HISTORY

OF ALL

THE RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS

IN

THE UNITED STATES:

CONTAINING AUTHENTIC ACCOUNTS OF THE

RISE AND PROGRESS, FAITH AND PRACTICE, LOCALITIES AND STATISTICS,

OF THE DIFFERENT PERSUASIONS:

WRITTEN EXPRESSLY FOR THE WORK,

BY FIFTY-THREE EMINENT AUTHORS, BELONGING TO THE RESPECTIVE DENOMINATIONS.

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JOHN CALVIN.

HISTORY

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

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I. DOCTRINE, WORSHIP, AND GOVERNMENT.

THE published "Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," sets forth at large the system of doctrine, mode of worship, and form of government, adopted by this church.

The Doctrines are contained in the "Confession of Faith," and in the "Larger and Shorter Catechisms," and are those which are popularly denominated "Calvinistic." This distinctive title is appropriated to this system, not because *Calvin* invented it, but because, among all the modern advocates of it, he was undoubtedly the most profound and able, and because it has suited the policy of some to endeavor to convey the idea that this system was unknown until Calvin began to propagate and defend it.

In the Confession of Faith there are many doctrines in which the Presbyterians agree with their brethren of other denominations. In regard to all that is embraced in that formula concerning the being and perfections of God, the Trinity of persons in the Godhead, the divinity, incarnation and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, &c., they may be said to hold substantially in common with all sects who deserve the Christian name. But with respect to the true state of human nature before God, the doctrine of sovereign, unconditional election to eternal life, the doctrine that Christ died in a special sense for his elect people, the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone, of sanctification by the special and invincible power of the Holy Spirit, and of the perseverance of the saints in holiness, they differ very materially from many who bear the Christian name. In short, with regard to what are commonly called the "five points" discussed and decided in the Synod of Dort, the Confession is opposed to Arminianism, and coincides with the Calvinistic system maintained by that body.

These evangelical doctrines, as they are taught in the Word of God, were revived and held with singular unanimity by all the churches which arose out of the Reformation, as appears very evidently from a comparison of the various creeds and confessions which were framed and published by them. Those who on the Continent adhered to Martin Luther in his ritual views and observances, and the Anglican prelatists as well as the Reformed Churches of France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland and Scotland, equally adopted the tenets since denominated Calvinistic, their differences having relation mainly to the administration of ecclesiastical affairs, the parity of the Christian ministry, and their subordinate topics. And the history of the church and of the world, (as a constant development of this

great principle, that truth is in order to goodness, its great touchstone, in its tendency to produce holiness, and that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty,) together with the admission of some of the most eminent scholars and divines, and eloquent writers of later days, even of those who by no means favored Calvinism, are an irrefragable testimony to the benign influence exerted by this much-abused system, on the illumination and salvation of those who cordially embrace it, and on the moral character and deportment, the knowledge and freedom, and the general prosperity and happiness of every community where it has prevailed.*

The forms of worship are simple and scriptural, consisting in praise, prayer, and the reading and preaching of the

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* "By many ignorant and prejudiced persons, a very foul, but a very false allegation, both before the time of the Synod of Dort, and also down to the present day, has occasionally been advanced against the Calvinistic system. That system has been set forth as offering a premium for gross immorality, as inculcating in the case of the vainly presumptuous, an unhallowed security, and as advocating, to the certain ruin of the constitutionally despondent, all the wild recklessness of utter and uncontrolled desperation. Hence, in the way of summary, we have been gravely assured that, according to the Calvinistic scheme of interpretation, the elect, no matter what may be the obstinate ungodliness of their lives, must be finally saved even in their impenitence, while the reprobate, no matter what may be the devoted holiness of their conversation, even in their godly penitence must be finally damned. Nothing can be more unfounded than this vulgar allegation.

"Calvinism really teaches, that the elect, even though they may be humbly doubtful of their own individual election, after their effectual calling, however speckled with the remains of human corruption, will always lead holy and devoted and godly lives; while the reprobate, even though they may madly and contemptuously presume upon their own imagined security, will always show their true character, either by an indulgence in habitually unhallowed practice, or by an utter deadness to every sentiment of vitally influential religion."—*Judic. Synod. Dordrech. Conclus.* Cap. V.

"This invariable association of holiness with election, and of unholiness with reprobation, is assuredly the special badge of Calvinism; and for the abuse of the system by the profanely licentious, that scheme is no more responsible, than any other scheme can justly be made responsible for its own particular and disallowed perversion.

"The dogma, if such a dogma be held even by the wildest Antinomian, that an individual fearlessly and securely may sin, because without evidence, or rather against evidence, he has fondly persuaded himself that he is one of the elect—that dogma is a mere perversion of the Genevan system. A pious Calvinist—and among doctrinal Calvinists have been numbered some of the best and the wisest and the most holy men who have ever adorned the Catholic Church—a pious Calvinist would shrink from it with horror and disgust. So far from sanctioning the blasphemous absurdity, on the real principles of his own scheme, he would be the first and the foremost to consider its maintainance, by any pretended Calvinist, as a black mark indicative of the wretched perverter's own reprobation. He would say—Whatever may be the secret purpose of God in regard to effectual calling, no man can claim to be of the number of the elect to glory, unless as a clear evidence of his election, he can show a life devoted to his Saviour and instinct with fruit-producing holiness. As honest men, we are bound, in the measure of our opportunity, faithfully to investigate doctrinal truth; but then, we are equally bound to abstain from the offensive shamelessness of unmerited calumny."—*Faber's Primitive Doctrine of Election*, B. I., chap. vi. sec. 2.

As the most powerful body of European refugees from prelatical cruelty, who originally settled in the United States, were inflexible Calvinists; and as they have impressed their character upon all the national attributes of our republic: it is indispensable accurately to comprehend the cardinal principles of Calvinism in its operation and results, among the entire body of its genuine disciples in this country—the original Anglican Puritans, the Scottish and Irish Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Reformed Dutch and Germans. In addition, therefore, to the previous testimony of Mr. Faber, three separate witnesses are adduced; and as neither of them are Calvinists, the four combined historiographers must be admitted as proof equivalent to moral demonstration.

Calvin.—The author of the biographical notice of "Calvin," in the Encyclopedia Brittanica, among other expressions laudatory of the exalted virtues, noble talents, and transcendant erudition of the French Reformer, thus characterizes him and his most illustrious compeer. Luther and Calvin are "twin stars, the brightest of that constellation of lights by whose effulgence were dispelled the long night of darkness, under the cloud of which the energies of mankind suffered eclipse; and having emerged, they shone forth with a brilliance

word of God. They are regulated according to a prescribed "Directory," but are not minutely controlled by the stereotyped forms of any authorized or commanded liturgy. Not condemning either the principle or the use of a liturgy, the Presbyterian Church, nevertheless, from a conviction that the practice of confining ministers to set or fixed forms of prayer for public worship, derives no warrant from the spirit and examples of the word of God, nor from the practice of the primitive church, and that it is, moreover, unprofitable, burdensome to Christian liberty, and otherwise inexpedient, disapproves of such restriction; but she has,

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and glory unparalleled in the history of the world."

The same writer also mentions, among the chief points which distinguish the system of Calvin from that of the other Reformed Churches,—the independence of the church of the civil power, and the spiritual presence of Christ in the sacrament "of the Lord's Supper."—*Encyclopædia Britannica*, article CALVIN.

The Puritans.—Mr. Bancroft, in his History of the United States, exactly coincides with Mr. Macaulay and other critics, who have illumined the world by their splendid lucubrations in the Edinburgh Review. The American narrator's evidence being so unexceptionable, a few sentences are extracted. It must be premised, however, that he uses the terms Calvinism and Puritanism, in the doctrinal view, as identical.

"Puritanism was religion struggling for the people; the shelter, said its enemy, for the noble principle of liberty. It was its office to engraft the new institutions of popular energy upon the old European system of feudal aristocracy and popular servitude. The good was permanent. The outward emblems were of transient duration. The effects of Puritanism display its true character. Ecclesiastical tyranny is of all kinds the worst. Its fruits are cowardice, idleness, and poverty. Puritanism was a life-giving spirit. Activity, thrift, and intelligence followed in its train."

"The *political* character of Calvinism, which with one consent, and with instinctive judgment, the monarchs of that day feared as republicanism, and which Charles II. declared a 'religion unfit for a gentleman,' is expressed in a single word—Predestination. Did a proud aristocracy trace its lineage through generations of a high-born ancestry, the republican Reformer brought down the record of the noblest enfranchisement from 'the book of life.' His converts defied the opposing world; and standing serenely amid the crumbling fabrics of centuries of superstition, they had faith in one another; and the martyrdoms of Cambray, the fires of Smithfield, and the surrender of benefices by two thousand nonconformist Presbyterians, attest their perseverance. Such was the system which for a century and a half assumed the guardianship and liberty for the English world.

"To advance intellectual freedom, Calvinism absolutely denied the 'sacrament' of ordination; thus breaking up the great monopoly of priestcraft, and scattering the ranks of superstition. To restrain absolute monarchy in France, in Scotland, and in England, it allied itself with the decaying feudal aristocracy which it was sure to outlive; to protect itself against the feudal aristocracy it infused itself into the mercantile class and the inferior gentry; and to secure a life in the public mind, in Geneva, and in Scotland, wherever it gained dominion, it invoked intelligence for the people, and in every parish planted the common school.

"Calvinism overthrew priestcraft; Calvinism saw in goodness infinite joy, in evil infinite wo; and recognizing no other abiding distinctions, opposed secretly, but surely, hereditary monarchy, aristocracy, and bondage. Massachusetts owned no king but the King of heaven; no aristocracy but of the redeemed; and no bondage but the hopeless, infinite, and eternal bondage of sin. Calvinism invoked intelligence against Satan, the great enemy of the human race; and the farmers and seamen of Massachusetts nourished its college with corn and strings of wampum, and in every village built the free school. Thus had the principle of freedom of mind first asserted for the common people, under a religious form, by Wiclif, been pursued; until at last it reached a perfect development, coinciding with the highest attainment of European philosophy."—*Bancroft's History of the United States*, vol. i. pp. 279, 289, 290, 460, 469; vol. ii. pp. 459—463.

One more testimony is appended. It is of the highest value; because it is the conclusion of an essay, the design of which is this: expressly to invalidate and disprove the Calvinistic theory of the divine government both in providence and grace.

Practical Tendency of Calvinism.—"From the earliest ages down to our own days, if we consider the character of the ancient Stoics, the Jewish Essenes, the modern Calvinists, and Jansenists; when compared with that of the Epicureans, the Sadducees, Arminians, and the Jesuits; we shall find that they have ever excelled in no small degree in the practice of the most rigid and respectable virtues; and have been the highest honor of their own ages, and the best models for imitation to every age succeeding."—*Encyclopædia Britannica*, article PREDESTINATION.

at the same time, made such provision in her "Directory" for the service, that it may be performed with dignity and propriety, as well as profit, to those who join in it, and that it may not be disgraced by mean, irregular, or extravagant effusions.

The Presbyterian Church, moreover, prescribes no canonical vestments for her ministers; possesses no altar, but only a communion table; and instead of kneeling at the Lord's Supper, the communicants sit; she rejects lay-baptism, and godfathers and godmothers, and the sign of the cross in baptism; and she repudiates all saints' days, and observes the Lord's day as the sabbath and as the only season of holy time commanded to Christians.

In all these matters, it is believed that she is sanctioned by the scriptures, the practice of the primitive church, and the principles of the purest churches of the Reformation; while her own history and experience furnish a confirmation of the value of her practice, which she fears not to compare with that of any other religious community, in its influence, (as well as the influence of her doctrines and discipline,) on the order and decorum of public worship, on the purity in the faith of her ministers, on the edification of the worshippers, and on the sanctification of their hearts and lives.

The plan of government rests on these avowed and cardinal principles:—That God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith or worship. That the rights of private judgment, in all matters that respect religion, are universal and unalienable. That it is not even desirable to see any religious constitution aided by the civil power, farther than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time be equal and common to all others. That, in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian church or union or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed. That our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible church, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty, by censuring or casting out the erroneous or scandalous, according to the rules contained in the word of God; that, nevertheless, there are truths and forms with respect to which men of good characters may differ, and in all these it is the duty both of private Christians and societies, to exercise mutual forbearance towards each other. That the character, qualifications, and authority of church officers are laid down in the holy scriptures, as well as the proper method of their investiture and institution; yet the election of the persons to the exercise of this authority in any particular society is in that society. That all church power, whether exercised by the body in general, or in the way of representation by delegated authority, is only ministerial and declarative; that is, the holy scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners,—no church judicatory having the right to *make* laws to bind the conscience, by virtue of their own authority, but only to judge upon laws already made, and common to all who profess the gospel; and all their decisions should be founded on the revealed will of God; and that ecclesiastical discipline must be purely moral, or spiritual in its object, and not attended with any civil effects; and it can derive no force whatever, but from its own justice, the approbation of an impartial public, and the countenance and blessing of the great Head of the Church universal.

It is farther held by Presbyterians, that Christ has appointed and established in the holy scriptures a certain definite form of government for his Church; that, however many particular churches may be constituted, they are not independent societies, but are connected parts of *one body;* that the actions and operations of the several parts should be in subordination to the whole; that this being an organized body, it is furnished with officers for the purpose of communicating instruction, and for the orderly government of

the society; that these officers were expressly instituted by Christ, the only Head of the Church, before he left the world; that some of them were, at first, endowed with extraordinary powers; but the ordinary and permanent officers of the Church —as organized by the apostles, after the model of the Jewish Synagogue, which was undoubtedly Presbyterian,—are pastors or teachers, elders who rule, and deacons who have charge of the alms for the poor; that as to bishops and presbyters, the holy scriptures make no difference between them; these, like other names therein applied to the ministers of the gospel, being applied promiscuously and indifferently to the same officers; that the same *character* and *powers* being also, in the scriptures, ascribed interchangeably to bishops and presbyters, it is plain that they are identical both as to their *order* and their *name;* and therefore all the ministers of the gospel, although described by different names and titles which designate their various functions, are of equal official rank. That the apostles indeed were invested with authority over all the churches and all the other ministers; but as they have no successors in their inspiration and miraculous gifts, by which they were qualified to exercise such a power over their brethren, so they have *no successors in that plenary authority*, which Christ committed to them; but, since their departure out of the world, all regular pastors and teachers in the Church of Christ are equal in authority, no one being invested with power to rule over his brethren in the ministry, although each is appointed a ruler as well as an instructor over the flock of which he has been regularly constituted a bishop; and the presbyterate being the highest permanent office in the Church, every faithful pastor of a flock is successor to the apostles in every thing in which they were to have any successors, and is scripturally ordained with the "laying on of the hands of the presbytery;" that the difference which, in after ages, sprung up, has no foundation or vestige in the sacred record; that the gradual introduction of prelacy within the first four centuries, was not only practicable, but one of the most natural and probable of all events; how it came to pass, it is not difficult to explain; and the most competent judges and profound inquirers into early history, have pronounced that it actually took place; that all arguments which our Episcopal brethren profess to derive from scripture in favor of their system, are perfectly nugatory, and do not yield it the least solid support; that while the advocates for prelacy, or diocesan episcopacy, have mainly relied on the fathers, the fathers of the first two centuries are so far from furnishing a single passage which gives even a semblance of aid to the episcopal cause, that, like the scriptures, they every where speak a language wholly inconsistent with it, and favorable only to the doctrine of ministerial parity; that the great body of the reformers and other witnesses for the truth, of different ages and nations, with one voice, maintained the same doctrine, as taught in Scripture, and in the primitive church; and that even the most conspicuous English Reformers, while they assisted in organizing an episcopal establishment in their own country, defended it on the ground of human expediency and the will of the magistrate, rather than that of divine right; and they acknowledged the foreign churches, which were organized presbyterially, to be true churches of Jesus Christ; that the Church of England, and those churches which have immediately descended from her, stand absolutely alone in the whole Protestant world, in representing bishops as an order of clergy superior to presbyters; all other Protestants, even those who adopt a sort of prelacy, having pronounced it to be a mere human invention; that some of the most learned and pious bishops and other divines of the Church of England, have utterly disclaimed the divine right of diocesan episcopacy; and have declared that they considered a great majority of the clergy of that church, in later as well as earlier times, as of the same opinion with themselves; and, that such like various, abundant, and explicit testimony, not only establishes in the most perfect manner the validity of the Presbyterian ordinations and ministry, but it goes farther, and proves that they are superior to the Episcopal, as being more scriptural, more conformable to primitive usage, and possess-

ing more of that whole character which is fitted to satisfy an humble, simple-hearted, Bible Christian. Therefore, although some zealous advocates for the divine right of diocesan episcopacy charge them with schism, for being out of the communion of their church, and denounce our ministry and ordinances as invalid: Presbyterians may well receive such charges and denunciations with the same calm, unmoved, dispassionate, and conscious superiority, that they feel when a partisan of the Papacy denounces them for rejecting the supremacy of the Pope, and questions the possibility of their salvation out of the Church of Rome.

And as the church is one body: so, for the wise and orderly government of the whole, it is expedient to have a gradation of courts or judicatories, from the authorities which pertain to a particular church, through as many gradations as may have been established, up to the highest judicatory which can be assembled, with convenience, for the decision of all matters, according to the word of God, which may relate to the welfare and increase of the church. And it is accordingly held to be agreeable to the scriptures that the church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies.

These are severally composed, both of *ministers*, or those elders whose office it is to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, as well as to bear rule; and *ruling elders*, whose office has been understood by a great part of the Protestant Reformed Churches, to be designated in the holy scriptures by the title of "governments," and of those "elders who rule well," but do not labor in the word and doctrine. Hence is derived the name "Presbyterian," from the Greek words πρεσβυτερος and πρεσβυτεριον, which, as they occur in the New Testament, respectively signify an *elder* and a *body of elders*, or a *presbytery*.

The offices of a particular church, when it is fully organized, are a bishop, or pastor,—or more as the case may be—a bench of ruling elders, and a bench of deacons. The pastor, or pastors, and the ruling elders, compose the church session. To this body is confided the spiritual government of the congregation; for which purpose, they have power to inquire into the knowledge and Christian conduct of the members of the church; to call before them offenders and witnesses; to receive members into the church; to admonish, to rebuke, to suspend, or exclude from the sacraments those who are found to deserve censure; to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation; and to appoint delegates to the presbytery and the synod. Appeals may be made from their decisions, to the presbytery, and carried up to the higher judicatories. The business of the deacons is to take care of the poor; and to them may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the church. The ruling elders and the deacons are ordained, or solemnly set apart, to their respective offices, by a bishop.

All the ministers, (being not less than three in number,) and one ruling elder from each congregation, within a certain district, are formed into a presbytery. This body has power to receive and issue appeals from church sessions, and references brought before them in an orderly manner; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to ordain, instal, remove and judge ministers; to examine and approve or censure the records of church sessions; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline seriously and reasonably proposed; to condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the church; to visit particular churches, for the purpose of inquiring into their state, and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them; to unite or divide congregations at the request of the people, or to form or receive new congregations; in general to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under their care; and to appoint delegates to the General Assembly.

A synod is a convention of all the bishops, and one ruling elder from each congregation within a larger district than a presbytery; and must include at least three presbyteries. The synod has power to receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the presbyteries; to decide on all references made to them; to review the records of presbyteries, and approve or censure them; to redress

whatever has been done by presbyteries contrary to order; to take effectual care that presbyteries observe the constitution of the church; to erect new presbyteries, and unite or divide those which were before erected; and generally to take such order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and people under their care, as may be in conformity with the word of God, and the established rules, and which tend to promote the edification of the church.

The *General Assembly* is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church. It represents in one body all the particular churches of this denomination, and constitutes the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence, among all our churches. It consists of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each presbytery in the following proportion, viz: each presbytery consisting of not more than twenty-four ministers, is entitled to be represented by one minister and one ruling elder; and each presbytery consisting of more than twenty-four ministers, is entitled to be represented by two ministers and two elders; and in the like proportion for every twenty-four ministers in any presbytery. These delegates are styled *commissioners to the General Assembly.*

This body is empowered to receive and issue all appeals and references which may be regularly brought before it from the inferior judicatories; to review the records of every synod, and approve or censure them; and to give their advice and instruction in all cases submitted to them in conformity with the constitution of the church. To it also belongs the power of deciding in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; of reproving, warning, or bearing testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, presbytery or synod; of erecting new synods when it may be judged necessary; of superintending the concerns of the whole church; of corresponding with foreign churches, on such terms as may be agreed upon by the assembly and the corresponding body; of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations; and, in general, of recommending and attempting reformation of manners, and the promotion of charity, truth, and holiness, through all the churches under its care.

The General Assembly is required to meet at least once in every year. And when the whole business that may have come before it, has been finished, and the time and place for the next meeting appointed, it is dissolved; and another General Assembly, chosen in like manner, is required to meet as its successor.

For carrying out the objects of organizing these various judicatories, the constitution has prescribed a body of rules, adjusted with great care to the various emergencies to which they are to be specifically applied, and constituting a very admirable code, under which the rights and freedom of every minister and member are intended to be guarded against injustice and oppression, while it has an efficient tendency to require obedience to the laws of Christ, on the part of all persons in our communion, and of restraining the disorderly, and excluding the contumacious and the impenitent.

Before any overtures or regulations, proposed by the General Assembly, to be established as constitutional rules, can be obligatory on the churches, the assembly must transmit them to all the presbyteries, and receive the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof.

II. HISTORY.

For centuries before the Reformation, the whole territory of nominal Christendom, with the solitary exception of the Alpine wilderness between Gaul and Germany and Italy, was covered with gross darkness and superstition, and oppressed by spiritual, and civil and ecclesiastical despotism. The occurrence of that splendid and benign event, was the occasion of reviving the truths and institutions of primitive Christianity, and thus, of restoring civil and religious liberty.

It is remarkable that wherever the Reformation pervaded, and in whatever degree it made progress, both on the continent of Europe and in the British Isles, there was an entire agreement among the Reformers, with respect to the truths of

the evangelical system. The great doctrine of justification by faith, together with all those correlate truths which make up the harmonious system, subsequently known by the name of Calvinism, every where prevailed; and however different from each other the *forms* under which the Reformed Churches were organized, they acknowledged each other as true churches of Jesus Christ, and mutually cherished a beautiful sympathy and fraternal intercourse.

But as the Reformation was commenced and carried on under different auspices and circumstances, this fact gave birth, especially in Great Britain, to a series of events, which had the most important influence on the organization and character of the churches, both of England and of Scotland; on the condition of the people of both kingdoms; and ultimately, on the settlement of this country, and the planting of the Church of God on these shores.

On the Continent, the Reformed Churches of Germany, Switzerland, France, and Holland, were organized on the platform of Presbyterianism; *that is*, on the essential principles of the parity of the ministry, the association with them of ruling elders for the government of the church, and the gradation of consistorial, classical and synodical assemblies.

In England, the Reformation begun in royal caprice or passion. The sovereign seized upon the power formerly possessed by the Pope, and became *head of the church* as well as of the state. The consequences were soon apparent. The Reformation was made subservient to the arbitrary will of a despotic monarch, through the pernicious element of his ecclesiastical supremacy. Not only was episcopacy thus imposed upon the church, but the progress of reformation was rendered unsteady and fluctuating in the struggle which soon arose, between the courtly and prelatic rulers of the Church and the Puritans, as they were afterwards called, who wished to effect a farther advancement in purity and in truth, and bring about a complete reform, in doctrine, worship and order. The disputes commenced ostensibly in respect to ecclesiastical vestments, but included, as various emergencies produced them, controversies between all the points of a simple, scriptural worship, and the gorgeous rituals and superstitious observances which had descended from Popery. Oppression was on the side of power. Persecution arose; and the progress of civil and religious despotism became rapid. These consequences advanced steadily through the reigns of Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I., and becoming unendurable, at length involved the nation in civil war; and an outraged people, rising in their might against tyranny, overturned the government both in church and state. During the progress of these events, the principles of the Puritans were widely diffused, and finally prevailed in the Parliament and in the nation; they were embodied in the ecclesiastical formularies composed by the Westminster Assembly, which met in A. D. 1643; and being adopted by the Parliament, A. D. 1649, Presbyterianism became the established religion. Dissensions, however, arose between the assembly and the Parliament, which ended in the overthrow of the new establishment, in the restoration both of monarchy and episcopacy, under Charles II., and in a bitter renewal of the persecutions against the Puritans. In the mean time a portion of the Puritans, (who were of that party which preferred Congregationalism,) sought a refuge in the wilds of America; and the Pilgrims of the Mayflower laid on Plymouth Rock, the foundations of their institutions in the New World.*

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* At this period it would seem that Presbyterianism, both as to government and doctrine, included the far greater number of the Puritans of England; and the form of government which was adopted by the early churches of New England, had at the least a much stronger resemblance to the Presbyterian polity than that which now exists in that part of our country. And these two facts may account for the ease with which the greater part of the Puritans who emigrated to America south of New England, and of those who emigrated from New England, to the same territory, coalesced with the Presbyterians in the earlier times of our church, and became thoroughly identified with it.

The infusion of Congregationalists emigrating from New England was comparatively small as to numbers, in the beginning of the Presbyterian Church; and not only did those elements readily coalesce with Presbyterianism, so as

In England alone, of all countries where the Reformation gained any footing, was the Episcopal form of government found in the Reformed Church.

In Scotland the Reformation was, from the beginning, a purely ecclesiastical and popular movement. "Patrick Hamilton, the noble and youthful friend of Luther and Melancthon, learned the doctrines of the Reformed faith, and taught them to his countrymen, till his testimony was sealed with the blood of martyrdom, A. D. 1528. Wishart gave an additional impulse to the sacred cause, equally by his teaching and his death. Several of the Popish priesthood were converted, and aided in converting others. John Knox caught up the same testimony; and though, by the commanding power of his genius, and the unconquerable energy of his character, he caused the voice of religious reformation to be heard throughout the kingdom, equally by prince and peasant, in the palace and the cottage: still it was simply and essentially a religious reformation, taking its form and impress directly from the word of God alone, encountering at every step the formidable opposition of civil powers and political intrigues, instead of receiving from them its bias and its external aspect. Believing that God's word contained the only authoritative direction for doing God's work, the Scottish reformers made their sole appeal, 'to the law and to the testimony;' and though they respected the great continental Reformers, they sought the principles of doctrine, discipline, and government, from no foreign model, but from the holy scriptures alone. Thus it was that the Church of Scotland framed its Confession of Faith, and its First Book of Discipline, and met, in its first General Assembly, for its own government, in 1560, seven years before it had even received the sanction of the legislature. From its origin it had to encounter the world's opposition; in its growth it received little or nothing of a worldly admixture; and when it reached somewhat of a matured form, it still stood opposed to the world's corrupting influence."—*Hetherington.*

James VI., in order to secure uniformity in religion throughout his dominions, and to obtain for himself that supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs which he foresaw he could never obtain over a free General Assembly, bent all his resources of craft, treachery, and force, to subvert Presbyterianism and substitute Episcopacy. After his accession to the throne of England, (as James I.,) he partially succeeded, in utter disregard of the sentiments of the great majority of the Scotch, in procuring the appointment of bishops, the introduction of certain rites and ceremonies, and the partial suppression of General Assemblies. His unhappy son, Charles I., under the counsels of Laud, attempted to complete the work which his predecessor had begun. The Scots were thoroughly roused to resistance. The Assembly of 1638, threw off the modified Episcopacy which had been foisted on the church; and its act was confirmed by the Scotch Parliament in the following year. A successful stand was made by the nation against the army raised by Charles to coerce them. The Westminster formularies were adopted by the General Assembly, and ratified by Parliament. And Presbyterianism, which was indeed the religion of the whole nation, maintained its ground until 1660. Then, upon the accession of Charles II., renewed attempts were made by that profligate monarch and by the minions of Prelacy, to subvert Presbytery. These attempts brought on a violent struggle, which lasted for twenty-eight years,—the blackest period of Scottish history,—when the malicious bigotry that sought to dragoon the church into Episcopacy was checked. The principles which, half a century before, had contributed to bring on that "Great Rebellion," as courtly and prelatical writers have called it, and which was crushed for a season, by the accession of Charles II., still lived; and being farther stimulated by the very persecutions of that insolent tyranny which in the flush of success be-

to lose their formal distinctive character altogether, but they were prepared beforehand to do so, from the fact that, at that early period the old leaven of Presbyterianism, which the Puritans of England so generally adopted, had not lost its vitality under those influences and circumstances which had given such a preponderance to Congregationalism in New England, as Presbyterianism had had over it in Old England, about the times of the Westminster Assembly.

came more resolute to quell them, they spread abroad more extensively and powerfully than ever, both in England and Scotland. The Revolution of 1688, was effected; James II. was expelled from the throne, and William and Mary established thereon, by the almost unanimous suffrages of the British people; and thus was a more secure basis laid for the enjoyment of civil and religious liberty. Then, the Presbyterians of Scotland had peace.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland was mainly the offspring of Presbyterian emigration from Scotland, and, as in the sister kingdom, it grew up under severe persecutions and sufferings.

The Presbyterian Church in the United States, derives its lineage from the Presbyterians both of Ireland and Scotland. It is true, as has been before stated, that Presbyterianism was the form, not only of the Church of Scotland, but also of the Reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, and indeed of the Puritans of England about the time of the Westminster Assembly; and contributions from all these sources have been made at various times to the elements of the American Presbyterian Churches. But still, it is unquestionable, that the early founders of this church were principally Scotch and Irish Presbyterians. In like manner, the Church of Scotland was more than any other their model, in the whole arrangement of their judicatories, and in their whole ecclesiastical nomenclature, with few exceptions. And on this account, the Presbyterian Church in this country has always been popularly and appropriately regarded as the daughter more especially of the Church of Scotland.

The persecutions which drove so many of the early settlers to this country fell, in the first instance, heaviest on the Independents and Quakers; and when it came upon the Presbyterians, (at least those of Scotland,) it did not drive them so generally from their own country; but led to a protracted struggle for liberty at home —a struggle which, as we have seen, was eventually crowned with success. The opportunities at that time to migrate were also few and far between, and a very small number only could take their flight; and hence, until the revolution in 1688, but few Presbyterians had become residents of the then British provinces in America. And as they did not at first emigrate in large bodies, but came, as a general rule, as individuals, or in small companies, they did not occupy by themselves extensive districts of country, but settled in the midst of other denominations. Thus, scattered as they were, it was only gradually that they became sufficiently numerous in any one place to form congregations, or to associate in a presbyterial capacity.

From the period of the accession of William and Mary to the British throne, the Presbyterians began to remove from Scotland and northern Ireland, to America. The first Presbyterian Church in the colonies which now can be distinctly traced, was organized at Philadelphia, a short period before the commencement of the eighteenth century, and almost coeval with it was the formation of four or five churches on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

The primary ecclesiastical union of the American Presbyterians occurred in 1706, when the Presbytery of Philadelphia was formed. It consisted of *seven* ministers—Samuel Davis, John Hampton, Francis McKemie,* and George McNish, all from Ireland, and residing in Maryland—Nathaniel Taylor, settled at Upper Marlborough, and John Wilson, officiating at Newcastle, both from Scotland—and Jedediah Andrews, of Philadelphia, from New England. To whom was added John Boyd, stationed at Freehold, the first can-

* Francis McKemie was the first Presbyterian minister on the western continent. He seems to have been one of the Christians who had experienced much opposition and persecution for the truth's sake, during the reigns of Charles II. and James II., in Ireland. His characteristics eminently qualified him for a pioneer in those colonies where the bigoted Prelatists had the sway. He possessed handsome intellectual endowments, with dauntless fortitude, a commanding extemporaneous eloquence, and a burning zeal for the gospel. In New York, in January, 1707, he was illegally arrested and imprisoned by the colonial governor, for the heinous crime of preaching the gospel. The admirable defence which he made upon that occasion, resulted in his acquittal and deliverance.

didate who was ordained by that presbytery, on October 29, 1706.

According to the official statement of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in their letter to the Presbytery of Dublin, dated September, 1710, the whole number of the ascertained Presbyterians at that time is thus given: "In Virginia, one small congregation at Elizabeth river, with some few families in Rappahannoc and York. In Maryland, four; in Pennsylvania, five; and in the Jerseys, two; with some places in New York." This enumeration may profitably be contrasted with the statistical view of our Presbyterian Church, according to the returns of 1843; which are exclusive of all the other correlative Presbyterian communities.

After the presbyterial organization of those ministers and churches, their numbers and stability rapidly were augmented. They manifested much solicitude to collect the scattered people "favoring our way," who were opposed to the "Episcopacy established by law." To secure an efficient ministry, they wrote to Sir Edmund Harrison, an influential nonconformist of London; to the Synod of Glasgow; to the Presbytery of Dublin; to Cotton Mather; and to Mr. Reynolds, a prominent Independent minister of London, desiring their co-operation and aid. That correspondence is an interesting relic of the early times of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States, and is also an honorable memorial of all the parties.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia having become much enlarged; and in consequence of the increasing migration of persons from Scotland and Ireland having also become widely scattered: it was decided, at their meeting in September, 1716, to subdivide their body into "four subordinate meetings or presbyteries;" all of which were constituent members of the general body thenceforward denominated the "Synod of Philadelphia." By that division, the Presbytery of Philadelphia comprised *six* ministers with their churches; the Presbytery of Newcastle, *six* ministers and their churches; the Presbytery of Snowhill, *three* ministers and their churches; and the Presbytery of Long Island, *two* ministers and their churches, with the anticipated immediate addition of other congregations.

The first meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia was held in that city, September 17, 1717, and embodied *thirteen* ministers, with *six* elders.

At the meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, in 1718, a striking memorial of *William Tennent* is recorded. It contains the reasons which he offered concerning his withdrawment from the established church in Ireland. The synod ordered "that his reasons be inserted in the synod book, *ad futuram rei memoriam.*"*

In the year 1718, the Synod of Philadelphia renewed their solicitations to the Presbytery of Dublin, and the Independent ministry of London for additional preachers and other missionary assistance; at which period they state their number to be *twenty-three* ministers and *three* probationers.

At the meeting of the synod in 1721, there was made a declaration that the Presbyterians in America, had exercised the Presbyterian government and discipline, according to the practice of "the best Reformed Churches, as far as the nature and constitution of this country will allow." The circumstances which caused that resolution do not appear. Six ministers protested against it; but at the

* "The reasons of William Tennent for his dissenting from the established church in Ireland, delivered by him to the synod, held at Philadelphia, September 17, 1718: 1. Their government, by bishops, archbishops, deans, archdeacons, canons, chapters, chancellors, and vicars, is wholly unscriptural. 2. Their discipline by surrogates and chancellors in their courts ecclesiastic, is without a foundation in the word of God. 3. Their abuse of that supposed discipline by commutation. 4. *A diocesan bishop cannot be founded,* jure divino, *upon Paul's epistles to Timothy or Titus, nor any where else in the word of God, and so is a mere human invention.* 5. The usurped power of the bishops at their yearly visitations, acting all of themselves, without consent of the brethren. 6. Pluralities of benefices. 7. The churches conniving at the practice of Arminian doctrines inconsistent with the eternal purpose of God, and an encouragement to vice. Besides, I could not be satisfied with their ceremonial way of worship. Those, &c., have so affected my conscience, that I could no longer abide in a church where the same are practised.

"WILLIAM TENNENT."

meeting of the synod in 1722, the disputants agreed upon four articles—"Presbyteries, synods, and church-officers have executive power of church-government: they may decide upon the circumstantials of church-discipline. Synods may compose directories. Appeals may be made to the superior judicatories, who should determine them." There is, however, an equivocal clause, which says, "Provided, that those 'Acts' of the ecclesiastical judicatories shall not be imposed upon such as conscientiously dissent from them."

In the year 1728, an overture was presented to the Synod of Philadelphia, respecting subscription to the "Confession of Faith, Catechisms, &c.," which was referred to the next synod. Although the Westminster Assembly's Confession of Faith and Catechisms always had been the only standard of faith, rites, government, and discipline: yet the book itself had never been formally announced as the creed and the directory of the American Presbyterians. The overture of 1728, was designed to supply that alleged deficiency, which produced, in the following year, "The Adopting Act," which was a very important measure in its subsequent application to the authorized theological and practical system of the American Presbyterian Churches. The entire documents are found in the volume of Records containing the proceedings of the Synod of Philadelphia.

At the meeting of the synod in 1735, it was directed, "That each presbytery have the whole Adopting Act inserted in their presbytery book." Notwithstanding those apparently uniform avowals on the part of the synod of their undivided opinion, and of their obvious intention: yet there seems to have been a dissatisfaction among a portion of the churches respecting the true meaning of the synodical declaration. Therefore to silence all cavils, the Synod of Philadelphia, in 1736, reiterated their testimony in an emphatic announcement, which was "approved *nemine contradicente*."

That avowal was perfectly explicit, and was the cardinal rule and test of a Presbyterian's creed.

Although the Presbyterians were divided into two bodies from the year 1745 to 1758, yet upon the final agreement of the two synods at the latter period, in the terms of their union they adopted this clause, as the first article of their compact:

"Both synods having always approved and received the Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms, as an orthodox and excellent system of Christian doctrine, founded on the word of God: we do still receive the same as the confession of our faith; and also adhere to the plan of worship, government and discipline, contained in the Westminster Directory; strictly enjoining it on all our ministers and probationers for the ministry, that they preach and teach according to the form of sound words in the said confession and catechisms, and avoid and oppose all errors contrary thereto."

In 1737, the synod prohibited the members of one presbytery from preaching to the congregations within another presbytery, "without a regular invitation." The object of this rule was to restrain ministers, who travelled about preaching during the "great revival," from holding meetings in those places where, as the itinerants declared, there was a "graceless minister and a lukewarm presbytery." Moreover, in 1738, the synod resolved, that every candidate for the ministry should have a diploma from a college in Europe or New England, or a certificate of competent scholarship from a committee of the synod.

Protest.—In the following year, the opponents of those measures presented an "Apology for dissenting from those two new religious laws." In that paper they assert, that there is a parity or equality of power among ministers; that a presbytery, or the smallest association of ministers, has power to ordain; and that they have authority to judge of the qualifications of candidates.

The synod's claim to jurisdiction in the examination of candidates for the ministry was contested with great earnestness and some personal acrimony; and the Presbytery of New Brunswick formally protested against the power which the synod asserted. In 1741, a counter protestation was presented to the synod, which includes many historical illustrations of that period. It contains a denunciation of the "unwearied, unscriptural, anti-presbyterial,

uncharitable, and divisive practices of the protesting brethren and their adherents." The document is inserted entire in the Records of the Synod of Philadelphia.

The strife increased, until, in 1745, it was terminated by the organization of the Synod of New York.

Dr. Hodge thus accurately decides on this topic: "The majority were influenced by a sincere desire to secure an adequately educated ministry; and the minority, by the belief that the operation of the rule would be inimical to the progress of religion. The conduct of the New Brunswick Presbytery was precisely analogous to that of the Cumberland Presbytery, who refused to comply with the constitutional provisions as to the qualifications of candidates. It was not diversity of opinion as to doctrine or discipline, but loss of confidence, and alienation of feeling respecting the revival of religion."

During the separation of the two synods, nothing of peculiar interest occurred, except the gradual enlargement of the number of ministers and churches, and the constant ineffectual attempts to promote an agreement between the dissidents. The differences of opinion upon the non-essential topics which had separated them, at length having wisely been obliterated, both synods dissolved, and the members of each assembled and constituted but one body, under the title of the "Synod of New York and Philadelphia;" which appellation they retained until the year 1788, when they divided themselves into four synods, preparatory to the first meeting of the General Assembly in 1789.

For the quarter of a century preceding the formation of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Presbyterians gradually increased in that part of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, around and above the southern termination of the Peaked Mountain. During that period they were much harassed by the adherents of the Church of England in the province. In 1738, the Synod of Philadelphia applied to Mr. Gooch, then Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, on behalf of their brethren, who returned a favorable answer, particularly respecting the scattered people who resided west of the Blue Ridge. The settlement of that district and the organization of those churches form an impressive and memorable portion of the early history of American Presbyterianism. Every obstacle was adopted to thwart the ministerial labors and success of the Presbyterian preachers, and to embarrass and distress them and their isolated disciples.* These facts are virtually implied in the formal application of the Synod of Philadelphia to the colonial authorities on behalf of their suffering brethren. They also are matters of family record among the members of the Presbyterian churches in those States; as, since the commencement of the present century, some of the primitive settlers then survived. Their immediate descendants now constitute the main body of the elder Presbyterian congregations in Western Virginia.

The Synod of New York and Philadel-

* Stith, in his history of Virginia, p. 148, records that, in 1618, it was enacted by law, that "Every person should go to church on Sundays and holy days, or lie neck and heels that night, and be a slave to the colony the following week." For the second offence he was to be a "slave for a month;" and for the third offence, he was to be in bondage "for a year and a day." By a law of the year 1642, the very time when the prelatical hierarchy was subverted in Britain, it was enacted, that "No minister shall be permitted to officiate in this country, but such as shall produce to the governor a testimonial that he hath received his ordination from some bishop in England; and shall then subscribe to be conformable to the orders and constitutions of the Church of England; and if any other person, pretending himself to be a minister, contrary to this act, shall presume to teach or preach, publicly or privately: the governor and council are hereby desired and empowered to suspend and silence the person so offending; and upon his obstinate persistance, to compel him to depart the country with the first convenience."

Dr. Miller, in his Life of Rodgers, having recited the preceding anti-christian enactments, adds, "We are accustomed to smile at what are called the Blue laws of Connecticut; but it would be difficult to find anything in them equal to the first act above mentioned." To which may be subjoined, that the source of the Virginia laws was bigoted intolerance, and the result of them, infidelity and irreligion, which still exist after the lapse of a century; while the laws of Connecticut originated in a devout solicitude for the glory of God and the spiritual welfare of men; and that the general effects of them appeared in the benign "fruits of righteousness."

phia, at their primary meeting in 1758, comprised ninety-two ministers; who agreed that all their "differences and disputes should be laid aside and buried without future inquiry." The "Plan of Union" was unanimously approved; and the principles included in that compact have constituted, from that time, the foundation upon which all the Presbyterian churches have been erected.

At that period there must have been great additions, by migration, to the Presbyterian denomination; as eight ministers more are reported in 1759, than in the preceding year, and the progressive enlargement of the churches continued until the commencement of the Revolutionary war. Indeed, of the religious population south of New England, during the existence of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, the Presbyterians must have increased more than any other denomination. The Episcopalians in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Carolina, almost disappeared. The Methodists, also, in consequence of John Wesley's opposition to the American Revolution, and the flight of the preachers to England, scarcely retained their numbers throughout the national contest. The Baptists did not develop their enterprise as they subsequently have done. The Presbyterians, however, maintained the meetings of their ecclesiastical bodies regularly, although with fewer numbers, and amid the interruptions which unavoidably accompanied the public agitation; but, during the thirty years prior to the formation of the General Assembly, by the number of emigrants from Scotland and the north of Ireland, the churches were both enlarged and multiplied. In 1789, there were *one hundred and eighty-eight* Presbyterian preachers, and *four hundred and nineteen churches;* of which two hundred and four were destitute of the stated ministry and ordinances.

The historical circumstances worthy of distinct remembrance, in connexion with the Presbyterian churches, previous to the formation of the General Assembly, may thus be specified in alphabetical order. Almost all of them were of a permanent character, in connection with the ecclesiastical polity of the denomination.

Bibles and Religious Books.—As many of the Presbyterians were widely scattered, and it was impossible to answer the call for ministerial help: the synod, at several periods, distributed large quantities of the holy scriptures, and the works of Baxter, Doddridge, and others, among the hungry people famishing for "the bread of life."

Domestic Missions.—In the year 1767, that interesting topic was discussed, and a plan was adopted to provide the instruments and means to execute the benevolent design; but the noble project was impeded by the subsequent political convulsions, and continued partially in abeyance until the formation of the "Standing Committee of Missions" in 1805.

Fasts and Pastoral Letters, with reference to the Revolutionary War.—The members of the synod during the period that "tried men's souls," from the commencement of the collision with Britain respecting the Stamp Act, until the treaty of peace, in 1782, were decided adherents of religious and civil liberty. Indeed this was the case with all Presbyterians of all denominations in the country. They were the sons of sires who had suffered for freedom in the Old World; and upon the renewal of attempts to bring the colonies under that despotism in Church and State, from which they had fled, one heart seemed to animate all classes and bodies of these sturdy opponents of tyrannical bigotry. From the journal of a convention held by delegates from the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, for some years before the breaking out of hostilities, it appears that great apprehensions were entertained of an attempt to establish the Church of England in this country, with all the odious and oppressive powers exercised by the bishops in that country. No more devoted Whigs were found in America than the people and ministers of every name in this land, who eminently unite the principles of that magnificent motto, "A Church without a bishop, and a State without a king." They went heartily into the cause of liberty. The pulpit and the press, the senate chamber and the battle-field, their murdered bodies, desecrated churches, and ravaged dwellings, bore witness to their

own zeal, and the special hate of the ruthless invaders.

As a farther illustration of this part of the subject, the writer hopes to be pardoned, for quoting from himself: "In framing the constitutions of some of the old thirteen states, or in settling their polity as independent states, the separation of religious establishments from the state was, in some measure, the result of formal petitions to that effect, from large bodies of the clergy. Such was the fact, with respect to the Presbyterian ministers of Virginia. It was so in New York. Those men who have been stigmatized as the crafty intriguers for a union of Church and State, were men,—now speaking of nearly all the great evangelical denominations of the time, and especially of the Congregationalists and Presbyterians,—were men foremost in the works and conflicts of patriotism, in 'those days that tried men's souls.' It was Presbyterianism as to doctrine, and even a modification of it as to government, which settled New England, and made it the garden it is. And, without disparaging others, the Presbyterian Church may claim a large share of that influence which has produced the order, happiness, and prosperity of the middle and western portions of this country. *Presbyterianism* is eminently a system of public and private virtue. Patriotism owns it as her own ally and friend. To her, civil and religious liberty, under God, owe much of their present large extent. She sent these fountains of blessedness through England in despite of the Tudors and the Stuarts; her own Scotland cherishes her as the guardian of the freedom which she purchased for that land with her blood, and for the Lordship of Christ in his own heritage in that land, she has perilled every temporal immunity; her principles and valor are indelibly interwoven with the self-denying and successful struggles with which Holland vindicated her liberties from the oppressions of 'kingly and of priestly tyranny;'—and in the war of the American Revolution, the daring and generous heroism of her sons, her members and her ministers, in this land, stands nobly emblazoned among the soldiers, the statesmen and the patriots of those times. When others proved traitors and fled, or fought the battles of tyranny, they stood faithful. "When the Declaration of Independence was under debate in the Continental Congress, doubts and forebodings were whispered through that hall. The House hesitated, wavered, and for a while, the liberty and slavery of the nation appeared to hang in even scale. It was then an aged patriarch arose; a venerable and stately form; his head white with the frost of years. Every eye went to him with the quickness of thought, and remained with the fixedness of a polar star. He cast on the assembly a look of inexpressible interest and unconquerable determination; while on his visage, the hue of age was lost in the flush of burning patriotism that fired his cheek. 'There is,' said he, when he saw the House wavering, 'there is a tide in the affairs of men,—a nick of time. We perceive it now before us. To hesitate, is to consent to our own slavery. That noble instrument upon your table, which insures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this very morning by every pen in the House. He that will not respond to its accents and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions, is unworthy the name of a freeman. For my own part, of property I have some—of reputation more. That reputation is staked, that property is pledged on the issue of this contest. And although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather they should descend thither by the hands of the public executioner, than desert, at this crisis, the sacred cause of my country.' Who was it that uttered this memorable speech, potent in turning the scales of a nation's destiny, and worthy to be preserved in the same imperishable record in which is registered the not more eloquent speech ascribed to John Adams on the same sublime occasion? It was John Witherspoon, at that day the most distinguished Presbyterian minister west of the Atlantic Ocean, the father of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

"Those men had suffered too much from the abuses of this adulterous union, and especially from the arrogance and bigotry of the prelatical establishments, even in the colonial state, to wish for the

continuance of the union of Church and State. They had faith in their holy religion, and in the God who revealed it, to believe that he would prosper it without state patronage; and all they claimed was protection."

The pastoral letters of the synod at this time inculcate much well-timed admonition, and urgently advise all the churches to betake themselves to the throne of grace, there to seek their God, who was their only refuge and strength, and their very present help in time of trouble.

Literary Institutions.—Emulating the example of their Calvinistic brethren, the Puritans, the Presbyterians ever have manifested a quenchless solicitude for the advancement of literature, and especially for the dissemination of the "light and the truth." The "Log College" at Neshaminy, although Mr. Tennent's private institution, was the incentive to more combined effort, and was the pioneer for the Newark Academy, and the Philadelphia and Nassau Hall Colleges.

Union with other Denominations.—In the year 1766, a proposition was made in the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, for a correspondence with "the Consociated Churches of Connecticut"—and the matter was continually under discussion until the Revolution commenced,—after which the subject was disregarded until the General Assembly resumed the consideration of it in 1790.

In the year 1784, the Reformed Dutch Classis of New Brunswick, having complained of the conduct of some of the Presbyterian ministers, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia determined "to enter into an amicable correspondence upon subjects of general utility and friendship between the churches."

A joint conference of delegates of the Presbyterian, Reformed Dutch, and Associate Reformed Synods, was held in October, 1785; which resulted in the promotion of more confraternity between those three denominations.

Universalism.—One of the latest measures of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia was, to bear their testimony against the heresy propagated by them who deny the doctrine of future punishment. As the assertion of the boundless malignity of sin, and the never-dying anguish of the impenitent, is a solemn part of the Presbyterian faith, and the knowledge of that fact should be reiterated: the important declaration of the synod is here inserted.—"Whereas the doctrine of universal salvation, and of the finite duration of hell torments, has been propagated by sundry persons who live in the United States of America; and the people under our care may possibly, from their occasional conversation with the propagators of such a dangerous opinion, be infected by the doctrine: the synod take this opportunity to declare their utter abhorrence of such doctrines as they apprehend to be subversive of the fundamental principles of religion and morality; and therefore earnestly recommend it to all their presbyteries and members to be watchful upon this subject, and to guard against the introduction of such tenets among our people."

The above particulars refer more directly to the external relations of the Presbyterian churches; the others of a permanent character belong to their interior discipline.

Candidates for the Ministry.—The controversy among the members of the synod was prolonged during two meetings in 1761 and 1762. It was founded upon the "*propriety*," and the "*right*," and the "*equity*" of demanding of the candidate an account of his personal religious exercises, and then making his statement the criterion of admitting or rejecting him. The whole subject was finally transferred to each presbytery, to act upon and decide as they considered most proper and evangelical.

This question was also propounded for the decision of the synod in 1783:—"Whether a person without a liberal education may be taken on trial, or be licensed to preach the gospel? The question being put, it was carried in the negative." A similar inquiry was made of the synod in 1785, in these words: "Whether in the present state of the church in America, and the scarcity of ministers to fill our numerous congregations, the synods or presbyteries ought therefore to relax, in any degree, in the literary qualifications required of intrants into the ministry? And

it was carried in the negative by a great majority."

Education.—In 1771, a plan for the education of the poor and pious youth for the ministry of the gospel was submitted to the synod, and unanimously approved. The object, however, seems to have been forgotten during the turbulent times which followed; but subsequently it was revived, and by its benign operation it has been the chief means, through which the increasing demands of the churches and the people in the western settlements have been supplied with the ministry of the word and evangelical ordinances.

Foreign Ministers.—The admission of ministers from Britain and Ireland was a matter of peculiar difficulty, on account of the known and avowed Anti-Calvinistic principles of many of them. Great discrepancy of opinion existed, concerning the application of any precise regulation to the applicants. In 1773, the topic was formally introduced in a rule precluding the reception of any foreign ministers by the presbyteries, without the previous approbation of the synod. Many were dissatisfied with this restriction; and the following year, the rule was mitigated. In 1782, on the restoration of peace, the subject was resumed; and in 1784, a general monition was addressed to the presbyteries and churches, warning them of their duty. Finally, the General Assembly adopted a plan which united caution with confraternity, and in accordance with it the presbyteries now decide.

Marriage.—The matrimonial relation has been one of the most prolific subjects of polemical discussion and appellate scrutiny in the ecclesiastical bodies of the Presbyterian churches. At the very first meeting of the Synod of Philadelphia, the marriage of a man with his brother's widow was the subject of a reference. From that day to this time, *one hundred and twenty-five years*, the precise meaning of the fourth section of the twenty-fourth chapter of the Confession of Faith, has been disputed by the ecclesiastical bodies; for they have adjudicated one year; rescinded on another occasion; re-enacted on a third; nullified on a fourth; referred back on the fifth; adopted an equivocal decision on a sixth; and virtually expunged, after a seventh protracted discussion.

From the proceedings of the elder synods and the General Assembly it appears that their decision has been required on the following examples: marriage, after the proof of adultery; the marriage of a brother's widow; the marriage of a half brother's widow; the marriage of a brother's and sister's relicts; the marriage of two sisters in succession, or of a deceased wife's sister; the marriage of a wife's brother's daughter; the marriage of a wife's half brother's daughter; the marriage of a wife's sister's daughter; and the marriage of a man who had not been legally divorced from his wife, in a case of long protracted obstinate desertion.

In the year 1761, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia decided that the marriage of a brother's or a sister's relict, and of a deceased "wife's sister" were unlawful, and debarred all such delinquents from the communion of the church. But in 1772, concerning the marriage of a wife's brother's daughter, the synod apparently relaxed from their prior judgment. At the meeting of the synod in 1779, the marriage of a deceased wife's sister was introduced, and in 1782, the applicants were formally pronounced "capable of Christian privileges." The sentence of the synod produced so much dissatisfaction, that, in 1783, they adopted a long explanatory statement, which certainly exhibits contradictions, against which a strong protest was entered on the synodical record.

The marriage of a deceased wife's sister has also been an inveterate theme of polemical strife during the whole half century, since the organization of the General Assembly; and is still the subject of "doubtful disputation." It has recently been revived, through the case of one of their ministers, who, having married the sister of his former wife, was condemned by the presbytery to which he belonged; and the General Assembly, after a protracted debate, affirmed the decision. But the party who are in favor of such marriages resuscitated the subject in the year 1843; and the question is now litigating: Whether the fourth section in the twenty-fourth chapter of the Confes-

sion of Faith shall be expunged, or explained so as to authorize the marriage of two sisters in succession?

Slavery.—This topic also, like that of marriage, has been a prolific source of contention. The primary notice of it is found in the proceedings of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, in 1786, under the form of two questions—"Whether the children of slaves held by church members should be baptized?" and "Whether the children of Christian professors, enslaved by irreligious men, ought to be baptized?" The synod replied in the affirmative.

In the year 1787, the matter was introduced before the synod in a more direct manner, and the result of their deliberation appeared in a testimony against it, and an urgent recommendation to "all their people, to procure the abolition of slavery in America." That "opinion" was reiterated in 1793; and in 1795, in reply to a petition, the same decision was confirmed, with a specific condemnation of all the traffic in slaves. At that period the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, &c., were published by order of the General Assembly. To the one hundred and forty-second question of the "Larger Catechism" was appended a note containing a definition of "man-stealing," with scriptural proofs. During the twenty years which followed, that *note* seems to have been overlooked; but in 1815, the subject of slavery was brought before the General Assembly, by a reference from the Synod of Ohio, and a petition from Virginia. The General Assembly then reiterated their declarations of 1787, 1793, and 1795. But in the following year, 1816, "the note connected with the scripture proofs in answer to the question in the Larger Catechism, What is forbidden in the eighth commandment? in which the crime of man-stealing and slavery is dilated upon," was ordered to be omitted in all "future editions of the Confession of this church." The subject occupied several sessions of the General Assembly, in 1816, 1817, and 1818, at which last meeting, that body issued a long declaration, entitled "*A full Expression of the Assembly's views of Slavery.*" From that period, the disputatious theme has remained, in a great measure, *sub silentio*, among the Presbyterian ecclesiastical bodies.

The closing paragraph of Dr. Hodge's History is so suitable as a peroration to the history of Presbyterianism, down to the dissolution of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, that it is extracted as the termination of that part of this narrative. "The effects of the Revolutionary war on the state of our church were extensively and variously disastrous. The young men were called from the seclusion of their homes to the demoralizing atmosphere of a camp. Congregations were broken up. Churches were burned, and pastors were murdered. The usual ministerial intercourse and efforts for the dissemination of the gospel were, in a great measure, suspended, and public morals in various respects deteriorated. From these effects it took the church a considerable time to recover; but she shared, through the blessing of God, in the returning prosperity of the country, and has since grown with the growth, and strengthened with the strength, of our highly favored nation."

THE FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY met in 1789, and the subsequent history of American Presbyterianism is chiefly a memorial of the more efficient and extensive development of the evangelical features and the "ecclesiastical polity," which already have been delineated. However, there are four influential topics connected with the latter periods of the Presbyterian Churches which must be recorded.

The plan of correspondence and union eventually included the General Association of Connecticut, the General Convention of Vermont, the General Association of New Hampshire, the General Association of Massachusetts, and the Consociation of Rhode Island, with the Reformed Dutch General Synod, and the Associate Reformed Synod. The great object of it was to combine these ecclesiastical bodies and the churches whom they represented in a closer fraternity, and to enlarge their Christian intercourse, both as ministers and for the entire denominations. From the period of the first agreement the system has been continued with little interruption.

But a more distinct notice is requisite concerning the "Plan of Union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the New Settlements," which was adopted in 1801. This plan was designed to extinguish any difficulties arising from a disagreement among Congregationalists and Presbyterians, so that they might all unite in the support of the ministry and sacred institutions; as their faith, order of worship, and principles of church government substantially were one—there being only a "difference of administrations." By that compact, a Presbyterian church might call a Congregational minister, and *vice versa*. If one body of Presbyterians and another of Congregationalists chose to unite as one church and settle a minister, each party was allowed to exercise discipline, and regulate its church affairs according to its own views, under the general management of a joint standing committee; and one of that committee, if chosen for that purpose, had "the same right to sit and act in the presbytery, as a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church." Under the operation of that "Plan of Union," hundreds of churches were formed in the States of New York and Ohio, during the period from 1801, to 1837.

About the commencement of the nineteenth century, a remarkable religious awakening was manifest through a wide extent of the then "Far West." New congregations were formed with exhilarating rapidity. To supply the ministerial destitution, it was resolved to secure the aid of men of piety and talents, although without a classical education, and to ordain them as missionary evangelists and pastors. Among the members of the Presbytery of Transylvania some opposed the measure; but as that body soon afterwards was divided, that portion of the body denominated the "Cumberland Presbytery" proceeded to license and ordain preachers who had not acquired a knowledge of the ancient languages, and of the other subjects of a collegiate course of study. The synod finally took cognizance of their proceedings, and appointed a "commission" to visit them, who summoned the presbytery, with their licentiates, candidates, and exhorters, to appear before them. When the commission met, they alleged a variety of charges against the presbytery, all of which were comprised within two general statements:—that they licensed "men to preach who had not been examined on the languages," and that their licentiates had been required to adopt the Presbyterian Confession of Faith partially, or "as far as they believed it to agree with God's word."

The presbytery justified themselves upon the ground of the "extraordinary emergency," the example of other presbyteries, and of the *New Testament*, which neither by example nor precept condemns the calling into the Christian ministry those whom the synod's *commission* denominated "unlearned and ignorant men." They also maintained that their candidates did not deviate in doctrine from any *essential* or important doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith. The synodical "commission" demanded, that the whole of the licentiates and candidates, under the care of the Cumberland Presbytery, should be transferred to them for re-examination. The presbytery spurned at the exaction, as destructive of their privileges and independence; and the young preachers and exhorters also denied the jurisdiction of the "commission," when summoned before them. Thus the controversy remained during four years; until, in February, 1810, three of the ministers, as they said, "protesting against the unconstitutional and unprecedented acts of the synod, and of the General Assembly who justified them," constituted a separate presbytery, "known by the name of the Cumberland Presbytery."

They required of all candidates and licentiates, that they "receive and adopt the Confession and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church," except any "fatality taught under predestination;" and the requisition of an academical education.

The "Cumberland Presbyterians" have prodigiously multiplied. They now form a very influential religious community in the western districts of Kentucky and Tennessee.

In the year 1810, there was an increasing disposition for a closer union displayed by some of the most influential ministers and elders, and other members among the Associate Reformed body to combine with

the Presbyterians. Eventually the measure was proposed with ecclesiastical formality; and after considerable negotiation, a large portion of the Associate Reformed Synod resolved upon that measure. That course produced a collision among them. The party who wished to unite with the other Presbyterians embodied themselves with the larger community in 1822; but their proceeding was attended by subsequent embarrassment. It involved the two denominations in litigation, which was not compromised, until after a vexatious dispute that continued during several years, and which terminated their ecclesiastical "correspondence and union."

In many aspects the disruption of the American Presbyterians which occurred in 1838, is one of the most interesting occurrences in the religious annals of the western continent. The narrative of the successive events which finally produced the separation of the conflicting parties, with their organization into two distinct communities, both bearing but one name, and both claiming to be the genuine integral body which had been subdivided, would combine a very instructive chapter of ecclesiastical history.

The collision ostensibly included two principal topics of controversy—*didactic theology*, and *church government and discipline*.

Prior to the year 1830, some laxity respecting the admission of ministers had been displayed by some of the presbyteries, thereby opening a wide gate for polemical disputation. But at that period the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia called Mr. Barnes, then minister of the church at Morristown, to be their pastor. The case was submitted to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, at their meeting in April, 1830.

A long discussion ensued, which involved both theological doctrines and also points of discipline in reference to the correlate rights and duties of the presbyteries. The origin of the debate was a sermon previously published by Mr. Barnes, entitled "The Way of Salvation," to which objections were made, that it promulged opinions adverse to the Presbyterian "Confession of Faith and Catechisms." The call, however, finally was admitted, accompanied by a protest signed by twelve members; and the usual formalities with the Presbytery of Elizabethtown having been fulfilled, Mr. Barnes became the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.

A "complaint" was made to the Synod of Philadelphia by the minority of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, based on their protest of the preceding April; and after the consideration of the whole subject, the synod, by a decisive majority, referred the examination of the sermon by Mr. Barnes, entitled "The Way of Salvation," with the cognate topics, to the presbytery. That body, in November, 1830, complied with the synodical direction: announced their disapprobation of the doctrines promulged in the sermon, and appointed a committee to visit and confer with Mr. Barnes, thereby to remove the difficulties which existed among them.

Moreover, another subject of contention had arisen, respecting the admission of persons into the Presbytery of Philadelphia. A "complaint" against the rule of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, enforcing an examination of all persons who desired admission into that body was presented to the synod, who referred that subject to the General Assembly of 1832, with a protest by twenty-two ministers.

To accommodate Mr. Barnes, and those who sustained him, the Assembly constituted the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia; which act the synod resisted as unconstitutional, and refused to enrol the members as part of the synod at their next meeting; which produced new "complaints, protests, and remonstrances," for review by the General Assembly of 1833.

The General Assembly of the year 1833, reversed the proceedings of the Synod of Philadelphia, by confirming the acts of the previous year; which brought up the whole controversy before the synod at their annual meeting. In the interim, a new principle of presbyterial consociation had been announced and acted on, by a departure from the usual geographical limits for presbyteries. It was denominated, in polemic technology, "elective affinity." The synod annulled the proceeding of the Assembly, and having dissolved the then Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, and

combined the members with their old associates, proceeded to sever the whole original presbytery by a geographical line, drawn from east to west through Market Street, in the city of Philadelphia. At the same meeting of the synod a "Protest and Complaint" against the rule respecting the examination of ministers or licentiates, desiring admission into the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the synodical virtual approbation of that rule, were recorded for transmission to the General Assembly of 1834. The synod, however, had introduced another subject of conflict, by the formation of *their* new presbytery: so that there existed the *Second* Presbytery of Philadelphia, organized by the General Assembly, and the *Second* Presbytery constituted by the synod. About the same time the Synods of Cincinnati and Pittsburg formally interfered in the collision, by impugning the proceedings of the General Assembly in reference to the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

The vacillating course of the General Assembly during some years, with the various attempts to compromise, as either of the parties seemed to acquire the preponderance, — for the actual division among the ministers and churches was avowed—constantly augmented the strife in pungency and amplitude. To place the matter in a form which could not be evaded, Dr. Junkin, of the Presbytery of Newton, directly charged Mr. Barnes with holding erroneous opinions, as declared especially in his "Notes on the Romans." The case occupied the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia for some days, when that ecclesiastical body acquitted Mr. Barnes of "having taught any dangerous errors or heresies contrary to the Word of God," and the Confession of Faith and Catechisms. From that decision Dr. Junkin appealed to the Synod of Philadelphia who met in 1835. Prior to that period, the Synod of Delaware, which had been erected by the Assembly to include the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, was dissolved, and that presbytery was re-incorporated with the Synod of Philadelphia.

When Dr. Junkin's appeal came before the synod, according to the constitutional rule, the record of the case made by the presbytery appealed from, was required. They refused to submit the original copy of the proceedings to the synod. The synod, however, proceeded with the investigation upon the proofs that the detail of the charges, evidence, and proceedings laid before them, was an authentic copy of the presbyterial record. Mr. Barnes refused to appear in his own defence, upon the plea that as the presbytery to which he belonged, and who had acquitted him, would not produce their "attested record" of the proceedings in his case, the trial, "whatever might be the issue," must be unconstitutional. After nearly three days' discussion, the synod *reversed* the decision of the Second Presbytery in the case of Mr. Barnes, "as contrary to truth and righteousness," and declared, that the errors alleged were contrary to the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church, and that they contravened the system of truth set forth in the word of God; and they suspended Mr. Barnes from the functions of the gospel ministry. Against which decision, Mr. Barnes entered his complaint and appeal to the General Assembly of 1836.

The synod then dissolved the *Second* Presbytery of Philadelphia, which had been organized by the General Assembly, and also the Presbytery of Wilmington.

The General Assembly met in 1836, and those various "appeals," "complaints," and "protests," were discussed. That body rescinded all the acts of the Synod of Philadelphia—they absolved Mr. Barnes from the censure and suspension pronounced by the Synod of Philadelphia. They erected their former Second Presbytery anew, as the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia—they restored the Presbytery of Wilmington—and they virtually proclaimed, that the positions avowed by Mr. Barnes are evangelical, and consistent with the Presbyterian Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

The alienation between the two parties had constantly been increasing; but after the proceedings of the Synod of Philadelphia in 1835, and the measures of the General Assembly of 1836, it was manifest, that a decisive struggle would be made at the meeting of the General Assembly in 1837. The *strict* interpreters of the Confession of Faith had been in a

minority of the Assembly in the years 1831, 2, 3, 4, and 1836. They therefore invited a convention to meet in Philadelphia, a week anterior to the opening of the General Assembly of 1837. The convention included one hundred and twenty-four members, most of whom also were delegates to the Assembly, and they continued in session until the General Assembly was organized. To that body the convention transmitted the result of their deliberations in a document entitled their "Testimony and Memorial." They bear testimony—

I. Against *sixteen* doctrinal errors.

II. Against *ten* departures from Presbyterian order.

III. Against *five* declensions in Christian discipline.

They emphatically declared, in reference to the distracted church, among ministers and people, that mutual confidence is gone, and is not to be restored by temporizing measures.

IV. They then propose the "Method of Reform."

1. The immediate abrogation of the "Plan of Union" with Congregationalists, adopted in 1801.

2. The discontinuance of the American Home Missionary, and American Education Societies.

3. The severance of all churches, presbyteries, and synods, which are not strictly organized on Presbyterian principles.

4. The examination of all licentiates and ministers on theology and church government; and the requirement of an "explicit adoption of the Confession of Faith and form of Government."

5. The separation from the Presbyterian Church of all presbyteries and synods, which are known to consist chiefly of unsound or disorderly members.

6. A *caveat* to be sent to all the national societies respecting their agents, that they should not interfere with the order and principles of the Presbyterian churches.*

The General Assembly of 1837, met, and, the adherents of the Convention having a decisive majority in that body, promptly acceded to the requests of the Memorial. They abrogated the "Plan of Union" between Presbyterians and

* *Doctrinal Errors.*—The minute specification of the disputed themes of theology was reserved for this point, because the "Testimony and Memorial" of 1837, constituted the formal basis of the proceedings in the Assembly of that year; and also because the catalogue comprises the objections included in the protest offered to the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in April, 1830; the "errors" enumerated in the western memorial of 1834; and the charges of Dr. Junkin, in 1835.

The Convention of 1837 thus announce—

We hereby set forth in order some of the doctrinal errors, against which we bear testimony.

I. God would have been glad to prevent the existence of sin in our world, but was not able, without destroying the moral agency of man; or, that for aught which appears in the Bible to the contrary, sin is incidental to any wise moral system.

II. Election to eternal life is founded on a foresight of faith and obedience.

III. We have no more to do with the first sin of Adam, than with the sins of any other parent.

IV. Infants come into the world as free from moral defilement, as was Adam, when he was created.

V. Infants sustain the same relation to the moral government of God in this world as brute animals, and their sufferings and death are to be accounted for, on the same principle as those of brutes, and not by any means to be considered as penal.

VI. There is no other original sin than the fact that all the posterity of Adam, though by nature innocent, or possessed of no moral character, will always begin to sin when they begin to exercise moral agency. Original sin does not include a sinful bias of the human mind, and a just exposure to penal suffering. There is no evidence in scripture, that infants, in order to salvation, do need redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

VII. The doctrine of imputation, whether of the guilt of Adam's sin, or of the righteousness of Christ, has no foundation in the word of God, and is both unjust and absurd.

VIII. The sufferings and death of Christ were not truly vicarious and penal, but symbolical, governmental, and instructive only.

IX. The impenitent sinner by nature, and independently of the renewing influence or almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, is in full possession of all the ability necessary to a full compliance with all the commands of God.

X. Christ never intercedes for any but those who are actually united to him by faith; or Christ does not intercede for the elect until after their regeneration.

XI. Saving faith is the mere belief of the

Congregationalists. They adjudged that the four synods of Genessee, Geneva, Utica, and the Western Reserve were not "constituent parts" of the Presbyterian Church. The operations of the American Home Missionary, and of the American Education Societies were excluded from their churches, and the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia was dissolved.

The succeeding twelve months were devoted by both parties to preparation for the Assembly of 1838. By custom it devolves upon the permanent and stated clerks to make up the list of the members, who present their commissions for that purpose, anterior to the commencement of the sessions. These officers omitted all reference to the delegates from the presbyteries comprised in the four synods which had been expunged from the ecclesiastical statistics by the previous Assembly. When the motion was made that the commissions from these presbyteries should be received, the moderator refused to recognize the motion, or the parties on whose behalf it was made. After a short interval of disorder, the minority, (including both the advocates of the synods who were excluded by the Assembly of 1837, and the commissioners from those synods,) united in disclaiming the authority of the moderator, and proceeded to organize by themselves; and having elected another moderator and clerks, the whole of the dissentients from the acts of the Assembly, in 1837, immediately withdrew, in a body, to the edifice occupied by the First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.

The majority retained their seats until the temporary confusion ceased, when they proceeded to their ecclesiastical business according to the prescribed ordinary forms.

The trustees and other corporate bodies among the Presbyterians possess much valuable property, for their seminaries and missionary institutions. Some time after the separation in 1838, had been consummated, the question, in whom that property was legally vested, was carried into the civil courts of Pennsylvania, in which state the trustees were incorporated. The Trustees of the General Assembly are elected by the General Assembly, who may change one-third of the number every year. The seceding Assembly elected one-third of the board as new members. When they claimed their seats at the board they were refused admission. A suit, therefore, was commenced, to obtain possession of the offices from which, as they contended, they were illegally excluded. The cause excited intense interest, and was primarily decided in favor of the claimants; for the true question litigated was this: Was the body who refused to acknowledge the four several synods the true Assembly of the Presbyterian Church? An appeal to the Supreme

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word of God, and not a grace of the Holy Spirit.

XII. Regeneration is the act of the sinner himself, and it consists in a change of his governing purpose, which he himself must produce, and which is the result, not of any direct influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart, but chiefly of a persuasive exhibition of the truth, analogous to the influence which one man exerts over the mind of another; or regeneration is not an instantaneous act, but a progressive work.

XIII. God has done all that *he can do* for the salvation of all men, and man himself must do the rest.

XIV. God cannot exert such influence on the minds of men, as shall make it certain that they will choose and act in a particular manner, without impairing their moral agency.

XV. The righteousness of Christ is not the sole ground of the sinner's acceptance with God; and in no sense does the righteousness of Christ become ours.

XVI. The reason why some differ from others in regard to their reception of the gospel is, that they make themselves to differ.

The Convention pronounced these "errors unscriptural, radical, and highly dangerous," which in "their ultimate tendency, subvert the foundation of Christian hope, and destroy the souls of men."

The Convention, on church order and discipline, particularly specified as practices of which they complained: The formation of presbyteries founded on doctrinal repulsions as affinities. The refusal of presbyteries to examine their ministers. The licensing and ordination of men unfit for want of qualification, and who deny fundamental principles of truth. The needless ordination of evangelists without any pastoral relation. The want of discipline respecting gross acknowledged errors. The number of ministers abandoning their duties for secular employments, in violation of their vows. The disorderly meetings of members and others, thereby exciting discord and contention among the churches.

Court was entered from the adjudication of the inferior tribunal. The superior court reversed the sentence of the lower court; and granted a new trial, with a construction of the law which in effect precluded the plaintiffs from obtaining their object, and the suit was withdrawn. Thus, so far as the legal decision in Pennsylvania operates, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States are recognised as that body, represented by their trustees who, in law, still hold that title, with its common property.

The effervescence of the strife now has almost disappeared; and the two bodies of American Presbyterians are actively pursuing their own course. According to their statistical returns, they have increased during the six years from their separation, nearly *one-third* in actual numbers. Moreover, when we contrast the diversified additional instrumentalities to promote the Redeemer's kingdom, which have been put in operation by them, since their division in 1838; it is manifest, that, in capacity for the Lord's work, they have doubled their usefulness and enterprise.

Thus, from the smallest beginnings, when the little companies of the "Presbyterian Pilgrims" who first came to America, as it were, but with a "staff," here laid the foundations of this church, and reared it under manifold difficulties and annoyances, encountering obloquy and even persecutions: it has grown under the protection and favor of Providence, oft sharing the dews of the Holy Spirit, enlarging its borders in this genial land, and exerting a happy influence on the world, until now it has "become two bands."

Although not of this distinct denomination, the Reformed Dutch and German Reformed Churches in the United States, are Presbyterian and Calvinistic. Their standards of doctrine are the Articles of the Synod of Dort and the Heidelberg Catechism. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, or Covenanters, the Associate Church, and the Associate Reformed Church, and the body which separated from us in 1838, adopt the Westminster Standards as the symbols of their faith and order;—the last specified body having the same constitution as the Presbyterian Church, with the exceptions of the restriction which they have since put to the powers of the General Assembly, and of the substitution of triennial for annual General Assemblies.

And all these distinct denominations, including the Cumberland Presbyterians, and some smaller denominations, although for various causes they are arranged in separate bodies, compose a great Presbyterian family in the United States, which comprises upwards of *four thousand* ministers and nearly *six thousand* churches, and comprehends a population of three or four millions who, either as communicants or worshippers, are associated with them.

III.—STATISTICAL.

According to the statistical tables, appended to the minutes of the General Assembly, for 1843, the Presbyterian Church in the United States comprises 19 synods, or 105 presbyteries, 1434 ministers, 183 licentiates, 314 candidates for the ministry, 2092 churches, and 159,137 members in communion.

The existing institutions of the Presbyterian Church must be concisely described. They may generally be divided into those connected with education, or literature, or missions.

Education.—This department comprises colleges, theological seminaries, and the "Board of Education."

Colleges.—The establishments of learning at the following places, although not absolutely connected with, or directly controlled by Presbyterians exclusively, are generally considered as under their supervision, or are chiefly sustained by them:

New York.—Hamilton College; Union College, at Schenectady; New York University.

New Jersey.—Nassau Hall, at Princeton.

Pennsylvania.—Jefferson, at Cannonsburg; Washington College; La Fayette, at Easton.

Virginia.—Hampden Sidney, in Prince Edward county; Washington, at Lexington.

North Carolina.—University of North Carolina, at Chapel Hill; Davidson, at Mecklenburg.

South Carolina.—South Carolina, at Columbia.

Tennessee.—University of Nashville.
Kentucky.—Centre, at Danville.
Ohio.—Miami University, at Oxford.
Indiana.—South Hanover College.

Theological Seminaries.—At Princeton, New Jersey; Western, at Allegheny, Pennsylvania; Union, in Prince Edward county, Virginia; Southern, at Columbia, South Carolina; Indiana, at New Albany, Indiana.

Board of Education. — The formal commencement of the work of education for the ministry, was the result of the proceedings of the General Assembly in 1806, when that duty was assigned to each presbytery. The inefficiency of the system induced the General Assembly, in 1819, to form the "Board of Education;" but during the interval until 1829, there was not the adequate result which was necessary to supply the demands for ministers. A new organization was then made; and the consequence has been manifested in a large augmentation of the funds, and a proportionate increase in the number of theological students maintained during their preparatory course.

Thirteen hundred and fifty young men have been assisted in their studies for the gospel ministry. Two-thirds of the foreign missionaries, and nearly one-half of the domestic missionaries, with a large proportion of the pastors of the Presbyterian churches at this time, have been introduced to the ministry through the aid of the "Board of Education."

Literature. — This department comprises the miscellaneous publications, which are expressly devoted to promulge the doctrinal principles, and to defend the government and discipline of the Presbyterian churches.

There is a quarterly periodical, by Presbyterian writers, entitled the Biblical Repertory and Theological Review, which is devoted almost exclusively to disquisitions strictly religious, or to those which have a close affinity with them, either on Christian ethics or ecclesiastical history. Several weekly newspapers are issued by them, and very extensively dispersed. The Presbyterian, at Philadelphia; the Presbyterian Advocate, at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania; the Presbyterian of the West, at Springfield, Ohio; the Protestant and Herald, at Frankfort, Kentucky; the Watchman of the South, at Richmond, Virginia; and the Observer, at Charleston, South Carolina.

Board of Publication.—In addition to these miscellanies, the Presbyterians have organized a most important and efficient society, denominated the Presbyterian Board of Publication, which was instituted for the purpose of disseminating standard volumes of theology and ecclesiastical history, and also tracts that elucidate and defend Presbyterianism. This board, which is elected by the General Assembly, has printed nearly fifty tracts, doctrinal, ritual, on Popery, historical, and for youth.

Nearly *one hundred and thirty* works have already been issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, which may thus be classified: Biographical, nineteen; devotional, eight; doctrinal, twenty; experimental, seventeen; historical, seventeen; polemical, sixteen; practical, five; prophetic, five; and works adapted for youth, eighteen. The benign fruits, which this powerful typographical machinery is producing, can be estimated only by remembering the moderate price at which the works are sold, and the high character of the volumes themselves, a few of which are enumerated in the order in which they originally were published.

Brooks's Mute Christian; Halyburton's Great Concern; Life of John Knox; Charnock's Discourses on Regeneration; Guthrie's Christian's Great Interests; Lime Street Lectures; Bradbury's Mystery of Godliness; Flavel's Divine Conduct; Charnock's Discourses on the Attributes of God; Owen on the Holy Spirit; Charnock on Christ Crucified; Owen on Justification; Calvin's Institutes, translated by John Allen; Owen on Indwelling Sin; Sibbs's Souls' Conflict; Lorimer's History of the French Protestants; McCrie's History of the Reformation in Italy and Spain; the British Reformers, with their Lives, twelve volumes; Daillie's Use of the Fathers; Mead's Almost Christian; Charlotte Elizabeth's English Martyrology, and the Lives of the British Reformers, separate from their writings.

The beneficial influence, under the divine auspices, which must result from the unrestricted dissemination of these and

similar invaluable Christian productions, throughout the Republic, and especially among the *Household of Faith*, far transcends our utmost imagination; and the exhilarating anticipation cannot be otherwise expressed, than in the Psalmist's urgent petition, "O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity!" Amen.

Missions.—This portion of the philanthropic labors of the Presbyterian churches is conducted by two distinct agencies and boards of managers.

Domestic.—The primary arrangements for Home Missions, under the committee appointed by the General Assembly, were comparatively restricted in extent and languid in their operations; until in 1828, the present efficient system was adopted, through which "there has been a gradual but constant increase in the number of missionaries, the amount of funds collected, the interest excited, and the good accomplished." Three hundred missionaries are now employed, while the prospect of usefulness in spreading the gospel never was more promising than at the present period. Signal success already has attended the work under the divine blessing; and every heart must exult in the glorious prospect, that "the righteousness" of Zion "shall go forth as brightness," and "the salvation" of Jerusalem "as the lamp that burneth."

Foreign.—"The first mission to the heathen, established by the Presbyterian Church, was among the Indians on Long Island, in the year 1741. David Brainard was the second missionary. His ordination took place in the year 1744, and the fields of his remarkable labors were at the forks of the Delaware, on the borders of the Susquehanna, and at Crossweeks in New Jersey. From that period, increasing attention was given to this great subject, and various missionary societies were formed in which Presbyterians largely participated. This was particularly the case in the United Foreign Missionary Society, which after a brief career was eventually merged in the 'American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.'"

Notwithstanding, many Presbyterians were solicitous that their own churches should separately engage in the missionary work. In consequence of which, "In the year 1831, a determined and active effort was made by the Synod of Pittsburg, to awaken the church to a sense of her duty in this respect, by the organization of the 'Western Foreign Missionary Society.' This society met with so much favor, that the General Assembly in 1835, resolved to engage the whole church in an enterprise worthy of her character and resources. The 'Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions,' was organized in the year 1837, under favorable auspices, and to it was made an entire transfer of all that pertained to the Western Foreign Missionary Society."

"The experiment has succeeded, and the smiles of God have rested on that institution. Flourishing missions have been established among various tribes of American Indians, in Western Africa, Northern India, and China, and all the operations are carried on with great ability."

In Northern India, there is a synod of American missionaries in connection with the General Assembly; comprising the Presbytery of Allahabad, of six ministers—the Presbytery of Furrukabad, of four ministers—and the Presbytery of Lodiana, of five ministers. The Board of Missions issues two monthly periodicals, the "Missionary Chronicle," and the "Foreign Missionary;" which are extensively dispersed, and effectually sustain the solicitude that is experienced to "send out the light and the truth."

The foregoing article claims to be but little more than an authentic compilation. The writer has freely copied and incorporated with his own language, the language of such of his authorities as suited his purpose, without specific notice. He takes this place to acknowledge his obligations of this sort to the authorities on which he has thus drawn, viz: The Confession of Faith; Edinburgh Encyclopædia; Miller's Christian Ministry, and Presbyterianism; Histories of the Westminster Assembly, by Hetherington, and by the Presbyterian Board of Publication; and Hodge's Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church. He has also received very essential aid from the Rev. George Bourne, in the sedulous explora-

tions of the official documents and records of the Presbyterian Church, and other reliable authorities, and in the arrangement and principal composition of that part of the historical sketch which commences with the formation of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and in the preparation of the statistical department.

HISTORY

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY JOEL PARKER, D.D.

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The character and peculiarities of the Presbyterian Church, may be learned from the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: containing the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, and the Directory for the worship of God; together with the Plan of Government and Discipline as amended and ratified by the General Assembly at their session in the first Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, in May, 1840, and the annals of the church found in the published reports of the proceedings of its ecclesiastical judicatories. This church does not differ very materially in doctrine and worship, or in ecclesiastical government and order, from any of the great family of anti-prelatical churches that sprung from the Reformation, and which are commonly termed Calvinistic.

It acknowledges no authority in things pertaining to the doctrines and duties of the Christian Church, but the revealed will of God as found in the sacred Scriptures. It maintains—

That God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrine and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or, beside it in matters of faith, or worship; that the rights of private judgment in all matters, that respect religion, are universal and inalienable, and that no religious constitution ought to be aided by the civil powers farther than may be necessary for protection and security, and at the same time be equal and common to all others.

That in perfect consistency with the above principle of common right, every Christian church, or union, or association of particular churches, is entitled to declare the terms of admission into its communion, and the qualifications of its ministers and members, as well as the whole system of its internal government which Christ hath appointed; that in the exercise of this right, they may, notwithstanding, err in making the terms of communion either too lax or too narrow; yet, even in this case, they do not infringe upon the liberty or the rights of others, but only make an improper use of their own.

That our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation of truth and duty; and, that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole church, in whose