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# CONTENTS.

## VOLUME VI.

	PAGE.
Andrews' <i>Life of Our Lord</i> ,.....	<i>Thos. R. English</i> ,..... 458
Baptism, The Pentacostal,.....	<i>John W. Primrose</i> ,..... 559
Beneficiary Education,.....	<i>John A. Preston</i> ,..... 592
Bible, The Study of the English,.....	<i>Thomas Cary Johnson</i> ,... 360 ✓
Bissell's <i>Hebrew Grammar</i> ,.....	<i>W. M. McPheeters</i> ,..... 454
Briggs' Theology Traced to its Organic Principle,.....	<i>Robert Watts</i> ,..... 21
Briggs' <i>The Bible, The Church, and The Reason</i> ,.....	<i>F. R. Beattie</i> ,.....
Brown's <i>Apocalypse</i> ,.....	<i>H. O. Alexander</i> ,..... 301
Brown's <i>Hebrew Lexicon</i> ,.....	<i>W. W. Moore</i> ,..... 311
Browning, Robert; The Man,.....	<i>W. S. Currell</i> ,..... 101
Browning, Robert; The Poet,.....	<i>W. S. Currell</i> ,..... 410
Carlyle, A Religious Estimate of,.....	<i>F. L. Ferguson</i> ,..... 510
Carpenter's <i>The Permanent Elements of Religion</i> ,.....	<i>S. M. Smith</i> ,.....
Carrier's <i>The Hebrew Verb</i> ,.....	<i>W. M. McPheeters</i> ,..... 454
Cheyne's <i>Origin and Contents of the Psalter</i> ,.....	<i>W. W. Moore</i> ,..... 451
Christ, The Pre-incarnate,.....	<i>T. W. Hooper</i> ,..... 399 ✓
Christo-centric Principle of Theology,.....	<i>John L. Girardeau</i> ,..... 1
Church, Origin of the Visible,.....	<i>Samuel J. Baird</i> ,..... 264
Cone's <i>Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity</i> ,.....	<i>W. M. McPheeters</i> ,..... 309
Council, The General Presbyterian,.....	<i>W. S. Plumer Bryan</i> ,..... 118
Creation, Babylonian vs. Hebrew Account of,.....	<i>A. H. Huisinga</i> ,..... 385 ✓
Criticisms and Reviews,.....	.....133, 285, 449, 597
Cumberland General Assembly,.....	.....447
Dabney's <i>Discussions</i> ,.....	<i>E. C. Gordon</i> ,..... 133
Dale's <i>Christ and the Gospels</i> ,.....	<i>T. R. English</i> ,..... 141
Deems' <i>Gospel of Spiritual Insight</i> ,.....	<i>W. M. McPheeters</i> ,..... 152
Denominationalism, Scriptural Limits of,.....	<i>J. A. Waddel</i> ,..... 49
Directory for Worship, the Revised,.....	<i>Robert P. Kerr</i> ,..... 113
“ “ “ “ “ .....	<i>Henry M. White</i> ,..... 275
Driver's <i>Introduction to the Literature of the O. T.</i> ,.....	<i>F. R. Beattie</i> ,..... 297
General Assembly of 1892,.....	<i>T. D. Witherspoon</i> ,..... 427
Girardeau's <i>The Will in its Theological Relations</i> ,.....	<i>Henry A. White</i> ,..... 285
Gladden's <i>Who Wrote the Bible?</i> .....	<i>W. M. McPheeters</i> ,..... 142
Gore's <i>Incarnation of the Son of God</i> ,.....	<i>Samuel M. Smith</i> ,..... 457
Gospels, Distinctive Characteristics of the,.....	<i>E. C. Murray</i> ,..... 89
Haweis' <i>The Broad Church</i> ,.....	<i>Samuel M. Smith</i> ,..... 146
Higher Criticism, The Anti-biblical,.....	<i>Wm. Henry Green</i> ,..... 341 ✓
Hunt's <i>Ethical Teachings in Old English Literature</i> ,.....	<i>W. S. Currell</i> ,.....

	PAGE.
Immortality of the Soul, The,.....	Rob't. L. Dabney,..... 473
Inspiration and the Doctrines of Grace,.....	Robert Watts,..... 167
International Theological Library.....	Robert Watts,..... 597
Jehu, A Modern,.....	R. C. Reed,..... 539
Judges, Literary Aspects of the Book of,.....	O. Alphonso Smith,..... 581 ✓
"MacRealsham's" <i>Romans Dissected</i> ,.....	H. C. Alexander,..... 137
Matheson's <i>Spiritual Development of St. Paul</i> ,.....	W. J. McKay,..... 314
Matson's <i>The Adversary</i> ,.....	Thos. R. English,..... 459
Mueller's <i>Science of Thought</i> ,.....	H. C. Alexander,.....
Northern General Assembly,.....	439
Notes,.....	113, 271, 422, 581
Peace Conference,.....	W. A. Campbell,..... 281
Peck's <i>Ecclesiology</i> ,.....	R. U. Reed,..... 449
Prayer, Scientific Study of,.....	Geo. D. Armstrong,..... 297
Price's <i>Syllabus of Old Testament History</i> ,.....	W. W. Moore,..... 145
Recent Publications,.....	157, 316, 461
Revelation, Object and Scope of Written,.....	J. B. Shearer,..... 329
Robin's <i>Harmony of Ethics with Theology</i> ,.....	R. A. Webb,.....
Romanism and the Public Schools,.....	Rob't. F. Sample,..... 522
Socialism's Bearings on Morality and Religion,.....	James MacGregor,..... 67
Societies and the Church,.....	John D. Gilland,..... 422
"Souls" versus "Hands,".....	W. Beatty Jennings,..... 271
Steenstra's <i>Being of God</i> ,.....	Samuel M. Smith,..... 456
Sterrett's <i>Reason and Authority in Religion</i> ,.....	Samuel M. Smith,..... 148
Steven's <i>Galatians</i> ,.....	H. C. Alexander,..... 305
Taylor's <i>Origin of the Aryans</i> ,.....	F. R. Beattie,..... 153
Theological Education, Methods of,.....	T. D. Witherspoon,..... 212
Thompson's <i>Divine Order of Human Society</i> ,.....	W. G. F. Wallace,..... 148
Waddel's <i>Memorials of Academic Life</i> ,.....	Rob't. A. Webb,..... 156
Wesleyan Theology, Unconscious Calvinism of,.....	W. P. McCorkle,..... 185
Wyclif, John,.....	Ethelbert D. Warfield,..... 246
Zimmer's <i>Irish Element in Mediæval Culture</i> ,.....	Robert Price,.....

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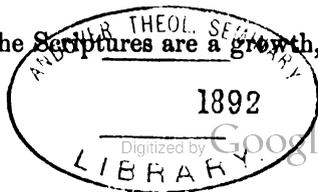
I. THE OBJECT AND SCOPE OF WRITTEN  
REVELATION.

WE use the term Revelation, in its wider signification, as the name of the Sacred Scriptures, and as implying divine authority for the whole, just as we call the whole the Word of God. Both of these names imply the orthodox view of inspiration. We shall assume that the book is as distinctly divine as if it all were actually revealed, while it is as distinctly human as if it all were of human origin. It is the analogue of the Incarnate Word, in whom perfect divinity and inerrant humanity meet in one person—the God-man. While it is not the purpose at this time to discuss this view, it will, no doubt, appear incidentally that no other working hypothesis is so satisfactory as this, no matter what inductions we seek to make from the Scriptures.

Writing looks to permanent preservation in unvarying form, and carries authority when duly authenticated. The "Ten Words" were written on tables of stone by the finger of God, and kept in the ark of the testimony under the most awful sanctions. Moses wrote his law in a book, and put it either in or beside the ark for a witness. Samuel wrote the "manner of the kingdom" in a book. Christ said to Satan, "It is written."

There is no difference of opinion here. Nor is it important to settle whether there were previous writings from which much of the earlier books of revelation was taken, nor how far such writings may have been inspired.

It is now popular to say that the Scriptures are a growth, a de-



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clothed in the sovereignty and mercy of God, while another is in the dark unless he can see salvation by the light of his own works. Another can see Christ only through the beam of light deflected by the water, and another escapes punishment solely by the laying on of holy apostolic hands. There is no common road which all people can travel to heaven. There *is* a common plane which the paths of all cross and recross, until they all unite at the end in Jesus Christ, the Saviour; but each church must follow its own road to the common meeting point. Presbyterians will surely strike the stumbling-block of the "historic episcopate" when they attempt to travel that part of the High-Church road which does not coincide with theirs. Or, if they wander off into other paths, they will become entangled in the meshes of immersion or Arminianism; while the stray Episcopalian or Methodist would be awed into despair by a sight of the sovereignty of the great God.

It is best for each to work in his own proper sphere, in his own church, where he knows what he is doing, and where he knows that he has the promise of the Spirit, and let God bind the general result together for the good of the community and the world, and for his own glory.

Let our Southern Presbyterian Church work with the agencies with which Christ has endowed his body, knowing that he will fulfil his promise to be with us therein to the end of the world. In this way alone is prosperity assured to the church.

JOHN D. GILLAND.

*Vicksburg, Miss.*

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#### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1892.

This venerable body which so recently convened at Hot Springs was in many respects a remarkable one. It was notable as to the place and circumstances of its entertainment. For the second time in its history it met in one of our great sanitariums, one of our public resorts for health and recreation. On the former occasion, at Asheville, N. C., it met in the midst of a community largely Presbyterian, and was in great measure the guest of the congregation. In this case, our noble band of Presbyterians being comparatively small, the Assembly was the guest of the whole city, and right nobly and generously was the hospitality dispensed through that prince of hosts, Bro. Van Meter, whose thoughtfulness and kindness left nothing unsupplied that could minister to the comfort and enjoyment of the guests.

Another feature of the entertainment peculiar to this Assembly was that so large a proportion of the commissioners were entertained in the hotels and public boarding houses of the city. Usually the pastor who is to serve as host of one of our General Assemblies is besieged in advance with requests, if convenient to the committee of arrangements, to be assigned to hotels or boarding houses rather than to private homes. If such was the mind of this Assembly it has occasion of special thanks to Bro. Van Meter and his energetic committees. The largest and best hotels of the city were thrown open to the commissioners. Tickets admitting without charge to the luxurious bath-rooms with all kinds of remedial baths were furnished to all who desired them. The managers of the several hostelries vied with each other in attention to the guests. The writer is under obligations to Manager Kops, of the Hotel Pullman, and his assistants for uniform courtesy and kindness. The whole Assembly was delightfully and cordially entertained. Quite a novel feature in its entertainment was that all its sessions, whether for business or for religious services, except the Sabbath afternoon communion, were held in the public Opera-house, of the city. Anticipating that the audience-room of the church would be inadequate to the accommodation of the Assembly and its visitors, the session of the church had leased the Opera-house which has accommodations for eight hundred or a thousand people, and to avoid any technicalities, had by a vote of session adopted it temporarily as the place of worship of the congregation. To many of the brethren, no doubt, the surroundings of stage and parquette and dress-circle were at first strange. To be assigned for committee-rooms to box-office, dressing-room, green-room, etc., was somewhat startling; but when at the evening sederunt, they saw the crowds pouring in, filling the spacious ampitheatre to overflowing, and pressing into the galleries, they must have commended the wisdom of Bro. Van Meter and his session in securing so capacious and comfortable a place for the Assembly's sittings.

For the first time in the history of the church, the Moderator of the previous Assembly was not present to preach the opening sermon, and preside at the organization of the court. Rev. Dr. H. C. DuBose, of the China Mission, who during a visit to this country was elected Moderator, had during the interim returned to his distant field of labor. This fact was duly announced to the Assembly by the venerable stated clerk, and the duty of opening the Assembly devolved upon the undersigned, the last Moderator present.

Three names were presented as nominees for the moderatorship,

each the name of a brother honored and beloved, one that all would have been glad to see elevated to the Moderator's chair. Rev. S. A. King, D. D., of Texas, was chosen, manifestly for two reasons, the one that he had been so long and prominently connected with aggressive Home Mission work, the other that he was so strongly endorsed as an experienced parliamentarian and presiding officer. In the latter respect the Assembly was not disappointed. Whatever preferences brethren may have had for the other nominees, all will unite in testifying to the promptness and impartiality of Dr. King's rulings, to the orderly methods by which the business was brought before the Assembly, and the dispatch, without hurry, with which each item was brought to conclusion.

It was a working Assembly. It meant business. The work in the committee-rooms was well done, and wisely done, so much so that in almost every instance the report of the committee was adopted without change, or with such slight modifications as did not alter its character. And yet while intent upon business, the Assembly found time for an unusual amount of preaching. Instead of devoting, as heretofore, one night session to work among seamen, one to Home Missions, one to Foreign Missions, &c., the Assembly heard a sermon every night, and then gave such part of the evening as remained to addresses in connection with these various arms of service.

The Assembly of 1891 might be characterized as a Foreign Mission Assembly. With a foreign missionary in the Moderator's chair, it was perhaps natural that it should devote unusual time and attention to that great interest of the church, so that, as the reviewer in the *QUARTERLY* reports, "Home Missions did not receive the usual amount of attention from the Assembly." This could not be said of the Assembly of 1892. Whilst the interests of Foreign Missions received their due share of consideration, more than usual attention was given to the needs and prospects of the home field.

It would be impossible in the brief space allotted to an article like this to go over in detail the whole work of the Assembly. We think it best rather to emphasize a few of the points about which special interest gathered.

#### POWERS OF JUDICIAL COMMITTEES.

The only paper placed in the hands of the Judicial Committee of the Assembly was what purported to be a complaint of the Presbytery of Missouri against the action of the Synod of Missouri, in taking exception to the records of the Presbytery in a judicial case. The Pres-

bytery, in the exercise of its judicial authority, had directed a ruling elder of one of its churches to demit his office, because of unacceptability to a portion of the congregation. To this action the Synod, in its review of the minutes of the Presbytery, had taken exception on constitutional grounds. The Presbytery, being convened during the sessions of the Synod, gave notice in due form and within the prescribed limit that it would complain to the Assembly of the Synod's action. The Book of Church Order requires, in case of appeal or complaint, that, in addition to giving notice, the appellant or complainant shall "lay the reasons in writing" before the court, either before its rising, or within ten days thereafter. The Presbytery of Missouri, having given notice to the court that it would complain, and having appointed a commissioner to bear its complaint to the Assembly, appointed a committee to draw up a form of complaint, with the reasons, and adjourned without receiving a report from this committee, or adopting as its own action the form of complaint and reasons prepared by the committee, so that the paper lodged with the Synod was the paper of a committee of the Presbytery, not the paper of the Presbytery itself. The representative of the Presbytery held that this committee, being a judicial committee appointed by the Presbytery to "digest and arrange all the papers," had authority to prepare and lodge with the Synod the complaint and reasons, and that its action was the action of the Presbytery. The Assembly's committee decided by a unanimous vote that the judicial committee had no such power; that the complaint and reasons, never having been adopted by the Presbytery, were not its own, and therefore the complainant was not before the Assembly in any constitutional way. The case seemed so plain, that the members of the Judicial Committee of the Assembly were quite astonished when, on presentation of their report, a substitute was offered returning the papers to the committee with instructions to prepare the case for trial, and when this substitute was only lost by the close vote of 74 to 75. It would have been an anomaly in the history of all courts, civil or ecclesiastical, if, under the solemn sanctions of a judicial process, the action of a mere committee should be recognized as the action of the body appointing it.

#### BENEFICIARY EDUCATION.

As might naturally be conjectured, this subject, which had occupied so prominent a place in the discussions of the preceding Assembly

came very promptly to the front in this. It was introduced by a resolution from Rev. J. A. Preston, of Alabama, requiring every candidate asking aid, to have a certificate of his church session to the fact of his inability to make his way without church aid. This was followed by a resolution from Dr. Marquess, of Missouri, instructing the standing committee of Education to report on the expediency of an entire change in the policy of the church in the matter of beneficiary education, so that all appropriations to candidates shall hereafter be in the form of loans to be secured by the individual notes of the candidates, bearing a low rate of interest from the time of their entrance upon ministerial work. The standing committee reported adversely to these propositions, recommending a continuance of the present method of affording pecuniary aid. The motion to adopt this report awakened a discussion which took very wide range, some of the speakers seeming to oppose all help to candidates, on the ground that parents and friends helped young men into other learned professions, but shifted upon the church the responsibility of helping them if they proposed to enter the ministry. Others advocated aid, but only after entrance upon the junior year in college. Others wished the aid limited to students in the theological course, while others still, like Dr. E. P. Palmer, of Mississippi, advocated larger liberality toward the candidates, proposing an increase of the amount appropriated to each student from one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars per annum. The conservatism of the Assembly appeared in this as in every matter that came before it. It listened patiently to all the new methods and plans, and then wisely determined that, while urging upon the Presbyteries a more careful oversight of the needs of the candidate, and of the amount of appropriation asked for them, there should be no change in the system as it has been administered by the committee of education heretofore. There can be no doubt that the remedy for the evils alluded to by the speakers lies in the closer oversight of the Presbyteries as recommended by the Assembly. If, as was claimed on the floor, there are young men who are kept out of the ministry, because they will not be dependent on what they regard as the charity of the church, but who would be willing to accept aid in the way of a loan, there can certainly be no difficulty in the way of their executing in favor of the committee such legal obligations as they may choose for the return of the amounts appropriated by the committee. It would be a very different thing to require such an obligation as a condition of the appropriation.

## LICENSURE AND ORDINATION.

Close akin to the discussion to which we have just referred was that awakened by the subject of a change in the terms of licensure and ordination. This subject had been even more prominent in the last Assembly than the one of beneficiary education. Indeed it seems to have stirred that Assembly more profoundly than any other question brought before it, and the ground-swell of the storm that had agitated that body was seen in the multitudinous overtures upon the subject that poured in upon this Assembly from every direction. Including overtures on the subject of "extraordinary cases," which fall practically under the same head, there were overtures from two Synods, and at least seven Presbyteries, some advocating change, some protesting against it. Into the merits of this question there is not space here to enter further than to say that in the very stirring debate that arose there were evidently three parties. First, on what might be called the progressive extreme, there were those who are evidently dissatisfied with the rigid requirements of our Book of Church Order in the matter both of licensure and ordination. They are for lowering the standard, for finding a short cut to the ministry. They are altogether out of sympathy with the time-honored position of our church in the matter of an educated ministry. They constituted but a small minority, but they represent an element in our church that is dangerous. Second, on what may be called the conservative extreme were those, embracing a large part of the Assembly who dread any change or innovation in the matter either of licensure or ordination, lest it should bear the appearance of a willingness to lower the standard, or should give encouragement to those who are clamoring for a less exacting standard of preparation for the ministry. Third, between these two extremes is a small, but growing class of thoughtful men, who look at facts as they are, who see that every year our candidates for the ministry after a single session in one of our theological schools, really exercise with the approbation of their theological professors, and the sanction of silence at least from the Presbyteries, all the functions of a licensed probationer for the ministry. They see further that, whilst licensure is technically to the position and work of a probationer, yet really there is little distinction made between the terms of licensure and those of ordination, the latter often following swiftly upon the former. Their judgment is that there should be a more marked distinction between licensure and ordination. They would change the qualifications for licensure, so that it may take place at the end of one year of theologi-

cal study, and our seminary students do with the authority of Presbytery regularly conferred that which they are now doing in an irregular way. They would leave the qualifications for ordination just as they are, except that the Presbytery in certain cases, at its own discretion, may omit the qualifications as to the knowledge of the original tongues of Scripture, and so omit them as not to imply any such stigma as now in the minds of many applies to the term "extraordinary case."

The report of the Committee recommended that no change is expedient, and the Assembly, with its usual conservatism, adopted the report by a very decisive vote.

#### SYNODICAL EVANGELISTS.

The question of the constitutional right of a Synod to appoint one of its ministers to the office of Synodical Evangelist was raised by an overture from the Presbytery of Mecklenburg. This overture asked five questions of the Assembly, each of which was evidently aimed at our present system of synodical evangelism. The first asked whether the Scriptures and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church recognize such an office as that of Synodical Evangelist. The second asked that if so recognized, the Assembly would define his powers. The third asked a definition of his relation to the Presbytery; the fourth, whether the Synod has a right authoritatively to make apportionments to the Presbyteries for the support of these evangelists, and the fifth, whether a Synod has a right to collect money through financial agents. To those of us who have been eye-witnesses of the wonderful work of synodical evangelism, and the marvellous blessing of God upon it, such an arraignment at the bar of the Assembly, for it was nothing else, seemed scarcely less than sacrilege. But the patience of the Assembly was wonderful. Upon the report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, which was an excellent one, though speakers on all subjects, except chairmen of committees, had been limited to ten minutes, and these chairmen to twenty, the Assembly voted Rev. Roger Martin, as the representative of Mecklenburg Presbytery, unlimited time, and listened as for fifty minutes he endeavored to establish the unconstitutionality and unscripturalness of our great system of synodical evangelism, and when he was done adopted by an overwhelmingly large vote the answer of the Committee of Bills and Overtures to all the questions except the last. On that question, as to the right of a Synod to employ financial agents, the Assembly seems to have become confused as to the difference between the right of the Synod and the expediency or propriety

of employing such agents. It declined to answer affirmatively, and so left that question unanswered.

#### FINANCIAL AGENTS.

The subject of the employment of financial agents was evidently one that rested heavily upon the minds of the Assembly. On four distinct occasions, and in four different connections, it lifted up its voice with no uncertain sound against them. The first occasion was that of the report of the standing committee on Foreign Missions. That committee reported recommending that the minutes of the executive committee, which they had examined, be approved, except in the matter of their action touching the appointment by the Synod of Georgia of a Synodical Secretary of Foreign Missions, whose duty it should be to visit the churches of the Synod and raise money for Foreign Missions. It appeared from the minutes of the Synod of Georgia, as quoted in the minutes of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, that this Synodical Secretary was appointed by the Synod of Georgia at the suggestion of the Secretary of Foreign Missions. The Secretary, taking the floor, made the remarkable statement that he had made this suggestion to the Synod of Georgia without any consultation with the Executive Committee, so that he alone was responsible; but the Assembly held that even if he had failed to consult the committee, as he ought to have done before taking the action, the committee, on his return and report to them, had it in their power to decline cooperation in a plan which was manifestly inconsistent with the action of the last Assembly in reference to a field secretary of Foreign Missions, and so voted to sustain the exception, and virtually to disapprove of the Synodical Secretary who was really a financial agent for the raising of funds in the Synod. In taking this action the Assembly expressly disclaimed any intention to reflect upon the Executive Committee, of whose laborious and faithful service during the year it spoke in terms of highest commendation.

In the discussion of Home Missions, on Wednesday night, the same subject of the employment of paid agents by the lower courts for the collection of funds for the causes of beneficence under the direction of the General Assembly came up, and the Assembly a second time expressed its disapproval of their employment.

Finally, on the last day of the Assembly's sitting, the subject of financial agency was twice brought to the attention of the Assembly. The committees on the minutes of the Synods of Georgia and North Carolina both brought in reports recommending exceptions to the

records in the matter of the appointment of financial agents. Strangely enough in the first of these cases, that of the Synod of Georgia, the Assembly voted to strike out the exception, and in the other, that of the Synod of North Carolina, voted to sustain. Perhaps the Assembly thought it had sufficiently covered the case of the Synod of Georgia in its action upon the minutes of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions. But the consciences of the brethren evidently were not easy, for late Saturday night, upon the very eve of the dissolution of the Assembly, the action in the case of the Synod of Georgia was reconsidered, the exception recommended by the committee was sustained and the fourth distinct utterance on this subject given. It is to be hoped that this decisive and reiterated action of the Assembly will have due weight, for in this matter of synodical secretaries, superintendents of evangelization, etc., there is the entering wedge to the old *ante bellum* system of paid financial agents.

#### COMMUNION WINE.

It would have seemed in advance, that if there were any question upon which our people were a unit, it was that of the use of ordinary wine in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. If any of us dreamed that this modern innovation of the substitution of the unfermented juice of the grape had not as yet disturbed the equanimity of our church, our dreams were destined to a sudden and rude awakening. We were first startled by an overture from the Presbytery of Holston, asking for a deliverance on the use of fermented wine at the communion. We were still more astonished when we found that, in addition to the majority report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, to the effect that the wine referred to in Scripture is fermented wine, but that the use of unfermented wine does not vitiate the ordinance, there was also to be a minority report contending that the wine of Scripture was unfermented wine, and that this was the proper element to be used in the sacrament. At first thought it seemed unfortunate that this subject was to be discussed whilst we were the guests of a congregation that used unfermented wine at its communion table. If the discussion had taken place before the communion service on Sabbath, the action of the Assembly, possibly, might have been a little less pronounced than it was. As our generous hosts had in everything else provided for us the very best that it was possible to obtain, it was fair to presume that the wine served at the communion would be and was the very best quality of unfermented wine. If so, there was a

practical break-down of the theory at the very outset. What was served to us was not only not unfermented, but it had passed beyond the vinous into the acetous fermentation. It was a weak quality of grape vinegar. It is strange that the advocates of the "two-wine theory" do not see the practicable impossibility of giving us unfermented juice of the grape, except in the grape itself. The mover of the minority report stated in so many words that the moment the juice of the grape comes in contact with our impure atmosphere, fermentation begins. The juice, therefore, that is given to the communicant is not unfermented. The process of fermentation may be artificially arrested, but it has begun.

A member of the Assembly who is a practical chemist gave it as his opinion that the wine served contained alcohol and also microbes peculiar to acetous fermentation. To a student of the original scriptures nothing could be more painful than to see a member of the Assembly, an honest, earnest ruling elder, misguided by the ministerial fanatics of our land who profess to study the Bible in the original, taking two passages of scripture in which the Holy Spirit uses the same identical word for wine, and authoritatively declaring, with a dogmatism which nothing but a supernatural inspiration in the speaker could warrant, that when the Holy Spirit used the word in one place he meant fermented wine, and when he used it in the other place he meant unfermented wine. Wherever the Bible speaks favorably of wine it was, according to the speaker, unfermented wine; wherever it had anything to say against wine it was fermented wine, although the same word in the original is used in each case. It is astonishing to see to what lengths the advocates of the "two-wine theory" are borne. Not a great while ago a pamphlet was widely circulated through the land, the author of which, laying claims to great erudition, actually asserted that the old Falernian wine, whose praises Horace, the scapegrace, sings, was unfermented and contained no intoxicating element.

There was one point which the speaker on behalf of unfermented wine as the scriptural element failed to notice, and that was that the Apostle Paul, when those irregularities were reported to him in the Corinthian Church and so severely animadverted upon by him, did not tell the men who were drinking to drunkenness at the Lord's table that they were using the wrong kind of wine. If the mover of the minority resolution had been there he would have advanced his "two-wine theory," but the inspired apostle did not, for the simple reason that he had never heard of it. It is the result of the higher criticism of the present day.

It is essentially rationalistic in its origin. Its leading advocates do not hesitate to say that if they believed that the wine made by our Lord at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee was alcoholic wine, they would say, "down with Christianity!" The great cause of temperance, in which every Christian must be profoundly interested, can never be advanced by methods of this kind. Besides the majority and minority reports of the Committee of Bills and Overtures three papers were offered as substitutes. The first by Rev. Dr. Cecil, of Alabama, took the ground that the usage of the church for eighteen centuries was so well known that there was no need of a deliverance. The other two held substantially the ground that the Assembly declined to say whether the sacramental wine of scripture was fermented or unfermented, and either might be used. But the Assembly had been asked for an authoritative interpretation of scripture. The Presbytery was entitled to it. The Assembly gave it. The majority report, expressing the views of all the Committee of Bills and Overtures, except the elder from Kentucky, who introduced the minority report, was adopted by a very large majority, all substitutes for it having been voted down. This action is certainly as liberal as fidelity to the scripturalness of the ordinance will allow. Indeed, there are many of us who seriously doubt whether unfermented grape juice (so-called), whose effect upon the physical system is depressing rather than exhilarating, can fulfil the conditions of that symbol of our redemption which represents its joyousness, or take the place of the "wine which maketh glad the heart of man." As in the use of the bread, it is not necessary to take enough really to nourish, a crumb being sufficient, so in the use of the wine it is not necessary to take enough to exhilarate, a drop being sufficient. But that very symbolism which makes a crumb of bread and a drop of wine sufficient, imperatively demands that the bread shall contain nourishment, and that the wine shall contain exhilaration. The use of unfermented wine may be, as we say, "valid." It certainly is not "regular."

There are many other subjects which came before the Assembly to which it would be pleasant to the writer, and perhaps interesting to the reader to refer at some length if there were space. There was for instance the question of memorializing Congress in reference to the closing of the Columbian Exposition on the Sabbath. The conservatism of the Assembly exhibited itself in a reluctance at first to adopt such a memorial, lest it should seem to smack of intrusion into the things which are Cæsar's. But a calm and discriminating discussion of the

matter soon showed that it belonged to that class of cases of "humble petition and remonstrance," provided for by our standards, and that it involved no departure from the distinctive principles of our church. It would be pleasant to refer to the advance steps taken by the Assembly in the matter of the evangelization of the colored race in the South. There would be a melancholy pleasure in reverting to the fact that the name of our dear young brother Lapsley, who so recently fell at his post in "Darkest Africa," could not be named without the evidence of a wave of tender and tearful emotion passing over the Assembly. He has not labored in vain. We would like to dwell upon the subject of the hymnology of the church, as it came before the Assembly, developing the presence of three strong parties, those desiring the improvement of the old book of the church, those desiring a continuance of the contract with the publishers of "Hymns for Social Worship," and those desiring in preference to either the "Hymns of the Ages." The Assembly did the best thing in appointing an *ad interim* committee to take into consideration the whole subject and report. Doubtless, also the wisest course was taken with the Directory for Worship, in placing it in the hands of a new committee, but of this we have not time fully to write. It was pleasant to have such reports of advance all along the line—more money for Foreign Missions, more for Home Missions, more candidates for the ministry, more business done by our Publication Committee, etc., etc. It was gratifying to see the Assembly take such strong action in reference to the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance, solving all pecuniary difficulties by ordering our share of the expenses of that body to be paid out of the Assembly's treasury. It was above all gratifying that the Assembly, not troubled with any heresy-trials, or perplexed with any questions of alteration of our doctrinal standards, could devote its whole time to the consideration of questions connected with the expansion of the church and the enlargement of its work.

It was an Assembly in large measure of younger men. As one of the older brethren, with experience in several Assemblies, it gives me pleasure to testify to the ability, courtesy, and conservatism that characterized all its deliberations. No Assembly ever had a better right to sing as its closing hymn—

"Blest be the tie that binds."

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