. The Presbyterian Historical Society stands for the *Justice of God*, and for the attribute of justice in man as communicated to him by his Creator. It is an act of justice to the worthy that their memory be kept green. Not, indeed, that they asked or had even thought that posterity would do them that justice. The pioneers, men and women, those noble and most beneficent servants of God's Church in America, were unconscious, for the most part,

The  
Society  
Stands  
for  
Justice.

( 1 )

THE  
Presbyterian Church in the United States.

A Paper read before the Presbyterian Historical Society, in Philadelphia,  
April 16, 1900.

By THOMAS CARY JOHNSON.

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*Gentlemen of the Presbyterian Historical Society:*

BRETHREN,—You have invited us to speak of “the characteristics of the particular church” to which we belong, “in its origin in the United States and its development and its present status, and what it stands for, *i. e.*, what justifies its denominational existence.” You have asked that all this be treated “with particular reference to the other sister Churches embraced in this society, so as to differentiate correctly the Church represented.”

In response to this request we propose to speak of the *origin, the distinctive features at the start, the growth, including the expansion of its agencies, the constitutional changes, the relations to other bodies, civil and ecclesiastical, the present distinctive features, the principles for which our Church stands, and the grounds on which it justifies its independent existence.* But of all very briefly, as our time has been limited.

This subject is not one with which we ourselves would have chosen to come into your midst. We had preferred to come with one in which we all have a common interest, and for which we have a common love. But *you* having indicated this subject as the one for us, we take for granted that you expect an honest and a manly treatment; that you expect the rotund truth so far as we can give it; that you wish us to put the

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Church before you as it thinks it is, and as it is, so far as such a thing is possible, even though some of its views run sharply counter to your own. We take for granted also, however, that you expect this account to be spoken gently and in love; and that we shall try to do.

Without more in the way of preliminaries, we at once proceed to our sketch, and in the order foreshadowed.

## THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

### I. *The Origin of This Church.*

The chief European sources of the membership have been the English Presbyterians, the Dutch, the Germans, the Swiss, the Huguenots, the Scotch and the Scotch-Irish. Some of these came directly from Europe, and some immediately from the more Northern colonies, or States, as they came to be later. Indeed, the Southern Church is one in sources with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, of which it was a part till after the middle of the present century.

That great Church had, owing to the prevalence of latitudinarian views in the realms of ecclesiastical polity and theology, been divided in 1838 into two independent bodies, viz., the Old School Church and the New School Church. The New School Church, on account of its time-ghost teaching concerning slavery, suffered another division in 1857, the Southern segment, which refused to regard slave-holding as a sin, establishing the Synod of the South. The Old School retained its integrity and conservative tone till 1861. But in that year the Assembly, sitting at Philadelphia, adopted the Spring Resolutions, wherein it attempted, as Dr. Charles Hodge and his fifty-seven noble fellow-protestants said, "to decide the political question to what government the allegiance of Presbyterians was due," and "to make that decision a condition of membership in the church."

Largely in consequence of this course forty-seven Presbyteries in the then Confederate States of America, each for itself, dissolved connection with that Assembly during the summer of 1861; and on the fourth of December in that year their repre-

sentatives met in Augusta, Georgia, and formed the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, South.

This constituting Assembly did much to make itself memorable. It adopted the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as its own constitution. It sloughed off the unpresbyterian machinery of the Old Church by which that body had conducted its missionary and other church operations. It recognized the church itself as a Home and Foreign Missionary Society, and so forth. In a word, it saw in the church itself the sufficient and the God-appointed instrumentality for the evangelization of the world. It cast away the cumbrous, unscriptural and irresponsible boards of the mother church; and it set the church itself to do its own work, appointing executive committees to carry out its will. These committees of Foreign Missions, Domestic Missions, Education, and Publication, were to be immediately responsible to the General Assembly.

In a letter "to all the churches of Jesus Christ throughout the earth," written by the gifted Dr. James Henley Thornwell, this Assembly also stated the reasons for its separate existence. It asserted that the consequences of the proceedings on the part of the recent Philadelphia Assembly, its opening "the door for the worst passions of human nature in the deliberation of church courts," its admission of the passions of the forum into the halls of ecclesiastical debate, had justified separation, as well as the *de facto* existence of the Confederate States of America, within whose bounds they were. This letter also declared what were then believed to be the distinctive peculiarities of the New Church, a subject to which we will now give brief attention.

## II. *The Distinctive Features of This Church at the Start.*

The constituting Assembly made the claim in this letter of the following distinctive features of the new Church, viz., "Witnessing for the non-secular character of the church and the headship of Christ, or, in other words, for a strict adherence to the constitution," and "the complete organization of the church, obviating the necessity of boards and societies."

The Southern Church believed in 1861 that it is partial apos-

tasy for the Church of God to devote itself to other objects than the preaching of the gospel, the promotion of spiritual interests and enterprises, the gathering in and building up the body of Christ. It believed that God had established both church and State; that He had given to each its distinctive work, and that neither might intrude into the sphere of the other; that the church "had no right to construct or modify the government of the State," and "that the State had no right to frame a creed or polity for the church."

It believed that the church is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ; that its constitution is a divine revelation; that the church has in itself no proper legislative power; that it is the interpreter and servant of Christ; and that Christ is alone king in Zion.

It believed that the standards are approximately the true interpretation of the Scripture; that for that reason they have been received, and that the church must adhere to them; that it must be strict in its adherence to the standards.

It believed also that the church is amply sufficient to do the work of God in the world; that it must not think otherwise; that it must not attempt to frame agencies which in any sense should be substitutes for itself; that it must itself do the work God has imposed upon it; that it should not, for example, have great unwieldy, irresponsible, incorporated boards to do its mission work; that it must do that work itself; and should, therefore, have simple executive committees to take charge of the church's work during the intervals between the meeting of the Assembly, and report to it, and through it a regular court of the church, report to the whole church.

Thus the new organization looked upon itself as distinguished for witness to the spirituality of the church, the alone authority of Jesus therein, and as realizing more perfectly than the mother church, from which it had gone out, the ideal of the church set forth in the Scriptures. An unworthy son of this church, we may be pardoned for expressing the conviction that the dry light of history justifies these high claims.

"The Letter to the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth" in which they are made is one of the noblest apologies

to be found in ecclesiastical literature; and it was of a piece with the whole work of the Constituting Assembly.

### III. *The Growth of the Church and the Development of Its Agencies.*

The numerical growth of the church has been very rapid. Its 47 Presbyteries have become 77; its 700 ministers, 1,471; its 1,000 churches, 2,919; its 70,000 communicants, 221,022; its contributions to Home and Foreign Missions are more than four times as large; and it has kept pace in developing other branches of church enterprise. It has made this advance in spite of the exodus of about 10,000 colored communicants, who went for the most part to the Northern Presbyterian Church.

This growth is explained by: 1. The church's having taken into organic union with itself many smaller bodies of sound Presbyterians. Thus it took in "the Independent Presbyterian Church (1863), the United Synod of the South (1864), the Presbytery of Patapsco (1867), the Alabama Presbytery of the Associate Reformed Church about the same time, the Synod of Kentucky (1869), the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Kentucky (1870), and the Synod of Missouri (1874). The union with these churches brought in about 282 ministers, 490 or more churches, and 35,600 communicants."<sup>1</sup> 2. The energetic use of the evangelistic arm of the church's service. Particularly since 1866 presbyterial evangelists have been, in increasing numbers, set apart to preaching to the weak and destitute. In 1880 the Synod of Kentucky entered upon the pioneer enterprise of Synodical evangelism. Not less than eight or ten Synods have subsequently inaugurated some form of synodical work. Thus Christ has been widely preached and the church has grown. 3. The pastors and the people have been generally faithful and so preached Christ.

*The development of the church's agencies* has also been very gratifying. Foreign Missions had a large place in the heart of the church from the start. That place has steadily grown. Carrying this work as its opportunity and ability allowed till 1866, the church in that year began to plant new stations.

<sup>1</sup> Johnson's *Southern Presbyterians*, pp. 358, 359.

It has planted stations in China, Italy, the United States of Columbia, Brazil, Mexico, Greece, Japan, the Congo Free State, Corea, and Cuba. It has in its various missions at this time about 163 ordained and unordained missionaries; and can now look upon about 2,948 communicants in these fields, besides many hundreds of young people receiving Christian instruction, many native Christian preachers, teachers, and other evangelical workers, exerting an immeasurable influence on heathenism, predisposing it to hear Christianity.

Home Missions have also had a large place. The Executive Committee of Home Missions was originally called the Executive Committee of Domestic Missions. Owing to the preponderance of sustentation work in behalf of weak churches, which was made necessary by the war, the name of the committee was changed, in 1866, to that of Committee of Sustentation. By 1879 the church had begun to desire again aggressive evangelistic work on the part of this Executive Committee. Accordingly, in keeping with the projection to the front of this desire, the name of the committee was again changed to that of Home Missions.

The general objects for which the committee has labored are: 1. To aid feeble churches in support of their pastors and to secure a competency to every laboring minister; 2. To aid in the support of missionaries and evangelists; 3. To assist weak churches in obtaining suitable edifices in which to worship; 4. To assist laborers in getting from one field to another where they are without the means of doing this of themselves; 5. To raise and disburse an invalid fund.

The sustentation of weak churches has been a highly blessed work. The committee's evangelistic work has not been very successful. As the years have passed, an increasing number of Presbyteries and Synods have preferred to push their own evangelistic work. Hence, while the church has been extraordinarily active of late in evangelistic work in the home field, the Assembly's committee has done but little of the work. This is to be regretted. The plan of independent Synodical and Presbyterian work appeals more to selfish emulation and synodical and presbyterial ambition. It is apt to result in

expenditure where there is no sufficient promise, and non-expenditure in fields full of promise, in the newer and weaker Synods; and it is Independent rather than Presbyterian in tendency, and weakening to the common life of the great body.<sup>1</sup>

Missionary operations among the negroes were placed under the patronage of this committee by its original constitution. It continued to take oversight of the work till 1891, when the Executive Committee of Colored Evangelization was organized. The latter committee has, in its short life, displayed much zeal and good sense; and its work, chiefly the direction of the Tuskalooosa Institute for the education of colored ministers, has been greatly blessed. The committee has done a very helpful work in assisting weak congregations to secure suitable places of worship. At the bidding of the assemblies of 1885 and 1888 it established the Church Erection and Loan Fund, which has found favor with the people and steadily grown. In raising the much-needed Invalid Fund the committee's efforts have been attended by only very partial success.

The Cause of Education for the Ministry has been much talked of by the church. The Assembly's plan for securing an educated ministry, adopted in 1861, styled variously as "a beneficiary, or eleemosynary," or "stipendiary," plan has never been in universal esteem throughout the church. It has been modified and improved, especially by the Assemblies of 1866 and 1895, but still meets with detraction. It is a good scheme if faithfully carried out by the Presbyteries; but seems to be tolerated only because of the necessity of some such scheme. It is so poorly supported, or operated, that many deserving candidates suffer from want of needful funds.

The church has in successful operation the following theological seminaries: Union, in Virginia, founded in 1824;<sup>2</sup> Columbia, in South Carolina, established in 1828; Tuskalooosa Institute, in Alabama, founded in 1877; The Divinity School of the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Johnson's *Southern Presbyterians*, p. 337.

<sup>2</sup> In a sense Union Seminary began in 1812, as a department of Hampden-Sidney College, with Dr. Moses Hoge, President of the College, as the Professor of Theology.

Southwestern Presbyterian University, in Tennessee, organized in 1885; and the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, organized in 1893.

The following colleges are under the control of the church: The Southwestern Presbyterian University at Clarksville, Tenn., Central University in Kentucky, Westminster College in Missouri, Austin College in Texas, King College at Bristol, Tenn., the Arkansas College, and South Carolina College at Clinton, S. C., and many academies and other schools of high grade doing a beneficent work. Washington and Lee University and Hampden-Sidney College are under Presbyterian influence: so are many private schools of superior excellence.

The Assembly's Cause of Publication has never received a liberal support. In spite of this, and the financial distress into which the cause was carried in its early history, a great success has been achieved by the Assembly's committee under Dr. Hazen. In publishing, in selecting religious books and stamping them with its *imprimatur*, in making gratuitous distributions of literature, and in supporting colporteurs, the committee has done much. While making gratuitous distributions greater than the contributions, it has accumulated a capital of more than \$100,000 in value. Since 1875 this committee has had a separate charter of incorporation. It is a peculiarity of the Southern Presbyterian Church that "the several Executive Committees of the General Assembly, with the exception of those of Publication, and Foreign Missions since 1895, have no separate corporate existence. And with these exceptions the Board of Trustees of the Assembly hold all its property."

The journals of the church not under this committee's care but advocating the principles of the church and giving information concerning the church's work are: *The Central Presbyterian*, *The Christian Observer*, *The Presbyterian Standard*, *The Southern Presbyterian*, *The Southwestern Presbyterian*, *The Trans-Mississippi Presbyterian*, *The Quarterly*, *The Union Seminary Magazine*, *The Bible Student*, *The Missionary*, and others.

So much of the growth of the church and the expansion of its agencies.

IV. *The Constitutional Changes of the Church.*

In doctrine the church's movement has been, if any, to a more thorough-going Calvinism. This Calvinism is of the sub-lapsarian type—the type of the standards. This form of Calvinism is in common esteem amongst our rulers. Naturally, therefore, there has been no change in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms save in the single paragraph about marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Indeed, the church has made an arrangement for the amendment of these parts of her standards, making it more difficult to change them than in the mother church.

The changes in polity have been considerable, seeing that this body is still so young. They have sprung from a more solid conviction of the *jure divino* character of Presbyterianism. They have resulted in a clearer and more adequate statement of the ruling elder's rights and duties—given to him his real rights in the ordination of the minister, and made his presence necessary in order to a quorum of the Presbytery. They have given us a more thoroughly constitutional type of government in the church in thus making necessary the presence of two classes of representative elders in every one of our church courts above the Session.

The relations between the several courts, too, in the hierarchy have been so defined in the Constitution of the Southern Church as to give expression to a more constitutional type of government. These courts check one another better; power is so related to power that there is little danger of any arbitrary or unconstitutional measures being carried through.

The New Book of Church Order contains also a much more adequate and scriptural exposition of deacon's duties and relations; and it provides for *quasi* deaconesses, and thus furnishes a recognized and appropriate function in which good women can be employed with great effect. In providing them with this proper official outlet for their activity, it tends to keep them from desiring other offices in the church from which God has clearly debarred them.

V. *The Relations of the Church to Other Bodies, Civil and Ecclesiastical.*

In all its formal and well-considered acts from 1861 to the present it has maintained its non-secular character; it has held both in theory and practice that the Church and State are, of right, independent. During the war it did, indeed, wobble occasionally into political acts; but its falterings were transient inconsistencies, as its formal testimonies of the times abundantly indicate, and as its sorrow for these missteps, evinced by its implicit and explicit confessions in 1866, 1870, and 1876, show.

Of the cases of organic union with other bodies which this church has effected, it must be granted that every one was made without any compromise, on its part, of a principle of doctrine or polity, and has been conducive of good.

Fraternal correspondence, more or less close, has been maintained with several ecclesiastical bodies. This has been peculiarly close with the Dutch Reformed Church; and, since 1882, with the Northern Presbyterian Church. Owing to the non-secular character of the Dutch Reformed Church, its thoroughly Calvinistic creed, and its Presbyterian polity, this correspondence bore fruit in 1875 in a "plan of active coöperation" in publication, home missions, foreign missions, and education.

There were great impediments in the way of coöperation, and for a long time even of fraternal correspondence, with the Northern Presbyterian Church. In the judgment of the Southern Church the Northern Church had secularized itself and dethroned King Jesus in his own Zion; the union of the Old and New School bodies had involved the united church, North, in the broadest latitudinarianism of doctrine and policy; the Northern Church had unconstitutionally expelled many members of the Southern Church but a short time before; and it had preferred the gravest charges against the whole Southern Church. The Southern Church continued to make a sturdy witness against these acts till 1882, when, out of fear that it would be charged with an unchristian attitude toward the Northern Church, and appreciating the awful stress under which these things had been done, it passed a resolution, which *mutatis mutandis* should be adopted by the Northern Assembly, and so

furnish a basis for fraternal correspondence. This resolution was adopted by the Northern Assembly and the churches found themselves in correspondence with one another. The real basis of the correspondence thus established was only made plain to the Southern body, however, upon the receipt of the celebrated Herrick Johnson "rider." The Northern Assembly adopting for itself the *mutatis mutandis* resolution just referred to, had declared that in that resolution it had intended no reference to any "actions of preceding Assemblies concerning loyalty and rebellion," but referred "only to those concerning schism, heresy, and blasphemy."

In 1889 these churches entered upon a plan of coöperation, which is the close analogue of that with the Dutch Reformed Church.

#### VI. *The Present Distinctive Features of the Church.*

1. The emphatic and generally consistent maintenance of the spirituality of the church and the absolute headship of Jesus therein. It has not concerned itself with political or sociological questions, with any questions of State. It has kept clearly before it the great aim set before the church by its divine head, the gathering in and building up of the elect.

If at any time it has lapsed into the handling of other than spiritual matters, and it has occasionally so fallen, it has been only transiently inconsistent. It has soon repented of its lapse and has openly acknowledged the fault.

We are persuaded that it has made such a record in this respect as to warrant its claim to this as a feature somewhat distinctive. The Dutch Reformed Church stands on a high level in this respect. Its testimony to the spirituality of the church and the headship of Jesus has been splendid. It is able to make the enviable claim that it has never "hung the rags of political principles on the cross of Christ." The Southern Presbyterian Church may here claim justly to be not far behind.

2d. The advantageous position its history gives it for the defence of the Bible as the inspired word of God.

This church has ever vindicated the moral code of the Bible as perfect. To take one illustration: It has always defended

the moral propriety of the relation of slavery, while expressly admitting the liability of the relation to abuse. This gives it no inconsiderable advantage over other churches in warring with rationalistic infidelity, which very often fortifies its attacks on the Scriptures by concessions on the part of the churches, that the moral code of the Bible is beneath the ideals of the nineteenth century. This church, in vindicating the moral propriety of slavery as legislated for in the Bible, strips the hostile critic of a decided advantage. The enemy of inspiration can not begin with the concession that the ethics of the Bible are faulty.

3d. This church is markedly and enthusiastically Calvinistic. It is intolerant of Arminianism in any of its rulers, and contemns it in its members. The thorough-going character of its Calvinism and the pleasure it takes in it are distinguishing features. It does not only respect Calvinism as the system for its schools, but loves it as a large part of God's saving truth, loves to preach it, thinks the people ought to have it, believes God will honor it as he will not the preaching of Arminianism, finds it honored of God, in fact, in the production of strong, high and pure character. Amongst the Calvinistic churches ours can say, "A Calvinist of the Calvinists, we have never wished to make our confession one whit less Calvinistic."

4th. Our church, owing to its development of ecclesiastical polity, has become distinguished for its constitutionality. This appears in the larger place and dignity accorded to the ruling elder, thus making of him a more powerful check on the ministerial rulers. It appears also in the careful definition and observance of the spheres and rights of the several courts. It appears also in a decided opposition to anything like democracy. The people are never allowed to dictate to the ruler as to how he shall vote. It appears in its opposition to centralization and to womanism, etc., etc.

5th. Its attitude toward the negro is somewhat peculiar. It advocates the notion of an independent colored Presbyterian Church and the gathering the negroes into this church on the grounds that they will thus develop the faster, and that the inevitable friction between the races in its midst may be in this manner lessened. The instinct of self-preservation moves the

Southern white people to avoid admitting the negro to any equal authority in any sphere. Our people know the race. They know that the negro made the ideal slave; that, generally, if his bodily appetites were satisfied, he cared little for anything higher; and that he had no ability for sustained resistance to a stronger will. They know that there are many noble individuals amongst them. But they know also what the negro was on the West Coast of Africa, whence most of ours came. They know what he is to-day. They see, through the eyes of the missionaries in that part of Africa, these people murdering and plundering, eating human flesh, fresh or decaying, giving reign to demoniacal lust, enslaving one another. They know that for thousands of years before Christ these people have been living their lives of beastly appetite, unrestrained impulse, rapine, lust and murder, indolent and worthless, "participating in cannibal forays," and "swooping down on unsuspecting villages, murdering the men and capturing and outraging the women."

They know that under the ante-bellum regime these indolent and impulsive people were wonderfully lifted in the scale of civilization, so that four millions such blacks were nowhere else to be found in all the world. They know that whatever negro slavery was for the white masters, it was in our Southern country a blessed school for the negro himself. And they know that for the negro's good this tutelage was too short. They know that the ingrained habits of indolence and worthlessness, of theft, robbery, murder, rapine and lust, were too deeply wrought by the centuries and centuries of his life in Africa to be eradicated in so short a time. They know that these are not only habits of individuals, but of tribes, nations, and races; nay more, that deep and abiding traits of character are born of these tribal, national, and racial habits; traits so deep and so rooted that they can only be permanently altered by long ages of altered living. They know that the negro's West African character was not permanently altered by his discipline in slavery. They see the young negroes in their midst to-day *lapsing* in the absence of the restraining will of the master and the necessity of steady labor into the indolent, worthless, and beastly character of his African fathers.

They see also that there is a general tendency on the part of the negro to divorce religion from morality; that the most devout professions of religion form no sort of guarantee of even tolerable morals.

Naturally, therefore, while the Presbyterian Church, South, welcomes the negro to full membership in its white churches, provided he does not come in such numbers as to give him a real voice in the election of officers; and while it welcomes to its Presbyteries colored brethren who preach to negro churches, provided they do not come in sufficient numbers to exercise any real control in the Presbyteries, it believes it neither wise nor right to profess to concede to these unfortunate heirs of African savagery equal authority in church affairs in their own body. Its instinct for the preservation of its own life and usefulness forbids its doing so.

This being the instinctive feeling of the great body of white people of whom the Southern Presbyterian Church is composed, it is clear that the colored people would not be trained to self-government, should they remain in this church, by the actual and real participation in the government. Our people at large seem to feel that therefore the negroes should form a separate church.

This explains, too, why our people are more likely to help an independent negro Presbyterian Church than to help build up a colored membership of our own church; and it may explain, at least in part, why many negroes prefer the independent Presbyterian Church, where they can enjoy the *bona fide* exercise of power.

6th. Once more, and inclusively, our church is a strict construction church.

When our ministers subscribe to their ordination vows, it is understood that they interpret the standards in no loose way. Though children of the New Side Church, we vie with the Old Side in the strictness with which we accept the standards. We are the children and heirs of the Old School. We are more; we hold to the *jure divino* theory of Presbyterian Church polity. We hold to the Scriptures as the rule of faith and practice; and that we have no power to make even regulations, except about

necessary circumstances. We hold that no church has a right to turn itself into the confidential adviser of the Most High; that it is obliged to try simply to find out God's will as revealed in His word, and do it.

VII. *The Principles for Which It Stands and the Grounds on Which It Justifies Its Separate Existence.*

The Presbyterian Church in the United States has, in common with all evangelical churches, the great aim of gathering in and building up the body of Christ. It stands also (1) for the spirituality of the church, in practice as well as in theory. It stands (2) for the perfect ethical ideals of God's book, for the inspiration of the moral code and the whole book. It stands (3) for a genuine Calvinism as an essential part of the saving gospel, of which sinful man stands in need, for a Calvinism therefore to be preached. It stands (4) for a perfected constitutional form of Presbyterianism in theory and as well in practice. Incidentally and temporarily, it stands (5) for a separate Presbyterian Church for the negro. It stands (6) for strict construction of and adherence to the standards in practice as well as in theory.

This church does not imagine that it alone gives expression to these features; but it claims, by the grace of God, to give emphatic expression to them. On these grounds and on considerations of a geographical and local sort, it justifies its independent existence. It may recognize the fact that God has made it easy and natural for it to see the truths for which it stands just as he provoked Jerome of old, by his non-election to the bishopric, to prove clearly the identity of Presbyter and Bishop in the apostolic age, and according to the institution of Christ, and to show that the difference between them was the result of custom. It does to some extent take this view. It does not claim superiority on the ground that it has discerned and witnessed strongly for these truths. But it sees that they are truths, and that they must be witnessed for; and that God has in his providence laid the duty of witnessing to them on itself in an especial manner.