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P L E A
FOR
VOLUNTARY SOCIETIES,
AND A
D E F E N C E
OF THE
DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1836,
AGAINST THE STRICTURES OF THE
PRINCETON REVIEWERS AND OTHERS.

BY A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY.

NEW-YORK:
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PREFATORY REMARKS.

SINCE the rising of the last *General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, the decisions of that body, on the subject of *Foreign Missions*, and in the case of the *Rev. Albert Barnes*, have been assailed by a multitude of anonymous writers, whose communications have been addressed to the public every week through the "*Presbyterian*," published in Philadelphia, the "*Pittsburgh Herald*," the "*Western Presbyterian Herald*," of Louisville, Kentucky, and other papers under the control of the members and friends of the minority of the Assembly. Among these, one QUARTERLY, the "*Biblical Repertory and Theological Review, conducted by an Association of Gentlemen in Princeton*," early took the field. Most of their strictures have been republished in the above papers and widely circulated. In the mean time, a *secret* "CIRCULAR" was early prepared and addressed to numerous individuals of the disaffected party, inviting their attention to the question of a division of the Church and other schismatical measures. This *Circular* was signed by the Rev. Drs. Phillips and

McElroy and Messrs. Potts and Krebs, ministers, and Messrs. Rankin, Auchincloss and Lenox, elders, of New-York, Rev. Dr. Breckinridge, (one of the "*Gentlemen in Princeton*," and a Professor in the Theological Seminary there,) the Rev. Dr. McDowell, Secretary of the Assembly's Board of Missions, and the Rev. Mr. McFarland, Secretary of the Assembly's Board of Education, both of Philadelphia. These gentlemen claim to be a committee of the minority of the last General Assembly, and to have been appointed in Pittsburgh, at a *confidential* meeting held immediately after the dissolution of the Assembly. The duty assigned them, it appears, was "to prepare and circulate a suitable publication on the state of the Church." They have, accordingly, more recently, published a *Pamphlet* of forty-one pages, over their own signatures, entitled an "*An Address to the Ministers, Elders and Members of the Presbyterian church in the United States.*" In this address they declare, for reasons which they urge as important, that, "whatever else may be dark, this is clear, *we cannot continue in the same body.*" And again, "*In some way or other, these men*" (the majority of the last Assembly and the members of the Presbyteries and churches which they represent,) "**MUST BE SEPARATED FROM US.**" In what manner this is to be effected, they do not venture to announce. It is apparent, however, from the urgency with which they invite their partizans to the next General Assembly, that they intend, by the influence of their publications and their private correspondence, to procure a majority in that body, and to exclude the members and friends of the majority of the

last Assembly. Though we have not the slightest apprehension that such a result will be found practicable, we do expect that the extensively concerted measures of these gentlemen, conducted with the industry and decision, which have marked their progress hitherto, (as far as it has been developed,) will produce a state of feeling adverse to that peace and co-operation in every good work, which we are sure is desired by a large majority of the ministers and members of our church. To prevent, as far as possible, the occurrence of this unfriendly state of feeling is our earnest wish, and shall be our endeavor. For this purpose, however, we have no party organization, such as the above, no committees of publication or of correspondence. We have felt and do still cherish a calm security in the protection of the Great Head of the church. But it has appeared to the writer of the following pages, and to several of his valued brethren with whom he has conferred, that the history of the measures proposed to the last Assembly, and the reasons of its decisions, ought to be briefly exhibited and presented, in a convenient form, to the public, that the members of our extended communion, and the friends of missions generally, may have in their hands the means of refuting the groundless assumptions and false reasonings of those who would "*cause divisions*" among us.

In accomplishing this work we have presented the most important documents, in their order, and have found ourselves under the necessity of controverting several of the statements of those by whom the decisions of the Assembly have been assailed. We regret the truth of the remark, however, that many of the



statements and objections of our opponents have been presented and urged in a style of vulgarity and of personal abuse altogether unworthy of the religious press. This has been especially the case with the productions of the numerous editorial and anonymous writers in the newspapers before named. We cannot regard it our duty, therefore, to meet the many insinuations, inuendoes and reckless assaults upon individual character, in which they have indulged. We know that these assaults are as undeserved by us, as they are unworthy of those who make them; and to attempt their refutation would lead us into a mode of warfare, for which we confess ourselves ill adapted, and the consequences of which, in most cases, are such as good men deplore. Nor is this necessary. Most of the statements and arguments, on which the minority of the Assembly and their friends have urged their appeal to the public, are found condensed, and in a somewhat less objectionable style in the "*Biblical Repertory*." Our remarks, therefore, so far as they are intended to meet the positions assumed by our opponents, will be principally confined to the statements and reasonings of the conductors of that *Periodical*.

NEW-YORK, }
Oct. 1836. }

CHAPTER I.

A PLEA FOR VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE
WORK OF MISSIONS. GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

It is the revealed purpose of God to evangelize the world by the instrumentality of his church; and both prophecies and providential signs indicate that the time is at hand for the accomplishment of this glorious event. The *twelve hundred and sixty* prophetic years are drawing to a close; and the day of vengeance is in his heart, because the year of his redeemed is come. The overturnings, which are to bring down the mountains and exalt the vallies, have commenced. The sun is darkened and the moon is blood; and the stars of heaven fall. All the forms of governmental opposition to the gospel are tottering. Pagan, Mahometan and Papal governments are in their dotage; and it is remarkable that, just at this time, christianity, with the vigor of a renewed youth, and armed with all the facilities of modern science, arts, wealth and enterprise, is organizing her legions for the last onset and for certain victory.

The church, whose instrumental agency is to achieve the emancipation of the world from bondage and its joyful reconciliation to God, is composed of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus,—all converted men, associated by a public profession and covenants, under whatever form, for the maintainance of the worship

of God and for the advancement of his cause. It is wholly a spiritual society, for a spiritual work.

This universal church of Christ exists elementarily in local organizations, with their members and officers for purposes of edification, worship and discipline. But for more general purposes, and especially for those aggressive movements which are necessary for the subjugation of the world to Christ, *associated* action is indispensable. The work to be accomplished is not only the most important, but the most arduous ever committed to men,—requiring a greater amount of cultivated intellect, glowing zeal, exuberent munificence, practical wisdom, self-denying toil and effectual prayer, than the world has ever seen.

The foregoing positions, it is believed, will be admitted; but the manner in which the associated energies of the church shall be applied to advance, with the greatest safety, efficiency and success, the work of missions, has become a subject of deep and general interest, and, in our own church, a subject of no small difficulty. A difference of opinion has arisen, attended with strong and excited feeling, threatening even a division of the church.

On the one hand, a large majority of those who have, hitherto, been most actively engaged in promoting the cause of missions, and other objects of christian philanthropy, have regarded themselves as perfectly free to associate, for these purposes, in any manner which might seem best adapted to the object. The right of individual property being secured to them by the principles of the Bible, as well as the laws of the land, they have supposed that, by the

laws of Christ's house, they possess entire personal liberty, and are under solemn obligations, to dispose of it according to their best discretion, for useful purposes. Their associations for such purposes have, accordingly, been free and voluntary, unsupported by civil or ecclesiastical power. Such are most of the great benevolent societies of this country, the Bible, the Tract, the Sunday School, the Education, the Home and Foreign Missionary and Temperance societies. The supporters of these institutions have been accustomed to discriminate between those duties which are appropriate to the official functionaries of the church, such as the preservation of doctrinal purity, the maintainance of discipline, the ordination and government of the ministry, &c., and those personal duties which are submitted to the discretion of individual christians. To the latter class, in their view, belong the contribution and disbursement of money for the support of missions and other purposes of benevolence; and in the exercise of their individual discretion, guided by the light of God's countenance and favor, they have voluntarily associated in the missionary societies above named, whose operations are conducted by boards of trust, chosen annually for the single purposes of exploring and supplying, to the extent of the means placed at their disposal, the wants of the destitute. These boards are accountable only to the christian community, whose servants they are, and are dependent on their faithful and successful exertions for public confidence and patronage. They have no concern with the licensing or government of the ministry, nor with any thing that appertains to the authority of church

courts, but are helpers of the church, as faithful members, by employing and sustaining such missionaries only as are approved by the proper judicatories and pronounced qualified for their work.

On the other hand, it has, of late, become the opinion of many in our communion, that missionary efforts for the supply of the destitute and the conversion of the world ought to be submitted to the supervision and control of the judicatories of the church, and that the authority of these bodies to organize and direct such operations is the same as that which they possess for the preservation of doctrine and the maintainance of discipline. They maintain that the "*funds*" of the members of the church, "by the laws of all social order, ought to come into the treasury of the body to which its possessors belong,"* and that all the secular and financial labor involved in the work of missions ought to be determined on and directed by the church, represented in her judicatories; that not only the missionaries, but also the boards of trust and agencies ought all to depend, for their being and continuance, upon the suffrage of the church, thus represented. In accommodation to these views, (though they are entertained, as we believe, by only a respectable minority of the church,) the existing Boards of Missions and of Education of the General Assembly have been formed. These are called "ecclesiastical or church organizations," and it is between the friends of these boards and the friends and supporters of the "Voluntary Societies" before named that a dispute has arisen.

* See "Memorial of the Pittsburgh Convention," 1835.

For their aversion to church organizations for missionary purposes, and their preference of voluntary societies, the friends of the latter offer to the consideration of their brethren the following reasons.

1. For church courts to assume the control and direction of missionary operations and disbursements is an attempt to subject to ecclesiastical legislation that which the Great Head of the church has left to the unbiased decision of every man's conscience. Though Jesus Christ has made it the duty of every man to give as God has prospered him, he has not authorized any ecclesiastical tribunal to assess the amount of each one's contribution, nor to prescribe the objects or the modes of its administration. Almsgiving, whether for the alleviation of distress or the conversion of the world, is one of those relative duties which no human legislation can enforce. According to the definition of Dr. Paley, it is "a duty of imperfect obligation," which cannot be measured or regulated by civil or canon law. If this is admitted, (and it cannot be denied,) then is the claim of a divinely instituted organization for the above purposes precluded; for there cannot be a perfect freedom of discretion in regard to the amount and mode of giving, in the face of a divine prescription fixing both the mode and the channel of our contributions.

2. There is no enactment in the Bible, enjoining it on the church, as such, in her organized form, by her judicatories, to evangelize the world. // ?

To the whole church, as such, certainly no such command was given, for the whole church, by a visible Catholic church organization, to prosecute the work of missions. From the beginning, for three

hundred years, the church was in the fire of unremitted persecution, and could not act in any such visible and methodical manner. And when she exchanged persecution for the patronage of a powerful civil government, she was too extensive to act as one body, even for the preservation of doctrine and of salutary discipline. There is, indeed, upon sacred record, no chartered organization of the whole church, with her officers and measures, and her supreme judicatory, for the performance of any work. The claim of the Papal church to universal authority, as one visible, organized community, is regarded by all Protestants as a fiction, and the evils of its attempted administration are a warning to all Protestant churches to resist the very beginnings of principles which have spread darkness and ruin over so many ages and countries.

When our brethren, therefore, claim that the church, as such, is bound to conduct the work of missions, by her judicatories, they cannot mean the whole church, but only that each denomination, by itself, is thus bound. But has God organized the several denominations, and enjoined it on each to enterprize the propagation of the gospel in its church form? Where is the distinctive organization of each recorded, and where the direction that each shall perform its labors of love in its distinctive form as a church? Whence come separations, and divisions and sectarian organizations? Is God the author of denominational churches? And has he *forbidden* them to volunteer, and mingle their common charities and prayers for the conversion of the world? Has he commanded them to march under separate banners, and do what-

ever they do ecclesiastically, each denomination by itself, and each by the authority of its own church courts? Is it any where ordained in the Bible that the Episcopal, the Baptist, or the Methodist church in its distinctive character, as a church, shall prosecute the work of missions? Where then is the authority or the obligation binding the Presbyterian church to do it in this particular way?

Again. Are the higher judicatories of our church of divine appointment? Were there no General Assembly and no Synods, would not the Presbyterian church exist in her local churches and her Presbyteries? Where, then, is the command that the Presbyterian church shall propogate the gospel by the intervention and under the administration and control of the General Assembly? There is no such command, and no revealed direction specifying at all the manner in which the church shall send out her energies for the conversion of the world. This is left open for the free exercise of discretion and preference.

Nor is it necessary that the work should be done by the church, in her ecclesiastical organization, in order to its being done *by the church*, and in a manner acceptable to God. What is the church, but the collective body of Christ's disciples? And what are the conscience and the faith of the church, but the conscience and the faith of her individual members? What then are the duties of the church, but the duties of the individuals who constitute it? Now, it is but a small portion of the duties which the members of the church are bound to perform, that they can accomplish through the church ecclesiastically. It is the duty of the church to build houses for the wor-

ship of God, but must she do this ecclesiastically, by her Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, or General Assembly? And if she does it by the discreet influence of her members, availing themselves, by association, of the contributions of others, does she not fulfill her obligation? So she must build school-houses and colleges, and become the light of the world and the salt of the earth; and if, in any lawful way, she secures these results, will not God approve of her action, as a fulfillment of the obligation of the *church, as such*? Why, then, may she not, in the same free and voluntary manner, collect and disburse money for the support of duly authorized ministers, both at home and abroad? In what other manner did the primitive church propagate the gospel? Did she do it by her judicatories? Where did her General Assembly meet, and where were her boards of trust, to act in the name of this body? She had funds, it is true, for the relief of the poor, but even these were too secular for her ministers to be concerned with, and an order of men was appointed to superintend the administration of this charity. There was no board of missions for the heathen, appointed by the judicatories of the church;—no central treasury for the funds of the church. Yet the Acts of the Apostles exhibit the missionary enterprise prosecuted by individual effort and voluntary association with more vigor and success than has marked its progress at any subsequent period.

The church, then, may prosecute the work of missions, as a church, though she do it wholly by voluntary associations, without the interposition of any of her judicatories. All which heaven has laid

on the church is the responsibility of seeing that the work is done; and this, as we have seen, is the responsibility of her individual members. They are bound also to do it in the best way they can.

We come now to the question of expediency. Is it best that the church, in her endeavors to evangelize the world, should act by her judicatories? We answer—

1. That our church, as such, in her highest court, is not well adapted, by the mode of her organization, to superintend and direct the work of missions, either faithfully or efficiently. The members of the General Assembly come from great distances—are changed, for the most part, every year—are not familiar with the history and policy of the work; and they sit so short a time, and are encumbered with so much other business, that they can only hear reports and adopt them on the ground of their general confidence in their Boards of Trust, without any possible opportunity for a careful and thorough examination of their proceedings. Yet the authority and sanction of the Assembly stands between these Boards and the public, to shield them from the watchful scrutiny of others. We maintain, therefore—

2. That Boards, thus constituted, and acting under so powerful a sanction of what is so little understood, are the most irresponsible bodies that could well be devised. They are responsible to the public at large only through the General Assembly, and that body gathered from all parts of the land—changing every year—remaining in session only a few days—pressed, and vexed, and agitated, by a great variety of other business—would, it is presumed, never have been

selected by sagacious business men, as the best constituted body for the safe-keeping and appropriation of large amounts of money, or for the management of great, distant, and complicated financial concerns. And its supervision of such concerns must necessarily be not only imperfect, but, by the sanction which it affords, it must be a hindrance to the quick and healthful action of the public mind in the detection of abuses. How much more perfect and secure, therefore, is the responsibility of Boards appointed by voluntary societies, which stand solely upon their good behaviour, and the well-earned confidence of the community, sustained by the published reports of their doings! These bodies have no intermediate sanction to shield them from the scrutiny of the public, and protect them in the practice of abuses which might otherwise be discovered and exposed.

3. By conducting all her concerns ecclesiastically, the judicatories of the church would be loaded with an amount of property and of secular business, which would much endanger her spirituality. The funds of all her seminaries—her Education Societies—her Home and Foreign Missionary Societies, &c., with all the augmentation of their amount, which the exigencies of this country and the world demand, must be very great, and their management a great concern, which ought not to be, and cannot be, safely, commingled with the spiritual business of the church. The ministration of so much property introduces into church courts the occasions of competition, and the action of a powerful ecclesiastical patronage, which, if it may be wielded for good, may also be perverted to evil. The concentration, therefore, in these courts,

of so much ecclesiastical and pecuniary power, is both inexpedient and perilous. It would present an amount of aliment to ambition, too great to consist with the single eye which should pervade the church of Christ. It was such secular influences, beginning with her union with the state, which once completed the corruption and downfall of the church; and the same causes, though less powerful now, have lost none of their relative potency on our fallen nature.

The General Assembly is an ecclesiastical judicatory, a court for the preservation of doctrine and discipline, holding in her hands the reputation and the ecclesiastical life of the ministry, and, through them, the rights and the peace of the churches. Suppose then, that, in addition to this, it possesses the property and the pecuniary patronage of the whole church, and how tremendous must be the power of this judicatory! Remember, too, that it would still be an elective body, composed every year of new members, liable to such influences as cupidity, ambition and rivalry might engender, and such also as whisperings, and jealousies, and alarms, and public argumentations, and public accusations, and prejudgments, with the aid of secret correspondence and agencies, might produce, and who would not fear before such a power?

4. If we consider also the best means for promoting the unembarrassed and alert action of the church, in the work of missions, we may find occasion to distrust the relative efficiency of formal ecclesiastical organizations for this purpose. In the beginning of these enterprises, it is always difficult to secure a sufficient

amount of zeal and unanimity in the church to *commence* an auspicious effort. Objections and balanced action are incident to extended ecclesiastical bodies, and especially to the representative judicatory of so many bodies as constitute the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church. This is admitted. And do not facts speak on this subject? How long were the voluntary associations of our own and other churches, united, pioneering their way into heathen lands, undermining satan's kingdom and casting down imaginations, before our own church, as such, in her judicatories, had zeal enough either to imitate or to oppose? And is not the light which she now enjoys, as a church, a borrowed light, from orbs rolling around and athwart her path, which possibly had left her rayless and cold to the present hour, had not the zeal of voluntary societies provoked her to love and good works? If there be, therefore, in church organizations, such incidental disqualifications to *commence* the work of missions, can it well be believed that this is heaven's plan, or the best plan, for the prosecution of the work? May not and will not the difficulties which hinder a beginning, hang on the wheels, and clog habitually the celerity and power of their movement? Look at the condition of our own church at the present time. Is it her duty, in the name and by the authority of her highest judicatory, to enter on the work of missions? But, behold the paralyzing influence of that very diversity of conscientious opinions, which renders her united action, in this way, impossible; one year a majority for it, the next, a majority against it, and alienation and strife occasioned by these discrepant views! And what is

the cogent argument, used by our opponents even now, for this mode of operation, but that many churches have, as yet, done little, and will do nothing, unless it be done in this way? And how much will churches, so languid, and thus easily hindered, be likely to do even in this way?

There is, it is believed, an inherent difficulty attendant on efforts to propagate the gospel by the formal agency of extended ecclesiastical organizations, arising from the *vis inertia* and discrepancy of opinion incident to distance, sectional differences and infrequent intercourse. Hence most of the benevolent operations of the new era are the result of voluntary enterprise. The Serampore mission of the Baptists, the London Missionary Society of all denominations, whose hearts were touched with fire from above, and the English Church Missionary Society, so called, are voluntary associations. And what church court, as such, is the parent of the British or the American Bible Society, or the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Education, Sunday School, Seamen's Friend or Temperance societies? Let all these lights of modern times be quenched, excepting those which church courts, as such, have projected, let all the showers now falling be suspended, excepting those which are descending through the agency of church organizations, as such, and how long would it be before the sun of righteousness would reach his meridian, and the harvest of the world be planted, ripened, and ready for the sickle?

On general principles, therefore, as well as from

all past experience, we are constrained to believe that the voluntary, associated action of evangelical christians, as far as it is practicable, is much better suited to the object of the world's conversion, than any form of church organization for this purpose, ever has been or can be.

CHAPTER II.

DEFENCE OF THE DECISIONS OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY OF 1836. ATTEMPTED ORGANIZATION
OF A BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

THE General Assembly, convened in Pittsburgh, May, 1836, was probably the largest Assembly of the kind ever convened in this country. It was composed of 270 members, and lacked only about 30 of being a full representation of the 127 Presbyteries constituting the Presbyterian church of the United States.

The occasions of this unusually large representation are generally understood to have been the interest awakened in the churches by the published proceedings of the last preceding Assembly, proposing the organization of a "*General Assembly's Board of Foreign Missions*," the trial of the Rev. Albert Barnes and his suspension from all the functions of the Gospel ministry by the Synod of Philadelphia, and the Appeal of the Rev. J. L. Wilson, D. D., from the decision of the Synod of Cincinnati in the case of Dr. Beecher. These cases were spread before the public as in the process of preparation for ultimate decision by the General Assembly of 1836. Thus were the ecclesiastical lives of two of our most eminent and useful ministers held in suspense, and the delightful harmony which had characterized the

Foreign Missionary enterprise in former years, was threatened with a permanent interruption, by the measures which had been concerted for the establishment of a separate Board of Foreign Missions, to act in the name, and to represent the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, in this most important interest. The circumstances were such as could not be regarded with indifference by any. To many, the attitude of our ecclesiastical affairs appeared in a high degree alarming. A crisis was approaching, and the churches in every direction were aroused to a sense of their tremendous responsibilities, in regard to the pending questions.

The appeal in the case of Dr. Beecher having been introduced to the Assembly, was, by the advice of the friends of the prosecutor, withdrawn; there being no doubt that the Assembly would sustain the decision of the court below, in commending this distinguished and orthodox minister to the affectionate confidence of all the churches. The other two cases of general interest before named, were submitted to the decision of the Assembly. The discussions on both of these subjects were protracted and able, involving principles of the highest importance to the peace and prosperity of this extended branch of the church of Christ, and to the general cause of Christian missions. It was not to be expected, however, that the decision of questions, arraying on either side the talent, the deep and conscientious preferences, and the great public interests which were involved in these debates, would be satisfactory to all; and it is the privilege of the minority, if they feel themselves oppressed, or regard the decisions of

the majority as in any way injurious, to express their dissatisfaction, and to adopt such measures as they may hope will ultimately correct the evils to which for the present, as a minority, they are bound to submit. Of this privilege, the minority in these cases have availed themselves. They have uttered their complaints to the churches in a variety of forms, which we shall have occasion to notice. They have sounded the note of alarm—have raised the standard of resistance—have predicted, and even threatened a division of the church—and have represented the decisions of the Assembly in aspects so calculated to bewilder and mislead the public mind, that it seems incumbent on the friends of those decisions to disabuse them, by an exhibition of the facts and reasonings on which they were founded. We begin with the

Attempted Organization of a Board of Foreign Missions of the General Assembly.

That the claims of this measure may be fully understood, we give the following sketch of its history.

In the General Assembly of 1835, the "*Committee of Bills and Overtures*" reported an overture in relation to Foreign Missions. On Saturday afternoon, June 6, that overture was taken up, read, and committed to Messrs. Elliot, Magie, Witherspoon, Williamson, and Simington, [see *Minutes*, p. 30.] On the same afternoon, the above Committee reported, recommending the adoption of the following resolutions: viz.

1. That it is the solemn conviction of this General Assembly that the Presbyterian Church owes it as a sacred duty to her glorified Head, to yield a far more exemplary obedience, and that in her distinctive character as a church, to the command which he gave at his ascension into Heaven,—“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” It is believed to be among the causes of the frowns of the great Head of the Church, which are now resting on our beloved Zion, in the declension of vital piety, and the disorders and divisions that distract us, that we have done so little—comparatively nothing—in *our distinctive character* as a Church of Christ, to send the gospel to the Heathen, the Jews, and the Mahomedans. It is regarded as of vital importance to the welfare of our church, that foreign as well as domestic missions should be more zealously prosecuted, and more liberally patronized; and that as a nucleus of Foreign Missionary effort, and operation, the Western Foreign Missionary Society should receive the countenance, as it appears to us to merit the confidence, of those who cherish an attachment to the doctrines and order of the church to which we belong.

2. *Resolved*, that a committee be appointed to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh on the subject of a transfer of the supervision of the Western Foreign Missionary Society now under the direction of that Synod, to ascertain the terms on which such transfer can be made, to devise and digest a plan of conducting Foreign Missions under the direction of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, and report the whole to the next General Assembly.

Dr. Cuyler, Dr. Cummins, Dr. Hoge, Mr. Witherspoon, and Dr. Edgar were appointed this committee.

[See *Minutes*, p. 31.]

On the Monday following, June 8, in the afternoon, it being the last day of the Sessions of the Assembly, and near the time of its dissolution, Mr. Latta (as we learn from the reports of the newspapers at the time) introduced the following resolution, which was adopted: viz.

Resolved, That the committee appointed to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh, on the subject of a transfer of the supervision of the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the General Assembly, be authorized, if they shall approve of the said transfer, to ratify and confirm the same with the said Synod, and report the same to the next General Assembly. [See *Minutes* p. 33.]

Let it be remembered, that in the morning of that day, on a test vote on which the *yeas* and *nays* were taken, there were counted only *ninety-one* votes. In the afternoon, the number must have been much diminished. Probably not more than *seventy* of the members were present, when the above extraordinary resolution was adopted. It appears from the Minutes, that the whole number of members of the General Assembly of 1835, who had a right to vote, was *two hundred and thirty-four*! The above unlimited power, therefore, was conferred on the Committee, when less than *one-third* of the members of the Assembly were present!

The next documentary notice which we have of this transaction, is contained in the published account of the Meeting of the Synod of Pittsburg, at Meadville, October, 1835. It is as follows:—

A committee, appointed for that purpose by the last General Assembly, submitted the following

Terms of agreement between the Committee of the General Assembly and the Synod of Pittsburgh, in reference to the transfer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society.

1. The General Assembly will assume the supervision and control of the Western Foreign Missionary Society from and after the next annual meeting of said Assembly, and will thereafter superintend and conduct, by its own proper authority, the work of foreign missions of the Presbyterian church by a board especially appointed for that purpose, and directly amenable to said Assembly. And

the Synod of Pittsburgh, does hereby transfer to that body all its supervision and control over the missions and operations of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, from and after the adoption of this minute, and authorizes and directs said society to perform every act necessary to complete said transfer, when the Assembly shall have appointed its board, it being expressly understood that the said Assembly will never hereafter alienate or transfer to any other judicatory or board whatever, the direct supervision and management of the said missions, or those which may hereafter be established by the board of the General Assembly.

2. The General Assembly shall annually choose ten ministers and ten laymen, as members of the Board of Foreign Missions, whose term of office shall be four years, and these forty ministers and forty laymen so appointed, shall constitute a board, to be styled the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States; to which, for the time being, shall be entrusted, with such directions and instructions as may from time to time be given, the superintendence of the foreign missionary operations of the Presbyterian church, who shall make annually to the General Assembly, a report of their proceedings, and submit for its approval, such plans and measures as may be deemed useful and necessary. Until the transfer shall have been completed, the business shall be conducted by the Western Foreign Missionary Society.

3. The board of directors shall hold a meeting annually at some convenient time during the sessions of the General Assembly, at which it shall appoint a president, vice president, a corresponding secretary, a treasurer, general agents, and an executive committee to serve for the ensuing year. To the board it shall belong to receive and decide upon all the doings of the executive committee, to receive and dispose of their annual report, and present a statement of their proceedings to the General Assembly. It shall be the duty of the board of directors to meet for the transaction of business as often as may be expedient; due notice of every special meeting being seasonably given to every member of the board. It is recommended to the board to hold in different parts of

the church, at least one public meeting annually, to promote and diffuse a livelier interest in the Foreign Missionary cause.

4. To the executive committee, consisting of not more than seven members, besides the corresponding secretary, and treasurer, shall belong the duty of appointing all missionaries and missionary agents, except those otherwise provided for; of designating their fields of labor; receiving the reports of the corresponding secretary; and giving him needful directions in reference to all matters of business and correspondence intrusted to him; to authorise all appropriations and expenditures of money; and to take the particular direction and management of foreign missionary work, subject to the revision of the board of directors. The executive committee shall meet at least once a month, and oftener if necessary; of whom, three members meeting at the time and place of adjournment or special call, shall constitute a quorum. The committee shall have power to fill their own vacancies, if any occur during a recess of the board.

5. All property, houses, lands, tenements, and permanent funds belonging to the Board of Foreign Missions, to be constituted by this agreement, shall be taken in the name of the trustees of the General Assembly, and held in trust by them for the use and benefit of the Board of Foreign Missions for the time being.

6. The seat of the operations of the Board shall be designated by the General Assembly.

CORNELIUS C. CUYLER,
Chairman of the Com. of the Gen. Assembly.

These terms were accepted by a vote of the Synod; and the Editor of the "*Presbyterian*" announced, that "*Of course* the General Assembly will proceed to appoint its Board of Foreign Missions, to proceed, according to the above agreement, in the work of preaching the Gospel to the Heathen."

The Synod of Philadelphia, at its meeting in York, about the same date, adopted the following resolutions: viz.

Resolved. 1. That in the opinion of this Synod the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, is bound by every consideration in faithfulness to our divine Master and fidelity to our ruined world, to embark fully and immediately in the great cause of Foreign Missions.

2. That the organization by that body of a permanent board and the appointment of suitable persons for this work, should be undertaken without delay.

3. That the principal seat of the operations of such an organization ought to be in one of the large Atlantic cities—the Synod would suggest the city of New-York.

4. That the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions ought to be requested to transfer to the Board of our Assembly, when fully organized, all those stations in foreign lands, at which the majority of ordained persons belong to the Presbyterian Church.

5. That members of the Presbyterian Church, who are now in the foreign field, or who may hereafter go into it, ought in the opinion of this Synod, unless special and extraordinary reasons indicate a different course, to maintain a direct missionary relation to the Board of their own church when organized, and they are affectionately exhorted to the serious consideration of this question.

6. That if the General Assembly should not, at its next meeting organize this great interest upon the general principles now exhibited, this Synod will itself, at its next meeting, in dependence upon God, fully enter upon the glorious work.

Resolved, That the stated Clerk be directed to lay a copy of the above report before the next General Assembly.

The foregoing "*Terms of Agreement,*" &c., and also the resolutions of the Synod of Philadelphia, were submitted to the General Assembly of 1836, and were committed to Drs. Phillips and Skinner, and Messrs. Scovil, Dunlap, and Ewing. This Committee reported as follows: viz.

That the attention of the last Assembly was called to the subject of Foreign Missions by the following overture

On p. 31 of the Minutes. [Here the report quotes the first resolution which we have before quoted from p. 31 of the Minutes of the Assembly of 1835.]

The Assembly feeling the force of the suggestions contained in this overture, and believing it to be their most important and *appropriate* work to spread the gospel through the world, adopted the overture in the form of a resolution, together with the following viz. [Here the report quotes the second resolution from p. 31, of the *Minutes* of 1835.]

Thus it appears that the proposition to confer with the Synod, and to assume the supervision and control of the Western Foreign Missionary Society originated in the Assembly.* At that time the Western Foreign Missionary Society was in a prosperous condition, enjoying the confidence and receiving the patronage of a considerable number of our churches, having in their employ about 20 missionaries, and their funds were unembarrassed. The committee having conferred with some of the members of that Society, and finding that the proposition was favorably regarded by them, and indulging the hope that an arrangement might be definitely made with the Synod, at their next stated meeting, by which the Assembly would be prepared to enter on the work at their present sessions, brought the subject again before the Assembly, where it was, after mature deliberation,

Resolved, That the committee appointed to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh on the subject of a transfer of the supervision of the Western Foreign Mission Society to the General Assembly be *authorized* if they shall approve of the said transfer, to ratify and confirm the same with the said Synod and report the same to the next General Assembly. [See *Minutes* for 1835, p. 33.]

The committee, thus appointed and clothed with full powers to ratify and confirm a transfer, submitted the terms on which they were willing to accept it to the Synod of

* The Chairman of this Committee ought to have known that this proposition did not originate in the General Assembly. The first of the resolutions quoted in this report, was a transcript of a resolution adopted by the Pittsburgh Convention, as we shall hereafter show, and Dr. Phillips, who was a leading member of that Convention, was aware that its connexion with the appointment of the Committee to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh, was at least as intimate as that of cause and effect.

Pittsburgh at their sessions last fall. The members of the committee not being present at the meeting of the Synod, and there being no time for farther correspondence, the Synod (although they would have preferred some alterations of the terms,) were precluded from proposing any on the ground that such alteration would vitiate the whole proceedings, and therefore, acceded to the terms of the transfer which were *proposed* by the committee of the Assembly, and solemnly ratified the contract on *their part*. Feeling themselves bound by the same, and trusting to the good faith of this body, they have acted accordingly, and have made no provision for their Missionaries now in the field for a longer time than the meeting of this Assembly; having informed them of the transfer which had taken place, and of the new relation they would sustain to this body after their present sessions.

It appears then to your committee that the Assembly have entered into a solemn compact with the Synod of Pittsburgh, and that there remains but one righteous course to pursue, which is, to adopt the report of the committee appointed last year, and to appoint a Foreign Missionary Board. To pause now, or to annul the doings of the last Assembly in this matter, would be obviously a violation of contract, a breach of trust, and a departure from that good faith which should be sacredly kept between man and man, and especially between Christian Societies; conduct, which would be utterly unworthy of this venerable body, and highly injurious to the Western Foreign Missionary Society.

The committee beg leave further respectfully to remind the Assembly, that a large proportion of our churches, (being Presbyterian from conviction and preference) feel it to be consistent not only, but their solemn duty in the sight of God, to impart to others the same good, and in the same form of it, which they enjoy themselves, and to be represented in heathen lands by Missionaries of their own denomination. They greatly prefer such an organization as that contemplated, and which shall be under the care of the Presbyterian Churches and cannot be enlisted so well in the great and glorious work of sending the gospel to the heathen under any other. Already, with the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, on the efforts of the

Western Foreign Missionary Society in this form of operation, has a missionary spirit been awakened among them to a considerable extent, and an interest in the cause of missions been created, never before felt by them. They have furnished men for the work, and are contributing cheerfully to their support in the Foreign field.

As one great end to be accomplished by all who love the Redeemer, is to awaken and cherish a missionary spirit, and to enlist all the churches in the work of evangelizing the world; as every leading Christian denomination in the world has its Foreign Missionary Board, and has found such distinct organization the most effective method of interesting the churches under their care in this great subject; as such an organization cannot interfere with the rights or operations of any other similar organization; for the field is the world, and is wide enough for all to cultivate; as it is neither desired nor intended to dictate to any in this matter, but simply to give an opportunity of sending the gospel to the heathen by their own Missionaries to those who prefer this mode of doing so, giving them that liberty which they cheerfully accord to others: Your committee cannot suppose for a moment that this General Assembly will, in this stage of the proceedings, refuse to consummate this arrangement with the Synod of Pittsburgh, and thus prevent so many churches under their care from supporting their Missionaries in their own way. For they are unwilling to believe that there can exist in the nineteenth century, a spirit of bigotry and intolerance, which would interfere with the sacred liberty of conscience, and which would seem to say to all, unless you belong to our party, you shall not publish the glad tidings of salvation through the crucified Redeemer to a dying world. From this view of the case, they recommend to the Assembly the following resolutions, viz.

1. *Resolved*, That the report of the committee appointed by the last Assembly to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh on the subject of a transfer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the General Assembly be adopted, and that said transfer be accepted on the terms of agreement therein contained.

2. *Resolved*, That the Assembly will proceed to appoint

a Foreign Mission Board, the seat of whose operations shall be in the city of New-York.

(Signed) W. W. PHILLIPS, *Chairman*.

Agreed to by the committee, excepting Dr. Skinner, who as the minority of the Committee presented the following report, viz.

“Whereas the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, has been connected with the Presbyterian Church from the year of its incorporation, by the very elements of its existence; and whereas at the present time the majority of the whole of the Board are Presbyterians; and whereas it is undesirable, in conducting the work of Foreign Missions, that there should be any collision at home or abroad; therefore

Resolved, That it is inexpedient that the Assembly should organize a separate Foreign Missionary Institution.”

The question being on the adoption of the report of the Committee, a motion was introduced to postpone this report, for the purpose of adopting the counter report of Dr. Skinner. A long debate ensued, embracing to some extent the merits of the whole subject; at the close of which, the vote was taken by *yeas* and *nays*, when it appeared that there was a majority of *one* against the postponement. This has been regarded by some as exhibiting “a majority of *one* in favor of an ecclesiastical organization.” We are assured, however, that more than one who voted against the postponement, voted, on the final question, to reject the plan proposed by the Committee. They voted against the postponement, because they preferred to meet directly the report of the majority of the Committee, and reject it at once.

On a subsequent day, the question was resumed, and after a renewed and animated debate of several hours, the plan proposed by the Committee was

rejected by a vote of 111 to 106, exhibiting a majority of 5 against the attempted organization. Against this decision, the following protest, penned by Dr. Miller, and signed by himself and eighty-one other members of the Assembly, containing a summary of the reasons which had been previously urged in favor of the formation of the proposed Board, was entered on the Minutes: viz.

The undersigned would solemnly protest against the decision of the General Assembly, whereby the report of the committee of the last General Assembly respecting the Western Foreign Missionary Society was rejected; for the following reasons, viz.

1. Because we consider the decision of the Assembly in this case as an unjustifiable refusal to carry into effect a solemn contract with the Synod of Pittsburgh duly ratified and confirmed under the authority of the last Assembly.

2. Because we are impressed with the deepest conviction that the Presbyterian Church, in her ecclesiastical capacity, is bound, in obedience to the command of her divine Head and Lord, to send the glorious Gospel, as far as may be in her power, to every creature; and we consider the decision of the Assembly in this case as a direct refusal to obey this command, and to pursue one of the great objects for which the church was founded.

3. Because it is our deliberate persuasion that a large part of the energy, zeal, and resources of the Presbyterian church cannot be called into action in the missionary cause, without the establishment of a missionary board by the General Assembly. It is evident that no other ecclesiastical organization by fragments of the church can be formed, which will unite, satisfy, and call forth the zealous co-operation of those in every part of the church who wish for a general Presbyterian Board.

4. Because while the majority of the Assembly acknowledge that *they* had a board which fully met all the wants and wishes of themselves and those who sympathized with them; they refused to make such a decision as

would accord to us a similar and equal privilege ; thereby, as we conceive, refusing that which would have been only just and equal, and rejecting a plan which would have greatly extended the missionary spirit, and exerted a reflex beneficial influence on the churches thus indulged with a board agreeable to their views.

5. Because to all these considerations, urged with a solemnity and affection, the majority of the Assembly were deaf, and have laid us under the necessity of protesting against their course ; and of complaining that we are denied a most reasonable, and, to us, most precious privilege, and of lamenting that we are laid under the necessity of resorting to plans of ecclesiastical organization, complicated, inconvenient, and much more adapted, on a variety of accounts, to interfere with ecclesiastical harmony, than the proposed board could have been.

Pittsburgh, June 9th, 1836.

To this protest, Dr. Peters, as Chairman of the Committee appointed for that purpose, presented the following answer, which was adopted by the Assembly, and entered on the Minutes : viz.

In answer to the protest of the minority of the General Assembly on the subject of Foreign Missions, the majority regard it as due to the churches and the friends of missions generally, to state some of the grounds on which they have declined to carry into effect the arrangement adopted and reported by the committee of the last General Assembly, in regard to the Western Foreign Missionary Society.

We are of opinion,

1. That the powers intended to be conferred upon the above committee by the last Assembly, to ratify and confirm the transfer of the said society from the Synod of Pittsburgh to the General Assembly, on such terms as the said committee might approve, are altogether unusual and unwarranted ; and especially that it was indiscreet and improper for that Assembly to attempt to confer such unlimited powers for such a purpose, in the existing state of our churches, upon so small a committee ; and that too

on the last day of the sessions of the Assembly, when more than one half of the enrolled members of the body had obtained leave of absence, and had already returned to their homes.

2. That it was unwarrantable and improper for the above committee, in the exercise of the extraordinary powers supposed to be conferred on them, to incorporate in their agreement with the Synod of Pittsburgh the condition, that the supervision of the missions of the Missionary Board intended to be organized should never be alienated by the General Assembly, thus endeavoring to bind irreversibly all future assemblies by the stipulations of that committee.

3. It is, therefore, our deep conviction that it was the duty of this Assembly to resist the unwarrantable and extraordinary powers of the above committee, and to reject the unreasonable condition of their contract with the Synod of Pittsburgh.

4. It is our settled belief that the church is *one* by divine constitution, and that the command is of universal obligation; "Let there be no divisions among you," and that whatever advantages or disadvantages may have resulted from the division of the church into numerous denominations, with conflicting opinions, it cannot be our duty, as christians, to perpetuate and extend these divisions by incorporating them in our arrangements to spread the Gospel in heathen lands. We cannot, therefore, regard the decision of the Assembly in this case, as a refusal to obey the command of the Great Head of the church to preach the gospel to every creature. That command, as we understand it, is not to the Presbyterian church in her distinctive ecclesiastical capacity, but to the *whole church*, to the collective body of Christ's disciples, of every name. It was that they may the more effectually *obey* the above command, by uniting with christians of other denominations in the noble work of foreign missions, that the Assembly declined to carry into effect the proposed organization restricted to the Presbyterian church.

5. We do not agree with the protestants in the opinion that the resources of any part of the Presbyterian church "cannot be called into action in the missionary cause without the establishment of a missionary Board by the

General Assembly." The history of missionary operations in this and in other countries furnishes ample evidence that the energy and zeal of christians in the spread of the gospel are much more effectually enlisted, and their liberality greatly increased by more expanded organizations, which overstep the limits of sects, and the bond of whose union is the one great object of spreading the glorious gospel of the blessed God. It is our settled belief that societies formed on these principles, and including different denominations of christians, are actually performing as the proxies of the church, in the work of missions, that which the church, on account of her existing divisions, can perform in no other way so well. They appear to us to have embraced the harmonizing principle which is destined ultimately to reunite the churches, and make them ONE, as it was in the beginning and will be in the end.

6. While the majority of the assembly acknowledge their unabated confidence in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as fully meeting our wishes, and affording a safe and open channel through which all our churches may, as consistent Presbyterians, convey their contributions to the cause of Foreign Missions; we do not regard ourselves as having denied, by the decision protested against, to the minority, the privilege of conducting their missionary operations with entire freedom, on any other plan which they may prefer. But we think it unreasonable for them to ask us to form, and to complain of our not forming, by a vote of the General Assembly, an organization, the principles of which we do not approve. We do not ask of them to assume the responsibilities of the plan which we prefer, and we cannot regard ourselves as chargeable with unkindness or injustice, in having refused to assume the responsibilities of the plan which they prefer. If we cannot agree to unite in the same organization, for the same purpose, it appears to us manifestly proper, that each party should bear the responsibilities of its own chosen plan of operations; and if our brethren cannot so far commend their principles, as to extend their ecclesiastical organizations beyond those "fragments of the church" of which they speak, they surely ought not to complain of us, "if those in every part of the church who wish for a general Pres-

byterian Board," remain dissatisfied. We would respectfully ask whether they ought not to charge their embarrassment, in this respect, to the plan which they have adopted, rather than to those who have chosen, on their own responsibility, in the fear of God, to conduct their missionary operations on other principles. If, therefore, the minority of the Assembly should hereafter judge themselves under "the necessity of resorting to plans of ecclesiastical organization" which shall "interfere with ecclesiastical harmony," the majority cannot regard themselves as responsible for such results. The settled belief of the majority of the Assembly is, that the operations of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, with its numerous auxiliaries, both ecclesiastical and voluntary, within the bounds of the Presbyterian church, present the best arrangement for the promotion of the cause of missions by our churches; and it was to prevent the ecclesiastical conflicts and divisions which have resulted from the operations of other similar organizations, that they have thought it their duty to decline the organization proposed. They have made their decision for the purpose, and with the hope of securing and promoting the union in the missionary work which has so happily existed in former years. With these views and hopes, they commend the cause of missions and their solemn and conscientious decision to the blessing of God, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

The reader is now in full possession of the history of the proposed measure and its rejection, as far as it may be gathered from the Minutes of the two General Assemblies before which it was urged.

The foregoing "*Answer*" to Dr. Miller's "*Protest*" expresses the views which we still entertain, and which we shall endeavor to illustrate in the following pages. It is therefore commended to the special consideration of the reader.

CHAPTER III.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

Hasty publication of their Review. History of the debates. Evidence that the proposal to organize a Foreign Missionary Board of the General Assembly originated in the Pittsburgh Convention. The position of Dr. Miller illustrated.

THE "Association of Gentlemen in Princeton," who conduct the "*Biblical Repertory and Theological Review*," have devoted a large portion (sixty-one pages) of their No. for July, 1836, to a review of the doings of the last General Assembly. The position which several of these gentlemen occupy, as Professors in "*the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian church*," and the large number of pupils whom they have educated with exemplary diligence and ability, have given to their Association an extensive influence in regard to our ecclesiastical affairs, which on former occasions they have not been backward to exert. Whatever, therefore, may be the diversities of opinion as to the propriety of their voluntarily associating for such a purpose, the public have not been surprised to find them out at the present time, upon that portion of the church whose doings in the late Assembly have effectually resisted certain influences and arrangements which seemed to these "gentlemen" essential to the triumph

of an ecclesiastical power, ever regarded by them as identical with the best interests of the Presbyterian body.

The topics on which the writers of the article referred to have expended their principal strength, are the attempted organization of a "*Foreign Missionary Board of the General Assembly*," and the "*Trial of Mr. Barnes*."

To account for some of the errors into which these gentlemen have fallen, in common with the numerous anonymous and editorial writers before referred to, and by way of apology for the same, we premise the following suggestions:—

1. The haste with which these brethren have urged their opinions before the public is truly remarkable. Scarcely was the General Assembly closed, before it was rumored that the Princeton Professors had predicted a reaction, and that soon the doings of the Assembly would be regarded with universal censure. In a few weeks, one and another was heard to say that the reaction had already begun—that a "rod was preparing at Princeton," which would be felt by certain leaders of the "*new school*." Soon again it was announced that the rod was perfected—that the book was in the press; and in about six weeks from the close of the Assembly, the Review itself made its appearance. With it, the opinion became rife and confident, in a certain circle, that the churches would be indignant at what had been done, and that the "*old school*" would undoubtedly have a large majority in the next General Assembly, and would carry, with double strength, the measures which were rejected in the last. To all

intents and purposes, the reaction was now complete—the balance was changed—and the *minority* of the last Assembly had become the *majority* of the next.

2. Their haste to effect so desirable an object brought these Reviewers before the public under every disadvantage. The materials furnished them at that early day were altogether insufficient for their purpose. For the knowledge of what had been done at the Assembly, and the reasons of its decisions, they were obliged to depend upon such hasty sketches of the debates as were already before the public: they could not wait for the more full and accurate reports which were in the process of publication. The crisis had come, and must be met with such materials as were already furnished, however imperfect: hence, in summing up the arguments on the subject of the proposed Board of Foreign Missions, they seem to be under the necessity of exhibiting what they supposed ought to have been said, rather than what was actually advanced by the several speakers in the General Assembly. They say, (page 421,) “It is not intended to convey the idea, that the arguments which follow were all presented on the floor of the Assembly precisely as they are here exhibited;” and, on the Trial of Mr. Barnes, they remark, (page 454,) “In the absence of any satisfactory account of the trial, we must content ourselves with a few remarks upon the points of the case, as actually presented in the reports.” Yet they extend these *few* remarks through *twenty-two* pages! It is not surprising, that, with this hasty and insufficient preparation, they have fallen into some mis-

takes, which the cause of truth and of Christian charity requires to be corrected. It is to be regretted, however, that their sense of duty to their ecclesiastical relations, in the important point of influence which they occupy, did not, in the circumstances of the case, allow them to delay their Review until the subjects of their strictures were more fully before them. In regard to some points, they might have been led to different conclusions; and their opinions, changed or unchanged, would have had ultimately more weight with the Christian public at large. This infelicity, however, cannot now be changed—*scriptum est scriptum*.

The Reviewers introduce their remarks on the rejected overture by a brief statement of the case, but omit the documents which we have quoted, and which seem to us essential to illustrate its history. They then inform us that “the principal speakers against the organization of a Foreign Missionary Board by the General Assembly, were Mr. Jessup, Dr. Peters, Dr. Skinner, Dr. Palmer, Messrs. Wisner, Brainerd, Stevens, Ford, &c. &c.,” and proceed to give “their leading arguments.” These are presented neither in the words nor the order of the speakers; but arranged under eight counts, compressed into the space of about three pages, and exhibited with just as much strength as the Reviewers pleased to give them.*

* These arguments are numbered and expressed with confidence, as if they were a perfect epitome of the “leading arguments,” &c. No apology is made for possible inaccuracies and deficiencies. But in presenting the arguments of the other side, the Reviewers are careful, as we have before remarked, to notify their readers that they are not all exhibited precisely in the form in which they were presented on the floor of the Assembly. This apology in the latter case tends to confirm

To balance the above, and make it appear that, as candid and impartial Reviewers, they intend to render equal justice to both parties, they introduce the names of Mr. Nesbit, Dr. Hoge, Dr. Miller, Dr. Phillips, Dr. McElroy, Dr. Neill, Mr. W. L. Breckinridge, Mr. Ewing, Mr. Boyd, &c. &c., as the principal speakers in favor of the proposed organization, and present "their most important arguments" embraced in five counts, and extended over thirteen pages of the Review! These are the arguments of the Reviewers themselves, as well as of the gentlemen above named, and are adopted and defended as such in their discussions. They will accordingly claim our attention; and we propose to meet them not only by the "leading arguments" made use of by the majority in the General Assembly, but with such other suggestions as shall occur to us in our humble endeavors to set this subject in its true light before the Christian public.

Before entering upon the consideration of these arguments, however, it seems incumbent on us to correct a misconception in regard to the origin of the proposed measure, and to examine the force and tendency of an excellent authority which the Reviewers have urged, with an air of triumphant confidence, in its support.

To disprove the declaration of Dr. Peters, on the floor of the Assembly, that the proposed measure originated in the "*Pittsburgh Convention*," and to sustain the assertion of Dr. Miller, that it did not

the impression that, in the former, they regarded themselves as having presented, with sufficient accuracy and point, the "leading arguments of the principal speakers."

thus originate, the Reviewers assume the responsibility of the following statement, [page 432, &c.]

Dr. Peters has said this measure originated in the celebrated Pittsburgh Convention. This is a mistake. It has been in consideration for years, and has been the subject of long and anxious consultation. It is in vain to attempt to cast odium on the plan. It must be judged by its own merits. So far from originating in the convention of last year, it is almost universally known that the late Dr. Rice prepared, on his death bed, an overture on this subject to be presented to the General Assembly, embracing every essential feature of the proposed measure. It has not originated in any narrow sectarian policy, nor is it advocated on sectarian grounds. There is no man in this Assembly, who could find it in his heart to stand on the grave of JOHN HOLT RICE, and pronounce the words, sectarian bigot. The overture as prepared by that good man, breathes the very spirit of the gospel, and that overture contains every thing which the most strenuous advocate for ecclesiastical organization desires.*

“Project of the Overture to be submitted to the next General Assembly.—The Presbyterian Church in the United States of North America, in organizing their form of government, and in repeated declarations made through their Representatives in after times, have solemnly recognized the importance of the Missionary cause, and their obligation as Christians, to promote it by all the means in their power. But these various acknowledgments have not gone to the full extent of the obligation imposed by the Head of the Church, nor have they produced exertions at all corresponding thereto. Indeed, in the judgment of this General Assembly, one primary and principal object of the institution of the Church by Jesus Christ was, not so much the salvation of individual Christians—for, ‘he that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved’—but the communicating of the blessing of the gospel to the destitute with efficiency of united effort. The entire history of the Christian Societies organized by the apostles affords

* As this overture is short, we give it here entire, as the best possible refutation of the charge in question.

abundant evidence that they so understood the design of their Master. They received from Him a command to 'preach the gospel to every creature'—and from the churches planted by them, the word of the Lord was 'sounded out,' through all parts of the civilized world. Nor did the missionary spirit of the primitive churches expire, until they had become secularized and corrupted by another spirit. And it is the decided belief of this General Assembly that a true revival of religion in any denomination of Christians, will generally, if not universally, be marked by an increased sense of obligation to execute the commission which Christ gave to the apostles.

"The General Assembly would therefore, in the most public and solemn manner, express their shame and sorrow that the church represented by them has done, comparatively, so little to make known the saving health of the gospel to all nations. At the same time, they would express their grateful sense of the goodness of the Lord, in employing the instrumentality of others to send salvation to the heathen. Particularly would they rejoice at the Divine favour manifested to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, whose perseverance, whose prudence, whose skill, in conducting this most important interest, merit the praise, and excite the joy of all the churches.

"With an earnest desire therefore, to co-operate with this noble Institution; to fulfil, in some part at least, their own obligations; and to answer the just expectations of the friends of Christ in other denominations, and in other countries: in obedience also to what is believed to be the command of Christ; be it therefore *Resolved*,

"1. That the Presbyterian Church in the United States is a Missionary Society; the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world; and that every member of the church is a member for life of said Society, and bound in maintenance of his Christian character, to do all in his power for the accomplishment of this object.

"2. That the Ministers of the Gospel in connection with the Presbyterian Church, are hereby most solemnly required to present this subject to the members of their respective congregations, using every effort to make them

feel their obligations, and to induce them to contribute according to their ability.

“ 3. That a committee of — be appointed from year to year by the General Assembly, to be designated, ‘The Committee of the Presbyterian Church of the United States for Foreign Missions,’ to whose management this whole concern shall be confided, with directions to report all their transactions to the churches.

“ 4. The Committee shall have power to appoint a chairman, corresponding secretary, treasurer, and other necessary officers.

“ 5. The Committee shall, as far as the nature of the case will admit, be co-ordinate with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and shall correspond and co-operate with that association, in every possible way, for the accomplishment of the great objects which it has in view.

“ 6. Inasmuch as numbers belonging to the Presbyterian Church have already, to some extent, acknowledged their obligations, and have been accustomed, from year to year, to contribute to the funds of the American Board, and others may hereafter prefer to give that destination to their contributions; and inasmuch as the General Assembly, so far from wishing to limit or impede the operations of that Board, is earnestly desirous that they may be enlarged to the greatest possible extent; it is therefore to be distinctly understood, that all individuals, Congregations or Missionary Associations, are at liberty to send their contributions either to the American Board, or to the committee for Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, as to the contributors may appear most likely to advance the great object of the conversion of the world.

“ 7. That every church session be authorized to receive contributions; and be directed to state in their annual reports, to the Presbytery, distinctly, the amount contributed by their respective churches for Foreign Missions: and that it be earnestly recommended to all church sessions, in hereafter admitting new members to the churches, distinctly to state to candidates for admission, that if they join the church, they join a community, the object of which is the conversion of the heathen world, and to impress on their minds a deep sense of their obligation as

redeemed sinners, to co-operate in the accomplishment of the great object of Christ's mission to the world."

Here, then, is the evidence in full, that the rejected measure did not originate in the *Pittsburgh Convention*, nor "in any narrow sectarian policy," and that it was not "advocated on sectarian grounds." We now offer the following evidence that it *did* thus originate, and that it was advocated on the very grounds which are here denied by the "Gentlemen in Princeton."

The lamented Dr. Rice died in September, 1831: In March of the same year, the above "overture," which he is said to have indited "on his sick bed," was forwarded by his amanuensis to Professor Hodge of Princeton, with the request that he and the other Professors would communicate their views concerning it. Whether they ever did so we are not informed; but there is recorded evidence in abundance, to show that the above overture did not lead the Princeton Professors to their recent warm approval of the measure rejected by the last General Assembly. In 1833, (two years after they had received the overture of Dr. Rice,) Dr. Miller wrote his sixteen "*Letters to Presbyterians*," first published in the "*Presbyterian*," in Philadelphia, and subsequently collected into a volume. In *Letter V.*, after having explained his views at some length, in regard to Voluntary Associations and Ecclesiastical Boards, he remarks as follows, (p. 83,)

"It was from the combined force of all the foregoing considerations, that I was induced more than a year ago, to express an opinion favorable to the formation of the

“Western Foreign Missionary Society,” a society formed within the bounds of the Synod of *Pittsburgh*, under the auspices of that body; having as its formal patrons, all the Presbyteries composing that Synod, together with some Presbyteries belonging to other Synods.”

Again, (p. 85.) “The probability is, that the Western Foreign Missionary Society” will not be placed under the direction of the General Assembly, or attempt any resort to that body for patronage. It would be unwise and unhappy to introduce, into the highest judicatory of the church, another subject of party jealousy and party contention. Such portions of the church that feel friendly to its existence, and willing to make efforts for its support, will of course, yield it their patronage, without impeaching the motives of those who may choose to act otherwise, and without the least unfriendly feeling towards other institutions.”

These are the sentiments of Dr. Miller in 1833; and to justify the position which he then held, he does not even allude to the overture by Dr. Rice. It was not *that*, therefore, which led Dr. Miller, in 1833, so pointedly to condemn, by anticipation, the very measure which, in 1835 and 1836, he approves and defends in unmeasured terms, and in support of which he quotes the overture of Dr. Rice. Then he said “it would be unwise and unhappy” to do this very thing; he deprecated the measure as a “subject of party jealousy and party contention:” now he regards it as both wise and happy! He finds “every essential feature of the proposed measure” in the overture of Dr. Rice; and in these views he is sustained by the whole “*association of Gentlemen in Princeton.*” There must have been some cause for this wonderful and rapid change! What was it? Not the overture of Dr. Rice: *that* they had long before considered, and taken their ground, irrespec-

tive of it. Let us, then, examine the progress of this overturning. Are not the causes of it found mingled with the causes which resulted in the "*Pittsburgh Convention?*" In June, 1834, a little more than a year after the date of Dr. "*Miller's Letters,*" the "*Act and Testimony*" was issued, calling that convention. One matter of grievance, set forth in that extraordinary instrument, was the existence of operations, within the Presbyterian church, of voluntary associations. In May, 1835, the Convention was assembled, numbering forty-seven ministers and twenty-eight elders, representing forty-eight Presbyteries, or minorities* of Presbyteries. Among the resolutions which they adopted were the following:—

Resolved, That the operation of any Missionary Society, within the Presbyterian Church, and not responsible to her judicatories, is an infringement of her rights, and inconsistent with her peace and integrity.

Resolved, That the operation of any Education Society, within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church, for the training of her ministry independent of her ecclesiastical judicatories, is a usurpation of the rights of the Church, and ought to be resisted, as tending to undermine her own Education Board, and the independence of her ministry.

Resolved, That the committee on the memorial, be instructed to present to the General Assembly, the solemn conviction, of this Convention, that the Presbyterian

* The Editor of the New-York Evangelist, to whom the Princeton Reviewers acknowledge themselves indebted for "the most satisfactory reports," being present at the Convention, remarks as follows, May 30, 1835.

"By comparing the published pamphlet containing the signers of the Act and Testimony, we judge that about half of the delegates represented minorities—frequently quite small minorities of Presbyteries—seven of them only a single signer each. Only three Presbyteries in New-York were represented—two by minority delegates.

"In organizing the Convention, Rev. ASHBEL GREEN, D.D., was appointed President, Rev. J. Witherspoon, Vice President."

Church, owes it as a sacred duty to her glorified Head, to yield a far more exemplary obedience, and that in her distinctive character as a church, to the command which he gave at his ascension into heaven, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, to every creature." It is believed to be among the causes of the frowns of the great Head of the Church, which are now resting on our beloved Zion, in the declension of vital piety and the disorders, and divisions, that distract us that we have done so little—comparatively nothing—in our distinctive character as a church of Christ, to send the gospel to the Heathen, the Jews and the Mahommedans. It is regarded as of vital importance, to the welfare of our church, that foreign as well as domestic missions, should be more zealously prosecuted and more liberally patronized, and that, as a nucleus of foreign missionary effort, and operation, "the Western Foreign Missionary Society, should receive the countenance, as it appears to us to merit the confidence, of those who cherish an attachment, to the doctrine and order of the church, to which we belong." After some discussion, the above document was committed to the Rev. Messrs. Blythe, Cuyler, and Witherspoon, with instructions to present it to the notice of the General Assembly, in whatever way was deemed best.

The following passages, copied from the "*Memorial of the Pittsburgh Convention*," explains the first of the above resolutions, and have an indirect bearing in favor of the second and third:—

4. Our fourth item of grievance is: The existence and operation, within our church of a Missionary Society in no sense amenable to her ecclesiastical jurisdiction. *Again—*

This institution operates largely in our congregations; *first*, by sweeping away, from our own Board the funds which, by the laws of all social order, ought to come into the treasury of the body to which its possessors belong. *Again—*

We are unspeakably distressed to be constrained to view this as a part of a great system of operations whose tendency is to subvert the foundations of our Zion. The evidence of such a system forces itself upon



us. We cannot shut our eyes against it if we would, and we would not if we could. Painful as the vision is, we are determined to behold it steadfastly ; and we crave the attention of this venerable body to the same. And again, We pray this General Assembly to sustain her own Board of Missions, by solemnly enjoining upon all the churches to contribute to its funds, and by rescinding the resolutions formerly passed, which recommended to their patronage "The Home Missionary Society."

The memorial containing the above "item of grievance" was brought before the Assembly of 1835, and, according to the prediction of Dr. Miller in 1833, became the subject of much "*party jealousy and party contention.*" A majority of that Assembly, through the special efforts which had been used during the year for that purpose, were friendly to the principles and measures of the "*Act and Testimony Convention.*" Its moderator (Dr. Phillips) had been a leading member of the Convention—the majority of all important committees were of the same class—and, in most of its acts, the Assembly yielded to the prescriptions and suggestions of the Convention, as contained in their "Memorial." Among the resolutions adopted by the Assembly, in obedience to these suggestions, was the following—modifying, it is true, in some degree, the demands of the Convention, but sustaining substantially their principles and reasonings, and pushing them as far as *expediency* at that time, in their opinion, would allow.

5. *Resolved*, That while this General Assembly fully appreciate, and deeply deplore the many painful evils which result from the present division in our church, in respect to the method of conducting domestic missions,

and the education of beneficiary candidates for the ministry ; they are persuaded that it is not expedient to attempt to prohibit, within our bounds, the operation of the " Home Missionary Society," or of the " Presbyterian Education Society," or any other voluntary association not subject to our control. Such an attempt would tend, it is believed, to increase, rather than to diminish the existing evils.

[See *Minutes* of the General Assembly 1835, p. 29.]

Thus far it appears that the majority of the General Assembly of 1835 sustained, in all important particulars, the views of the "*Pittsburgh Convention*," in regard to domestic missions and voluntary societies generally. Nor was this sufficient to satisfy the controlling power in that body. The "*Act and Testimony Convention*," it will be recollected, had committed the subject of Foreign Missions to three of their number — "Messrs. Blythe, Cuyler, and Witherspoon, with instructions to present it to the notice of the General Assembly, in whatever way was deemed best." These gentlemen were faithful to their instructions, and presented this subject in the form of an overture, which was read and committed, the Vice President of the Convention (Mr. Witherspoon) being one of the Committee. From this Committee a report was received, recommending the resolutions which were adopted by the Assembly of 1835, and which we have before quoted, page 34. The *first* of these resolutions recommends the "*Western Foreign Missionary Society*," as a "nucleus of foreign missionary effort and operation;" and the reader will perceive, by comparing them, that it is identical with the *third* of the resolutions, which we have before quoted, (page 58,) as

adopted by the "*Pittsburgh Convention*"—excepting that what was in the one, "*the solemn conviction of this Convention*," has become, in the other, "*the solemn conviction of this General Assembly!*" In all other respects, the latter is a transcript of the former, in the very words of the pattern prescribed by the Convention. Here too, again, we have Dr. Cuyler and Mr. Witherspoon (the only members of the Committee of the Convention, on this subject, who were also members of the Assembly) on the Committee of the Assembly, "to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh," &c.

Mr. Latta, also, who introduced the resolution on the last day of the Sessions of the Assembly, to confer plenary power on the above Committee, was a signer of the "*Act and Testimony*," and a member of the *Pittsburgh Convention*.

And it is understood, that the resolutions adopted by the Synod of Philadelphia, on the same subject, were introduced to that body by the Rev. R. J. Breckinridge, the reputed author of the "*Act and Testimony*," and a zealous promoter of the disorganizing measures of the "*Pittsburgh Convention*."

Next, in the order of events on this subject, occur the doings of the General Assembly of 1836. Here, too, we find, in the Moderator's chair, a member of the "*Pittsburgh Convention*"—and more than a member. The Rev. J. Witherspoon was the Vice President of that Convention, and is understood to have been the principal writer of the "Memorial" presented, in its name, to the Assembly of 1835. It is well known, that the circumstance which elevated this gentleman to the chair of an Assembly,

most of whose decisions were the reverse of his own views and wishes, was the Providential detention, on their journey, of a number of members, until after the election was made, whose votes, had they been present, would have given a majority to the opposing candidate. This Providential hindrance of the voice of the majority, in the choice of a Moderator, clothed the Vice President of the "*Act and Testimony Convention*" with the power of appointing the Committees of the Assembly. Hence, the majority of each of the important Committees of this Assembly, as well as of that of 1835, were either members, or known and pledged friends of the principles and measures of that Convention. Such were all of the Committee on the proposed transfer, excepting Dr. Skinner, who, as we have seen, dissented from their report.

Sustained by the foregoing evidence, we now affirm, without the fear of contradiction, that the proposal to transfer the supervision of the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the General Assembly did not only *originate* with the "Pittsburgh Convention," but that, in every step of the proceedings concerning it, it was principally supported and urged by the members and friends of that Convention, until it was finally rejected by a vote of the General Assembly of 1836—every member of the Assembly, who had been a member of the Convention, or a signer of the "*Act and Testimony*," voting against the rejection.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

Further Evidence that the proposal to organize a Foreign Missionary Board of the General Assembly originated in the Pittsburgh Convention. The overture of Dr. Rice explained.

IN the affirmation which closed the preceding chapter, we more than sustain the declaration of Dr. Peters on the floor of the Assembly. His remarks are correctly reported in the "*New-York Observer*," (July 23, 1836,) as follows: viz., "It is said that the proposal of such a transfer originated in the Assembly. But this was not the fact. No, sir; it originated in the *Pittsburgh Convention*—a very different body from this Assembly, as to its origin, its constitution, and its ends. That Convention was a *Voluntary Association*, formed by pre-concerted arrangement, and for the express purpose of *controlling* the General Assembly; and for one year it did control it. I disclaim the powers of that Convention, and cannot consent to yield the government of this Assembly to its suggestions and arrangements."

Dr. Miller denied the correctness of the above representation, and asserted, in reply to Dr. Peters, as reported in the same paper—"I can personally testify, that this very proposal, which is now the

subject of discussion, was insisted on, not only for months, but for more than a year before that Convention held its sittings. It was matter of familiar conference for many months before that time."

All this may be true. The causes which led to the calling of the "*Pittsburgh Convention*" were many. A principal one, there is much reason to believe, was a desire to promote the organization of a *Board of Foreign Missions of the General Assembly*. It is therefore doubtless true, that for this purpose the "*proposal*" to make the "*Western Foreign Missionary Society a nucleus of foreign missionary effort and operation*," was "*insisted on*" for many months before the sitting of the Convention. But, will Dr. Miller tell us *who* insisted on it? It was not himself; for he, as we have seen, in 1833, only one year before the issuing of the "*Act and Testimony*," was pointedly and unequivocally opposed to such a proposal, for such a purpose. He regarded it as a "*subject of party jealousy and party contention*," which it would be "*unwise and unhappy*" to introduce into the highest judicatory of the church. And it could not have been that "large proportion" of the Assembly of 1835, who, Dr. Miller assures us, "were opposed to the doings of the Convention." *They* certainly could never have insisted on the very measure which was a principal object of those "*doings*." Nor could it have been the "*Association of Gentlemen in Princeton*," in their united counsel; for it is well remembered that these gentlemen, soon after the publication of the "*Act and Testimony*," in 1834, animadverted with great severity in their Quarterly upon the principles

assumed in that paper, as subversive of Presbyterial order, and upon the Convention proposed, as irregular and uncalled for. *They*, therefore, could not have "*insisted*," at that time, on the identical "proposal," for which perhaps principally the Convention was invited, and which had been so pointedly condemned by one of their own number, as "unwise and unhappy."

Who, then, did *insist* upon this measure, and make it "matter of familiar conference, for more than a year before that Convention held its sittings"? It must have been the men who prepared the "*Act and Testimony*," and who invited the "*Pittsburgh Convention*," for the purpose, among other things, of promoting this very measure, *then* so unequivocally condemned, and *now* as warmly approved by the "*Gentlemen in Princeton*."

But it may be imagined that the overture of Dr. Rice suggested this measure to the friends and members of the "*Pittsburgh Convention*," and that therefore it may be considered as having *originated* with him rather than with them. This may have been the ground of the following assertion of the Princeton Review, as before quoted: viz., "So far from originating in the Convention of last year, it is almost universally known that the late Dr. Rice prepared, on his death-bed, an overture on this subject, to be presented to the General Assembly, embracing every essential feature of the proposed measure." Yet there is not the slightest evidence that this overture suggested the measure adopted by the Convention, and proposed to the Assembly. And it could not have been the fact; for, in all the published

proceedings of the Convention, we do not find that overture even alluded to. Had it been possible for that Convention to trace the origin of their proposal on this subject to Dr. JOHN H. RICE, it cannot be doubted that they would have been careful to render "honor to whom honor is due," by quoting the name and the suggestion of one whose character and influence, in their favor, would have inspired universal confidence in their proceedings. The conclusion, therefore, is unavoidable, that they did not approve of the suggestions of Dr. Rice. His overture was in the hands of their violent opposers, (at that time,) the "*Gentlemen in Princeton*," and they were willing it should remain there.*

The overture of Dr. Rice is far from sanctioning the measures of the Convention on this subject, or of the committee of the Assembly of 1835. It maintains positions and breathes a spirit which could not have led to such results. It does not intimate that "the operations of any Missionary Society, within the Presbyterian Church and not responsible (directly) to her judicatories, is an infringement of her rights and inconsistent with her peace and integrity." It does not intimate that it is the duty of the Presbyterian Church, "*in her distinctive character as a church*," to conduct the work of Foreign Missions, separate from all other denominations. It does not intimate that the *funds* of the members of the church,

* They well understood it condemned their exclusiveness. Dr. Miller and his associates in Princeton, being recent converts to the views of the Pittsburgh Convention, seem not to be fully aware of the wide discrepancy between the plan which they now approve and the "overture" which they have incautiously adduced in its support. Had they understood this, they too would have left the overture to sleep in silence, as did the members of that Convention, when they originated the measures, which these gentlemen have recently so warmly espoused.

“ by the laws of all social order, ought to come into the treasury of the body to which its possessors belong.” It does not intimate that the operations of the Home Missionary Society are “ a part of a great system of operations, whose tendency is to subvert the foundations of our Zion.” It does not intimate a wish for “ the General Assembly to sustain her own Board of Missions by solemnly enjoining upon all the churches to contribute to its funds, and by *rescinding the resolutions formerly passed, which recommends to their patronage the Home Missionary Society.*” Yet each of these positions is asserted by the “ *Pittsburgh Convention*” in the documents which we have already quoted, and a part of the same are affirmed, and the remainder implied, in the resolutions of the Assembly of 1835, in the agreement of the committee of that Assembly with the Synod of Pittsburgh, and in the report of the committee of the Assembly of 1836 on the same subject.

On the contrary the overture of Dr. Rice, though it does recommend the annual appointment of a committee by the General Assembly, “ with directions to report all their transactions to the churches,” makes no provision for a permanent Board of Foreign Missions exclusively responsible to the Assembly. We unite with the Princeton Reviewers, in affirming that “ the overture, as prepared by that good man, breathes the very spirit of the gospel.” It asserts that a “ primary and principal object of the institution of the church, (the whole church including all evangelical denominations,) by Jesus Christ, was the communicating of the blessings of the gospel to the destitute *with the efficiency of united effort.*” While it recognizes, with

shame and sorrow, that the churches represented in the General Assembly "have done, comparatively, so little," in this cause, it expresses the most "grateful sense of the goodness of the Lord in employing the instrumentality of others to send salvation to the heathen." "Particularly" does it "rejoice in the Divine favor manifested to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, whose perseverance, whose prudence, whose skill, in conducting this most important interest, merit the praise and excite the joy of all the churches." It is therefore declared to be the object of the overture and the "earnest desire" of its author, "*to co-operate with this noble institution.*" Hence it provides that "the Committee of the Presbyterian Church shall, as far as the nature of the case will admit, be co-ordinate with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and shall correspond and co-operate with that Association, *in every possible way*, for the accomplishment of the great objects which *it* has in view." Again, "earnestly desirous that the operation of that Board may be enlarged, *to the greatest possible extent*," it provides "that all individuals, congregations, or missionary associations are at liberty to send their contributions either to the American Board, or to the committee for Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, as to the contributors may appear most likely to advance the great object of the conversion of the world." These and other accordant provisions, in the "overture" of Dr. Rice, exhibit the catholic spirit and the liberal views of that "good man," who, being dead, yet *speaketh to all the churches*. Is there any thing in the spirit or the

declarations of this "overture," which, by any possibility, can be made to accord with the resolution of the originators of the measure rejected by the last Assembly, "that the operation of any Missionary Society, within the Presbyterian Church, and not responsible to her judicatories, is an infringement of her right, and inconsistent with her peace and integrity?" On the contrary, it expresses the *earnest desire that such operations "may be enlarged to the greatest possible extent."*

How then could the "Gentlemen in Princeton," with all these facts in their possession, regard the "overture" by Dr. Rice, as "*embracing every essential feature of the proposed measure?*" How could they affirm that "*that overture contains every thing which the most strenuous advocate for ecclesiastical organization desires?*" It is presumed that they will never make these declarations again, and that hereafter should they ever allow themselves to write with the haste and the carelessness, as to matters of fact, which are manifested in their review of the "General Assembly of 1836," they will confine themselves to topics, concerning which there exists no documentary evidence. For we have yet other proof that we have not mistaken the spirit and meaning of Dr. Rice in the overture under consideration.

We quote the following from the New York Observer of July 9, 1828, headed

"THE NEW ENGLAND CHURCHES."

"*Dr. Beecher's Occasional Sermons.*"

"In a review of Dr. Beecher's Occasional Sermons, which we find in the "Literary and Evangelical Magazine,"

edited by the Rev. Dr. Rice of Virginia, the writer, (who we presume is the worthy editor himself,) takes occasion to glance at the doctrinal views of the New England churches and the policy of co-operating with them in the great work of evangelizing the world. He recommends the book to his readers for the following reasons:—

“1. *Because it contains the views of the orthodox churches in New England on various and important points of doctrine.* As these churches are represented in the highest judicatory of our church, and are also united with us, in their efforts to promote the great cause of Missions, both at home and abroad, we think it important that their views should be fully known in every part of our church.

The members of our church certainly ought to know the religious character of those with whom they unite in the sacred and benevolent work, of propagating the Gospel of Christ in heathen nations: and to know their character, we must know their creed.

We wish therefore that their sentiments may be more generally known, and this—instead of destroying, we are confident will cement and strengthen the union which happily subsists between our church and the orthodox of New England.

This union appears to us important, not only to them, but to the prosperity and enlargement of the Presbyterian Church. It tends to cool the zeal of bigotry, to exclude the spirit of sectarianism and to promote *liberal* (we use the word in its *proper*, not its popular sense) Christianity.

We do not wish our church to become sectarian, because it has the best system of government and discipline: we do not wish it to separate from others who hold “*the faith once delivered to the saints,*” in the holy enterprise of preaching the gospel among all nations. We do not wish to see this cause tarnished, or its progress retarded, by the paralyzing efforts of sectarianism.

The influence of correspondence and of *united* exertion to promote the cause of Christ, between our churches, is a most salutary and important influence. We hope, therefore, it will be increased and extended till its benign power is felt in every dark corner of the earth.

From the history of other churches we may learn what

would be the effects of a separation from Evangelical Associations in the cause of benevolent enterprise.

Should the Presbyterian Church withdraw from others in this cause, we venture to predict her future history. Instead of looking abroad with compassion on the world lying in wickedness before her—instead of carrying the standard of the cross and planting it in the heart of Satan's empire, her eyes will be fastened and riveted to the walls and her energies will be wasted in defending the intrenchments which surround her own little encampment. Her sons, instead of building up and beautifying the temple of the Lord, which is destined to become the joy and the glory of the whole earth, will exhaust their strength and spend their lives in petty contentions with their neighbors, who happen to find fault with their scaffolding, reared for their convenience, merely to facilitate their labors. On this scaffolding they will linger night and day, watching for the approach of an enemy, like sentinels on the walls of a besieged city, till the very outworks become as sacred in their eyes, as the temple itself, or the holy altar on which they should offer their morning and evening sacrifice.

If it be said that all this is a mere conjecture or prophetic theory, we answer, it is theory built on facts; theory which we might illustrate by the records of more than one church in our own country.

We therefore, hope that the church which regards us as members, will continue to unite with others of like character in the great work of preaching the Gospel to all creatures; and the progress of this work, we believe, will more fully exhibit, more gloriously illustrate, more boldly defend, and more effectually, propagate "the faith once delivered to the saints" than the Confession of Faith itself.

And this union of effort, which the Lord regards with peculiar favor, we doubt not will be strengthened by just views of the system of faith and practice, so efficiently inculcated by the orthodox churches of New England.

With all our attachment to our church, then—and we are sincerely attached to it—and with all our Southern feelings, and we are not charged with a want of love to our country, we recommend to our brethren this volume of

Sermons, as a faithful and lucid exposition of the theology of those who are united with us in the most important enterprise in which our church has ever been engaged."

It should be remembered, that the foregoing remarks of Dr. Rice were published shortly after the rising of the Assembly of 1828, at which the "*Assembly's Board of Domestic Missions*" was re-organized, and clothed with its present powers. Dr. Rice, with the majority of that Assembly, regretted the unyielding determination with which the minority urged the re-organization. He regarded it as unnecessary and unwise; though, after the overture had been rejected by a majority of two-thirds of the body, he was in favor of the concession by which that vote was reversed, to prevent the unpleasant appearance and consequences of the protest of the minority, which was prepared to be entered on the Minutes of the Assembly. The Board was accordingly organized, against the judgment of the majority, to gratify and appease the views and feelings of the minority. It was at that time intimated by the friends of the measure, that the Board, as then constituted, ought to, and probably would extend its operations to other countries, and become the organ of the Presbyterian church for Foreign as well as Domestic Missions. It was, doubtless, with a view to resist the tendency of this suggestion, that Dr. Rice felt himself urged to publish the remarks contained in the above extract. They were timely and judicious; and his predictions, had they been inspired prophecies, could not have been more accurately fulfilled than they have been in the present lamented results of their rejection, by those who have con-

tinued to urge the separate and sectarian action of the Presbyterian church in the work of missions.

Such being the sentiments of Dr. Rice in 1828, it is not surprising that he was ready to express them on subsequent occasions. In March, 1829, his opinion having been requested in regard to the "*plan of union*" between the Assembly's Board and the American Home Missionary Society, which was then under discussion, he wrote the following to the Secretary of the latter institution : viz.

"The plan of the Assembly's Board is to some extent exclusive. Now while I do greatly lament that divisions have taken place in our church, and believe that they have been much increased by imprudent zeal, and magnified into undue importance in many cases, *I can never consent to proceed on this principle of exclusion.* Because the constitution of the Presbyterian Church is such that one party cannot turn the other out of the church. Old Calvinists and Hopkinsians, (as they are called,) are obliged to meet in the same General Assembly; and both sides are so powerful that they cannot help respecting and fearing each other. And we see evidence enough that neither side will yield and give up the government of the church to the other. If the old Calvinists have the majority and employ only their own men; then the Hopkinsians will feel aggrieved and form a Society to send out their Missionaries, and *vice versa.* Thus will disputes in the church be perpetuated, and a dissolution of our General Assembly at length take place. It does seem to me then, that the A. H. M. Society has hit on the only expedient that could have been devised, in the present state of things, to bring the whole resources of the Presbyterian Church to bear on the cause of Domestic Missions, and that without any sacrifice of principle whatever. For a Hopkinsian Presbytery or Missionary Society can choose their own Missionaries, and so of the old Calvinists, and there not be collision among them enough to break a straw. And here is the fairest opportunity for that party which has

the best spirit, and the most of truth on their side to gain the victory. For, my life on it, in this age, those who do most to build up the kingdom of the Redeemer, will prevail. I would not give one good revival preacher, who converts sinners, for a hundred polemic theologians."

The following is extracted from a letter of Dr. Rice, dated Nov. 22, 1830, and addressed to his friend Dr. Wisner, of Boston, afterwards Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. This date, it should be remembered, was only about two months before he is said to have indited the "overture" forwarded to Princeton. In this letter, he breathes out his full heart on several topics concerning the condition of the church and its responsibilities, and concludes with the following paragraph:—

"I wish, too, that some plan might be devised for kindling up, in the Presbyterian Church, the *true spirit of Missions*, and rousing this great sluggish body from its sleep. Here is a subject of delicacy and difficulty. The *Presbyterian* spirit has been so awakened up, that I begin to apprehend that no power of man will ever bring the whole body to unite under what is *thought* to be a Congregational Board. But the church must not be under the guilt of letting souls perish, who might be saved. What can be done? Here we want wisdom. I never will do any thing to injure the wisest and best Missionary Society in the world, the American Board. But can no ingenuity devise a scheme of a Presbyterian Branch of the American Board,—co-ordinate,—sufficiently connected with the General Assembly to satisfy scrupulous Presbyterians, yet in union with the original Board,—having the same object, and tending to the same result? Do think of this. Something must be done; but I can not say what. You are the only person in the world, to whom I have mentioned this, and I throw it out to set your mind to work. Do let me hear from you soon."*

* *Memoirs of Dr. Rice*, p. 383.

Here, then, we have the key to the "overture" of Dr. Rice. It was an expedient to prevent the organization of a "*Foreign Missionary Board of the General Assembly*," on sectarian principles, with sectarian guards and sectarian tendencies, by early securing the appointment of a committee by the General Assembly, who should be in effect a "*Presbyterian Branch of the American Board*," in union and co-operation with it. He saw that something must be done. He was aware also of the "delicacy and difficulty" of the subject; and in the documents which we have presented, there are evident traces of the progress of his mind towards the conception of such a plan, until he ventured, in confidence, to express his wishes to his friend Dr. Wisner; after which, while his infirmities were increasing, and it became certain that his time was short, he reduced his conceptions to the form of the "overture" which was submitted to the "Gentlemen in Princeton," for the purpose before named. We are not aware, however, that this overture was ever brought before the General Assembly. It was permitted to slumber from 1831 to 1836; and the first proposition submitted to the Assembly to organize a Board of Foreign Missions, was that of 1835, originating, as we have seen, among the members of the *Pittsburgh Convention*. Who, then, in view of the evidences of the verity of what we have now stated, will dare "stand upon the grave of JOHN HOLT RICE," and attribute to the spirit that once animated his sleeping dust, the authorship of the measure rejected by the last General Assembly? If, then, "it is in vain to attempt to cast odium upon the plan," it is equally

in vain to endeavor to sustain it by the authority of one whose wisdom and watchfulness enabled him to discern the existing tendencies to such a plan—and who, to prevent it, and to enlarge the operations of the American Board “*to the greatest possible extent,*” penned the very “overture” which is now adduced in support of “a measure” which, in the resolutions accompanying its introduction, declares “that the operation of any Missionary Society within the Presbyterian church, and not responsible to her judicatories, is an infringement of her rights, and inconsistent with her peace and integrity”—a measure to which, by its own provisions, would bend the Presbyterian church to conduct its Foreign Missionary operations on the very “*principle of exclusion,*” (doubly guarded,) on which Dr. Rice declared, in 1829, HE NEVER COULD CONSENT TO PROCEED.

Having thus disposed of the support attempted to be derived from the authority of a great and good man, we agree with the Princeton Reviewers, (and we think with more consistency than they,) that the plan “must be judged by its own merits;” and we now ask, if there may not be among the substantial *merits* of this measure, a MERITED *odium* attached to a plan which is so signally condemned by the excellent authority adduced in its support? The plan, however, has other merits, which claim our consideration—whether of praise or blame, remains to be shown.

CHAPTER V.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

The right of the Assembly to conduct missionary operations discussed. The agreement with the Synod of Pittsburgh unconstitutional and incomplete.

1. The Reviewers maintain that, "in virtue of the action of the last [preceding] Assembly, the Assembly of 1836 was bound in good faith to appoint a Board of Foreign Missions, agreeably to the contract formed with the Synod of Pittsburgh. In support of this position, they say—

"Though our Assembly cannot by an act of ordaining legislation bind its successors, yet in all cases in which contracts have been formed, under the authority of our Assembly, succeeding Assemblies are bound in honor and honesty to execute them." *Again—*

"It is not now the question, whether this agreement is wise or unwise, expedient or inexpedient, but simply whether it has been actually formed, and formed according to the constitution of the church. As to the first point there can be no doubt, for here are the documents; first, a resolution of the Assembly appointing a committee to confer with the Synod of Pittsburgh, in reference to the transfer of the Western Missionary Society;—Secondly, a subsequent resolution authorizing that committee to conclude the arrangement, and "to ratify and confirm the same with the said Synod;"—Thirdly, the report of this committee, that they had, in the name and by the authority of the Assembly, concluded a com-

pact which had been accepted and ratified by the Synod of Pittsburgh. Here then is surely a formal agreement binding in honor, in morals, and in law, which can be vitiated only by proving that the Assembly of 1835 had no authority to make such an agreement, or, if they possessed the power, that they had no right to delegate it to a committee. Both of these positions were assumed. That, however, the Assembly had itself the right is plain from the constitution of the church, and from the nature of this body as the supreme judicatory. It has a right to agree to do whatever by the constitution it has a right to do. It has the right to acquire and to alienate property, to conduct domestic and foreign missionary operations, to found and superintend theological seminaries, and having the right to do these things, it has the right to enter into contracts with second parties in relation to them, which contracts must be binding, in law and conscience, on all future Assemblies." [p. 422.]

Here, then, are the points on which the Reviewers rest their argument in support of the *obligation* of the Assembly of 1836 to appoint the proposed Board: viz., that the Assembly has a right to conduct missions, and that this right is not only conferred upon it by the Constitution, but belongs to it from the nature of the body, as the supreme judicatory of the church. We admit the premises here assumed, but deny the conclusion that, in the exercise of the above constitutional and inherent right, the Assembly had power to form *such an agreement* as that of the Committee of 1835 with the Synod of Pittsburgh, and we deny that such an agreement, being formed, has the nature or force of a contract, binding on all future Assemblies.

We admit, then, that the Assembly has power to conduct missions. The only clause in the Constitution, however, which asserts this, is the following, [chapter XVIII.]

When vacancies become so numerous in any Presbytery, that they cannot be supplied with the frequent administration of the word and ordinances, it shall be proper for such Presbytery, or any vacant congregation within their bounds, with the leave of the Presbytery, to apply to any other Presbytery, or to any Synod, or to the General Assembly, for such assistance as they can afford. And when any Presbytery shall send any of their ministers or probationers to distant vacancies, the missionary shall be ready to produce his credentials to the Presbytery or Presbyteries through the bounds of which he may pass, or at least to a committee thereof, and obtain their approbation. And the General Assembly may, of their own knowledge, send missions to any part to plant churches or to supply vacancies, and for this purpose, may direct any Presbytery to ordain evangelists, or ministers without relation to particular churches; *provided always*, that such missions be made with the consent of the parties appointed; and that the judicatory sending them, make the necessary provision for their support and reward in the performance of this service."

The above is the whole of the constitution on this subject. It asserts the right of Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly to conduct missions. But this right is asserted under certain restrictions. Either of these bodies may send missions to supply vacancies, in answer to applications from Presbyteries or from vacant congregations, with the leave of Presbyteries, and it is manifestly intended that the applications shall be made to these bodies themselves. There is no provision made for the appointment of permanent Committees or Boards to receive and act upon such applications. But farther than this, the General Assembly are authorized, "*of their own knowledge*," without the formality of an application, "to send missions" &c. Here again, there is no provision for the appointment of a permanent Board for this purpose.

The missions must be sent, *by the Assembly, of their own knowledge*. This can be done only while the Assembly is in session. To direct a permanent Board to act with the *knowledge, as well as power* of the Assembly, would be for the Assembly to perpetuate itself after its dissolution, which is absurd. And the Assembly can not delegate the power of acting "*of their own knowledge,*" to any Board. It is impossible. And these views are in perfect accordance with the uniform practice of the Assembly up to the year 1828, when the existing Board of Missions was organized. In 1802, the first "*standing committee of missions*" was appointed by the General Assembly ; and it was then made the duty of this Committee, among other things, "to nominate missionaries to the General Assembly, and report the number which the funds will permit to be employed." The Missionaries thus nominated were to be appointed, and their compensation fixed, by vote of the Assembly in session, and thus it was the uniform practice of the Assembly, "*of their own knowledge,*" to appoint their Missionaries. In 1816, "the style of the *Committee*" was "changed to that of the *Board* of Missions." It was not yet understood, however, that this Board might have a treasury of its own, separate from that of the Assembly, but they acted for the Assembly, and deposited their collections in its treasury, subject to the annual order of the Assembly, thus recognizing that provision of the constitution, which enjoins that "the judicatory sending Missions shall make the necessary provision for their support and reward." Hence in the Assembly of 1828, the Committee on the report of the Board of Missions for the year then terminated, re-

ported the following resolution, which was adopted, viz. "*That the trustees of the General Assembly issue their warrant for the payment of the balance due to the Missionaries.*" But, since that date, other views have prevailed among the supporters of the Board. They have regarded it as the depository of the whole power of the Assembly on the subject of missions. But the delegation of this power to a Board, we have shown, is contrary to the uniform interpretation of the *constitutional* power of the Assembly, as it was understood and acted on, up to the year 1828. They sent their missions, "of their own knowledge," and made "provision for their support," while yet in session. And this we regard as the right interpretation of the Constitution.

Again, If the power to appoint missionaries may be *constitutionally* delegated to a permanent Board, under sanction of the above article, then, by the same rule, the Assembly may empower such a Board to "*direct Presbyteries to ordain evangelists, &c.*" which would be a manifest infringement of the rights of the Presbyteries guaranteed by the Constitution. Besides, if the General Assembly is authorized, by the above provision, to appoint a Missionary Board, to act in its name and by its authority, then Synods and Presbyteries are authorized by the same provision to appoint such Boards, to act in *their* name and by *their* authority. The power of conducting missions is equally guaranteed by the constitution to each of these bodies, Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly; excepting that the highest judicatory may perform the work, "of their own knowledge," without the application of those to whom the

missions are sent. But if this power belongs equally to these several bodies, within their respective spheres, it is manifest that no one of them has the right to appoint a Board for the whole, without the consent of the others. The General Assembly, then, has no right by this constitution to assume the control of missionary operations for the whole church, without the consent of the Presbyteries, who have the same right to conduct these operations within their several spheres that the Assembly has. Much less has the Assembly a right to appoint and sustain a permanent Board to conduct these operations in all the Presbyteries, without first ascertaining the willingness of the Presbyteries to yield their constitutional rights to the General Assembly for this purpose. The Presbyteries are permanent bodies, and may be frequently in session. The General Assembly is composed annually of new delegates and has no existence, excepting during the brief period of its sessions each year. That, therefore, which is equally the constitutional right of these bodies, during their continuance, becomes the sole right of the permanent body, as soon as the other ceases to exist, and so remains the sole right of the Presbytery until another General Assembly is constituted. It is therefore an unwarrantable assumption of authority for the General Assembly to claim the *constitutional* right, over the heads of the Presbyteries, to conduct the missions of the whole Church, by a permanent Board, to act during the interim of its own sessions, when the sole constitutional power belongs to the Presbyteries and Synods, which are the only permanent bodies known to the constitution for this purpose. We affirm, then, that the

General Assembly of 1835 had no right, by constitution, to appoint the proposed Board to act in its name and by its authority; and if they had no right to do it, they had no right to agree to do it, nor to authorize their Committee so to agree; and if the agreement was made by that Committee, in the exercise of their supposed power, it was the right of the Assembly of 1836 to refuse to sanction that agreement. They could not have sanctioned it, constitutionally, without having first obtained for it the approbation of the Presbyteries. For to have adopted and ratified this agreement, with the irreversible condition embraced in it, would have given to it all the permanency and power of a "*constitutional rule*," and would have transcended the expressed limits of the Assembly's power, defined in the following paragraph, Chap. XII. Sec. 6. viz.

"Before any overture or regulations proposed by the Assembly to be established as constitutional rules, shall be obligatory on the churches, it shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and to receive the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof."

The resolution proposed by Dr. Palmer, therefore, that this whole subject be sent down to the Presbyteries for their action in the premises, was altogether reasonable and proper. This resolution was urged upon the friends of the proposed Board as indispensable to its *constitutional* organization. But they resisted it, and claimed the *constitutional right* of the Assembly to appoint the proposed Board, subject to all the conditions and restrictions of the agreement of the Committee of the previous Assembly with the

Synod of Pittsburgh. The Assembly, therefore, were constrained, by the urgency of the friends of the proposed Board, to appoint it, subject to all the conditions and claims of that agreement, or to reject it altogether. They chose the latter course, not only on the ground of the unconstitutionality of the proposed act of appointing a Board, over the heads of the Presbyteries, to conduct the missionary operations of the whole church, in the name and by the authority of the General Assembly, but also on account of the condition embraced in the agreement, viz. "that the said Assembly will never hereafter alienate or transfer to any other judicatory or Board whatever, the direct supervision and management of the said missions, or those which may hereafter be established by the Board of the General Assembly." This, had it been adopted, would have bound all future Assemblies, (as far as an unconstitutional contract is binding,) to exercise an assumed authority over the missionary operations of the whole church, wholly inconsistent with the rights of Presbyteries and Synods guarantied to them by the Constitution.

Again, The contract with the Synod of Pittsburgh, had it been constitutional, was not completed by the Committee of the Assembly of 1835. The Princeton Reviewers affirm that it was, and say that, on this point, "there can be no doubt, for here are the documents." But they do not furnish these documents. Had they quoted them at length, as we have done, every reader might have detected what our Reviewers have failed to notice, that the "agreement," as it came before the Assembly of 1836, was in an unfinished state. Read the following.—Section 1. The

Synod of Pittsburgh "authorizes and directs said Society, (the W. F. M. S.) to perform every act necessary to *complete* said transfer, *when the Assembly shall have appointed its Board.*" It is therefore manifest that something remained to be done, not by the Committee but by the Assembly, before the Society could *complete* the transfer. Again, Section 2. "Until the transfer *shall have been completed*, the business shall be conducted by the Western Foreign Missionary Society." Here too is a recognition that something remained yet to be decided to complete the contract. The General Assembly must decide whether they will appoint the proposed Board, and until this is decided, there is no transfer. The business remains in the hands of the Society, and under the supervision of the Synod. Hence the Chairman of the Committee, the Rev. Dr. Cuyler, in his letter communicating the terms of agreement to the General Assembly, remarks :

"It will be perceived from the agreement, that two things remain to be done, before the transfer can be carried into full effect ; 1. The appointment of the Board ; —2. The designation of its location by the General Assembly.—The resolution under which the committee was appointed, no doubt, gave them the power to complete the whole business, but they preferred to have it done by the collected wisdom and intelligence of the whole church in General Assembly."

Was ever the like authority conferred upon a committee in such circumstances? Did ever a committee, so appointed, assume so much? A plan is to be devised for the permanent direction and management of the great work of Foreign Missions of the whole church, in the name and by the authority of

the General Assembly. A committee is appointed by one Assembly, when less than one-third of its members are present, to make, ratify and confirm the plan, and report it to the next Assembly. The Committee proceed. They fix the details of the plan, designate the number and character of the Board, and settle it for ever, as an irreversible condition, that the missions once assumed shall never be alienated or transferred, &c. Only two things remain to be done, *the appointment of the Board and the designation of its location*; and Dr. Cuyler has "no doubt" that the Committee had full "power to complete the whole business? Then they had power to appoint the proposed Board of Missions, to designate its location, and to agree with the Synod of Pittsburgh, that the members of the Board should be permanent! subject to no change by the voice of the General Assembly! Truly it was very kind and prudent in these brethren not to exercise this unlimited power. But let it be remembered that their having failed to exercise it has, by their own showing, left the contract incomplete. This too, though denied in the reasoning, is implied in the very language of the report of the Committee of 1836, of which Dr. Phillips was chairman. They say that, in their opinion, "there remains but one righteous course" for the Assembly to pursue "which is to adopt the report of the Committee appointed last year, and to appoint a Foreign Missionary Board." But if the report of the Committee of the previous Assembly, was submitted to the Assembly of 1836, for their *adoption*, it was also submitted for their *rejection*, provided they should judge its adoption inexpedient, unconstitutional, or in any respect



improper. If, on the question of the adoption of this report, the Assembly had a right to say, *yes*, they had also a right to say, *no*. If not, then we ask Dr. Cuyler and the Committee of 1835, what it was which they intended to submit to "the collected wisdom and intelligence of the whole church in General Assembly?" Was it simply to recognize the authority of a committee of five, appointed by less than one-third of the previous Assembly, and yield to that authority, by appointing the proposed Board, without exercising the power of altering one jot or tittle of the agreement of the Committee with the Synod of Pittsburgh? If these were the only points proposed to the discretion of the whole church, it was well that the representatives of the whole church, in the last Assembly, had the firmness to reject the assumed authority of the committee, and to refuse a performance of the *two things*, which *remained to be done*, to carry into full effect the alleged contract. It was no contract, and could not be such, "binding in law and conscience on all future Assemblies," without having the sanction of the Assembly itself, in the free and unembarrassed exercise of their "*collected wisdom and intelligence*." All that the Committee did, and all that they could do, was to make proposals to the Synod of Pittsburgh and to form an agreement with the said Synod, in regard to the terms of the proposed transfer, *subject to the approval or rejection of the General Assembly*. "To complete the whole business," they had no power. In the Assembly alone this power resides, essentially, and in the nature of the case, and the Assembly itself cannot delegate it to a committee. As well might they delegate to a committee the power of sitting in

judgment, in the name of the Assembly, on cases of appeal, or of trial for heresy. The decision of such cases is the inalienable right of the whole Assembly. Theirs is the responsibility, and they cannot vote it away, nor throw it off. One Assembly cannot, by the intervention of a committee, take this responsibility and this right from another Assembly. So, in regard to the proposed organization of a Missionary Board, claiming to settle judicially and irreversibly, for the whole church, as such, the manner in which its Foreign Missionary operations shall be conducted, no one Assembly has power to delegate even their own responsibilities to a committee, and much less have they a right to empower such a committee to proceed to ultimate action, and "complete the whole business," and thus to wrest from all future Assemblies their rights and their responsibilities to direct, "of their own knowledge," the mode of their missionary operations from year to year.

We hesitate not to affirm, then, though it conflict with the assertion of the "Gentlemen in Princeton," that the agreement of the Committee of 1835 with the Synod of Pittsburgh was not of the nature or the force of a contract. It was a mere conditional stipulation, and the Assembly were neither "bound in honor and honesty," nor "in conscience and law," to confirm it. The question of the Reviewers, then, is answered. A contract was not formed—was not completed; and the conditional agreement of the Committee was not according to the constitution.

In all this, we admit that the Assembly has power to conduct missions. And this we have never denied. It was not denied on the floor of the Assem-



bly. The expression attributed to Dr. Peters by the Reviewers, "that the Assembly had no power to engage in the business of missions," was never uttered by him. His remarks were the following:—

"I do not think the Assembly has power to make *such an arrangement*. I accord with the legal view of the subject which has been given by Brother Jessup, and believe heartily in the doctrine laid down, last year, by the Pittsburgh Convention, (though I do not admit that as authority, but use it to you, Sir, and to the Chairman of this Committee, [Dr. Phillips,] as an *argumentum ad hominem*,) viz. that all authority in the Presbyterian Church originates with the Presbyteries, and that you cannot tack on to the Constitution contracts or other irresistible arrangements, till you first go down to the Presbyteries and ask their authority." [See New-York Observer, June 11.]

And the argument of Mr. Jessup, by the admission of the Reviewers themselves, after showing that the powers of the Assembly are derived from the Presbyteries, simply denies that the Presbyteries have ever "clothed the Assembly *with power to establish Boards for the management of Missions.*" In perfect consistency with these denials, we not only do not deny, but we maintain that the Assembly has the power to engage in missions.

And more than this, it has the power, (not by any express provision of the Constitution, giving authority to their acts binding upon the churches or upon future Assemblies, but from the nature of the body, irrespective of all constitutional provisions,) to appoint a Board of Missions, and *recommend* it to the confidence and patronage of the churches. It may also, in the exercise of the same right, *recommend* to the patronage of the churches any other Board not of its own appointment, as it has in former years, recom-

mended the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the American Home Missionary Society. This right, however, does not arise, as the Reviewers affirm, "from the nature of this body, as the *supreme judicatory*," but it is a right inherent in all bodies, who are not prohibited by the constitution under which they exist, to do good on the individual responsibility of their members. Presbyteries and Synods have as much right to appoint Boards for the above purposes, and recommend them to public confidence and patronage, as the General Assembly have. But Boards thus appointed or recommended, have no right to exercise the ecclesiastical authority of the bodies appointing them.

The Assembly, as we have shown, possesses no authority in this respect, which it can confer upon such Boards. It has simply the power to recommend them, and all beyond the exercise of this recommendatory power is usurpation and assumption, until the Presbyteries shall have authorized it according to the Constitution. The appointment of such Boards, therefore, by the Assembly, imposes no obligation upon the churches to sustain them contrary to their own preference. This the Reviewers admit, and yet, in the very face of it, they maintain, that the appointment, without any action of the Presbyteries authorizing it, may be so made as to be binding, in law, upon all future Assemblies, with the force of a constitutional rule. Their doctrine is not only that each Assembly has a right to do it, but that any one Assembly may *so* do it, that all succeeding Assemblies shall have no right not to do it, that is, one Assembly may so exercise its powers as to destroy the powers of all

subsequent Assemblies! The absurdity of this position is apparent.

Again the Reviewers illustrate the power of the Assembly to appoint a Missionary Board, to act in its name and by its authority, by its power to establish Theological Seminaries. They say,

“If the Assembly had no right to organize a Board of Missions, it has no right to establish Theological Seminaries, and if the Assembly has no such right, the several Synods cannot have it, and the Auburn, Princeton, Pittsburgh, Union and Columbia Seminaries are unconstitutional excrescences.”

We answer, if these seminaries were established to exercise the ecclesiastical authority over the churches, in any respect, which belongs to the several bodies which have established them, they *would* be “unconstitutional excrescences.” These bodies have no right to confer upon Seminaries their own authority to license ministers, to sit in judgment on appeals, &c. But there being no constitutional provision prohibiting such seminaries, for their own appropriate work, the Assembly and Synods have a right to establish and recommend them. Indeed there is not a word in the constitution concerning Theological Seminaries. Yet the reviewers maintain that the right of the Assembly to establish them is the same as that to appoint a Board of Missions. By their own showing, then, the right, in both cases, is out side of the constitution, and irrespective of it, and of course, a right which the Assembly is perfectly at liberty to exercise, or not, as its members shall judge best. It is simply the right of a voluntary society. Where then is the ground of complaint? where the obligation,

binding in law as well as conscience, on all future **A**ssemblies? All that we have ever affirmed is, that the appointment of a Board of Missions is *extra-constitutional*. It is an act which the Constitution neither provides for, nor forbids, and on which it confers no authority. This is the doctrine which we have never ceased to maintain.



CHAPTER VI.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

The charge of inconsistency refuted.

IN the face of the doctrines defended in the preceding chapter, the Reviewers affirm that we have now "*taken new ground and renounced our former principles.*" They say of us, [page 436.]

"They have taken the ground that the whole church is committed by the action of the Assembly. They refused to allow the organization of a Board of Foreign Missions, because they would thereby sanction the principle, renounce their preferences, and stand committed to sustain an Ecclesiastical Board. The standing objection was that it would be unfair to give the sanction and authority of the whole of the church to a part; whereas, according to their old doctrine, the sanction and authority of the whole, it was not in the power of the Assembly to convey or bestow."

Here again is a surprising mistake. This "new ground," as it is called, was not taken by us but by the friends of the proposed Board. And with them it is not new. It has been long contended for. It was assumed in the Report of the Committee. It was urged by most of the speakers on that side, in the Assembly, and the Reviewers themselves affirm that the Assembly was bound *in good faith, in honor and honesty, in conscience and in law*, to appoint a Board

of Missions, &c. But if the Assembly was bound in good faith, &c., then both parties in the Assembly were thus bound, as well those who did not, as those who did approve. All must say, *yes*. Not an individual could say, *no*, without a breach of legal obligation. The whole body was bound by one and the same obligation. But if *good faith, honor, honesty, conscience and law* bound all the members of the Assembly to *appoint* a Board, then they were all equally bound, having appointed it, to *support* it. To appoint it, and then leave it without patronage, all will admit, would be to trifle with the sacred things above named, *good faith, honor, &c.* This ground then, was assumed by the friends of the proposed organization, and by them alone is it maintained. We admitted the position in our arguments only for the sake of presenting in their true light, the alarming consequences which its adoption by the General Assembly would necessarily involve and entail upon the churches. It was only on this *admission* that the alleged contract possessed the binding power which was claimed for it, that the opposers of the measure argued "that the whole church would be committed by the action of the Assembly." At the same time we denied the power of the Assembly thus to commit and bind the churches, and therefore rejected the measure proposed. All this appears to be perfectly consistent and harmonious. Was it candid then in the Reviewers, for the sake of an opportunity of declaiming against us, as inconsistent with ourselves, thus to attribute to us a sentiment, which we admitted only for the purpose of refuting it? Every fair minded reader will condemn this, and their own re-

fections, it is presumed, will convince them of its impropriety.

The Reviewers further exhibit their misconception of the principles of the majority of the last Assembly, on the subject of constitutional power, in the following language: [page 436, &c.]

“ The most important and startling principle, however, advanced by our new school brethren was, that the Assembly has no power to appoint such a Board, or to conduct Missionary operations at all, This seems to have been in many minds the turning point of the whole matter. Mr. Jessup, Dr. Peters, Judge Stevens and other leading speakers on that side gave it a prominence which appears to have surprised and alarmed those who have never been considered men of extreme opinions.” Again, “ There are several things in the assumption of this position adapted to create both alarm and sorrow. The first is its novelty and its inconsistency with the previous professions of its advocates. To the best of our knowledge this is the first time that this principle has ever been advanced in any of our judicatories, and it is now advanced by men, who for a long series of years, and in many different forms, have professed a different opinion.” Again, “ The Secretary of the Home Missionary Society has, from his station, been the most frequent organ of giving utterance to the professions to which we have alluded. He was the active agent also in proposing different plans of compromise and co-operation, all involving the right of the Assembly to conduct missionary operations. Yet he was the leader of the party which now assumes the opposite ground. The men who have hitherto professed most liberality and friendship are now foremost in avowing a principle of deadly hostility; a principle which demands not merely reform, a change of men, or of measures, but absolute destruction. It is this, that has produced alarm. The churches know not what to depend upon or what to trust to. Mutual confidence is destroyed, when such repeated professions and avowals are forgotten in a moment.”

Is it so, that mutual confidence is destroyed? And is this surprising to the authors of the foregoing paragraphs? Can it be wondered at, that mutual confidence should cease, when grave religious periodicals, conducted under the sanction of "*men venerable for age and station,*" are allowed thus to misstate, and then to hold up to ridicule and reproach, the principles, and reasonings of a majority of their brethren of the same church? We have already explained the grounds on which we deny the power of the Assembly to appoint *such a Board*, as was proposed by the Committee of 1835, with all the unconstitutional conditions embraced in their agreement, while, at the same time, we have admitted, and have never denied the right of the Assembly "to conduct missionary operations." We have also explained the principles on which we admit and maintain this right. And these positions are neither novel nor inconsistent with the previous professions of their advocates. It is not "*the first time*" that they have been advanced, nor are they now advanced by men, who have ever, in any form, professed different opinions. The Secretary of the Home Missionary Society, in his endeavors to promote the very "plans of compromise and co-operation," to which the Reviewers allude, assumed the same positions which we now maintain, in nearly the same words. That this may not be doubted, we quote the following from the "Letters" of Dr. Peters, published in the "*Cincinnati Journal*" in the months of December 1830, and January 1831, entitled a "PLEA FOR UNION IN THE WEST" and afterwards collected into a pamphlet. These Letters were in reply to an *official* publication

of Rev. Mr. Russell, at that time Secretary of the "*Board of Missions of the General Assembly*," containing several erroneous and injurious statements against the Home Missionary Society. The following is from "*Letter III.*"

"CORRECTION FIRST."

"It is stated in the letter under review, that "*the one [the Board of Missions] is strictly ecclesiastical; the other [the A. H. M. Society,] as strictly voluntary.*" Now I maintain that neither of these Boards is *strictly ecclesiastical*, and that the former, though *ecclesiastical* in its origin, yet so far as relates to every thing valuable and safe in *ecclesiastical responsibility*, is no more an *ecclesiastical body* than the latter.

The impression which has been entertained by some, that the appointment of the Board of Missions is *formally prescribed* in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and that in this respect, it is *strictly ecclesiastical*, is erroneous. The constitution simply declares that "*the General Assembly may, of their own knowledge send Missions to any part, &c.* [See form of Gov. chap. xviii.] This article plainly provides that the General Assembly, as such, *while yet in session*, may, *of their own knowledge*, appoint missionaries, and send them to *any part*, for the purposes specified. But here is no provision for the appointment of a *permanent Board* to appoint missionaries during the year; and I see not how such provision could have been made *constitutionally*, because this would give power to the General Assembly to perpetuate its *existence* after its *dissolution*, which is absurd. Besides, if the power to *appoint missionaries* may be constitutionally delegated to a permanent Board, under sanction of the above article, then, by the same rule, the Assembly may empower such a Board to *direct Presbyteries to ordain evangelists, &c.* which would be manifestly infringing on the rights of Presbyteries guaranteed in the constitution. I do not deny that the General Assembly have a right to designate a Board of Missions, and recommend them to the churches, as suitable persons to be intrusted with the management of this be-

nevolent enterprise. But what I affirm is, that the appointment of such a Board, so far as constitutional authority is concerned, is *extra-ecclesiastical*.

Nor is the Board of Missions an ecclesiastical body, because its Committee may have assumed, in any instance, the appearance of exercising *ecclesiastical authority*. No such authority belongs to it by constitution. This, since the meeting of the last General Assembly, is pretty well understood.

In the above particulars, therefore, and in all other respects, which appertain to the constitution of the church, neither of the Boards is *strictly ecclesiastical*. But taking the word in its largest signification, which is "*relating to the church, not civil,*" both are *ecclesiastical*, and one is about as much so as the other. Both *relate to the church*, both are sustained principally by the contributions of *professing Christians*, and the officers of both are *members of the church*. The only difference here is that the members, officers, and operations of the one are confined to a single denomination, while those of the other are extended to three denominations, but all in communion with each other, and disposed to "*bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*"

Where is the discrepancy between the above positions assumed by the Secretary of the Home Missionary Society in 1830, and the grounds maintained by himself and the majority of the Assembly of 1836? Where the evidence that they *now assume the opposite ground*? We answer, it is to be found only in the assertions of the Reviewers, repeated almost every week in the "*Presbyterian,*" and other party papers, whose editors and correspondents have an avowed and settled purpose to answer by representing us as inconsistent with ourselves. The Reviewers proceed, [page 437.]

"The case is the more aggravated because of the weakness of the arguments by which the position in question

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was defended. Were it matter for which some show of reason could be presented, about which there had been previous diversity of opinion, or with regard to which some new light had sprung up, we might be less concerned. This, however, is not the fact."

Wonderful!—"NOT THE FACT"? Then this is altogether a new controversy!—never heard of until some "diversity of opinion" sprung up in the last Assembly!—"NOT THE FACT"? Then Mr. Russell, never wrote and published an official letter in 1830, assailing the Home Missionary Society, and maintaining the *strictly ecclesiastical* character of the Board, and declaring that it had "*jurisdiction*" over the churches!—Dr. Wilson never wrote his "*Four propositions against the American Home Missionary Society*"! Dr. Phillips did not procure their republication in New-York, and their gratuitous circulation through the churches! and Dr. Peters never wrote his "*Brief Answer*" to Mr Russell! nor his "*Reply*" to Dr. Wilson!—nor his "*Six Letters*," published in the "*Cincinnati Journal*"! "NOT THE FACT"?—Then the "*Act and Testimony*" was never written! was never signed!—was never reviewed and condemned in the "*Biblical Repertory*," by the "*Gentlemen in Princeton*"?—the "*Pittsburgh Convention*" was never assembled, and the "*Memorial*" of that convention was not presented to the Assembly of 1835!!—Can it be, that "*such repeated professions and avowals are FORGOTTEN IN A MOMENT*"? The "Gentlemen in Princeton" understand that it is much easier to speak of the "*weakness of arguments*," than to meet them with *strength*; and to deny that they carry with them even "*the show of*

reason," than to resist them with any thing better than *show* ; and we cannot divest ourselves of the unwelcome impression that their oft repeated expressions of *alarm may* have been published to the churches, for the sake of *producing alarm*. Why else do they accuse us of "deadly hostility," and of maintaining principles, which demand "absolute destruction," and which are "adapted to create both alarm and sorrow"? Why did they thus early and formally announce, that "the churches feel astounded," and "know not when they are safe, nor what is to be considered sacred," unless it was that they anticipated such results from their own representations of the principles, positions and reasonings of their brethren? We do not charge these gentlemen, but it must be apparent to every one, that, if their aim had been the *destruction* of "mutual confidence," they could hardly have devised a wiser adaptation of means to an end so deplorable. But we have still some further "show of reason" to offer, why the blame of the "alarm and sorrow," which has resulted from this controversy, should be attributed to them, rather than to us.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

The unreasonableness of the claims of the minority of the General Assembly in regard to the proposed organization of a Board of Foreign Missions.

2. THE Reviewers maintain that the proposed measure was not only constitutionally proposed, but that "it is reasonable and expedient." They reason thus :

"It is notorious and acknowledged, that one portion of our churches prefer voluntary associations, and another ecclesiastical organizations, for conducting benevolent enterprises. The former have an organ suited to their wishes in the American Board ; It is therefore but reasonable that the others should have one adapted to their wishes, organized by the General Assembly." (p. 424.)

"The former have an organ"! But where did they get it? Who gave them their organ? Did its friends ask the General Assembly to constitute it for them, as a portion of the church? No; it was their natural right, as individual christians, apart from any ecclesiastical authority or sanction, thus to associate for a benevolent purpose. So it is the natural right of the other portion of the church to organize themselves under any form that pleases them. They have no need to ask this right of any General Assembly. It

belongs to them, and they ought to be contented with it, as the friends of the American Board are with the enjoyment of the same right. But they are not satisfied with this, and they make their *dissatisfaction* the ground of their claim, as a portion of the church, on the other portion for more. They say to us in effect, "Because you are *satisfied* with what naturally belongs to you, the right of conducting missions as you please, on your own responsibility, and because we are *not* satisfied with the possession of the same right, 'it is therefore but reasonable' that you should grant us what would *satisfy us*. This would be reciprocal. You have what *satisfies you*"! But hold, brethren. What have you given us, as an equivalent for what you ask? Nothing. Without any action of the General Assembly on this subject, we have just what belongs to us, and so have you. We have not taken from you any right which we claim for ourselves. Where then is the reciprocity on which you found your claim? You concede nothing;—we ask nothing;—and because we ask nothing, and are satisfied with the exercise of our natural rights, you claim of us to become, with you, the makers and the patrons of an organization which we do not approve, and from the responsibilities of which we desire to be excused, as we readily excuse you from the responsibilities of the organization which we prefer. You ask, therefore, more than your natural right, and the whole force of your argument, thus far, is that you may be *satisfied*, however *unsatisfactory* to us may be the measure which you claim. But the argument is not exhausted here. The Reviewers proceed:

"They," (the friends of ecclesiastical organizations,) are scattered over the whole country, connected with every Synod, and perhaps every Presbytery in the church. They need a common bond of union, and this bond can be found only in the General Assembly. This body is their mutual representative, where they can all meet, and through which alone they can combine. They have a natural right to avail themselves of their own system, to give harmony and union to their actions. It was therefore ungenerous and unjust for those who do not wish such an organization for themselves, to say that those who need it shall not have it." [p. 424.]

A little examination will show the unsoundness of the above position. *A portion of our churches* "need a common bond of union, and this bond can be found only in the General Assembly." Is it so? Have they not a bond of union among themselves, and is not this bond their preference for a certain mode of conducting missions? Can they not be united by this bond, as a portion of the church? Must they, of necessity, remain at variance and do nothing, until they are compelled to unite by the power of the General Assembly, associating with themselves in the organization which they prefer, the other portion of the church who do not approve of that organization. We, as the other portion of the church have a bond of union among ourselves, and we are contented with it. We ask no concessions from the other portion, nor do we need the exercise of any ecclesiastical power to unite us. There is a moral power in the object and mode of our operations which bears our hearts towards each other, and gives to our endeavors the energy of united action; and we would by no means adopt a plan, which would exclude any

of our brethren from the privilege of this union. Nor would we constrain any to co-operate with us. If the other portion of the church prefer another mode of conducting missions, we are willing they should adopt it. But we are unwilling, by our votes, to adopt it for them. Indeed, we cannot thus adopt it. The organization which they ask is a "Board of Missions of the *General Assembly*," and the moment we constitute it by our votes, on the principles contended for by our brethren, it becomes the Board of the whole Assembly, and not the Board of a portion of the church. The measure which they propose then, if adopted by us, in the manner claimed, would bind us, as well as the other portion of the church, to an organization which we do not approve, and we maintain that it is not just, generous nor reciprocal for them to demand so great a concession at our hands.

The Reviewers affirm that the General Assembly is the "mutual representative" of that portion of the church who desire the proposed Board, "where they can all meet, and through which alone they can combine." They doubtless admit that the General Assembly is also the "mutual representative" of the other portion of the church, as well as of themselves. The calamity of the former portion, therefore, is that they have prescribed a plan for conducting missions which demands, as a necessary condition, that the General Assembly shall be their organ, and they declare that it is on this condition alone that they can combine. But the General Assembly is divided on this subject. By their own showing, they are but a portion of the church. The other portion do not agree with them.

Our representatives in the General Assembly do not agree with their representatives. We do not regard the General Assembly as properly constituted for the business of conducting in this form missionary operations. We deprecate the tendencies of the organization proposed. Yet we are a portion of the General Assembly, as well as they, and of the last Assembly we were the majority. Was it reasonable, then, to expect that the majority would yield their conscientious judgment to the opinion of the minority, and by their votes constitute the General Assembly the organ of the minority, because, as a minority they refuse to combine on any other condition? Yet this is what the minority demand, and they utter loud complaints, and call us "ungenerous and unjust," because we refused, as an Assembly, to adopt a plan, which, as an Assembly, we did not, and do not approve.

Our brethren of the minority further claim that "they have a natural right to avail themselves of their own system, to give harmony and union to their action." This is doubtless true provided their system does not involve the destruction of the rights of others. But they have no right, as a "portion of the church," and a minority of the General Assembly, to control the action of the whole church, and compel the General Assembly to become their organ in the prosecution of a system which a majority of the Assembly deprecate as unwise and injurious. The system proposed therefore is clogged with a condition which is utterly impracticable, unless a majority in the Assembly shall approve it. But a majority do not approve it. Are the minority then deprived of a natural right? Is it their natural right that the

majority should agree with them and promote their system? They will not assert this. Yet their system requires it, and their reasoning urges it as a claim. They are contending therefore for a condition which is not their natural right. It would be wrong in the majority to grant it, as it is wrong in the minority to ask it. Our brethren then have no just ground of complaint. They have their natural rights, and their remedy for the embarrassment into which they have thrown themselves, by urging an impracticable condition, is obvious. It is to relinquish that condition. Let them no longer contend that, as a portion of the church, they have a right to the action of the General Assembly of the whole church as their organ. Strange it is, and marvelous, that such a right should ever have been claimed by any party! Let it be relinquished. Then let our brethren "avail themselves of their own system" on the responsibility of such and such only as prefer it and desire to promote it. This would remove, at once, all grounds of offence. The General Assembly would no longer be disturbed by this distracting controversy. Each portion of the church would pursue its own plans, and choose its own organs, and both would doubtless be blessed in their endeavors to do good.

But it is here urged that the plan proposed is *ecclesiastical*, and can only be carried into effect by an *ecclesiastical* body. Then let it be adopted by some ecclesiastical body which approves of such an organization, and is willing to exert its power and sanction in its support. Let it remain in the hands of the Synod of Pittsburgh. That is an ecclesiastical body. Or let the several Synods and Presbyteries, if there

be several, who prefer this plan, unite for the purpose of carrying it forward. But if this would imply a modification of plan or conditions to which our brethren cannot consent, if it is indispensable for the plan to be adopted by the General Assembly, then we see no end to the evils which must result from this unreasonable and impracticable requirement. So long as these brethren maintain this position, they must continue in a state of perpetual disquietude, opposing and opposed. The condition which they claim is such that they cannot avoid being the occasion of perpetual disturbance to the church, unless they shall relinquish that condition, or withdraw from their present ecclesiastical connexion with the friends of Voluntary Societies, and form a General Assembly of their own, which may with propriety become their organ for conducting their missionary operations. The latter measure we do not advise. The division of our church, for any cause, we should deprecate as an evil of tremendous magnitude. We would therefore avoid giving the slightest just occasion for such a result. But if our brethren cannot remain with us, and be contented to enjoy the rights which are consistent with the rights of the whole body, we hesitate not to say, it would be better to separate.

Again. The plan proposed is not ecclesiastical in its origin, any more than is the plan of Voluntary Societies. It was originated and proposed by certain individuals, members and ministers of the church, more or less numerous, who agreed to recommend its adoption by the General Assembly. Thus far it is supported simply by the voluntary association of its friends, who desire to procure for their plan the sanc-

tion of ecclesiastical authority of the highest kind by having it adopted by the General Assembly. Until it is thus adopted, it has no such authority, and no claim to our concurrence on account of its ecclesiastical form and pretensions. We are led to make these remarks from the apparent confusion into which the minds of some of our brethren have fallen, who seem to have concluded, that, because their plan is designed to be made ecclesiastical by adoption, it is so in its origin and nature, and that therefore its friends and supporters are the church, entitled to all the power and sanction of the church. Hence the Princeton Review asserts that "they," (the friends of ecclesiastical organizations,) "have a natural right to avail themselves of their own system," that is to make the General Assembly their organ for conducting missions. Again, [page 425.] "They," (the majority of the last Assembly,) "are deliberately refusing to allow their brethren," (the minority,) "to have an organization such as they prefer, which they believe to be essential to the right discharge of *their duty as a church*, and necessary to bring all *its* resources to bear efficiently on the missionary work." Is the minority *the church*, then, because it is in favor of an ecclesiastical appointment of a Missionary Board? This is plainly the meaning of the language—" *Its resources*," i. e. the resources of the church. But the Reviewers mean only that portion of the church who prefer the proposed plan. The other portion, they admit, in the sentence immediately preceding, "are right" in regarding themselves "perfectly free to patronize what societies they please?" The resources of the church, then, are the resources of the minority,

or at most of a portion of the church, and that portion it is, who "have a natural right to avail themselves of their own system," though it demand, as a necessary condition of its execution, the action of the General Assembly in direct opposition to the opinions and wishes of a majority of its own members, and of the churches under its care! Again, our Reviewers assert,

"3. That the Assembly ought to organize a Board of Foreign Missions, because a large portion of our churches desire it. It is no matter whether this desire in itself is reasonable or not, it is sufficient that it exists to render it obligatory on the Assembly to gratify it." [page 426.]

"The consideration that a portion of its," (the Assembly's) "members prefer a different mode of action, is no sufficient reason for rejecting it. These brethren come forward and say, We feel bound in conscience to appear and to unite, as a church, in sending the gospel to all nations; we believe that the command of Christ requires this at our hands." [p. 426.]

Truly here is great confusion of conceptions, as well as the most arrogant and mistaken pretensions. The *minority* "feel bound in conscience to appear and to unite *as a church*"! And they proceed to say, "The General Assembly is our only point of union; we wish it to give us a Board," &c. Mark the expression, "Give *us* a Board"! Would it then be the Board of the General Assembly, or the Board of a party,—a portion of the church? Yet the fact that this portion of the church desires it, reasonably or unreasonably, makes it obligatory on the Assembly to grant it! But suppose the other portion of the church, (the majority,) should desire the Assembly not to grant such a Board, and suppose this desire should

seem to a majority of the Assembly to be very reasonable and highly important,—would this be “no sufficient reason” for refusing the request of the minority in direct opposition to it? Surely the Princeton Reviewers have fallen into confusion and a snare. But the mistake may be easily accounted for. Some of the advocates of Boards appointed by church courts, have so long and so ardently calculated upon the efficiency of these organizations, to increase the party who have sustained them, and make it in very deed, *the church*, that, in the warmth of their discussions, they forget that the desired result is not yet attained. There is still another portion of the church who have adopted other plans of action, removed far from the blighting influence of ecclesiastical debates, and who, while they have scattered much, have, by the blessing of God, been much increased and multiplied. This should be remembered by our brethren, and that we, too, “feel bound in conscience” to put no obstacles in the way of the onward movement of those catholic plans of missions, which have attracted nearly all the minds in christendom, who care for the salvation of men, and have been so signally useful in combining the resources and the activities of the church for the conversion of the world. They who oppose us, therefore, should not be surprised, if in the fullness of our hearts, we speak out on these subjects and cause our voices to be heard, in discussions so vitally affecting the character and influence of that branch of the church of Christ, which owns very many of us, who have been thus engaged, as members and as ministers.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

The privilege of the Presbyterian Church. The Moravians considered. The arguments of Dr. Hoge discussed. The influence of "monied men."

4. The fourth topic of special pleading adopted by the Reviewers, on behalf of the proposed organization is the following, viz.

"We feel it to be the duty and privilege of the Presbyterian church to engage, as a church, in the great work of evangelizing the world. We find all other denominations thus engaged. The Episcopalians, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Moravians have each their Missionary Societies; why should Presbyterians alone be deprived of a separate organization?"

To the question here propounded, we reply by asking another, How many of the societies above referred to, are mere voluntary societies, having no responsibility to church courts, as such? With most of them, we know this to be the fact. But even if it were otherwise, we would say that Presbyterians ought not to have "a separate organization" for missions, because the Presbyterian church is much more liberal in the structure of its constitution, and far less exclusive in the terms of its communion, than the denominations above named, excepting perhaps

the Moravians. It is the glory of American Presbyterianism that it opens its arms to the reception of all evangelical christians. It unchurches none of the denominations who hold the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. It recognizes as valid the accredited ministry and ordinances of all such denominations, notwithstanding their great diversities of external form and order, and Presbyterians invite the members of these denominations to their communion. It is not so with Episcopalians and Baptists. Their churches exhibit, in the modes of their external administration, conditions of exclusion, which shut out from their communion, the members of all other denominations, whose visible ordinances do not embrace the conditions required. It is therefore with reason that American Presbyterians have cast the blame of exclusiveness and sectarianism upon the above denominations. We have not so learned Christ, and least of all, did we expect to be urged by the "*Gentlemen in Princeton*" to copy, in these respects, the example of *Episcopalians and Baptists*, the exclusiveness of whose organizations is such that they cannot consistently co-operate with other denominations in the work of missions. Presbyterians are under no such embarrassment. The constitution of our church, as well as the spirit of our profession, as Christians, invites the co-operation of all denominations, who hold the like precious faith. And so far as the American Board is concerned, we are not desired to extend our co-operation beyond a few of the most homogeneous denominations. The members and missionaries of that Board, are all Presbyterians, or

belong to denominations in correspondence with the General Assembly of our church, who agree with us in essential doctrines, and do not materially differ from us in the general principles of their order and discipline. Instead, therefore, of inquiring why Presbyterians should be *deprived* of a separate organization for conducting missions, we cannot forbear to ask, why *Presbyterians* should *desire* such an organization? To be consistent with the spirit of our professions and the expansiveness of our constitution, we ought rather to regret that, on account of the impediments thrown in the way by other denominations, we are obliged to confine our associations to so small a portion of the professed disciples of Christ, in the great work of evangelizing all nations. Few, if any, can be induced to unite with us, in this glorious enterprise, excepting those who are substantially Presbyterians, and the terms of whose communion are equally liberal with our own. Why, then, should we desire to reduce to still narrower limits the circle of our influence, as a church, by adopting organizations which shall exclude the co-operation of the few denominations who are ready to unite with us? It would be suicidal. It would weaken both their strength and our own. It would throw the whole business of missions under sectarian banners, and leave us to compete single handed and alone, with other exclusive organizations. Hitherto the union of our church with other denominations, in efforts to do good, has been its strength. It is this which has given us an extent of influence and an efficiency in every benevolent enterprise, far surpassing that of every other de-

nomination, excepting those who have co-operated with us, on the same liberal principles.

“Every organized body,” say the Reviewers, “has a moral character to sustain and cherish, as well as every individual;” and from this they argue that every church should act under its own banner, that it may stand out by itself, and as a denomination command the respect of the world. The reasoning however is inconclusive. It is not the philosophy of the Bible. That requires that we seek not every one his own, but every one the things of others. It is by self-denying beneficence, that as individuals, we sustain and cherish the best moral characters, and if this is to illustrate the duties of churches in this respect, it inculcates a very different doctrine from the above. It urges upon churches the duty of mingling their counsels and sympathies and prayers, that they too, as well as individuals, may “bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” As *Presbyterians*, then, if we would sustain and cherish the highest moral character and the most extensive influence, as a *denomination*, we ought to prefer those organizations for benevolent action, which will afford us the widest field of co-operation with the servants of Christ, of other names.

“What is the reason,” then, say the Reviewers, “that the Moravians are looked up to with such respect and affection by the whole christian world? It is because they have as a denomination, and not merely as individual christians, stood forth as an humble, faithful, devoted band of missionary men.”

But under what form have they stood forth?
 “What characterizes the Moravians most, and holds

them up to the attention of others, is their missionary zeal. Their missionaries, as one observes, are all of them volunteers*." Again. The Moravians, or "United Brethren," as they are sometimes called, have had two societies for missions among the heathen, in operation for nearly a hundred years, viz. one in London and one in Amsterdam, and to these was added a similar society in North America in 1787, incorporated by the State of Pennsylvania. And the denomination itself has been in existence, much in its present form, since 1547, [nearly three hundred years,] when "they were called *Fratres legis Christi*, or Brethren of the law of Christ, because, about that period, they had thrown off all reverence for human compilations of the faith, professing simply to follow the doctrines and precepts contained in the word of God."† What an example for high church Presbyterians! We wonder that the "Gentlemen in Princeton" have adduced it in support of the exclusive measures which they and the minority of the last Assembly defend! Again. "No schism whatever, in point of doctrine, has disturbed the church of the United Brethren," [since 1727.] "They are all of one mind as to the doctrines they teach. Their zeal is calm, steady and persevering. They would reform the world, but are careful how they quarrel with it."‡ In this manner, we grant that the Moravians "have stood forth as an humble, faithful, devoted band of missionary me," exhibiting a noble example of labor and self-denial in the cause of missions. But it is not their *sectarianism* which commends them to the

* "See "Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge," *Moravian: s.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.*

imitation of christians of other denominations. And what have the Moravians accomplished, "that they should be looked up to with such respect and affection by the whole christian world?" By the operation of their three missionary societies, established in England, Germany, and the United States, after the lapse of nearly a hundred years, the "*Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*" informs us that "the number of converts and persons under instruction, in the different missions, amount to about 55,150, and the number of missionaries to about 163." This, by the showing of the Princeton Reviewers themselves, is the best example of a denominational organization, which can be adduced, and this is much less sectarian and exclusive than their inquiries imply. Let us contrast with this the glorious and rapid success of two voluntary societies, embracing christians of different denominations, associated in their united efforts for the propagation of the gospel, in heathen countries. The London Missionary Society, formed in 1795, had in 1831, 80 stations, 90 European missionaries, and 20 printers, school-masters, &c. in all about 400. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, formed in 1811, has already in its employ, dependent wholly upon the Board for their support, more than 300 missionaries and helpers in heathen tribes and in foreign countries. These societies, therefore, though much later in their commencement, have left the Moravians far behind in the race. So far as example is concerned, the "Gentlemen in Princeton" should have yielded their preference for ecclesiastical organizations, and admitted the superior efficiency and success of voluntary socie-

ties. Before the experiment of the latter had been fully tried, it was lawful to point to the Moravians as the noblest example in the world of missionary zeal and success. But since our fathers were taught thus to regard these devoted pioneers in the work of missions, another experiment has been tried, exhibiting a much nobler example. These general societies, voluntarily associated, have discovered a harmonizing principle, which has already resulted in a far more extended and efficient union, than that which *was* the glory of the church of the "United Brethren." By their action and success a deep and mighty stream has set in upon the churches of christendom, bearing the hearts of the faithful towards each other and making them one; And we had thought that no friend of the Redeemer would desire, while no enemy has the power, to roll back that stream. It will flow on, from the infinite fountain in which it originated, until its fertilizing influences shall be felt in the length and the breadth of the inhabited earth, and the members of the church universal shall no longer say, "I am of Paul and I of Apollos," but all shall be one in Christ Jesus."

5. The Reviewers quote the language of Dr. Hoge, as reported in the "*New-York Evangelist*" of June 25, 1836, and strenuously maintain the position which he assumed. They say,

"It is impossible to bring the Presbyterian Church, as it is, into general action on any other principle than the one proposed. There are a multitude in this church who will not contribute to the American Board. You can neither persuade nor compel them to do it. The principle that the church ought to act in this behalf is written on their hearts, right or wrong."

We have no doubt that the above is the fact to a considerable extent, and we regret it, that it is "written upon the hearts," or at least upon the determinations of many in our church, that they "*will not contribute to the American Board.*" But how came it to be thus written? It cannot be doubted that the "Gentlemen in Princeton," by their repeated declarations on this subject, (though they have ever professed to be the friends of that Board,) and especially that the "*Letters*" of Dr. Miller "*to Presbyterians,*" and the public addresses and active personal influence of himself and his son-in-law, Dr. Breckenridge, have contributed more than any other single combination of agencies, to produce this unhappy result. They have created suspicions and alarm in the minds of many against all voluntary societies, by declaiming against them as irresponsible and unsafe, and have thus weakened the confidence of some in what Dr. Rice regarded as the "WISEST AND BEST SOCIETY IN THE WORLD, THE AMERICAN BOARD," and have diverted from it the contributions of many. Is it fair, then, and candid, for the "Gentlemen in Princeton," after having so long and in so many ways, exerted their influence to produce this state of alienation, to urge the very prejudices, of which they are conscious of having been, to some extent, the authors, as a reason for the adoption of the proposed measure? Are not the "Gentlemen" fully aware that, if they were so disposed, it would be perfectly within their power to efface from the minds of many the prejudices which themselves have produced? But they are not so disposed; and as we have failed to persuade them to relinquish their positions, our



only alternative has been to resist them by our votes, and then to make our appeal to the judgment, the candor, and the enlightened missionary spirit of the christian public. They, on the other hand, are awake to the separate interest which they have espoused. They continue to cherish and promote the prejudice and alarm, which they have been so successful in producing. What, but to foment suspicion and *destroy* "mutual confidence," can be the object of the following insinuations against all voluntary societies for benevolent purposes? [page 438.]

"And by whom are these voluntary associations controlled? By monied men. Whatever may be the theory of their operation, this we believe to be practically the fact." Again, "It results from the nature of the system. The men who have the direction of the education of the candidates for the ministry, and the location and support of these candidates, when ordained, have ten thousand sources of influence in the feelings and associations, as well as interests of those concerned, which render them the arbiters of the destinies of the church. This influence is the more serious because it is invisible, unofficial and consequently irresponsible. It is acquired in one sphere, and is made to bear on all others. It is created without, yet enters all our church judicatories, decides points of discipline and doctrine, and determines the whole course of ecclesiastical affairs."

Is it possible that the Professors in the "*Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church*" have come to this; that, "for the sake of a purpose," they are willing to cast odium upon our most efficient and successful systems of religious charity, by the "sneering" insinuation that they are sustained and directed by *monied men*? Are they not aware that this is an appeal to the lowest prejudices of the ignorant, and

of such as are opposed to all benevolent efforts? Do they not know that the exigences of the cause of Christ, in the whole world, require the contribution of *money*, in large amounts? And who, but "*monied men*," can supply these consecrated treasures? The orphan's pittance and the widow's mite fall far below the demands of the cause, and the authority of heaven has imposed upon the rich the obligation to give of their abundance. No system of operation can be devised, which would allow us to dispense with their contributions. And is the influence of "*monied men*" dangerous, and to be deprecated, only when the spirit of piety and love to the souls of men constrains them to dispense their wealth in the promotion of religious charity? There are some "*monied men*" among us, of immense possessions, who are mighty to sign *Acts and Testimonies*, and to prepare *newspaper paragraphs* against the benevolent endeavors of their brethren, and a few who have recently shown themselves valiant in opposition to the decisions of the last General Assembly, by appending their names to a secret "*circular*," and a published pamphlet, whose avowed object is the division and dismemberment of the Presbyterian church. Would these men have been less usefully employed, and their influence more dangerous, had they written less and given more? Read the "*Act and Testimony*," and the late pamphlet of Drs. Phillips, McElroy, Breckenridge and McDowell, and Messrs. Potts, M'Farland, Krebs, Rankin, Auchincloss and Lenox, and contrast these documents with the last Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and then judge! Can any one fail to see that the

whole design and tendency of the latter is to "lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes" of all the tents of Israel, and the former tends only to produce alienation and strife, the destruction of "mutual confidence," and the disruption of those ties which bind friend to friend, and brother to brother, in the labor of love? A cold and sickening sadness comes over us when we contemplate these results, and reflect how much of the influence of wealth and of official station has already been worse than wasted in the production of these inflammatory and agitating communications to the public.

But "monied men," it is said, on the voluntary plan, control the societies, which are supported by their contributions, and from this results the danger complained of. Is not the same result also experienced on the *ecclesiastical* plan? If not, who does control the Boards appointed by church courts? Shall these courts possess the control, the majority of whose members, as in the present case, contribute nothing to the support of the Boards in question? And can our brethren regard this as a measure either of safety or of efficiency? Shall all the influence of monied men, which, while within their own control, is regarded so dangerous, be put out of their hands, and committed to the control of men who already possess the ecclesiastical power of the church? This would be a practical carrying out of the doctrine of the "Pittsburgh Convention," that the *funds* of the members of the church, "by the laws of all social order, ought to come into the treasury of the body to which its possessors belong." But the safety of this doctrine has been most signally disproved by the history of

the Romish Church, which has accumulated the tremendous power with which it has scourged the nations, for so many ages, by a practical adoption of this very principle. It is Popery thus to unite and concentrate the power of pecuniary patronage and of ecclesiastical authority in the same hands, to be wielded without restraint. And is it probable that Protestants, with all these facts before them, will surrender their personal rights to the claims of such a principle, and contribute largely to institutions thus controlled? Among us, hitherto, it has not been so; and it cannot be. Enlightened and liberal men, who feel their individual responsibility of seeing that their contributions are well appropriated, will choose to patronize societies, whose agencies are, in some degree, within their own control, and whose abuses of trust and of confidence, may be reached and corrected by the very men who furnish the means of their support and efficiency. The influence of monied men, then, cannot be separated from the immense pecuniary means which is required for the conversion of the world, and the least of all dangers connected with this influence is, that those whose hearts are so warmed with love to the heathen, that they are willing to contribute largely of their means to send them the gospel, will desire to make use of their pecuniary patronage for sinister ends. And what if "this influence is acquired in one sphere, and is made to bear on all others"? Is not this the fact with every influence which exists in the church? Where do the Princeton Professors acquire their influence? and where do they use it? And whether it be acquired without or within the church, if it be a good influ-

ence, we welcome it to our church judicatories. Neither the influence of money nor of official station will harm us, if they who possess it, will write upon it all, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD," and consecrate it to the spread of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God."

We are not alarmed, therefore, by the decision of the last Assembly on the subject of Foreign Missions. The gentlemen in Princeton "fear the result has inflicted a deeper wound on the prosperity of our church, than she has suffered for a long time." The reasons of this apprehension we have sufficiently considered, and in view of all the bearings and probable influences of that decision, we cannot but regard it as an event most propitious to the general interests of the cause of Christ, and especially to the prosperity of our own church, and its increased efficiency in the work of missions. It leaves the several branches of our extended communion free to adopt, without embarrassment, such plans as they prefer, and has produced, as we regard it, a happy separation of the work of Foreign Missions from the exercise of the supreme judicial authority of the church. We regret, as much as our brethren can, the misconceptions, wrong statements and alienations which the unlooked for resistance of the decision referred to has occasioned. But our hope is, that this unkindness will be temporary, and that under the operation of the present arrangements, it will soon give place to a better state of feeling. The friends of the American Board have already expressed their satisfaction in unmeasured terms, and those of the Western Foreign Missionary Society, we trust, will ere long be convinced that their operations are far less embar-

rassed, under the present arrangement, than they could have been under the control of the General Assembly, divided as that body is, and probably must be for a long time to come, in their conscientious opinions on this subject. May the great Head of the church preserve us from all future jealousies and contentions in regard to this most important, most sacred interest, whose success, under God, depends, more essentially than is generally apprehended, upon the *united* endeavors, as well as the fervent prayers of all, of every name, who desire to see the heathen given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCETON REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

The Trial and Restoration of Mr. Barnes. Influences tending to a division of the church deprecated.

Early in the year 1835, Dr. Junkin, being himself a member of another Presbytery, presented a series of charges against the Rev. Albert Barnes before the second Presbytery of Philadelphia, for error in doctrine, founded on his "Notes on the Epistle to the Romans." The Presbytery having tried and acquitted Mr. Barnes, Dr. Junkin appealed to the Synod of Philadelphia, where the decision of the Presbytery was reversed and Mr. Barnes was "*suspended from the exercise of all the functions proper to the gospel ministry.*" To this decision Mr. Barnes submitted, and remained silent for about seven months, his congregation being, during that time, without a pastor, waiting for his restoration by the General Assembly. For this purpose he pursued the constitutional steps, and made his appeal to the Assembly of 1836. The appeal being found in order, the records in the case were read, and the parties fully heard, after which the roll was called for the opinions of the court; the whole occupying, more than a week,

the undivided attention of the Assembly. The calling of the roll, being completed, the vote of the Assembly was taken on the question "*sustain, or not sustain?*" and the votes stood 134 affirmative, 96 negative, and 6 non-liquets.

Dr. Miller then moved the following resolution, viz.

"*Resolved*, That while this General Assembly has thought proper to remove the sentence of suspension under which the Rev. Mr. Barnes was placed by the Synod of Philadelphia; yet the judgment of this Assembly is, that Mr. Barnes, in his notes on the epistle to the Romans, has published opinions materially at variance with the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, and with the word of God; especially with regard to original sin, and the relation of man to Adam, and justification by faith in the atoning sacrifice and righteousness of the Redeemer. The Assembly consider the manner in which Mr. Barnes has controverted the language and doctrines of our public standards as highly reprehensible, and as adapted to pervert the minds of the rising generation from the simplicity and purity of the Gospel plan. And although some of the most objectionable statements and expressions which appeared in the earlier editions of the work in question have been either removed, or so far modified or explained as to render them more in accordance with our public formularies, still the Assembly consider the work, even in its present amended form, as containing representations which cannot be reconciled with the letter or spirit of our public standards, and would solemnly admonish Mr. Barnes again to review this work, to modify still further the statements which have grieved his brethren; and to be more careful in time to come to study the purity and peace of the church."

On motion of Dr. Peters the above resolution was postponed for the purpose of introducing the following, which was adopted by a vote of 145 to 78, non-liquets 11.

“*Resolved*, That the decision of the Synod of Philadelphia, suspending the Rev. Albert Barnes from all the functions proper to the gospel ministry, be, and it hereby is reversed.”

Dr. Miller's resolution was resumed, when Mr. Labaree proposed that it be amended, by striking out all after the word “*Resolved*,” and inserting the following, viz.

“That in the opinion of this Assembly there are terms and modes of expression in the first edition of Mr. Barnes' Notes on the Romans which are liable to misconception, and which have been misunderstood, but we are happy to find that these exceptionable expressions have generally been modified or omitted in the late editions of his book. This Assembly would, therefore, affectionately recommend to Mr. B. in his future publications to avoid the use of phraseology which is liable to misconstruction.”

This motion being strenuously opposed, Mr. Labaree was induced to withdraw it, and give place to Dr. Miller's resolution, which was rejected by a vote of 122 negative to 109 affirmative, non-liquets 3.

Dr. Phillips and Dr. Hoge gave notice, each for himself and such others as should join him, that they should enter their protest against the above decision. Their Protests were accordingly, in due time presented and ordered to be entered on the minutes.

Protest of Dr. Phillips, signed by himself and one hundred other members of the Assembly.

Whereas the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church did, by their vote on the 7th inst., reject a resolution disapproving some of the doctrinal statements contained in Barnes' notes on the Romans, which resolution,

especially under the peculiar circumstances of the case, the undersigned considered of high importance to the church with which we are connected, to the cause of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and to the just exhibition of his grace and truth ; we, whose names are subscribed, feel constrained, in the name of the Great Head of the Church, solemnly to protest against said decision, for the following reasons, viz :

1. Because we believe that the constitutional standards of the church, in their plain and obvious meaning, and in the sense in which they have always been received, are the rule of judgment by which all doctrinal controversies are to be decided ; that it is the duty of the church to maintain inviolate her doctrine and order, agreeably to those standards, to bear her decided testimony against all deviations from them, and not to countenance them, even by implication ; yet in the above decision, there was, as we believe, a departure from our constitutional rule—a refusal to bear testimony against errors, with an implied approbation of them ; and a constructive denial, that ministers of the gospel in the Presbyterian Church are under solemn obligations to conform in their doctrinal sentiments to our Confession of Faith and Catechisms.

2. Because the errors contemplated in the aforesaid resolution do not consist merely, nor chiefly, in inaccurate or ambiguous expressions, and mistaken illustrations, but in sentiments and opinions respecting the great and important doctrines of the gospel, which are inconsistent with the statement of those doctrines made in the Confession of Faith, and revealed in the word of God. We sincerely and firmly believe that Mr. Barnes has denied (and that in a sneering manner,) that Adam was the covenant head of the human race, that all mankind sinned in him, as such, and were thus brought under the penalty of transgression ; that Christ suffered the penalty of the law when he died for sin, and that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers for justification. These and similar doctrinal views we regard as material variations from our standards, as dangerous in themselves, and as contravening some of the leading principles of our system, such as man's complete dependence and the perfect harmony of justice and grace in the salvation of the sinner.

3. Because this expression of approbation of his opinions, was passed after, as we believe, it had been clearly and sufficiently proved to the Assembly that Mr. Barnes had denied these important truths, and had expressed opinions respecting original sin, the nature of faith, and the nature of justification, which cannot be reconciled with our standards; and after, instead of retracting any of his doctrinal opinions, he had declared expressly before the Assembly, and published in the preface to the last edition of his Notes on the Romans, that he had not changed, but held them still, and was determined to preach them until he died.

For these reasons and for the glory of God, that we may preserve a conscience void of offence, we request that this, our solemn protest may be entered on the minutes of the Assembly.

Protest of Dr. Hoge, signed by himself and fifteen others, all of whom are included among the signers of the preceding protest by Dr. Phillips.

The undersigned members of the General Assembly who were of opinion that the appeal of the Rev. Albert Barnes should be sustained only in part, and that a modified decision should be made, beg leave to present to the Assembly this brief explanation of their views, and desire that it may be entered on the minutes, as their protest against the course which has been pursued in this case.

1. They explicitly declare that in their opinion the refusal of the Presbytery to bring their records before the Synod, and of Mr. Barnes to appear and plead in defence, when their objections had been overruled, was irregular and censurable; and that although the Synod acted in a manner that was questionable, and perhaps injudicious, in trying the appeal of Dr. Junkin, without the records of the Presbytery and in the absence of Mr. Barnes, who had declined making any defence, yet this irregularity was not of such a nature as to annul their proceedings.

2. They were of the opinion that the charges brought against Mr. Barnes by Dr. Junkin were at least partly substantiated, and that on very important topics of the system of doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith

and the Word of God; and that therefore the appeal could be sustained only in a modified sense, if at all, on this ground, without an implied approbation of his doctrinal views.

3. Further they were of the opinion that—inasmuch as some of the charges were not fully if at all sustained; and it may be doubted whether the Synod ought, as the circumstances of the case appeared to be, to have inflicted the censure of suspension, and Mr. Barnes, during the progress of this trial, exhibited some important alterations of his book, and made such explanations and disavowals of the sentiments ascribed to him, as were satisfactory in a considerable degree—the removal of his suspension might be deemed proper and safe: they were, therefore, willing on this account to concur in this measure; but did not desire to sustain the appeal in an unqualified sense.

The undersigned, therefore, desire to place themselves aright, in the discharge of their official duty, before this Assembly and the church with which they are connected, and the whole christian church, so far as these transactions may be known; and cannot consent to be understood as giving countenance to irregular proceedings in the judicatories of the church, or those who are amenable to them; or as overlooking erroneous doctrinal sentiments; or as desiring to exercise undue severity towards the appellant. And they cannot withhold the expression of their regret, that all their efforts to procure a justly modified decision were defeated by the positions occupied by different and opposite portions of the Assembly in regard to this case; nor will they conceal that they have painful apprehensions that these things will lead to extended and increased dissension, and endanger the disruption of the holy bonds which hold us together as one church.

Drs. Skinner and Allan, and Mr. Brainerd were appointed a Committee of the Assembly to answer the above Protests, and subsequently reported the following, which was adopted and entered on the minutes, viz.

In reply to the two protests of the minority against the

decision of the Assembly in refusing to censure the first edition of Barnes' notes on the Romans, the Assembly remark :

1. That by their decision they do not intend to, and do not in fact, make themselves responsible for all the phraseology of Mr. Barnes ; some of which is not sufficiently guarded ; and is liable to be misunderstood, and which we doubt not Mr. Barnes, with reference to his usefulness, and the peace of the church, will modify so as to prevent, as far as may be, the possibility of misconception.

2. Much less do the Assembly adopt as doctrines consistent with our standards, and to be tolerated in our churches the errors alleged by the prosecutor as contained in the book on the Romans. It was a question of fact whether the errors alleged are contained in the book ; and by the laws of exposition, in the conscientious exercise of their own rights and duties, the Assembly have come to the conclusion that the book does not teach the errors charged. This judgment of the Assembly is based on this maxim of equity and charity, adopted by the Assembly of 1824, in the case of Craighead, which is as follows, viz. a man cannot be fairly convicted of heresy for using expressions which may be so interpreted as to involve heretical doctrines, if they also admit of a more favourable construction. " It is not right to charge any man with an opinion which he disavows." The import of this is, that when language claimed to be heretical, admits without violence, of an orthodox exposition, and the accused disclaims the alleged error, and claims as his meaning the orthodox interpretation, he is entitled to it, and it is to be regarded as the true intent and import of his words. But in the case of the first edition of the notes on the Romans, the language is, without violence, reconcileable with an interpretation conformable to our standards ; and therefore all the changes of phraseology which he has subsequently made, and all his disclaimers before the Assembly, and all his definite and unequivocal declarations of the true intent and meaning of his words, in the first edition, are to be taken as ascertaining his true meaning ; and forbid the Assembly to condemn the book as teaching great and dangerous errors.

3. When the Assembly sustained the appeal of Mr.

Barnes, by a majority of 38, and by a majority of 67 removed the sentence of his suspension, and restored him in good standing to the ministry, it is not competent for the same judicature, by the condemnation of the book, to inflict on Mr. Barnes, indirectly but really, a sentence of condemnation, as direct in its effects, and as prostrating to his character and usefulness, as if it had been done directly, by refusing to sustain his appeal, and by confirming the sentence of the Synod of Philadelphia : and what this Assembly has declared, that it cannot, in equity or consistency, do directly, it may not attempt to do indirectly.

4. The proposed condemnation of Mr. Barnes' book, as containing errors materially at variance with the doctrines of our standards, after sustaining his appeal and restoring him to good standing in the ministry, would be a direct avowal that great and dangerous errors may be published, and maintained with impunity in the church. For if the book does in fact inculcate such errors, it was wrong to attempt to destroy the book, and spare the man.. If the charges are real, they are not accidental. Therefore, should the Assembly decide the alleged errors of the book to be real, it would by its past decision declare that a man suspended for great and pernicious errors, may be released from censure, and restored to an unembarrassed standing in the ministry ; a decision to which this Assembly can never give its sanction.

5. The attempt to condemn Mr. Barnes by a condemnation of his book, is a violation of the fundamental maxim of law that no man shall be twice put in jeopardy for the same offence ; and if it were otherwise, the man might be tried in his person, and tried on his book, and the same process of specification and defence is due to personal and public justice.

6. So far is the Assembly from countenancing the errors alleged in the charges of Dr. Junkin, that they do cordially and ex-animo adopt the Confession of Faith of our church, on the points of doctrine in question, according to the obvious and most prevalent interpretation ; and do regard it, as a whole, as the best epitome of the doctrines of the Bible ever formed. And this Assembly disavows any desire, and would deprecate any attempt, to change the phraseology of our standards, and would disapprove of any

language of light estimation applied to them ; believing that no denomination can prosper, whose members permit themselves to speak slightly of its formularies of doctrine : and are ready to unite with their brethren in contending earnestly for the faith of our standards.

7. The correctness of the preceding positions is confirmed, in the opinion of the Assembly, by a careful analysis of the real meaning of Mr. Barnes under each charge as ascertained by the language of his book, and the revisions, disclaimers, explanations and declarations which he has made.

In respect to the first charge, that Mr. Barnes teaches, that all sin is voluntary ; the context and his own declarations show that he refers to all *actual* sin merely, in which he affirms the sinner acts under no compulsion.

The second charge implies neither heresy nor error, but relates to the expression of an opinion on a matter, concerning which no definite instruction is contained either in the Bible or in the Confession of Faith.

In respect to the third charge, Mr. Barnes has not taught that unregenerate men are able, in the sense alleged, to keep the commandments, and convert themselves to God. It is an inference of the prosecutor from the doctrines of natural ability, as taught by Edwards, and of the natural liberty of the will, as taught in the Confession of Faith, chap. ix. sec. 1. On the contrary, he does teach, in accordance with our standards, that man by the fall hath wholly lost all *ability of will* to any spiritual good accompanying salvation.

In respect to the fourth charge, that faith is an act of the mind, Mr. Barnes does teach it, in accordance with the Confession of Faith, and the Bible ; but he does not deny that faith is a fruit of the special influence of the Spirit, and a permanent holy habit of mind, in opposition to a created physical essence. That faith " is counted for righteousness " is the language of the Bible, and as used by Mr. Barnes, means not that faith is the meritorious ground of justification, but only the instrument by which the benefit of Christ's righteousness is appropriated.

In respect to the fifth charge, Mr. Barnes nowhere denies, much less sneers at the idea, that Adam was the covenant and federal head of his posterity. On the con-

trary, though he employs not these terms, he does, in other language teach the same truths which are taught by this phraseology.

In respect to the sixth and seventh charges, that the sin of Adam is not imputed to his posterity, and that mankind are not guilty, or liable to punishment, on account of the first sin of Adam, it is to be observed, that it is not taught in the Confession of Faith, that the *sin* of Adam is imputed to his posterity. The imputation of the *guilt* of Adam's sin, Mr. Barnes affirms, though not as including personal identity, and the transfer of moral qualities, both of which are disclaimed by our standard writers, and by the General Assembly.

In respect to the 8th charge, that Christ did not suffer the penalty of the law as the vicarious substitute of his people, Mr. Barnes only denies the literal infliction of the whole curse, as including remorse of conscience and eternal death; but admits and teaches that the sufferings of Christ, owing to the union of the divine and human nature in the person of the mediator, were a full equivalent.

In respect to the 9th charge, that the righteousness of Christ is not imputed to his people, Mr. Barnes teaches the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, but not as importing a transfer of Christ's personal righteousness to believers, which is not the doctrine of our church: And where he says, that there is no sense in which the righteousness of Christ becomes ours, the context and his own declaration show that he simply means to deny a literal transfer of his obedience; which, on the contrary, he teaches, is so imputed or set to our account, as to become the only meritorious cause or ground of our justification.

In respect to the tenth charge, Mr. Barnes has not taught that justification consists in pardon only; but has taught clearly that it includes the reception of believers into favour, and their treatment as if they had not sinned.

The foregoing *Protests* and *Answer*, present in a condensed form, the merits of the whole case, the objections of the minority and the grounds of the decisions of the Assembly; and, as a full examination of the labored and voluminous arguments of

Mr. Barnes and Dr. Junkin, and of the grounds taken by the numerous speakers in the Assembly, would occupy much more space than we can spare for this purpose,—and the whole being before the public in the reports of the New-York Observer and other papers, we omit the debates altogether, and shall confine ourselves to a few brief notices of some of the remarks and complaints of the Princeton Reviewers on the case.

1. The Reviewers complain of the strictly constitutional course adopted by the Assembly in taking the vote on the naked question, “*sustain or not sustain?*” This they urge as evidence of an “uncompromising spirit,” on behalf of the majority. Our reply is that this course was adopted on the suggestion and urgent request of Dr. Phillips. This the Reviewers admit, in their own account of the proceedings. We are not a little surprised, therefore, to find them pursuing a long argument to prove the impropriety of this course, and attributing the blame of it to the *uncompromising spirit* of the majority. This position needs only to be considered, to be relinquished.

2. They next dwell, at some length, and with “disapprobation and concern,” upon the ground taken by that portion of the Assembly, which they denominate the “*Edwardean*” party; two other parties being the “*Old School* and the *New Haven*.” They represent Mr. Barnes as holding the doctrines of the *New Haven party*, and then loudly proclaim the inconsistency of the *Edwardeans* for sustaining him. These “Gentlemen,” as we have seen, abhor inconsistency; but in the present instance they have

mistaken the facts. Mr. Barnes expressly denied, in his defence, that he held the peculiar doctrines of the New Haven school, and expressed his more general accordance with the views of the late Dr. Dwight, than with those of any other author. To a candid reader also, we believe this would be apparent from his "Notes on the Romans," as well as from other productions of his pen. But what was Dwight, but an Edwardean? This numerous party, therefore, whom the Reviewers compliment so highly, as to the general correctness of their doctrines, have not been so inconsistent, in this case, as they are represented to have been. They have simply restored one of their own number to his merited standing in the ministry, who had been cut off, for a season, by the violent assaults of another party not more numerous nor respectable than themselves. All of this however goes for nothing with the "Gentlemen in Princeton." They *will* have it that Mr. Barnes is a *Taylorite*, and then they proceed to treat the majority of the Assembly as "*New School men*," and to denominate them such, though by their own showing they are almost all *Edwardeans*, the New Haven party being, as they say, "*very inconsiderable as to numbers!*" Edwards and Dwight, then, and their followers, in the length and breadth of the land, constituting a majority of the Presbyterian church, by the authority of the Princeton Professors, are to be regarded as *New School men*, and the head and front of their offending, in this case, is that they have allowed an *inconsiderable number* of votes of the *New Haven party*, (so called at Princeton,) to be given with their own, to restore to the ministry, one

who claims to be, and is admitted by the Edwardeans themselves, to be one of their own number.

The Reviewers proceed to apologize for the opposition of the "Philadelphia brethren" to Mr. Barnes, on the ground that they have regarded him as having adopted the views of Murdock, Taylor and Fitch, and quote the "Unitarian Examiner," the "Christian Intelligencer of the Dutch Reformed Church," and the "Watchman, published at Hartford, Connecticut, and edited by the Rev. Mr. Harvey," as sustaining the above opinion of the "Philadelphia brethren." They then add, [page 459,]

What must we think of the men who objected to the "slightest censure," who complained of Mr. Barnes, as "too orthodox," and especially what impression must such language as the following, from the lips of Dr. Peters, make "When I heard the sentence, I regarded it as a blow struck at one half of the Presbyterian church. The doctrines held by brother Barnes, he has proved to be substantially in accordance to the Confession of Faith. I shall not vote to restore him on the ground of *toleration*; he has a right to be a minister in our connexion. If any one is to be *tolerated*, it is the prosecutor, who says that man has, in no sense, ability to love God. Yes, sir, the time has come, when the question is, whether such men are to be tolerated in the Presbyterian church * * * No! sir, I do not even condemn his indiscretions! It is time to have the question settled, whether in this nineteenth century we may not exercise the liberty of using language adapted to the age. I do not only approve of the doctrines, but of the *language employed*, while I may not agree with every word spoken or written by any man." To hear such language uttered of a book which Unitarians hail as rejecting the doctrines of original sin, the federal headship of Adam, &c. which a standard paper in New England denounces as containing "sentiments subversive of the gospel," is sufficiently startling; and to have it virtually sustained by the General Assembly is still worse."

We regret to be under the necessity of showing, that the language here ascribed to Dr. Peters, was neither "uttered" by him, nor "virtually sustained by the General Assembly." The Reviewers quote this language from the Presbyterian of July 2. That paper, however, with us, is not relied on for the correct statement of facts ; and to show how greatly its anonymous reporter has erred, in the present instance, we present the following extract from the remarks of Dr. Peters, as reported in the New-York Observer of September 17, which we are assured are correctly expressed.

Mr. Barnes appeals to this house from the "definitive sentence suspending him from all the functions proper to the gospel ministry." To me, Mr. Moderator, that appears to have been a tremendous sentence. It did so appear when the news of it first reached me, after the rising of the Synod at York, and the more so, because I felt it to be a blow aimed at the great body of the Presbyterian church. I speak as a member of that church, as well as of the more extended community of Christ's disciples of every name, of whom it is declared, "If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it;" and exercising the sympathies of a Christian, I felt that I would gladly have divided with my suffering brother all the reproach and suffering consequent upon the infliction of such a sentence. And looking back upon that scene, after the lapse of many months, in which my mind has often reverted to it with pain and anxiety, I cannot but regard it as a tremendous exercise of power, for a Synod, amid the rancor of the debates which have disgraced its records, and with such confusion of tongues, to depose from the gospel ministry, by a single stroke, a brother so beloved. There he stood, deservedly eminent among his brethren. He had improved with uncommon diligence the advantages afforded him of a learned education, and the providence of God had thrown him into one of the largest spheres of usefulness, had surrounded him with sympathies of uncommon extent and variety, and,



though in the morning of his ministry, had already given him many seals of his faithfulness through Jesus Christ. But what is he now? What has he been for the last seven months? By the action of the Synod, from whose sentence he appeals, he is a deposed minister, degraded before his people, his family, and his many friends, and published to the world as unworthy to hold a place among the ambassadors of God to guilty men. Let the brethren who have been active in producing this result, put their souls in his soul's stead, and they will better understand what is the import of such an excision from the ministry. I repeat it, the action of that Synod was tremendous in its consequences. I look about me with unspeakable solicitude and earnestness for the reasons of such a decision. I find them in the records of the court below. I will not go into the controversy which agitated that body. After having heard the records of the Presbytery, and having also read the printed report of the trial in the Synod with shame and confusion of face, I am fully of opinion, that the prosecutor failed there, as he has here, to substantiate his charges. A part of the opinions charged, Mr. Barnes has amply proved, that he did not and does not hold, and such part of them as he does hold, he has proved with equal clearness to be substantially, essentially, and in all important particulars, according to the Confession of Faith, however much they differ from the positions taken by the prosecutor.

It has been remarked by some who have preceded me in the expression of their opinions on this case, that the doctrines of Mr. Barnes have been *tolerated* in the church hitherto, and that the question now is, whether they shall be *tolerated* any longer? Sir, I dissent from this phraseology. I am not going to vote for the restoration of Mr. Barnes, on the ground of *toleration*, but on the ground of his essential agreement with the Confession of Faith. Yes, sir, his right to exercise the Christian ministry in the Presbyterian church, holding the sentiments he does, is, in my opinion, a settled right; it is a right which is guaranteed to him, and to each one of us, by the conditions of the compact under which we exist as a church. So long as our conversation is such as becometh the gospel of Christ, we are bound by our excellent standards to re-

ceive one another as brethren, notwithstanding the little diversities of opinion which exist among us in regard to the minor points of theological belief. I know not an exception to this rule in this Assembly. We are substantially agreed in essential doctrines. But whatever may be the rights of others in this respect, the right of Brother Barnes to an honorable standing among us is perfect and settled, it is founded in his essential conformity to the doctrines laid down in the standards of our church. If either of the parties before us is to exercise his ministry on the ground of toleration, so far as my vote can settle the question, it shall be Dr. Junkin, who says in the face of this Assembly and in the face of reason and of revelation, that fallen man has no ability, in any conceivable sense, to love either God or his fellow men. I would not cast out his name as evil on account of the avowal of such a sentiment, but I would retain him in the church, with such a doctrine on his tongue, only by toleration, and not as one whose sentiments correspond with the standards of our church.

A brother (Dr. Phillips) has told us that Mr. Barnes is not suspended from the exercise of his ministry, save in our own church connexion: he may still preach, if he will, but not as a minister in our church. Is this, then, to be the usage of the Presbyterian church? May our highest judicatories proclaim to the world, and to all other denominations of Christians, that our decisions and even our excommunications are not to be respected? Shall we thus commend our deposed ministers to the confidence of all other denominations, as fully competent for the perfecting of the saints and the edifying of the body of Christ, every where but in the Presbyterian churches? What surprising acts of brotherly kindness would these be to the churches to whom we extend the hand of Christian fellowship! No, sir, I would commend brother Barnes to the confidence of others, by taking him to my own bosom.

I will look then not only at a man's head, but into his heart. I will ask, to what does he direct his energies and all his powers of action? what does he live for? to what end has he consecrated himself? When I put Mr. Barnes to this test, I find that his life has been dili-

gent and useful above the common lot even of good men ; that he has " given himself wholly to these things." I find him grasping at the noblest objects and studying diligently to effect them. I find him writing many books adapted to the demands of his age and country—rising early to write them, laboring hard before the dawn of the day to prepare these very Notes on the Romans while the members of the Synod who have condemned him were lying at their ease folded in the arms of slumber. Yes, sir, this man has been at his work, and about his Master's business, while most of us have been sleeping. And when I look at the sentiments contained in the many productions of his pen, I find them in harmony with the views of such men as Edwards, and Dwight, and Bellamy, and Witherspoon, and others of the same class—men whose names will live with honor when ours are forgotten. And shall I give my assent to have such a man decapitated? I would as soon dig up the bones of the pious dead and hold them up to the scorn of the living, because some eagle-eyed fault-finder in the church had discovered that these men of blessed memory had said something in their writings, which might have been better omitted. I cannot conceive that this would be a greater offence, than to possess the heart to blast and to hand down to infamy a brother so beloved—so useful—so orthodox—so pure in life, and so extensive in his influence for good.

It has been said that Mr. Barnes has re-inserted in his book the very phrases which were censured by the Assembly of 1831; but if it was indiscreet in Mr. Barnes to issue again these phrases to the world, what shall be said of Dr. Junkin, who has proscribed Mr. Barnes for those very doctrines which, according to that decision of the Assembly, were declared not to be grounds of prosecution, but to be consistent with a high and honorable standing in the church? No, sir, I would not single out Mr. Barnes and condemn him as even guilty of indiscretion. Who, that has written so much as he, has not recorded some sentences to be regretted? Mr. Barnes has done this, and has expressed his regret. More than this, he has corrected, in the last edition of his book on the Romans, what seemed to be indiscreet in the former impressions of the work. Since, therefore, he is found substantially and

in all the essential doctrines correct and orthodox, I would say, in regard to any indiscretions of language which may remain, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." The true question to be tried in this prosecution, it would seem, is, whether we, speaking now in the nineteenth century, shall be permitted to speak in the language of the nineteenth century; or whether we must follow back the stream of time and use the self-same phrases and utter them with just the same emphasis as were used by our fathers two hundred years ago? Language changes with the lapse of time. The popular use of words changes; and if a man will at this day write a book for the use of children, he must employ such language as children can comprehend. I honor the design of preparing a doctrinal book that shall be divested of technical language and hard names; and I not only adhere to the doctrines, but for the most part to the very language of Mr. Barnes's book. I will not, indeed, make myself responsible for all the sentiments nor for all the expressions which it contains; but I doubt not I can agree as well with Mr. Barnes as with most of the brethren on this floor. Certain it is, I differ as much from Dr. Junkin, as he does from the Confession of Faith, and perhaps more. Yet I can tolerate him. I have no communion with that spirit which follows its victim to the last verge of conformity in unessential points of theology. I stand on the ground that all true believers are one in heart, though they may be diverse in language; and I love to work with them all. I am prepared to extend the hand of fellowship to other churches, and unite with them in rolling on the car of the Redeemer till his triumphant kingdom shall fill the whole earth. I shall vote in this case without hesitation. I am prepared to record my name, and let it stand upon the record of our doings as long as I have either a name or an influence in the earth, for restoring this much injured brother to his beloved office, to the wide sphere of his usefulness, and to the bosom of a people who are waiting with so much anxiety for his return.

We have made this extract longer than would otherwise have been necessary, for the purpose of showing the precise connexions and bearings of the

several expressions, erroneously reported in the "Presbyterian," as quoted by the Reviewers. Dr. Peters, then, did not say, "the time has come, when the question is, whether such men [as Dr. Junkin,] are to be tolerated in the Presbyterian church." Nor did he say any of the things attributed to him, in the manner represented by the Reviewers. And, to be convinced that the General Assembly did not "virtually sustain" such language, the reader has only to recur to the Answer of the Assembly to the Protests of Drs. Phillips and Hoge, as recorded on a previous page. Dr. Peters declared, not that he *approved of the language employed*, but that Mr. Barnes "has recorded some sentences to be regretted, and has expressed his regret." And to this the Assembly agree in their answer to the Protests. They say,

"That by their decision they do not intend to, and do not in fact, make themselves responsible for all the phraseology of Mr. Barnes, some of which is not sufficiently guarded, and is liable to be misunderstood; and which we doubt not Mr. Barnes, with reference to his usefulness and the peace of the church, will modify so as to prevent, as far as may be, the possibility of misconception. Much less do the Assembly adopt as doctrines consistent with our standards, and to be tolerated in our churches, the errors alleged by the prosecutor as contained in the book on the Romans. It was a question of fact whether the errors alleged are contained in the book; and by the laws of exposition, in the conscientious exercise of their own rights and duties, the Assembly have come to the conclusion that the book does not teach the errors charged."

What is there, in these proceedings, so "startling," and "worse" than startling? The alarm, then, expressed by the Reviewers, if real, is founded in mis-

conception ; and in regard to the expressions used by Dr. Peters and others, they certainly were misinformed by the "Presbyterian." But the *Answer* to the Protest was before them, and they understood and appreciated its correctness. They say,

"Is it not wonderful to hear it [the answer] moved by Dr. Skinner, seconded by Mr. Duffield, and voted, as it would seem, without dissent, by the whole majority ?"

But why is this so wonderful ? The Reviewers do not leave us in doubt on this point. Their wonder is that the "answer" is *orthodox* ! How could it be, that such *heterodox* men as constituted "the whole majority" of the Assembly should profess to be *orthodox* ? But who has proved the whole majority, or any part of it, to be any otherwise than orthodox ? It is plain, however, that the Reviewers thus regard them. Hence their many and varied expressions of alarm. Yet they affirm that this *answer* "goes farther in support of orthodoxy, and in condemning new school theology," [i. e. the theology of Edwards, which, by their own showing is adopted by a large majority of what they call the new school party,] in every form, than any act of any Assembly, with which we are acquainted." Again, they say,

"It cannot be that these men are disingenuous in all this ; that they mean to 'palter with us in a double sense ; and keep the word of promise to our ear and break it to our hope.' It cannot be."

At what then are these gentlemen so much *startled* ? Where is the ground of alarm ? They admit that the *answer* is orthodox, that it was unanimously adopted by the "whole majority of the Assembly,"

and that "these men" are honest and sincere in avowing the sentiments which it contains ! Is there anything "startling," and worse than startling in all this ? Or do they mean to express their surprise at the stupidity of the Assembly ? To use their own expression, "was the majority *stultified* ?" This they more than intimate in the following language.

"It is currently reported that it was Dr. Beecher, who thus converted the whole Assembly, led them back into the strong holds of orthodoxy, and then turned the key upon them—that he was the main author of the wonderful document presented by Dr. Skinner, and adopted by the majority. If this is so, we owe him many thanks. It is certainly the greatest exploit of his life."

Here is *stultification* with a witness ! But do the Reviewers really mean this ? Do they believe that "the whole majority" were thus *fooled* into the adoption of the answer to the protests ? Or do they speak *ironically*, when they say, "*It cannot be that these men are disingenuous in all this* ?" Do they not still believe that the majority were *insincere* in this act ? Do they not mean to be thus understood, when they say, in another paragraph, "If they are sincere in their declaration, then they have struck their flag and become orthodox ; if they are not sincere, they must forfeit the confidence of every honest man in the community ?" We confess that we cannot understand what the Reviewers mean by these conflicting expressions, uttered with so much facetiousness ; and we are constrained to regard the various *phases* which they exhibit on this subject, as trifling with the character and feelings of the honest and orthodox men who composed the majority of the last

Assembly. On the whole, it is more than probable, that the real ground of the alarm expressed by these gentlemen, and by the minority, is not that the majority are not orthodox, but that certain measures, on which they had confidently relied to give them a permanent ascendancy in the Assembly, have been frustrated. They are alarmed at the prospect of their continuing to be a minority of the church, on the questions of policy which are agitated, and not at any material discrepancies of doctrinal belief between themselves and their brethren of the majority. This is substantially admitted in the following language, [page 473.]

“The character of the answer to the protests presented by Drs. Phillips and Hoge furnishes a far better index to the state of the church than any vote of the General Assembly. That answer yields every thing, and professes every thing, for which the most orthodox have ever contended.” And again, “Take it, therefore, either way, it goes to prove the soundness of the church.”

The “Gentlemen in Princeton,” then declare their belief that the answer to the protest is orthodox, that the majority who adopted it are sincere, and that the answer itself goes farther to prove the soundness of the church, than any vote [resolution] of the General Assembly! Where, we ask again, is their ground of alarm? Why do they complain that the resolution of Dr. Miller, condemning Mr. Barnes’ book, was not adopted, when the object of that resolution, which was to exhibit “*the soundness of the church,*” has been so much better secured by this *answer*, which *was* adopted, and which “professes every thing for which the most orthodox have ever contended?” Surely

there is nothing alarming or startling in the fact, that the wisdom of the majority has, in this instance, surpassed that of the minority, in the choice of means to attain an object, upon which both are equally intent.

Much complaint has been expressed, that the majority, having rejected the resolution of Dr. Miller, did not then resume the amendment proposed by Mr. Labaree. By this omission it is said, they left the book "without the slightest censure." But this is not the fact. On the failure of Dr. Miller's resolution, two protests were, at once, announced, and it was immediately perceived by the majority, that, in adapting the answer of the Assembly to these, they could express their views of the book with much more clearness and precision, than it would be possible to present them in a single resolution. Mr. Labaree was accordingly requested not to call up his resolution, and the answer was prepared, embracing all that was expressed by that resolution, and furnishing "a far better index to the state of the church than any vote of the Assembly," could have done.

The Reviewers conclude their article with several considerations to show the impolicy and impropriety of any measures tending to a division of the church. They say, [page 476.]

"We cannot see, therefore, how any set of men can, with a good conscience, desire to effect the division of the church, until they are called upon to profess what they do not believe, or required to do what they cannot approve. This, as far as we can see, is the only principle which can bear the test; which will acquit us in the sight of God and man, for tearing asunder that portion of the church of

Christ committed to our care. We know not how good can result. Instead of producing peace, it will probably increase discord. Instead of promoting truth, it will probably render error triumphant. Instead of advancing the interests of Presbyterianism, it will probably destroy its influence."

With these sentiments we accord, as well as with most of the considerations urged by the Reviewers in support of them. We believe, with the "Gentlemen in Princeton," that, "If the *cordial* and *ex-animo* adoption of the confession of faith, according to its obvious and most prevalent interpretation is to be the test, we are all sound." Certainly this is true of the majority of the last Assembly, who have thus declared their adoption of that confession. We cannot, therefore, believe that there are sufficient diversities of doctrine in the church to justify a division, and in regard to the mode of conducting the benevolent operations of the church, since the decisions of the last Assembly, none are "required to do what they cannot approve;" all, by these decisions are left free to pursue the work of missions by such organizations as they shall prefer, and that without any sacrifice of principle or of doctrinal belief. Here there is no sufficient ground of separation, and we cannot conceive that any occasion exists for such a measure, excepting, [shall we say it?] in the lust of power, and in the unwillingness of a portion of the present minority of the church to submit to the mildest and most tolerant government, and the most reasonable and equitable arrangements in regard to the benevolent operations of the day. We agree then, with the Reviewers that, "If the church is to be divided, though we disap-



prove of the principle and deprecate the consequences, the responsibility will rest with those who effect it."

The following suggestion, however, forces itself upon us, in this connexion, and we cannot forbear to ask, if the "Gentlemen in Princeton" really desire to perpetuate the unity of the church, how is it that they have been led so far astray in the selection of the means of securing so desirable an object? In the style and language of their attack upon that portion of the church, from whose doings in the late Assembly they dissent, there are many things, which, if it were not for their professions to the contrary, would lead us to suppose that they *desire a division*, and intend, by their influence, to promote one. Why else do they accuse Dr. Beecher and Mr. Barnes "of *asserting* that, where they said *black*, they meant *white*"? Why do they pronounce Dr. Skinner "*more universally antagonistic than any man in the church*"? And why do they say of Dr. Peters that "*a word, a nod, from this Right Reverend Father seems to have been sufficient, on a late occasion, to reverse the judgments, belie the professions, and annul the pledges of himself and all his followers*"? * Why also do they use the many other

* This last expression occurs in the review of Mr. Colton's "*Reasons for preferring Episcopacy*," contained in the same number of the "*Repertory*" with the review of the "*General Assembly of 1836*." The writer of this article is understood to be Mr. J. Addison Alexander, Assistant Professor of Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Princeton; a young gentleman of considerable acquisitions in his department, a member of the church, but not a minister, nor a licensed preacher of the

expressions of alarm and concern, with which their Review abounds, and some of which we have quoted? The opinions of these gentlemen have weight in a portion of the church, and they were aware that their assaults upon the individuals above named, would be lauded by certain partizans who have trained themselves to say nothing but evil of men who stand in the way of their favorite plans. They must have anticipated that these expressions of personal abuse

gospel; of retiring habits and modest deportment, of whom we have ever entertained and expressed a favorable opinion. We confess, however, that, in this instance, the *mildness and modesty* of his pen are not such as commend themselves to our approbation. We say nothing of the unfortunate spirit of this article, in general, but simply present the following paragraph to show the connexion and bearings of the sentence which we have quoted. Mr. Colton, under a strange misconception of the organization and powers of the American Home Missionary Society, denominates it, in fact, though not in form, *an Episcopal Institution*, and its Secretary a *Bishop*. The Reviewer is so delighted with this suggestion that he arrests the current of his severity upon Mr. Colton, and says, "We cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of stating that this very portion of his book contains one admirable passage, which, at the imminent risk of overrunning our allotted limits, we must quote at length." Then follows this "admirable passage" of two pages by Mr. Colton, which, though wholly erroneous in sentiment, is free of personal abuse, and expressed in a style which is courteous and respectful. The Reviewer adds,

"Our inference from all this is of course far different from that which Mr. Colton draws; but we admit his premises. If we had doubted them before, the recent events at Pittsburgh would have established sufficiently the Episcopal character of Dr. Absalom Peters. Nor is he by any means so lax in the discipline of his enormous diocese as the nominal bishops whom Mr. C. admires. A word, a nod, from this Right Reverend Father seems to



would be quoted and widely circulated, as they have been, by certain Editors, who have been encouraged, by the authority of the Princeton Professors, to assail with still greater rudeness and severity the character and motives of the same individuals and others associated with them in the decisions of the Assembly. While, therefore, we approve of the *reasoning* of these gentlemen against a division of the church, on the ground of existing differences of doctrinal belief, or of preference in regard to the mode of conducting

have been sufficient, on a late occasion, to reverse the judgments, belie the professions and annul the pledges of himself and all his followers."

Who were his followers? The Reviewers represent the majority of the last Assembly as such. By the showing, then, of this young Professor, sustained by the "Association of gentlemen in Princeton," Dr. Peters is destitute of moral honesty, and was guilty of exercising an influence over the majority of the Assembly at once controlling and perfidious, and that majority, in yielding to his influence, were guilty of both perfidy and folly! This is putting on airs, and dealing out condemnation, to a degree which we had no reason to expect from such a source. We regret that the blame of so much temerity has fallen to the account of one from whom the majority of the church that sustains him had so much reason to expect better things. Do not all men know that this bold and reckless charge, uttered without proof, against such a body of men, is as little deserved by them as it is worthy of him who has uttered it? And we put it to the young gentleman, as a Christian, and a salaried Professor, under the care of the Presbyterian church, to whom the training of our young men for the ministry is in some measure committed, whether he does not owe an apology to the Christian public for the injury which he has inflicted upon himself, and the cause which he professes to serve, by the above paragraph? The characters of the individuals assailed, it is presumed, are above the reach of injury from weapons of this sort.

missions, we regret that they have, (whether by mistake or intention,) put in operation a train of influences, which are producing evil, and that continually, by strengthening the positions of those, whose avowed determination is to effect a division. They are with them in the support of principles in regard to the rights of the minority, which, if persisted in, must result in division; and with them too, as we have seen, in their endeavors to cast odium upon those who differ from them. These are the influences which have produced much of the alienation and strife which already exists among us. We regret them; and the "Gentlemen in Princeton," if they are true to their reasonings, will regret them, when they shall have paused and contemplated these influences in their necessary tendency to produce the very "consequences," which, in their *reasonings*, they "deprecate."

Here we had closed our remarks on the Review, and were deliberating whether it would be wise, and for edification, to venture such a suspicion as the preceding before the public. But our doubts were wholly removed, on receiving the Presbyterian of October 15, containing a series of resolutions, occupying more than a column in that paper, adopted by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, at its sessions in Monmouth, October 4th. These resolutions respect the character of Mr. Barnes, his "Notes on the Romans," the interpretation of the "Confession of Faith," and the decisions of the last Assembly on the case of Mr. Barnes and the subject of Foreign Missions, in all of which they fully sustain the positions and reasonings of the Princeton Reviewers, excepting in



regard to the importance of preserving the unity of the church and the guilt of schism. On these points, the Presbytery assume the ground of the necessity of division, and that too, for the very same reasons, in view of which the Reviewers had declared that they *could not see how any set of men could, with a good conscience, desire to effect a division.* The closing sentence of the last resolution of the Presbytery is in the following words, viz. :

“ This Presbytery, therefore, do hereby, in the fear of God, solemnly declare it, as their deliberate judgment, that they can see no prospect of our being able to accomplish the great objects for which the church was founded, and for which christian fellowship ought to be cherished, by the continuance of the discordant parts of the Presbyterian church in one body.”

Here is the necessity of division declared by the “ Presbytery of New Brunswick ” ! But who are the leading members of this Presbytery ? The *associated* “ Gentlemen in Princeton,” who conduct the “ Biblical Repertory ” ! Can it be that these gentlemen, in the short period of two and a half months have changed their ground, and have determined, in October, to advocate the measure, which, in July, they declared, “ instead of producing peace,” would probably increase discord ; “ instead of promoting truth,” would “ probably render error triumphant ” ? Can it be, that the “ Gentlemen in Princeton,” after having pledged themselves, before the church and the world, as the friends of union, are now the advocates of division ? We confess that we cannot tell. Yet the resolutions of the Presbytery are officially declared to have been “ *unanimously adopted,*” and

the "Gentlemen in Princeton" are members! And some of them, we are assured, were present! What ground these gentlemen will assume, in the next No. of the Repertory, we are utterly at a loss to conjecture. One of them, however, as we shall show, in the next chapter, is as unequivocally pledged before the public, "*in some way or other,*" to produce a division of the church, as the "Association," collectively, are pledged, by the reasonings of the last "*Repertory,*" to promote, by all means, its continued union and integrity.

CHAPTER X.

Remarks on The Secret Circular, and the Published Pamphlet of a Committee of a small minority of the last General Assembly, proposing a division of the Church.

Having concluded our examination of the positions defended by the "Gentlemen in Princeton," our attention is arrested by a Pamphlet of *forty-one* pages over the signatures of Drs. W. W. Phillips, Joseph McElroy, John Breckinridge, W. A. McDowell, and Messrs. Francis McFarland, George Potts, and John M. Krebs, ministers, and Messrs. Henry Rankin, Hugh Auchincloss and James Lenox, elders, and addressed to the "*Ministers, Elders, and Members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.*" The following is the introductory paragraph, viz.

"At a meeting of those members of the last General Assembly, who had voted in favor of the resolution introduced by Dr. Miller, condemning the errors contained in Barnes' Notes on the Romans, held at Pittsburgh, in May, 1836, agreeably to a call through the Moderator, the undersigned were appointed a Committee to prepare and circulate a suitable publication on the state of the church, and particularly on the two great subjects which had occupied the attention of the Assembly, viz: the Barnes Case, and the Foreign Missionary Question."

This pamphlet was issued about the last of August. It was preceded, however, by a *secret circular*, over the signatures of the same "Committee," dated

New-York, July 13, 1836. This circular was addressed, in a *confidential* way, to numerous individuals, both ministers and laymen, supposed to be displeased, (or capable of being rendered so,) with the decisions of the last Assembly, and was not seen by others, until it providentially fell into the hands of a correspondent of the "Philadelphia Observer," by whom it was forwarded to that paper and published on the 15th of September. It asks attention to the proceedings of the last Assembly, and concludes with a series of questions addressed to each of the selected individuals as follows, viz.—

And, now dear brother, in view of the whole subject, we ask you, *What ought to be done?* That we may be put fully in possession of your views, without at this time expressing any of our own, we would respectfully ask you the following questions :—

1. With so great diversity of sentiment in regard to doctrine and order in the Presbyterian Church, can we continue united in one body, and maintain the integrity of our standards, and promote the cause of truth and righteousness in the earth?

2. If you think *we can*, then please to say how the causes that at present distract us can be removed.

3. Do you believe that there are ministers in our connection who hold errors, on account of which they ought to be separated from us?

4. If you think such errors are held, please to name them particularly?

5. If you believe that persons holding the errors you name, ought to be separated from our communion, what in your judgment is the best way of accomplishing it?

6. It was repeatedly avowed by ministers in the last General Assembly, that they received the Confession of Faith of our Church only "for substance of doctrine"—"as a system"—or "as containing the Calvinistic sys-



tem in opposition to the Arminian," &c.—hence we know how much of our Standards they adopt and how much they reject. Is this, in your opinion, the true intent and meaning of "receiving and adopting the Confession of Faith?"

7. It is believed by many that much of the evil of which we now complain, has come upon us in consequence of our connection with Congregational churches within our bounds, and represented in our judicatories. We would ask you whether, in your judgment, it would not be better for us as a Church, to have no other connection with Congregationalists than the friendly one which we now have with them as corresponding bodies?

You are earnestly entreated, dear brother, to give a serious and speedy answer to these inquiries. It is of vast importance to our beloved Church that we should have embodied, as soon as practicable, the views of judicious thorough Presbyterians of our connection, as the best index in regard to the course that ought to be pursued.

To be convinced that this letter was intended to prepare the way for a division of the church, we have only to recur to the pamphlet before named. Here we find the same individuals, in a little more than a month after the date of the letter containing the above confidential inquiries, openly and avowedly advocating division, and laboring to convince all the disaffected that it is their solemn duty, if possible, by all means to produce the dismemberment of all who sympathize with the decisions of the last Assembly. They say,

"That creeds, confessions of faith, to answer their true and legitimate purpose, must be *honestly* received. And *here* we are constrained to believe is one fruitful source of our present distractions as a church, a lack of *honesty* in the reception of our standards. Some examine these standards with care—they compare them with the

scriptures of truth on which they profess to be founded—they scan narrowly the language used in them, and having done so, they *sincerely* receive and adopt all the doctrines they contain. Without laying any claim to infallibility, or pretending to judge those who may differ from them, they proclaim to the world that the Confession of Faith of this Church is their confession of faith. They feel themselves solemnly bound, as by an oath, to adhere to this form of sound words, and to publish no doctrines either inconsistent or at variance with it. This course they pursue as *honest* men. There are others, however, who view this matter in a very different light, and who act a very different part. Although they have professed to receive our standards in the *same manner* with the class just referred to, they do not consider themselves bound by that act to receive all the doctrines contained in them; nor to construe the language in which they are expressed, in the sense in which it was manifestly employed by those who framed them.”

Again. “Under the name and cloak of Presbyterianism they disseminate sentiments which lead directly to Arminianism, Pelagianism and Socinianism. These are the men who, in our judgment, have caused divisions among us—for we are a divided church—as really divided as though we were called by different names and existed under different organizations. The schism has come already, and let those men who have come into our church by professing to receive our standards, when, in fact, they did not believe them in their plain and obvious import, answer for it—for they are its authors.”

After a few general remarks, including the above extract, the “Committee” spread before their readers every official document, in existence, which is unfavourable to Mr. Barnes or his publications, but suppress every thing in his favor, excepting the resolutions of the General Assembly of 1831. First, they give at length the resolutions of the Synod of Philadelphia in 1830, censuring the Presbytery of Philadelphia for having received Mr. Barnes as a

member, against the remonstrances of a minority. Secondly a long series of resolutions adopted by the disaffected Presbytery. Thirdly, they introduce with an expression of disapprobation the resolutions of the Assembly of 1831, removing the censure of the Presbytery from Mr. Barnes' Sermon, entitled the "*Way of Salvation.*" Then comes Dr. Junkin's Charges and proofs, occupying ten pages of the Pamphlet. Then, omitting entirely the decision of the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, acquitting Mr. Barnes, with the reasons of it, they publish, at length the decision of the Synod, suspending him "from all the functions proper to the gospel ministry." In all this they are careful to withhold from their readers every word of Mr. Barnes' Defence, and to suppress entirely the resolutions of his Presbytery in 1835 and of the General Assembly of 1836, acquitting him! They hold him up as under the unmitigated censure of his prosecutor and of the single judicatory who condemned and suspended him. Then come the Protests of Drs. Phillips and Hoge, but the Answer of the Assembly to those protests is omitted, excepting a few sentences of it, on which the "Committee" remark, and pronounce it "the most painful and humiliating part of the whole proceedings in the case?" They then proceed to quote the language of Drs. Skinner and Peters and others, in the same garbled form, in which it is presented in the Princeton Review, and which we have corrected in a previous chapter, and conclude their remarks on the "Answer to the Protest" as follows:—

"We must be excused, if we express our fears that it is only a miserable attempt to deceive the church and the

world, as to the real sentiments of those who, though in our church, have no sympathies with us as Presbyterians."

Having presented the case with so much *candor* and *impartiality*, as we have seen, (and they profess a great deal of both,) the Committee declare that they *discover*, in the whole course pursued by Mr. Barnes, "the *absence of that frankness and candor*, that should always characterize the minister of the gospel!" They then speak of the prosecutor, Dr. Junkin, in contrast with the above, and say, "we know him personally, and believe him to be an humble, modest, faithful, and devoted servant of Christ, *in whom there is no guile!*" What a contrast! How frank and candid and impartial is this decision! And as to the Synod of Philadelphia, who suspended Mr. Barnes, and the violence of whose proceedings on that occasion have been contemplated with so much shame and sorrow by the churches, the "Committee" remark, that,

"Looking at the embarrassments of the position in which they were placed, and the provocation that was given them by the doings of the Assembly's Second Presbytery, it is to us matter of surprise that so little human weakness and human passion is apparent in their proceedings."

What candor and fairness! Mr. Barnes and Dr. Junkin, the Presbytery and the Synod are nothing to them! They are a "*Committee*" to guard the purity of the church! Who would not wish to be judged by men who hold scales so even, and weigh, with so much accuracy, the spirits of men?

The "*Committee*" proceed, with equal *candor*,

“to notice very briefly the second great subject that occupied the attention of the last Assembly, viz—the Foreign Missionary question.” Here they present, at full length, the resolutions of the Assembly of 1835, the “terms of agreement” between the committee of that Assembly and the Synod of Pittsburgh, the Report of the Committee of 1836, of which Dr. Phillips was chairman, and the Protest of Dr. Miller and others against the decision of the Assembly; but not one word do they furnish us of the *Answer of the Assembly* to that protest, and in their account of the “*discussions*” of the Assembly, they actually compress the arguments of the majority into the space of *seventeen lines* of their largest type, and *eight* of these lines are occupied by their own remarks in opposition to the arguments presented in the other *nine*!! Such men for *justice*, we have seldom met in controversy!

On the whole, this pamphlet is an extraordinary production. Its authors, though appointed “to prepare and circulate a *suitable publication on the state of the Church*,” did not forget that they were a “*committee*” of the *minority* of the Assembly, and of only that *portion* of the minority too, who, with the moderator at their head, were willing, under strong and confidential pledges, in a confidential meeting, to set themselves about the fearful business which is here commenced, **THE DISMEMBERMENT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH!** They seem therefore to have felt constrained to *suit* their publication to that portion of the church [small may it ever be,] who by their pledges at Pittsburgh and their answers to the *secret Circular*, had given their “Committee” as-

surances of *their* support in the positions which they have assumed. Therefore it is that these gentlemen have felt encouraged, in their professed exhibition of the true "state of the church," to suppress almost every document and argument, on which the majority rely for their justification before a candid and discerning public, and then to make their appeal to party prejudice. Hence, having represented the majority of the church as a "*party*," a "party of foreign origin"—"of Congregational prepossessions"—"who, in principle and feeling, are opposed to our whole system of doctrines and government"—a "party who have come in among us by stealth," &c., they make their address to another party, which, if it did not exist, they would hope to create, and say,

"Fathers, Brethren, Fellow-Christians, whatever else may be dark, this is clear, *we CANNOT CONTINUE in the same body.* We are not agreed, and it is vain to attempt to walk together. That those who we regard as the authors of our present distractions will retrace their steps is not to be expected; and that those who have hitherto rallied around the standards of our church will continue to do so, is both to be expected and desired. *In some way or other, therefore, THESE MEN MUST BE SEPARATED FROM US.*"

After confessing that they feel at a loss to suggest, in what manner or at what time this separation "*is to be effected,*" they add,

"In conclusion.—To those who agree with us in the general views thrown out in this paper, we would say—be firm. Let not the temporary triumph of error, a triumph achieved through unrighteous means, dishearten you. * * * * *—be firm then.



We would say to you also—be wary. Suffer not yourselves to be imposed upon by *professions* of Orthodoxy, † which are shown to be false by the *acts* of those who make them. Let not the cry of ‘peace,’ ‘peace,’ raised by men who have disturbed the peace of our church, by trampling on her purity, mislead you. * * * * *

And particularly we would say to you—abide at your posts. In a crisis like the present, for the sake of ease, for the sake of quiet, let no man seek a connexion with other ecclesiastical bodies, because by them sound doctrine is loved, and healthful discipline maintained. This were indeed an inglorious business, most unkind to those who have hitherto stood side by side with you in defence of the truth, and a criminal desertion of the church you have loved, and which, perhaps, has *cherished* ‡ you, in the hour of her need.”

Here then all disguise is thrown off, and the object suggested in the *secret circular* is openly avowed. This is probably, the second step determined on by the *confidential* meeting of the disaffected members of the last General Assembly, held in Pittsburgh immediately after the dissolution of that body. We are not ignorant of the proceedings of that meeting. Scarcely had the Moderator pronounced the solemn “benediction,” after declaring the Assembly dissolved, when Dr. Miller began to announce a meeting &c., but, as if memory had suddenly suggested some impropriety in what he was about to say, he stopped

† How accordant to this would it be to add, “Beware of that charity which ‘thinketh no evil!’—*THINK ONLY EVIL!*”

‡ What an appeal to the *beneficiaries* of the Education and Missionary Boards of the Assembly! Coming as it does from the Secretaries of both, must it not be heeded? “The church which has *cherished* you!” Can it be that these gentlemen, with their associate, the professor at Princeton, intend to remind the young men under their care, that the object of their training is to sustain the party which has *cherished* them? This is a wide departure from the example of the Moravians, so much admired in that institution, who “would reform the world, but are careful how they *quarrel* with it.”

abruptly in the midst of his announcement, and reminded the Moderator of the duty devolving on him by the appointment or request of a meeting held at Mr. Blythe's church the evening before. The Moderator then announced *that all the individuals who had been present at the meeting in the basement of Mr. Blythe's church, the preceding evening, were expected to attend a similar meeting at the same place that afternoon at three o'clock!*

To such of the majority as had been apprised of the proceedings of the previous meeting, referred to, this appeared to be an extraordinary transaction. Some of us had been informed, on authority entitled to full credit, that, at that meeting, the question of a division of the church had been discussed, and for this purpose it was proposed that another *Convention* be called similar to that assembled in Pittsburgh in 1835. This, however, was objected to by some of the more cautious, and, at their suggestion, after considerable discussion, it was agreed that it would be much the wisest plan to appoint a *confidential* committee of correspondence, to write to such ministers and elders in all parts of the church as were known to sympathize with them, and urge them to use all their influence to secure the appointment of such delegates to the next Assembly, as might be depended on to favor the views of the present minority. The committee were also to be instructed to *keep their correspondence out of the newspapers*, as long as possible, and exert their influence secretly, until they should judge it expedient to avow their purpose. Then, instead of having another "*Pittsburgh Convention*" publicly called, the prevalent opinion was,

that it would be best to have such individuals as the committee might designate, meet at Philadelphia, as if by common consent, a day or two before the meeting of the next General Assembly, and there hold a conference as to the measures proper to be adopted by the party. If it should then appear, from the report of the *confidential committee*, that they might calculate on a majority, they would proceed and adopt such measures as they desired, but if they should find themselves a minority still, it was suggested that they might then determine to retire from the meeting of the majority, and *call themselves the General Assembly*, and proceed accordingly!

Apprized, as we were, of the foregoing discussions and suggestions, it seemed to us extraordinary that the Moderator, Mr. Witherspoon, who was known to have been present at the meeting on the previous evening, should allow himself, in this public manner, (having just pronounced a benediction, in which he expressed, with apparent sincerity and solemnity, his desire that the church might be saved from distraction and preserved in perfect peace and unity,) to be made use of as the organ of convening another meeting to perfect the divisive measures before suggested. The meeting however was convened, according to his announcements, but of what was said and done, within its enclosures, we are wholly ignorant; excepting so far as its decisions have been indicated by what has since transpired; and this leaves us in no doubt as to their substantial accordance with the suggestions of the previous evening. Soon after the meeting was dissolved, and the members, with others, were preparing for their return to their homes, Mr.

Witherspoon remarked to a gentleman, who accosted him on the subject of the meeting, "*The die is cast ; the church is to be divided.*" Since that a letter from Mr. Witherspoon has been seen, which expresses the same sentiment. The newspapers, also, which are the organs of the party, have been constantly breathing suspicion and suggesting and advocating division. But the *confidential committee* were silent and unknown to the public until the issuing of their pamphlet, which has waked the party papers to a bolder tone of advocacy on behalf of division ; and by some a Convention for this purpose, to meet immediately preceding the meeting of the next General Assembly, is boldly and strenuously urged. In the mean time, while the attention of the majority of the churches is attracted, by these public announcements, as if the committee had now finished their work, they are doubtless urging on their confidential correspondence, with a view to procure, if possible, a majority in the next General Assembly who shall be pledged to reverse the decisions of the last.

This state of things, we confess, is sad and mournful beyond expression. Such a conspiracy against the salutary and healthful exercise of the rights and duties of the Presbyterian Church, was not to be expected, and can only be deplored. We would gladly, therefore, have withheld the preceding statement of facts from the churches, were it not that they seem to us to be fraught with dangers, of which the churches cannot be safely left in ignorance. Have not the churches and the Presbyteries something to do, to arrest the progress of these desolating evils? We

leave the question upon the conscience of every minister, every elder and every member of the church, reminding them, and endeavouring to feel, ourselves, that, in such a crisis, our only help is in God.

We cannot more fully express our own views of the nature and tendency of this whole transaction than by quoting the following from the remarks of the Correspondent of the "Philadelphia Observer," before referred to, accompanying the publication of the *secret circular* of the *confidential committee*, viz.

"2. The tendency of the letter is to invite crimination, and to perpetuate alienation and contention. What does it ask of each man to whom it is sent? Does it ask him to cherish feelings of love and charity towards his ministerial brethren around him? Does it conjure him to seek their aid and co-operation in endeavouring to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer, and to promote pure and undefiled religion? Does it implore him to lay aside any unfounded suspicions which he may have cherished respecting the piety, the honesty, and the orthodoxy of brethren in the same communion? No. It asks of every man to look over the whole circle of his ministerial acquaintance; to put his memory and his invention upon the rack; to form in his own mind charges of heresy against ministers of the Son of God, and to report them **SECRETLY** to this committee with a view to further action. Every man to whom the letter is sent, is tenderly invited to become a spy upon his brethren; to give form and substance to all his suspicions; to put his own construction upon his brother's sentiments; to report them to the committee; and to become pledged over his own hand that such brethren ought to be cut off from the Presbyterian Church. If thus pledged, it is assumed that he will act for it, and vote for it, when the effort shall be made to expurgate the church.

How extensively this letter breathing suspicion, and inviting crimination has been circulated, no man can tell, except the committee and they who are with them in the

secret and dishonorable plan. I have heard of it from the North and the West. Few probably have gone East; the South, doubtless, is flooded. It is to be presumed, however, that its circulation has been *at least* co-extensive with the signers of the "Act and Testimony"—for *they* are all pledged, and sworn, and tried men. Yet where are they? They are scattered everywhere through the church. Every minister not in the secret has one or more of them in his neighbourhood, perhaps in his own Presbytery. To promote the same object, the letters are sent to the elders of the churches that they may become spies upon their pastors, and informers in regard to their orthodoxy. It invites to secret suspicion, and secret crimination. It asks my neighbour with whom I am associated, and who sees me every day, to be a spy upon my movements; and to give his own construction to my opinions, and secretly to convey his impressions to a distant, irresponsible committee, clandestinely engaged in plotting the dismemberment of the church, and overthrowing the fair institutions of Presbyterianism in this land.

3. This letter contemplates movements that are an entire departure from Presbyterianism; and which, it seems to me, involve a violation of solemn ministerial vows. Every minister of the gospel in our connexion solemnly promises to adhere to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church; and it is implied in those vows that he will seek no other mode of discipline, and no other measures for opposing heresy or error than those which are prescribed in the standards. Yet in the cases which have given birth to this letter, the regular and prescribed modes of discipline have been pursued. Charges have been regularly brought and tried, and after the fullest investigations there has been an entire acquittal. Here according to Presbyterianism and common honesty, the matter in regard to those gentlemen is to stop. If there are gentlemen in the Church who hold error, the way is open for their regular arraignment, and trial, and condemnation. The Book of Discipline prescribes the course, and the only course which conscientious Presbyterians can pursue. But this letter invites to a different course. It contemplates a new measure. It asks gravely of the initiated and the faithful, whether, if any such error exists as ought to exclude the

holders thereof from the Church, they know of any mode in which the offending brother can be removed? Why is this? Is not the way open? Does not the Book of Discipline prescribe the mode? Can an honest Presbyterian ask about any other mode than that to which he has sworn, and to which he has promised adherence? Why then is invention put upon the rack? Why then do the Committee acknowledge that they can think of no way, and invite others all over the land to *think out some new way* by which they can eject their brethren from the ministry? The language of this question put into plain English, is this, "We have tried the regular steps of discipline in the Presbyterian Church, and the system does not work to our mind. We raised the note of alarm; we succeeded in getting the church excited and distracted; we enrolled the names of all who promised to adhere to us; and *then*, when matters were all arranged, we brought charges against prominent men. We carried those charges through all the regular stages, and adopted all the means known to the Constitution. *But the system did not work to our mind.* They are still in the Church. Do you know, "dear brother," of any new way—any way unknown to the Constitution by which those men, and their friends can be removed? Is there any new way of attacking them, of undermining their influence, of crippling their usefulness, so as to *compel* them to leave the Church? It is true we have established rules, and a regular government, and most excellent standards," and we have tried all these. *But all this availeth us nothing so long as we see Mordica the Jew sitting in the King's gate."*

4. It is natural to ask who are the men who thus secretly invite suspicion, and crimination, and who are aiming at the dismemberment of the Church?

Foremost is the Chairman of the Committee, and one other minister who came among us from the *Seceder Church*. Not native born Presbyterians; or not nurtured in the views of interpreting the Standards of the Church which have prevailed among us from the year 1727—and down through all the periods of our history till the present, they came among us but a few years since with a few others from the same communion, and as one of their first acts they now invite suspicion, and crimination, and

modestly demand that a large portion of the ministers of our connexion should be ejected. Certainly the modesty of these gentlemen cannot be sufficiently commended; nor can it be deemed surprising that *they* should in this letter complain of "foreign influence," and ask whether the evils which now exist have not arisen from a "foreign influence"—from our connexion with the churches of New England? Almost forty years have rolled away since that connexion was formed; ten years have not elapsed since those gentlemen were in the Associate church.

One other of the signers of this letter is a *Professor in the Theological Seminary at Princeton*. Last fall, in the Synod of Philadelphia, this gentleman used the following language, "Let us trust the next General Assembly." If that body shall not decide that there is error and more dangerous error in this book (Mr. Barnes' Notes on the Romans) then my best prayer for it shall be "may it never, never meet again!" Yes; if that shall be its decision let it be dissolved into its elements; and while out of its scattered fragments the gold, and silver, and precious stones shall be gathered into one heap, let the wood, and hay, and stubble be gathered into another. If the Assembly shall take your ground we shall be safe: but if not, I repeat the prayer, 'MAY IT NEVER, NO, NEVER MEET AGAIN.'" Report of Synod, p. 263. *This Secret Letter is one of the means by which this prayer is to be answered.*

The name of another member of the Committee is the Rev. William M'Dowell, D. D., *Secretary and General Agent of the General Assembly's Board of Missions*. That his name is there *will be* a matter of surprise and regret by all his friends. His course of life hitherto had not been such as to lead to the expectation that his name should be thus recorded. It would have been predicted ten years since, nay, three years since, that he would have pursued a different course; and that from respect to his official station, or his personal character, or following the natural inclinations of his heart to peace, and to confidence in his ministerial brethren, he would have frowned on a transaction like this. I venture to predict that the time will come—and that at no distant period—when *he* will look upon this act with regret.

The name of one other gentleman is that of the Rev.

Francis M'Farland, *Corresponding Secretary and General Agent of the General Assembly's Board of Education*, (who has declared, over his own signature, in regard to this letter,) that "it was never expected to be kept secret; it was the full understanding of the Committee that it would be shortly published in the newspapers; and it would have been published long ago, but it was the wish of the Committee to call the special attention of a number of those who were known in general, to coincide with them in opinion to these points, which certainly could not have been so well accomplished had it appeared first, or simultaneously in print."

Here is a distinct avowal over the name of the *Corresponding Secretary and General Agent of the General Assembly's Board of Education* that he, in connexion with other gentlemen, had objects to be "accomplished" by a secret circular, sent to a part of the Presbyterian Church, which "could not so WELL be accomplished," had the design been known.

Here we are presented with a most remarkable fact; and one which *demand*s and which *will receive* the attention of the Presbyterian Churches in the land. A secret letter, inviting suspicion, and crimination, and tending to the dismemberment of the Presbyterian Church, is sent forth signed by one Professor in the Theological Seminary, and by the two, and only general Agents of the General Assembly. Some reflections of serious import crowd on the mind.

It is natural to ask whether *this* is the purpose for which these gentlemen were appointed to these important offices? Did the General Assembly when it made or sanctioned these appointments contemplate *this* as a part of their duties? Did the Assembly suppose that they would have either the inclination or the leisure to engage in plans contemplating the dismemberment of the Church? Is *this* the way in which they shall fulfill their duties to the body from which they have received their power; and is *this* to constitute a part of their reports to the next General Assembly?

Those gentlemen are supported from the funds of the church, at an annual expense of not less than *six thousand dollars*. Was that money contributed with the expectation

that it would be appropriated to men who would labor for the dismemberment of the Church? Did the General Assembly of *this year*, or of any former year, make appropriations for their salaries with the expectation that they were sustaining men who were secretly aiming at the division of the Church? A delicate casuist would say that it was a matter of difficult solution to know how they could appropriate time, and influence which belongs to the entire Church, and which is sustained by the monies of the Church in other purposes than those contemplating the training of her sons for the ministry, or the extension of the gospel throughout the land. In what article of these Societies, or in the "Plan for the Theological Seminary" is it said that the promotion of suspicion and schism shall be a part of the duty of the incumbents in these offices?

Again:—These gentlemen have an *official* influence and power. It has been *created* by the acts of the General Assembly; and is the property of the General Assembly. It arises not from the moral worth of these gentlemen, however great that may be, but it arises from the fact that the Assembly has committed to them a portion of its own influence and authority. Did the Assembly design that its own influence should be thus employed? Was it to promote division and alienation that they were appointed to these responsible offices?

There is one other question. Can it be supposed that the secretaries and agents of the Boards of the Assembly are pursuing a course which is unknown to their Boards, or which is disapproved by them? Is it not a fair inference that when the *general* agents of their Boards become thus the advocates of schism, and lend their official influence to promote it, that this is the course also which their numerous *subordinate* agents in the churches are expected to pursue, and which they will advance? But if this be so, then who can follow and detect the numerous bad influences which are now already in operation, and which have been so long pursued that a public stand may now be taken tending to divide and rend into fragments the Presbyterian Church in the United States? If this be the purpose, the action, and the prostituted official influence of these Boards, is the preservation of the church consistent

with their continued existence? Should the church nourish in its own bosom, and sustain by its own authority and resources that which is known to be employed to rend it into fragments?

I ask, in conclusion, is the church always to be harassed and distracted by plans like this? Six years have rolled away amidst suspicions, and criminations, and prosecutions, and plans, secret and public, to rend the church in this land. Plan after plan has been tried and foiled; and yet invention is not exhausted. Suspicion did all it could. Crimination did all it could. Prosecution did all it could. The "Act and Testimony" did all it could. God in mercy interposed and saved the church from division. And now official influence, and the names of the public officers of the church are doing what they can *secretly* to accomplish the same end; to recover prostrated power, or to rend the church to fragments. In the mean time, revivals have ceased, and the humble and the pious are weary with these contentions, and the feeling of the church at large demands that the ministers of religion should lay aside these contentions, and give themselves to the promotion of pure and undefiled religion. The church on earth, and the church in heaven; the interests of religion every where demand, that every friend of peace and unity should be at his post; should oppose these efforts at division; and fix their eye and heart on the maxim of Paul, **MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS, AND AVOID THEM.**

AN ENEMY TO SCHISM.

CHAPTER XI.

PROPOSED DIVISION OF THE CHURCH.

The origin of the existing divisions in the Presbyterian Church. The "Adopting Act." Dr. Miller's account of the Schism in 1741. Concluding remarks.

The real merits of the questions which now agitate the Presbyterian church, and which are discussed in the preceding chapters, cannot be well understood and appreciated without considering them in connexion with the history of similar difficulties in former times. It is well known that, from the beginning, there existed among the constituent elements of our church, the same or a similar diversity of views in respect both to doctrine and discipline which now prevails. That portion of the church, therefore, which was represented by the General Assembly is not composed of aliens, as their opponents now affect to regard them, thrusting themselves in by tolerance, and discomposing the harmonious and peaceful body. We are, as really as our brethren, *the genuine sons of the Church*, and ought to be beloved for the fathers' sakes, as well as they. Our views of doctrine and discipline are as truly the orthodoxy of the church and her Presbyterianism, as those of our brethren of the other portion. We have as much right, therefore, to refuse to regard their votes as or-

thodox Presbyterian votes, as they have thus to refuse ours; as much right to treat them as heretics, as they have thus to treat us. More than a hundred years ago, in 1729, the mother Synod of Philadelphia, after much discussion, passed what is called the "*Adopting Act*," by which the Synod, composed as it was at that time of emigrants from Europe, (Scotch and Irish Presbyterians,) and others who had been educated Congregationalists, united in receiving the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as containing the *system of doctrines* taught in the Holy Scriptures. And because of the diversities of views which then, as now, existed, the following declaration was incorporated in the "*Adopting Act*," viz.

"In case any minister of the Synod or any candidate for the ministry, shall have any scruple in respect to any article or articles of said Confession, he shall, in time of making said declaration, declare his scruples to the Synod or Presbytery, *who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise of the ministry within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his scruples not essential or necessary in doctrine, worship, or government.*"

And when subsequently the Synod was divided, in 1741, on the ground of differences in doctrines and measures, and the Synod of New York was constituted, were not the causes of separation substantially the same as those which now exist? Yet after a separation of seventeen years, the above Synods were re-united, on the principles of the "*Adopting Act*," without any material change of sentiments. The following is Dr. Miller's account of the re-union.

“ Both parties gradually cooled. Both became sensible that they had acted rashly and uncharitably. Both felt the inconvenience as well as the sin of division. Congregations had been rent in pieces. Two houses of worship, and two ministers were established in places where there was not adequate support for one. The members of one Synod were excluded from the pulpits of the other; and this was the case even when individuals cordially respected each other, and were desirous of a fraternal interchange of ministerial services. Still, although both parties soon became heartily sick of the division, the Synod remained divided for seventeen years. The first overture towards a union appears to have been made by the Synod of New-York in the year 1749. But nine years were spent in negotiations. At length mutual concessions were made: the articles of union, in detail, were agreed upon, and the Synods were happily united under the title of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, in the year 1758.”
[*Miller's Letters to Presbyterians*, p. 11.]

Again. “ In contemplating the present state of the Presbyterian Church, in comparison with its former conflicts and trials, the following questions very naturally present themselves to the considerate mind. Do the *great mass* of the ministers and members of our church differ *more* among themselves at this hour, than did those who directed her affairs ninety years ago, at the date of the unhappy rupture which has been described? Did not the good men, on both sides, who acted in that schism, and promoted it, deeply lament, afterwards, what had occurred, and severely reflect on themselves for the spirit and conduct in which they had indulged? Did not the same men, after seventeen years, actually come together again, with mutual concessions, and with many lamentations over their animosities and rupture? Is there the least reason to believe that the members of either party really entertained essentially different opinions, on any important points, when they effected a union in 1758, from those which they entertained at the date of their schism in 1741? In other words, was there any more propriety, on principle, in their being united in 1758, than there was [would have been,] in their remaining united in 1741? Is there not reason to believe that the strife and division

which so long agitated the church, resulted, not merely in much trouble to pious individuals and churches, but in the dishonour of religion before the world; in hardening and driving farther from the kingdom of God, many a serious inquirer; and in the final destruction of hundreds of precious souls, alienated and confirmed in impiety by the controversies of christians? Would it be wise, then, at the present day, to promote a second rupture, only to reap from it similar fruits; nay fruits of, perhaps, still more morbid malignity; and, after a few years of embittered strife, to come together again, as our fathers, did, with mutual regrets and humiliation, for having ever separated, and without one important object having been gained by the separation?" [*Ibid*, p.p. 13 and 14.]

These were the sentiments of Dr. Miller in 1833, on the subject of a division of the church. Yet, we are told that he was present at the late meeting of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and voted for the resolution "*unanimously adopted*" by that body, declaring, in effect, that, in their "deliberate judgment," a division of the church is now necessary! We confess that we cannot reconcile these opposite positions with the consistent identity of the respected father, who has so rapidly changed from the one to the other.

It is known also that, in the controversies which rent the church in 1741, the leading sympathies of the one side were with the mother church in Scotland, while the other, holding substantially the same doctrines, illustrated them rather in the phraseology of Edwards and of the New England divines, than in the technical language of the standards. From the time of the union, however, the parties agreed to waive these minor differences, and to pursue the things which should make for peace, bearing and

forbearing one another. Until recently, however, the seat of empire was in Philadelphia, and the lineal descent of church power and policy with the sons of the church beyond the waters. Yet, though a jealous eye was kept, from the beginning, upon that portion of the church which was of American origin, and particularly upon the sons of New England, suspicions gradually died away, peace and prosperity returned, and friendly relations were sought between our church and the churches of New England. A plan of co-operation was at length adopted for uniting Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the same churches in the new settlements. In the prosecution of this plan our churches were replenished and greatly multiplied; and so long as the power of the church was supposed to be safe in the hands of those who had been accustomed to hold and exercise it, the American Presbyterians enjoyed quietness and estimation among their brethren. But the tide of emigration from the older states, to the West, began to set strong; Presbyterians of American predilections were rapidly multiplied, and the delegates to the Assembly, of this class, were approximating to a majority. Then it was that the alarm about heresy was raised, and the distinction between *sound* and *unsound* Presbyterians became rife in the discussions of those who had long held the dynasty of power.

It was not unnatural that our brethren should feel that their own views of doctrine and discipline were important, and that the administration could not pass from their hands to ours without endangering the purity and health of the church. And it is not sur-

prising that, from the long prescriptive right which they had enjoyed, of nursing and governing, they had come to regard the church as *their beloved Zion*, and those whose irrepressible growth had begun to give them disquiet, as aliens, coming in to take away their place and nation. It was natural, therefore, to expect that all *lawful* means would be used to avert so great a calamity. But it was not to be anticipated that, among the means adopted for this purpose, would be found whisperings, and secret correspondence, and public denunciations, and, at length, accusations, and trials, and suspensions, for heresy, of men who are guilty of no greater departure from the technicalities of our standards than were Edwards and Dwight and a multitude of others, whose praise is in all the churches. Much less could it have been expected that the moment when all these efforts had failed, and the individuals accused and prosecuted had been restored to their merited standing in the ministry, by the decisions of our highest judicatories, would have been selected as the time to urge upon *American* Presbyterians, now the majority of the church, the claims of the minority to special favor, and to appeal to our *sympathies* and our *magnanimity*, to enable them to complete a system of influences, by which they might hereafter hope to accomplish what they had just now attempted and pursued through all our courts, and failed to effect, the *disfranchisement*, by a division of our highest judicatory, of all such as hold the doctrines of the present majority of the church! The object for which they desire the facilities which they claim is no longer doubtful, and they might almost as well have said to

us in the last Assembly, " Brethren, you granted us in 1828, a Board of Domestic Missions, and we have our Education Board, and by the agencies connected with these, we have greatly increased and concentrated our strength, as a party, and we have not delayed to assail the character and rights of conspicuous members of the other portion of the church. And so great were our facilities and our increased strength, that we had nearly attained our object, your *excision from the church!* But we have failed! We are yet a minority. Give us one more Board, to act under our control, (and yet *in the name and by the authority of the General Assembly,*) and by the pecuniary patronage connected with the action of such a Board, for such a purpose, and the sympathies which it may enlist on our behalf, we shall soon be able to *purify* the church from the influence of all such men as *you*. Now, therefore 'give us a Board!' It is reasonable;—it is our natural right!" What an appeal to the generosity and kindness of those, whose right to an honorable and peaceable standing in the church they dispute, and only want the power to destroy!

Instead, however, of being moved by a spirit of unkindness in refusing to consummate the wishes of the minority, the majority simply obeyed the dictates of their own consciences, and of self-preservation. The trial of two of our most useful and conspicuous members has been ecclesiastical, and carried with unremitting perseverance through all the courts of the church; and had the decision gone against them, it must have affected most painfully the character and

rights of that whole portion of the church, with which they are classed, branding them all as heretics, compelling them to surrender their discretion and liberty, or to eat the bread of a precarious toleration. To such humiliation God did not call us, nor permit us to be accessory. And what is our offence? It is that we would not aid in providing our brethren with the means of our own disfranchisement and degradation. This is the head and front of our offending. We have made no assaults on their characters. We have only defended our own. And yet more flagrant errors have been advanced by some of them, and tolerated by all, than have been proved against any of us.

We have no desire to maintain our ascendancy in the church, except as the means of self-preservation. Let our brethren of the minority cease wrongfully to accuse us and enterprise our disability and downfall; let them accord to us the confidence we have earned, and done nothing to forfeit, and we pledge ourselves that there shall be no strife on our part, who shall be the greatest. We care not which of these portions of the church shall have the majority, so long as we may preach the doctrines of our standards in our own language, and promote revivals and missions, unhindered by secret machinations and public prosecutions. The lust of power is not with us. If we may be allowed to pursue our own views of duty, protected and unmolested, we have no disposition to require of our brethren "*to profess what they do not believe,*" or "*to do what they cannot approve;*" and if they will allow us to exercise the liberty

which they *claim*, the helm of power may return to their hands, as the guaranty of their safety, as long as it shall also guaranty ours.

Some of us, it is admitted, differ from some of our brethren in our mode of teaching the doctrines of the Bible and of our standards. But we differ from them no more than they differ from us ; and we appreciate our manner of explaining the truth, and our modes of operation for the advancement of religion and the conversion of the world, as highly as they do or can appreciate theirs. While therefore we would not, for the world, interfere with their liberty, we cannot consent to surrender our own. We covet none of their funds. We have no desire to usurp the control of institutions which they regard especially as their own, provided they will cease to employ them, as the *institutions of the whole Church*, to annoy the members and institutions of that portion of the church who prefer to perform their labors of love, under other forms and organizations. That some of these institutions have been thus used is fully proved on the preceding pages. Their secretaries and officers have become the champions of a party, and while they claim to be regarded as the servants of the whole church, "acting in its name and by its authority," they do not hesitate to unite with a Committee of the minority to undermine and destroy, by secret correspondence and public accusations, the influence and good name of their brethren of the majority. The churches then have reason to be "astounded ;" and we submit it to the members of our communion in the length and breadth of the land, whether they will

allow their public functionaries, sustained by the highest ecclesiastical authority in the church, thus to pervert their official power and influence to the rending and the dismemberment of the very body, whose united interests, by the conditions of their appointment, they are bound to protect and promote? A house thus divided against itself cannot stand.

In view of this state of things, then, we address ourselves to American Presbyterians, and ask, cannot these divisions be healed? If they have resulted from the perversion of official influence, is not that influence within the control of the church which has conferred it? May it not be arrested by the voice of her members? Has it come to this? Must the church submit to be divided and distracted by agencies of her own appointment? We put the question to all her members. We press it upon the consciences of her ministers, her elders and her communicants. Look at the tremendous evils of division on the grounds which are urged by the strangely constituted "Committee," whose publication we have noticed. Where will they draw the line which shall separate us? Imagine it cleaving asunder Synods, Presbyteries, Congregations, churches, and families, weakening the energies and wasting the strength of both divisions of their distracted body! And what good end can our brethren hope to attain by such a measure? The "Gentlemen in Princeton" believe, and we fully accord with them in the opinion, that, "instead of producing peace, it will probably increase discord; instead of promoting truth, it will probably render error triumphant; instead of advancing the interests of Presby-

terianism, it will probably destroy its influence." And, then, where will be the strength of the church to sustain her mighty responsibilities in regard to the work of missions? Let our brethren, who would both call us away from other associations and divide us among ourselves, on such a subject as this, look to it, that they do not mar and destroy the work which they endeavour to promote. Our confidence, however, is strong that it cannot be destroyed. The Providence of God, in regard to the American churches hitherto, and the signs of the times assure us that he will not prosper the counsels that would divide us. We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and instead of being alarmed at the differences of doctrinal belief which exist among us, we ought to be thankful, that, on the essential principles of the gospel there is so general an agreement. We are essentially one body. We have one end in view, and the principles which we maintain are such as urge us to the attainment of that end, the spread of the gospel in all the earth. And our endeavours to accomplish this glorious end, so far as they are wakened and urged by the spirit of missions, under whatever forms we may prefer to act, are sympathetic movements of one vital energy, diversified operations of one spirit, which, as far as it shall pervade the ministry, the officers and the members of the churches, will mould them, with mighty energy, into the same image. Let both parties in the church cherish this spirit, and minor differences will soon be lost in the ardor of the enterprise and the hope of glory.



A dispensation of the gospel is committed to the churches of this land; and it cannot be that American Presbyterians, amid all the light which is concentrated upon the present age, and upon the destinies of this country, will be allowed to lose sight of the high vantage ground on which God has placed them for the sake of all other nations, or long to forget how much they are *debtors to the whole world*. We beseech our brethren, therefore, who would divide the church, on such grounds as we have considered, to pause in the midst of their excitement, and reflect on their responsibilities, in common with us. The eyes of all nations are upon us, and the hope of the world, under God, hangs upon our determinations. And we are rich in the treasures of experience; history has recorded her long story for our instruction; the results of the wisdom of many ages have come down to us, while he who is Head over all things to the church is, in a special manner, lifting up his standard in the midst of us. All things are ready for decisive action, and the circumstances of the times, as well as the spirit of our profession, urge us to press every advantage and improve every talent. We have confidence in God, therefore, who has ordered all these encouragements, and placed us under these responsibilities, and waked in the minds of so many thousands among us, the spirit of missions, that he will not suffer us to be torn asunder by the influences which are diverting the minds of so many of our brethren, as we think, from the right ways of the Lord. To him we commit this most momentous interest, and urge our brethren, who ad-

here to the principles of the *adopting act*, to use with the utmost discretion, the liberty which the constitution of the church guaranties to all its members and ministers; and “by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, and by the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left,” endeavour to avert the calamity which threatens us, and “to keep the *unity of the spirit*,” throughout our communion, “IN THE BOND OF PEACE.”

THE END.

