

## CHAPTER V.

### THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO OTHER BODIES.

“If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”<sup>1</sup> The Presbyterian family of churches has been wont to recognize brethren in the numerous evangelical churches throughout the world. These churches have been distinguished for a liberality of posture toward the other branches of the Church of God in pleasing contrast to the exclusive claims of the majorities in the Episcopal and Baptist communions. And this posture toward the rest of the Christian world is of such importance as affecting the true unity of the Church of God in its opposition to the world that it deserves particular and careful treatment in the history of any church.

Having set forth, therefore, the origin and the historic development of the Southern Church, external and internal—its growth in numbers and external means and muniments, and its growth in doctrine, polity, and life—it becomes our duty to show how the church has lived with her neighbor churches.

But before doing this we propose to set forth the relations which this church has maintained with the state. These relations are not less important than the foregoing. If a church be united with a civil government, one of two things, as history establishes, invariably follows: the church becomes supreme and uses the state as its servant, thus

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<sup>1</sup> I John iv. 20.

employing means and methods which God's Word forbids; or the state becomes supreme and prostitutes the Church of God to its own service.

Some dreamers to-day talk about christianizing the state. This can hardly be done before the millennium. Atheists, infidels, Jews, and hosts of other Antichrist men, are too frequent in this country to have a state essentially Christian in its form of constitution and laws. The constitution of our state may and should be theistic, but not Christian. Hence, the true relation between the church and the state should be that of respectful and friendly independence.

I. *The Non-Secular Character of the Church: Its Relations with the State.*—The reader will remember that in the “Address to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth,” issued by the Constituting Assembly of 1861, it was distinctly affirmed that the church and state occupied provinces entirely distinct, and should in no wise intermeddle one with the other. And the theory that these two ordinances of God should remain in friendly and respectful and mutually helpful but entire independence, has remained the theory of the Southern Presbyterian Church—a theory which on the whole it has maintained well in practice. In a pastoral letter issued by the Assembly of 1865, and setting forth *the relation of the church to the government of the country*, these words occur:

During the prevalence of this war, “the higher powers” actually bearing rule over most of our bounds, and to which, under the Word of God, we were required to be “subject,” were the government of the Confederate States and those of the several States constituting it. By the event of the war the first has been overthrown; and the second, as constituents thereof, are changed. The “higher powers” now bearing rule over us are confessedly the government of the United States and those existing in the States wherein we reside. The rightfulness of these several authorities, and to which of them the allegiance of our people as citizens was or is primarily due, are matters upon which a judicatory of the church has no right to pro-

nounce judgment. The relations of the Church of Christ to civil governments is not one *de jure*, but *de facto*. As right and good, or wrong and wicked, they rise and fall by the agency and permission of God's providence. In either case the attitude of the church toward them is essentially the same. As long as they stand and are acknowledged, obedience is to be enjoined as a duty, factious resistance condemned as a sin; but in regard to conflicts between existing governments, or as to movements in society, peaceful or otherwise, to effect political changes, the church as such has no more control over them than it has over the polls of the country. If it has authority to uphold on the one side, it has equal authority to condemn on the other; if to suppress a political movement, then also to instigate it. In truth it has neither; and to assert the contrary is to corrupt the church in its principles, forever embroil it with the strifes of the world, and plunge it headlong into ruin.

Under these views, and considering the extraordinary conflict through which the country has passed, as well as the extraordinary circumstances in which it is now placed, it is incumbent upon us to exhort you, brethren, to obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; fulfill with scrupulous fidelity all your obligations to the government of the land, remembering the duty of this compliance, "not only for wrath, but for conscience' sake." For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.<sup>1</sup>

In the report of the Committee on Foreign Correspondence, adopted by the Assembly of 1866, are found the following words:

The old conflict for the spirituality and independence of the church is, to the amazement of many, renewed in our day and upon our own continent. The battle fought generations ago by the Melvilles, Gillespies, and Hendersons of Scotland is reopened with singular violence, and the old banner is again floating over us with the historic inscription, "For Christ's Covenant and Crown." Upon no one subject is the mind of this Assembly more clearly ascertained, upon no one doctrine is there a more solid and perfect agreement among those whom this Assembly represents, than the non-secular and non-political character of the Church of Jesus Christ. Whatever ambiguous or indiscreet expressions may have been extorted under pressure of extraordinary excitement from individuals among us, the Assembly of this church deliberately reaffirms the testimony given in the solemn "Address to the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth," issued in 1861, during its session in the city of Augusta.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1865," pp. 382 ff.

<sup>2</sup> The very words of the letter, beginning with "*The provinces of the church and state are perfectly distinct*," and ending with the words "*in the world of matter*," are quoted. See chapter ii., this sketch, p. 349.

[This address] commits us to the maintenance and defense of the crown rights of the Redeemer, whether, on the one hand, they be usurped by the state, or whether, on the other, they be renounced by any portion of God's professing people. Summoned thus in the providence of God to contend for the same principles for which our martyr fathers of the Scottish Reformation testified even to the death, and which the fathers of the Southern Presbyterian Church labored so earnestly to secure, and rejoiced in having obtained their full recognition by the civil government in America, it would be most happy if all those in the different branches of the Presbyterian family who are called to renew the protest could be united in one homogeneous body for the reassertion of Christ's regal supremacy in and over his spiritual kingdom, the church. The scattered testimony of individual witnesses would deepen in intensity if gathered into one volume and rolled against those who would place the crown of Jesus upon the head of Caesar. In view of all which, this Assembly would tender the hand to all who are of like mind with us as to the doctrines of grace and as to the order and discipline of God's house, that as one compacted church we may oppose a break-water against the current that is sweeping from its moorings our common Protestantism, until the doctrine of the church as a free and spiritual commonwealth shall regain its ascendancy, not only over the Presbyterian but over the whole American Protestant mind.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1866," pp. 30 ff. Compare the letter of the Synod of Kentucky. This letter to the General Assembly contemplating union was written in 1867. It set forth the principles of the Synod. The General Assembly, in giving it a place upon its records, assured the Synod of its "substantial agreement" therewith. It contained the following words

"It is therefore not only incompetent to the church courts, but positively a perversion of the truth, that they shall assume to consider any questions than those which relate to the government, order, and discipline of Christ's visible kingdom, or to determine these on grounds aside from the Word of God, or to speak in Christ's name and by his authority, otherwise than to the faith and conscience of his people, concerning things to be obeyed as enjoined by the law of Christ. . . . The church has manifestly no commission either to discharge any functions of the state, or to direct, advise, or assist the state. . . . Therefore the attempt on the part of the tribunals of the church to exercise the authority thus delegated to them by Christ in determining questions merely secular, concerning which his Word makes no such determination, is to usurp the prerogative of the church's divine Master; and practically to obscure to the faith of his people the doctrine of his kingly office. . . . Hence this Synod and its Presbyteries have steadfastly protested against and resisted the assumption of authority by the church courts to advise, direct, and assist the civil government in its policy by the exercise of their spiritual authority, or to interpose the power of the spiritual sword for enforcing any theories of social organization, or theories of labor, or political theories, or to direct men as citizens in the choice of their civil polity. . . . "As to the functions and sphere of the General Assembly and other courts, they have maintained, and desired to have it recognized as the accepted

Concerning the relation of the church to the institution of slavery, the "Address to the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth" had set forth as the church's position that the policy of slavery's existence or non-existence was a question which exclusively belonged to the state; that the church had no right to enjoin it as a duty, or to condemn it as a sin.<sup>1</sup> In the pastoral of 1865 the church affirmed that the address referred to "contains the only full and unambiguous and deliberate and authoritative exposition of our views in regard to this matter"; it reaffirmed "its whole doctrine to be that of Scripture and reason." After quoting at length from the Address, the pastoral letter of 1865 goes on to say:

This relation is now overthrown, suddenly and violently: whether justly or not justly, in wrath or in mercy, for weal or for woe, let history and the Judge of all the earth decide. But there are two considerations of vital interest which still remain. One is that while the existence of slavery may, in its civil aspect, be regarded as a settled question, an issue now gone, yet the lawfulness of the relation as a question of social morality and Scriptural truth has lost nothing of its importance. When we solemnly declare to you, brethren, that the dogma which asserts the inherent sinfulness of this relation is unscriptural and fanatical, that it is condemned not only by the Word of God but by the voice of the church in all ages, that it is one of the most pernicious heresies of modern times, that its countenance by the church is a just cause of separation from it (i Tim. vi. i-5), we have surely said enough to warn you from this insidious error as from a fatal shore.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the "well-considered and formal views of the church" up to 1870. The church has, however, once or twice—and according to the judgment of her critics,

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interpretation, that the constitution of the church assigns to the General Assembly no function to the end that it may counsel, direct, or assist the civil government. . . . That neither does the constitution assign to the Assembly any authority to consider and determine either questions of the policy of the state touching its citizens, or the duties of the citizens as such, in respect of the policy of the state; or questions between different interpretations of the Federal constitution."—"Minutes of 1867," pp. 183 ff.

<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1860," pp. 55 ff. See pp. 344 ff. of chapter ii. for a full statement of the church's position in 1861, in its own terms.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of 1865," p. 385.

several times—been inconsistent in practice with her formal views. The following instances of real or apparent transgression may be found from her records.

In the Narrative of the state of religion in 1862 it is said:

All the Presbyteries which have reported dwell upon the absorbing topic of the war in which we are now engaged. . . . [Again] All the presbyterial Narratives, without exception, mention the fact that their congregations have evinced the most cordial sympathy with the people of the Confederate States in their efforts to maintain their cherished rights and institutions against the despotic power which is attempting to crush them. Deeply convinced that this struggle is not alone for civil rights and property and home, but also for religion, for the church, for the gospel, for existence itself, the churches in our connection have freely contributed to its prosecution of their substance, their prayers, and above all of their members, and the beloved youths of their congregations. They have parted without a murmur with those who constitute the hope of the church, and have bidden them go forth to the support of this great and sacred cause, with their benedictions and with their supplications for their protection and success. The Assembly desires to record, with its solemn approval, this fact of the unanimity of our people in supporting a contest to which religion as well as patriotism now summons the citizens of this country, and to implore for them the blessing of God in the course they are now pursuing. [Again] We are constrained, however, to call the attention of the churches to the fact mentioned by some of the Presbyteries, that the absorbing interest of the struggle, in which we are contending for everything dear to man, is having some influence in lessening in the minds of God's people a sense of their spiritual obligations.<sup>1</sup>

The report on theological seminaries of the same year says:

We distinctly recognize the right of the state to claim the services of any or all of her citizens in this time of need. We also acknowledge it a privilege as well as a plain duty for our people to pledge each other, and the government of their choice, their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, in united effort to drive back the invaders of our soil and the enemies of our institutions. Yet when and where this necessity does not exist we think that our candidates can better serve their generation, and do more for their country, by diligently preparing to preach the gospel.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1862," pp. 21 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Somewhat similar faults were made in the pastoral letter of 1862, and in the Narrative of 1863.<sup>1</sup>

The Narrative of 1864 contains these words:

One and another message has come to us from the field of deadly strife, filling our minds with the deepest solicitude, urging us to more united prayer, and inspiring us with profound gratitude to God for the repeated repulses of our insolent and cruel foe. . . .

Our enemies have evinced a settled determination to prosecute their enterprises of guilt and horror in the face of all the disastrous consequences which must ensue from this insane attempt to subjugate and destroy us. . . .

The wonderful work of grace in our armies presents the strongest encour-

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<sup>1</sup> In the pastoral letter of 1862 it is said: "We have been called on to witness the desolations of the land, and to mourn over the waste places of Zion, created by the havoc of war; and from all our churches we hear the report that the ranks of the armies of our national independence are crowded with the noblest of our brethren and with the choicest of our youth, who have rushed to the rescue of the republic, driven by the impulses of patriotism, and in obedience to the call of God and of our country. But our hearts turn with special solicitude toward the noble youth of our congregations who have gone from our midst to this bloody contest for national life and independence.

"We honor you for your self-denial and patriotic zeal; we would love to see you become the honored instruments in God's hands in leading sinners to the Saviour. . . In you are wrapped all the hopes of our church and country. With the solution of the question, What are you to become? will be determined the problem of our national glory or shame, and that of the success and usefulness of the church in our beloved land. We tremble for you as we see you drawn away by the duties of patriotism from the constant use of the means of grace and divine influence of the sanctuary. We sympathize with you as you endure fatigue and sickness in camp, as you engage in the life-struggle on the sanguinary field, and as you consecrate everything dear on earth on the altar of patriotic duty."—"Minutes of 1862," pp. 35 ff.

The Narrative of 1863 says: "During the period which has elapsed since the last annual session of this body, our unhappy country has been the theater of a war unexampled, perhaps, in the scope of its operations, of the vast numbers engaged, and of the pitiless barbarity with which it has been conducted on the part of our invaders. The blood of our brethren, our fathers, and our children, unjustly and untimely slain, cries to Heaven. A considerable portion of our territory is in possession of the enemy, and all communication with the churches embraced in those districts must for the time be suspended. We look forward with a cheerful confidence to a renewal of our relations to those churches, when, by the favor of God, the enemy shall have been expelled. We commend these afflicted brethren to your sympathies and your prayers. It is to us matter of devout gratitude to Almighty God that he has so often and so signally baffled the efforts of our enemies to effect our subjugation, and that he has vouchsafed to our arms victories so repeated and so wonderful."—"Minutes of 1863," p. 155.

agement to the praying people at home, and has placed the seal of the divine approbation upon our righteous cause. . . .

The reports of all our Presbyteries indicate an increasing interest in the spiritual welfare of our colored population. The long-continued agitations of our adversaries have wrought within us a deeper conviction of the divine appointment of domestic servitude, and have led to clearer comprehensions of the duties we owe to the African race. We hesitate not to affirm that it is the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery, and to make it a blessing both to master and slave. We could not, if we would, yield up these four millions of immortal beings to the dictates of fanaticism and the menace of military power. We distinctly recognize the inscrutable Power which brought this benighted people into our midst, and we shall feel that we have not discharged our solemn trust until we have used every effort to bring them under the saving influence of the gospel of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

During the period between the close of the war and 1870 there was a great controversy in the country, upon the spirituality and independence of the church as the visible kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth. And in order that the mass of her membership might know clearly the past witness of the church as to her independence, and the proper, testimony for the future, the Assembly of 1870 instructed the Committee of Publication to issue in tract form the public official utterances of the Assemblies in relation thereto.<sup>2</sup>

This publication, together with the repeated charge that the church had not maintained an attitude of independence toward the Confederacy, was the occasion of the Assembly's reviewing in 1875-76 its witness as to the non-political character of the church, and formally setting forth its testimony once again. The Assembly of 1876 recited the church's testimony concerning its own non-secular and non-political character, delivered from 1861 to 1867 inclusive. It extracted from the minutes practically the entire body of expressions alleged to be incon-

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1864," pp. 293.

<sup>2</sup> Compare "Minutes of 1870," p. 542.

sistent with the afore-mentioned declarations.<sup>1</sup> By way of comment on these two classes of extracts, it affirmed:

It will be seen that the doctrine announced and maintained by the Assembly, on the relations of the church to the state, is not, as has often been charged, the unscriptural and impracticable idea that the church and Christian people, as such, have no duties to perform toward the state. True, the Assembly denies the right of the church courts to interfere with the domain of Caesar by legislating on purely political questions; but at the same time it has the right to enjoin those duties which the citizen confessedly owes to the commonwealth. . . . As long as states stand and are acknowledged, obedience—that is, submission and obedience in all things not sinful—is to be enjoined as a duty; factious resistance to be condemned as a sin. . . .

In 1861, at the time of its organization, the Assembly found its members placed under the civil authority of the Confederate Government and that of the respective States which constituted it. The governments, State and Confederate, were established and generally acknowledged within our respective bounds. The United States Government was known to us only as one with which the Confederate Government was at war, and by which it was menaced by land and by sea. Under these circumstances, and in accordance with the above principles, our Assembly recognized “the powers that be,” and which are “ordained of God over us,” to be those of the government of the Confederate States and of the respective States confederated in it. Hence it was simply carrying out its own principles and the doctrines of the Word of God when it taught the citizens and the soldiers to discharge toward these high civil authorities the duties which the Scriptures enjoin toward “the powers that be,” and when it made “intercession for all that are in authority.” . . .

So far as any action of *that kind* goes, and to *that extent*, there is nothing that offends against the principles set forth in our formal declarations.

In the Narrative of 1862 there is a single clause which demands a criticism. The situation of the Southern country was known to be one of extreme peril. The war, if successful on the part of the United States, involved not only the destruction of the Confederate Government, but the forfeiture of the political rights of its citizens, the overthrow of the existing domestic institutions, the loss of property, and other evils universally dreaded. Under these circumstances it was right and proper for our Assembly to utter a strong declaration of sympathy for our people, and to give a decided expression of commendation to those who were performing these acts of what they esteemed a patriotic duty. It was substantially saying to them: “As this is to you not only a government *de facto*, but also one of your own choice, we commend you for acting faithfully and fully according to these convictions, and follow you with our prayers.” But when our Assembly intimates or implies an opinion as

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<sup>1</sup> The extracts are just those given in the immediately preceding pages of this chapter.

to whether the war referred to was justly or unjustly waged, or a decision as to which was, in its origin and principle, the government to which the citizens owed obedience, it transcends the limits of its authority. It no longer bases its commendation upon what is *de facto* as to the government, or upon the inherent right which the citizen had in defending the government of his choice, but it assumes to decide upon the righteousness of the war. A court of the Lord Jesus Christ has no commission to do this. It is in principle the error we have condemned in the Northern Assembly of 1861, and those of other years.<sup>1</sup>

Another alleged error is to be remarked in several forms of expression found in the extracts which have been recited ; such as : “the *war* in which we are now engaged”; “the absorbing interest of the *struggle* in which we are now contending for everything dear to man”; “the armies of *our* national independence”; “the pitiless barbarity with which it [the war] has been conducted on the part of *our* invaders”; “it is to us matter of devout gratitude to Almighty God that he has so often and so signally baffled the efforts of *our* enemies to effect *our* subjugation, and that he has vouchsafed to *our* arms victories so repeated and wonderful”; “profound gratitude to God for the repeated repulses of *our* insolent and cruel foe”; “this insane attempt to *subjugate and destroy us*.”

If these expressions are to be taken in their literal sense, it should be candidly admitted that they are entirely out of place in a court of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are therefore to be regretted and disapproved. They seem to arise from a confusion of thought or a temporary forgetfulness; at any rate, there is a failure to discriminate between what may be properly uttered in the character of a citizen and what may be uttered by an ecclesiastical body.

At the same time, with this admission, it may be rightly insisted that the objection rests to a large extent upon a hypercriticism; for it is evident that the word “our” is here used inadvertently, and in a very general sense, similar to the phrase “our army,” or “our country,” so often heard in all ecclesiastical assemblies.

#### *Concerning Slavery.*

In the Narrative of the state of religion for 1864 two expressions concerning slavery are found which may have given rise to much criticism. It is

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<sup>1</sup> “There is, however, this wide difference between the action of the two Assemblies. The Northern not only decided a purely political question for its own members residing within these States and Territories, confessedly subject to the jurisdiction of the government of the United States, but it also undertook to decide the great question for the members of our churches residing under the *de facto* government of the Confederate States, and one organized under forms of much regularity and with much unanimity; and undertook also to make compliance a condition of church-membership, and to visit with discipline those who disobeyed this act of usurpation. The Southern Assembly was never guilty of this transgression, though it may have erred in the particular mentioned.”—“Minutes of 1876,” p. 294.

proper to state, as a preliminary remark, that these Narratives in general are not closely scrutinized when presented to the General Assembly, inasmuch as they are not expected to introduce difficult or debatable points. And in regard to the Narrative for that year, it is a well-known fact that it was read on the very eve of the final adjournment of the body, at a time when the most exciting reports of battles occurring or impending had just reached the place [Charlotte, N. C.], and when many members, apprehensive of being cut off by military operations from a return home, were impatiently hurrying away. If, therefore, some things may be found in this paper less carefully expressed than could be desired, the statement just presented may account for the fact that attention was not drawn to them. But taking them as they are, there are a few remarks to be offered which are due to a fair understanding. We notice:

1. The expression that "domestic servitude is of divine appointment." The essential principle of slavery is submission, or subjection to control by the will of another. This is an essential element in every form of civil government also, and in the family relation itself. The application of this principle in the form of "domestic servitude" is right or wrong according to circumstances. It is not an institution essential to the social state, and therefore is not of universal obligation. But in certain conditions of society it has been expressly recognized by God, permitted and appointed. See Exodus xx. 10, 17; Exodus xxi. 7; Leviticus xxv. 44-46; Matthew v. 17; i Timothy vi. 1-4. If it is a relation justifiable and lawful in the sight of God, it must be in a certain sense of divine appointment, since whatever is thus lawful implies the sanction of the law-giver. And the existence of wrong laws and usages connected with it no more disproves the lawfulness of the relation itself than such things disprove the lawfulness of marriage or of civil government.

Therefore, by declaring the institution of slavery to be "of divine appointment," our Assembly must not be understood as expressing the opinion that it was ordained of God as a positively divine and obligatory institute of society for all communities; but simply that as it was recognized and enforced by the law of the Confederate States, and of the particular States embraced in that confederation, and was a relation existing and prevailing throughout its boundaries, it was, in the sense of all established civil relations, a matter of divine appointment for the time being, in the midst of the people of those States.

2. It is affirmed that it was the peculiar mission of the "Southern Church to conserve the institution of slavery."

Concerning this we remark that the same form of expression is to be found in the "Minutes of the General Assembly (New School) of 1865." In a carefully considered paper on "The State of the Country," that Assembly says: "God has taught us in this war that the church must conserve the state by instructing the people in the great principles of justice, and inspiring them to practice the same." If any one will define the sense in which it is

proper for the church “to conserve the state,” in the same sense it would be also proper for it “to conserve the institution of slavery.” It certainly is not the duty of the church to conserve the state in the sense of dictating what form of civil government it shall establish, how long it shall continue, or for what causes it should be changed. Its duty is limited to condemning at all times factious resistance to established civil authority, to inculcating obedience while it remains, and those virtues by which it may be made, as far as possible, a blessing to society. The very same applies to slavery; and whoever will read in its connection the expression used by our Assembly, must see that such is the sense there intended by that word, namely, to secure from this relation and arrangement, as it existed, the greatest practicable amount of good for all classes of society, and thus “*make it a blessing both to master and slave.*” This we know was the sense intended by the writer of the Narrative, now settled as an acceptable minister in connection with the Northern Assembly, and we have no doubt it was the sense in which the Assembly adopted it.

It has been widely proclaimed that our Assembly meant by the word “conserve” to assert that it was the duty of the church to *perpetuate* the institution of slavery. On this point it may be remarked: (a) that no such intended meaning is to be gathered from the context; (b) that such an interpretation is negatived by the explicit and carefully considered statement of our church on this point, at its first organization in 1861. (c) Even those who have raised a clamor against us do not themselves seem to be satisfied that the word “conserve” necessarily means to perpetuate. This is evident from the fact that in the minutes of their General Assembly charging us with “grievous heresy” and with “blasphemy” they repeatedly misquote, and therefore misrepresent us. The word *perpetuate* is never used by our Assembly, but is to be found in the *interpolation* of its accusers. (“Minutes of the General Assembly, North, for 1865,” pp. 560 ff.) (d) Finally conceding, as we do, that the word “conserve” in this connection is ambiguous, our Assembly in 1865 did all that it could be reasonably expected in the premises to disengage itself from an ambiguous or inappropriate expression. All that was necessary or proper was to declare that the Address of 1861 “contains the full, unambiguous, and authoritative exposition of our views in regard to this matter.” And this was done for *the special purpose of disavowing an interpretation which was inconsistent with the deliberately expressed views of our church.*<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the Assembly of 1876, in view of all the circumstances and interests involved, solemnly, in certain specific resolutions, reaffirmed the explicit statements concerning the non-secular character of the church, set forth in the

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1876,” pp. 291-297.

“Address to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth” of 1861; disavowed all ambiguous and inconsistent expressions found upon the records as forming any part of the well-considered, authoritative teaching of the church; declared the meaning of the Assembly of 1864, in speaking of conserving slavery “as of divine appointment,” to have been, so far as ascertainable, “that as it was recognized and enforced by the Confederate States, and was an existing relation prevailing throughout its boundaries, it was, in the sense of all established civil relations, a matter of divine appointment for the time being in the midst of the people of those States”; and that it was the church’s duty “to secure from this relation and arrangement, as it existed, the greatest practical amount of good for all classes of society, and thus make it a blessing both to master and slave.”<sup>1</sup>

It thus appears that if the Southern Presbyterian Church has faltered in her testimony for the non-secular character of the church, her falterings have been transient inconsistencies. Her witness for this truth has been one of her peculiar glories. The Assembly has humbly explained and acknowledged such mistakes as she has made. “That it faltered at all amidst the pressure and confusion of the times is not the surprise, but rather that it did not fall away from the truth like others. . . . The surprise is that it has had the grace to acknowledge before the world its inconsistency in any transient departure. Awakening from a terrible delirium, and finding that a false and treacherous principle had, in an interval of paroxysm, stealthily insinuated itself, it hurled it with indignation from its embrace, and placed its heel upon it as a deadly viper.”<sup>2</sup>

It is believed that the church has continued to hold until

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1876,” pp. 233, 234.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. S. S. Laws’ “Letter to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), 1872,” p. 67.

the present the same theoretical view. In 1883, in reply to an overture from Abingdon Presbytery, the Assembly declared “that it is not competent for the church, in its organic capacity, to seek the intervention of the civil powers for the accomplishment of any of the ends before it, as a witness for the truth of God. The Assembly would furthermore deprecate all action which might be construed as committing the church to any alliance with associations or societies outside of its pale for the accomplishment of this or any other object, however worthy in itself.”<sup>1</sup> Any apparent deviation from this position since 1883 will appear on investigation to be merely apparent or unintentional.

*2. Cases of Organic Union with other Ecclesiastical Bodies.*

*Union with the Independent Presbyterian Church took place in 1863.* The founder of this church was the Rev. W. C. Davis, who withdrew from the Presbyterian Church about 1810—a “man of a vigorous intellect, of considerable influence among the people, and an interesting preacher, given more to metaphysical speculation than most men,”<sup>2</sup> extremely tenacious of what he regarded as new discoveries, and so unacquainted with church history as to be ignorant that most of the beloved offspring of his mind had been broached, advocated, exploded, and forgotten long before.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1883,” p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Howe’s “History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina,” vol. ii., p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Compare Howe’s “History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina,” vol. ii., p. 158. His views were propagated orally and through his book, “The Gospel Plan,” in which the courts of the church found the following objectionable doctrines: 1. “That the active obedience of Christ constitutes no part of that righteousness by which a sinner is justified;” 2. “That obedience to the moral law was not required as the condition of the covenant of works;” 3. “That God could not make Adam, or any other creature, either holy or unholy; . regeneration must be a consequence of faith; faith precedes regeneration; faith in the first act of it is not a holy act;” 4. “Christians may sin willfully and habitually;” 5. “If God has to plant all the principal parts of salvation in a sinner’s heart to enable him to believe,

He had a small following, not so much of adherents to his peculiar views as of personal friends. They perpetuated their separate life until 1863. In that year, "upon the cordial and hearty adoption of our confession, . . . the only true ground on which we can receive any ecclesiastical body,"<sup>1</sup> they were received into the Southern Presbyterian Church.<sup>2</sup>

*Union with the United Synod of the South* was the next to be consummated. This occurred in 1864. In 1838 a split between the Old and New School wings of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America took place. In 1857-58 the Southern contingent of the New School body withdrew from its Assembly in the North because the Cleveland Assembly of that body (1857) had "adopted a paper touching the subject of slavery, that was regarded by some of the members of the Assembly as contrary to Scripture and violative of the constitution of the church, in that it virtually made slaveholding a cause for discipline by the church courts."<sup>3</sup> The aggrieved members secured a convention in Richmond, Va., during the following August, to consider the situation. This convention despaired of the cessation of the slavery agitation in the New School Assembly; abhorred being disciplined for something made an offense neither by the Standards nor the Bible, as well as the Assembly's high-handed and unconstitutional measures in condemning a lower judicatory or individuals for any cause unless they have been

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the gospel plan is quite out of his reach, and consequently does not suit his case; and it must be impossible for God to condemn a man for unbelief, for no just law condemns a man for not doing what he cannot do." ("Minutes of Assembly of 1810," p. 4S2 f.) Mr. Davis was deposed in 1812.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander's "Digest," pp. 411, 412.

<sup>2</sup> The membership was confined to the upper parts of South Carolina and adjacent parts of North Carolina, with York County as a center. This union brought in four ministers, one licentiate, and about eleven country and village churches.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander's "Digest," pp. 404.

brought before the Assembly in the way prescribed by the constitution; “and resolved to recommend the Presbyteries which were opposed to the slavery agitation in the highest judicatories of the church to appoint delegates,” to meet at Knoxville, Tenn., on the third Thursday in May, 1858, to organize a General Synod, under the name of “The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.” Accordingly, at the time appointed twenty-one commissioners from twelve Presbyteries, located in four different States, met and constituted the “United Synod.” A declaration of principles which was adopted contained among its articles one affirming “their agreement in, and approbation of, the Standards of the church,” taken in the sense of the Adopting Act of 1729. The Synod made an overture to the Old School Assembly for reception into its fold; but that body was not disposed to receive the overture favorably. By 1863 the Old School Church of the South, however, was inclined to the union. It was no longer suspicious of doctrinal unsoundness in the New School, South. Indeed, it had long been known that the New School men of the South were never advocates of the distinctive New School doctrines, so much as admirers of New School leaders in the North, and protestants against the peculiar ecclesiastical moves of the Old School men of 1837-38.

Accordingly, in 1863 committees to jointly confer as to the basis of union were appointed, met, and with practically entire unanimity recommended a plan of union. This plan contained a *declaration* touching certain doctrines which had formerly been grounds of debate, in order to make clear the hearty and sincere agreement of the two bodies, “to restore full confidence between brethren, and to honor God’s saving truth,” to wit: first, concerning the *fall of man* and *original sin* including the imputation of the guilt

of Adam's sin; second, concerning *regeneration*; third, concerning the *atonement* of Jesus Christ; fourth, concerning the *believer's justification*; fifth, concerning *revivals*; sixth, concerning *voluntary societies* and the *functions of the church*.

The Assembly of 1864, after a very full consideration, expressed its belief that the approval of these propositions by the committees of conference, and extensively on both sides, "had served a valuable purpose, by presenting satisfactory evidence of such harmony and doctrinal soundness of views as might ground an honorable union"; but judged it most "prudent to unite *on the basis of the existing Standards only*, inasmuch as no actual necessity for other declarations of belief in order to a happy union" existed. The Assembly modified the plan of union further, "so as in every case to require the reception of the Presbyteries under the care of the United Synod into the Synods of this Assembly, so as to preserve the undoubted succession of the latter." It made a few other relatively unimportant changes, and then by a very large majority adopted the plan thus modified. During the August following the United Synod unanimously adopted the plan of union as amended and adopted by the General Assembly.

This union was honorable to both parties, and has been a source of great blessing to Southern Presbyterianism. It was a perfectly safe union for the Old School body. The other body was sound, and even if it had not been completely so, the seminaries for the ministry were to be in the hands of Old Schoolmen, for the whole church.<sup>1</sup>

In 1867 the *Presbytery of Patapsco* united with the Assembly. It lay in the State of Maryland. It was com-

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<sup>1</sup> The ranks of the church were much strengthened by this union. " In 1861 the United Synod embraced 121 ministers, 19g churches, and had under its care 4 licentiates, 18 candidates for the ministry, and 11,581 communicants.

posed of ministers and churches which had withdrawn from connection with the Northern Presbyterian Church (O. S.) “because of the numerous and persistent violations of the constitution of the church by the highest courts” thereof.<sup>1</sup>

*The Alabama Presbytery of the Associate Reformed Church* was received about the same time, the Assembly guaranteeing its members the right to use Rouse’s version of the Psalms in worship, according to their preference.

The *Synod of Kentucky* united with the Presbyterian Church, South, in 1869. In 1861 the Synod of Kentucky, belonging to the Old School Assembly, on the occasion of the withdrawal of the Southern Synods declared that it “adhered with unbroken purpose to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.” It enjoined “upon all its members, and upon all under its control and care, to avoid all divisive and schismatical courses, to cultivate the peace of the church, and to practice great mutual forbearance.”<sup>2</sup> It deplored the schism which had taken place in the Southern States, and condemned it as having been made on insufficient grounds. At the same time it expressed its regret “at that part of the action of the last Assembly touching the order<sup>3</sup> for a day of general prayer,

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<sup>1</sup> Appearing before the Assembly of 1867, through their commissioners they affirmed that they had no good “ground of hope that the church of” their “former connection” would soon “return to the divine constitution of the church so faithfully set forth in the Standards; that they held it to be the imperative obligation of all God’s people, according to the will of Christ, to manifest the invisible unity of their faith in the unity of a visible church, as far and as fast as it can be done consistently with the purity” of the *first*; that they believed “the Presbyterian Church in the United States” to be the largest body of Christians in the land whose faith and government were identical with their own and pure according to the Standards of the church.

The Presbytery was at once received by the Assembly, and attached to the Synod of Virginia as a component part of it. This Presbytery brought an accession of 6 ministers, 3 churches, 576 communicants, much wealth and intelligence. (“Minutes of 1867,” pp. 131 ff.)

<sup>2</sup> Alexander’s “Digest,” p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> The reader has been made acquainted with this order under the caption of “The Spring Resolutions.”

which was liable to be construed, and was construed, into a requisition on all the members and office-bearers of the church living in the numerous States which had seceded from the United States, and were in a state of war with them, as bound by Christian duty, and by authority of the church, to disregard the hostile governments which had been established over them, and, in defiance of the actual authority of those governments, to pray for their overthrow.”<sup>1</sup> The Assembly in 1862, by way of review, condemned the Synod’s disapproval of these acts.<sup>2</sup>

The Assembly of 1862 adopted a paper, too, prepared by Dr. R. J. Breckinridge, in which it declared that public order had “been wickedly superseded by rebellion, anarchy, and violence, in the whole Southern portion of the Union”; that all this had “been brought to pass in a disloyal and traitorous attempt to overthrow the National Government by military force, and to divide the nation contrary to the wishes of the immense majority of the people of the nation, and without satisfactory evidence that the majority of the people in whom the local sovereignty resided, even in the States which revolted, ever authorized any such proceeding, or ever approved the fraud and violence by which this horrible treason” had “achieved whatever success it” had “had”; that “this whole treason, rebellion, anarchy, fraud, and violence” was “utterly contrary to the dictates of natural religion and morality, and plainly condemned by the revealed will of God”; that it was “the clear and solemn duty of the National Government to preserve, at whatever cost, the national union and constitution, to crush force by force”; and that it was “the bounden duty of the people who” composed “this great nation, each one in his several place and degree, to uphold the Federal Government, and every State govern-

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander’s “Digest,” p. 427.

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes of Northern Assembly (O. S.) of 1862,” p. 631.

ment.” This paper further denounced, without naming, certain office-bearers and members of churches in loyal Synods and Presbyteries as “faithless to all authority, human or divine”; and enjoined obedience to civil government, not only in overt act, but “in heart, temper, and motives (as God’s law is to be obeyed), and as they shall answer at the judgment-seat.”<sup>1</sup> All this was intensely irritating to a large majority of the Kentucky Synod.<sup>2</sup>

Various acts of 1864 were regarded as still more outrageous. Among these was the minute known as the “Stanley-Matthews Paper,” adopting the naturalistic views of the slavery question, and declaring the political occurrences of the time to be providential revelations of the will of God that *every vestige of slavery should be effaced*; that the motive for the longer continuance of slavery had been taken away by the war of the slaveholding States in order to found an empire upon the corner-stone of slavery; expressing gratitude to God for overruling the wickedness and calamities of the rebellion to work out the deliverance of the country from the evil and guilt of slavery; and the desire for the extirpation of slavery; and recommending all in their communion “to labor earnestly and unweariedly for this glorious consummation to which human justice and Christian love combine to pledge them.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1862,” pp. 624-626. Compare letter of the Synod of Kentucky to the Southern Assembly, “Minutes of Assembly, South, of 1867,” p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> The Assembly of 1863 gave similar offense in its elaborate minute “upon the subject of raising the United States flag over the church building in which the body sat; reaffirming the doctrine of the obligation of the church, as such, to proclaim her loyalty to the civil government.” (Letter of the Synod of Kentucky to the Southern Assembly of 1867, p. 181 of the “Minutes.” For the minute, see “Minutes of Northern Assembly (O. S.) of 1863,” pp. 57-59.)

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Synod to Southern Assembly of 1867, pp. 181, 182 of “Minutes.” Compare “Minutes of Assembly, North, of 1864,” pp. 298, 299.

“The decisions in the cases of the Rev. Dr. McPheeters and the Pine Street Church, St. Louis, and of Rev. Mr. Farris and ruling elder Watson and the St. Charles Church, Missouri, . . . giving the full sanction of the Assembly to the persecution of Christ’s ministers who could not in conscience consent to pervert their office and position to the support of a political party,”<sup>1</sup> was not less objectionable. The Synod of Kentucky in the following autumn, in reviewing the minutes of this Assembly, expressed its disapproval of the Assembly’s deliverances on slavery, as unnecessary, unwise, and untimely. It looked upon said deliverance as a political, if not partisan, statement—one that made the Assembly seem to cast its influence with one or the other of the political parties which divided the country.<sup>2</sup>

The Assembly of 1865 gave still further offense in acts enforcing the principles of the foregoing acts as a part of the standing law of the church; thus: “First, condemning the Synod of Kentucky for taking exception to the Assembly’s paper on slavery in 1864, and because the Synod had ‘wholly failed to make any deliverance calculated to sustain and encourage our government in its efforts to suppress a wanton and wicked rebellion.’ ”<sup>3</sup> “Second, the order to the Board of Domestic Missions to appoint as missionaries ‘none but those that give satisfactory evidence of their loyalty to the National Government, and that they are in cordial sympathy with the General Assembly in its testimony on doctrine, loyalty, and freedom.’ ”<sup>4</sup> “Third, the order to all the lower church

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of Synod of Kentucky in “Minutes of Assembly, South, of 1867,” p. 183. Compare “Minutes of General Assembly, North, of 1864,” pp. 311, 312.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander’s “Digest,” p. 427.

<sup>3</sup> “Minutes of Northern Assembly of 1865,” p. 54. Compare letter of Synod of Kentucky, *ut supra*.

<sup>4</sup> “Minutes of General Assembly, North, of 1865,” pp. 554, 556, 590.

courts requiring the examination of all the ministers and church-members coming from any of the Southern States, and making it a condition precedent to admission to the church courts and churches that they confess as sinful certain opinions before held touching ‘States rights,’ rebellion, slavery, not in harmony with previous political utterances of the Assembly.”<sup>1</sup> “Fourth, the minutes of the same Assembly, declaring untruly that the Southern churches had organized a General Assembly ‘in order to render their aid in the attempt to establish, by means of the rebellion, a separate national existence, to conserve and perpetuate the system of slavery—a great crime against the government and against God’—and therefore declaring the Assembly’s purpose to ignore the existence of any Presbyterian church in the Southern States except such churches and Presbyteries as are loyal to the government of the United States and to the Northern Presbyterian Church, and whose views are in harmony with its views on subjects of domestic slavery.”<sup>2</sup>

During the summer of 1865 the Louisville Presbytery adopted its celebrated “Declaration and Testimony against the Erroneous and Heretical Doctrines and Practices which have Obtained and been Propagated in the Presbyterian Church in the United States during the Last Five Years” —a paper marked by splendid ability, clear, keen, revealing, unanswerable.<sup>3</sup> The signers testified: against the as-

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Compare letter of Synod of Kentucky to General Assembly, South, of 1867, p. 182.

<sup>1</sup> See “Minutes of General Assembly, North, of 1865,” p. 566. Compare letter of Synod of Kentucky to General Assembly, South, of 1867, p. 181 of “Minutes.”

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes of General Assembly, North, of 1865,” p. 506. Compare “Minutes of Assembly, South, of 1867,” p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> The “Declaration and Testimony” was written by Dr. S. R. Wilson, pastor in Louisville—a man born in the North, and who had lived there until a few years before. He was never suspected of a leaning toward secession. His writing the paper in question was the result of a conference

sumption, on the part of the courts of the church, of the right to decide questions of state policy; against the doctrine that the church, as such, owes allegiance to human rulers or governments; against the sanction given by the church to the perversion of the teaching of Christ and his apostles upon the subject of the duty of Christians as citizens to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and "to be subject to the higher powers," into authority for her courts to decide upon political questions; against the action of the Assembly of 1864 on the subject of slavery and emancipation, and against the confirmation of that act by the Assembly of 1865; against the unjust and scandalous contradictions of their own recorded testimony and the well-known fact in regard to the labors of the Presbyterian Church and ministry for the christianizing of the slaves of the South and the preaching<sup>1</sup> of the gospel of Christ; against the doctrine widely taught in the church, and even countenanced by the Assembly, that the acts and deliverances of the courts of Christ's commonwealth may properly be based upon and shaped in accordance with the ordinances and laws of the State legislatures, the orders and proclamations of military chieftains, and even upon the results of popular votes given at the elections; against the doctrine that the will of God and the duty of his church and of his people is to be learned from particular providential events, and that the teachings of the Scriptures are to be interpreted by these providences; against the sanction given, both directly and indirectly, to the usurpation by the secular and military powers of

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between himself, Dr. J. H. Brooks, of St. Louis, Mr. Edward Bredell, of St. Louis, and Dr. J. H. Van Dyke, of New York, in the study of Dr. Van Dyke, in New York City. It came not from "hot-headed Southern prejudices," but from cool, intelligent Northern principle!

<sup>1</sup> During the later years of the war the Northern Assemblies denied that Presbyterians had done anything to better the negro's religious condition. They therein contradicted their previous declarations.

authority in and over the worship and government of the church; against that alliance which has been virtually formed by the church with the State; against the persecution which for five years past has been carried on with increasing malignity against those who had refused to sanction or acquiesce in these departures of the church from the foundations of truth and righteousness; against the widespread and destructive perversion of the commission of the ministry and the province of church courts, which as such could know no difference between Jew and Gentile, "Rebel" or "Yankee"; against the action of the Assembly in reference to the churches in the seceded and border States, and against the basing of the action on assertion of what the Assembly had the clearest evidence was not true, viz., on the affirmation that the General Assembly of the Confederate States was *organized* in order to render their aid in the attempt to establish, by means of the rebellion, "*a separate national existence, and conserve and perpetuate the system of slavery*"; against the Assembly's making the Board of Domestic Missions a *court of final and superior jurisdiction* to judge of the orthodoxy of the ministry and the soundness of their views touching the nature of the Government of the United States, and the doctrine of States rights, the freedom of the negroes, and the various important questions touching their social and civil *status*, then and prospective; against every movement in the church which looked toward a union of the state and church, or a subordination of the one to the other, or the interference of either with the jurisdiction of the other. The paper further presented as reasons for the testimony, that the errors testified against were contrary to the Word of God and subversive of its inspiration and supreme authority; contrary to the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church as taught

in her confession, catechism, and constitution; that the errors tended to obliterate all the lines of separation between the civil and ecclesiastical powers, to bring the ministry and all the ordinances of religion and the authority of the church into public disrepute, to keep up strife and alienation between brethren of a common faith, and thus delay the pacification of the country; and that they are schismatical, teaching for doctrines the commandments of man. The protestants further declared that they would not in any way aid or abet the Assembly in its innovating measures, and would withdraw support from any men or institutions who gave themselves to carrying out said measures.<sup>1</sup>

At the meeting of the Synod in the fall of 1865, Dr. R. J. Breckinridge offered a paper calling in question the right of those members of the Presbytery of Louisville, and others who had indorsed and adopted the paper styled the "Declaration and Testimony," to sit and act as members of the Synod of Kentucky. The paper asserted that the signers of the "Declaration and Testimony" had assumed "such a state of open rebellion against the church, and such open contempt and defiance of her Scriptural authority, and such contempt of her faith and order and acts, as to render each and every one of them unqualified, unfit, and incompetent to sit and act as a member of that or any other court of the Presbyterian Church." But this paper was defeated by a vote of 22 to 107. Moreover, this Synod adopted an elaborate paper offered by Judge Sampson, in which it took exception to the Assembly's order to the Board of Missions to appoint as missionaries "none but those who give satisfactory evidence of their

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<sup>1</sup> See the "Declaration and Testimony," published at the office of the St. Louis Presbyterian," 1866, also in Grasty's "Life of McPheeters," pp. 304 ff.

loyalty to the National Government, and that they are in cordial sympathy with the General Assembly in its testimonies on doctrine, loyalty, and freedom.” But in the same paper, Synod, by a vote of 57 to 35, expressed its judgment that neither this action nor any of the acts and deliverances of the Assembly or the state of the country during the war justified a withdrawal from its connection with the General Assembly; and it again asserted that it would “adhere with unbroken purpose to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and would oppose every effort to interrupt” its “ecclesiastical relations with the General Assembly.”<sup>1</sup>

Acts and deliverances of the Assembly of 1866, ordaining the execution of the orders of 1865, were still more intolerable. This Assembly excluded the commissioners of the Presbytery of Louisville from their seats in the Assembly by a simple resolution, without hearing, “and on premises whose statements were utterly false, and one of them defamatory of a minister of good standing.”<sup>2</sup> It ordered “certain persons—some of them under process before the church session, and their case under careful consideration before the Presbytery—to be recognized as elders of the Walnut Street Church, without the possibility of any knowledge on the part of the Assembly whether they had been duly elected and were lawful ruling elders or not.”<sup>3</sup> It initiated steps for organic reunion with the New School body, “in utter disregard of the testimonies

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<sup>1</sup> Also, by a vote of 54 to 46, it expressed its disapprobation of the terms of the “Declaration and Testimony,” and of its spirit and intent, indicated on its face, as looking to the further agitation of the church, if not to its division at a time when great mutual forbearance was called for among brethren. (See Alexander’s “Digest,” p. 428.) This account of the Synod of Kentucky of 1865 is told here almost in Mr. Alexander’s words.

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes of Southern Assembly of 1867,” p. 182. Compare “Minutes of Assembly, North, of 1866,” p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> “Minutes of Southern Assembly of 1867,” p. 183. Compare “Minutes of General Assembly, North, of 1866,” p. 54.

of 1837-38 against errors which the New School body not only had not renounced, but, on the contrary, had added to largely by its monstrous Erastian deliverances on the state of the country in 1863, 1864, and 1865, and the monstrous deliverances just then made indorsing the Civil Rights Bill and negro suffrage as against the President, and calling for more blood in the condign punishment of the chief fomenters of the rebellion."<sup>1</sup> It passed an act "known as the Gurley *ipso facto* order, declaring, first, the 'Declaration and Testimony' to be slanderous and schismatical,<sup>2</sup> then summoning its signers to the bar of the next Assembly for trial, without other citation, or other tabling of charges; devising penalties unknown to the constitution, and utterly incongruous to the Presbyterian theory of the teaching rulers—interdiction of these rulers sitting in any church court higher than the session; and declaring the *ipso facto* dissolution of Presbyteries which refused to execute this unlawful penalty," and enrolled as entitled to a seat in the body any persons designated in the Gurley order.<sup>3</sup> The pastoral letter and the memorials adopted by the Assembly in reference to the same general subject were equally worthy of odium.

At the meeting of the Synod of Kentucky, October, 1866, it disregarded the Gurley *ipso facto* order, and called the roll of all the constituent members and churches of the

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of General Assembly, South, of 1867," p. 182. Compare "Minutes of General Assembly, North, of 1866," p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> "It is a remarkable fact that in a debate extending through two weeks, not even one speaker from the majority has touched the merits of the question before the house either by exposing the unsoundness of the principles contained in the 'Declaration and Testimony,' or the impropriety of the language in which these principles are embodied. We have had denunciation without measure, but not a word of argument or proof."—Dr. J. H. Brooks, in "Concise Record of Assembly of 1866."

<sup>3</sup> "Minutes of 1867," p. 183; "Minutes of Assembly, North, of 1866," pp. 60, 61. For a very just exhibition of "the bald confusion and incongruity of thought in the Gurley *ipso facto* resolutions, see Laws' letter to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), pp. 6 ff.

Synod. A certain segment of the Synod, under the lead of Dr. Breckinridge, who proposed to follow the Assembly's Gurley orders, withdrew. Synod pronounced the Gurley order an overstretch of power, and said that in the declared contingent dissolution of the Presbyteries which that order effects, the Assembly had attributed to its measures and ordinances a force and operation countenanced by no provision or principle of the church. But it declared that it was not the Synod's purpose to make any change of its formal ecclesiastical relations, but to continue to stand in its present position of open protest and resistance to the enforcement of the acts of the General Assemblies of 1861-66, "concerning doctrine, loyalty, and freedom, as unconstitutional, and therefore null and void."<sup>1</sup>

The number of ministers who withdrew was 32. Over half of them were without charges. They took with them 28 ruling elders, representing a membership of 1800. But 108 ministers maintained connection with the constitutional Synod, representing a membership of about 9800. This Synod addressed a letter "to the churches and people under its charge in vindication of its course."<sup>2</sup>

The General Assembly of 1867 adopted an Encyclopaedic Act known as the "Report of the Committee of Ten," wherein they crowded into one indistinguishable mass the judicial cases of near two hundred men, formally summoned to the Assembly; cases of repeal referred to this by the preceding Assembly; cases of irregularity and revolutionary proceedings in Presbyteries and Synods; cases of contested seats in the Assembly; they passed upon all these without any of the usual forms of hearing and trial, by one sweeping sentence of outlawry of two

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander's "Digest," pp. 428, 429.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429. Compare "Minutes of Synod of Kentucky of 1866," p. 27.

Synods—Kentucky and Missouri—and twelve Presbyteries of the church; they declared the seceders from the Kentucky Synod the true Synod, and declared the regular Synod and its Presbyteries no longer the Synod and Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church. It also passed several acts in accord with the foregoing “for depriving the churches of Kentucky of their property and the control of the schools which their piety and liberality had founded.”<sup>1</sup> Hence, the Synod, at a called meeting in Lexington, in June, 1867, declared that the General Assembly had ceased any longer to be a constitutional body, had become a schismatic and revolutionary body,” was no longer governed by the constitution, but controlled by the will of the majority; that the Assembly having by its own acts separated from the Synod, the Synod now makes solemn declaration of this fact upon its records, and, further, declares that it will in future govern its actions by this recognized sundering of all its relations to the Assembly, by the act of that body itself.”<sup>2</sup>

At a subsequent meeting called for the purpose, Synod prepared a letter to the Southern Assembly, to sit at Nashville in November, 1867. The letter expressed the Synod’s belief that “Southern Presbyterian churches and church courts have, in a good degree, preserved pure and unimpaired the constitutional Presbyterianism of the undivided church from 1837 to 1861,” and asserted that the Synod with its Presbyteries, churches, and people, still true to the native instinct of genuine Presbyterianism, and unwilling to stand isolated from their brethren, desired still to be in communion and organic union with all who maintain the principles of church order so dear to their fathers and themselves. It further asserted that it was a

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of Assembly, South, of 1867,” p. 183.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander’s “Digest,” p. 429.

first duty to ascertain whether such a union could be formed, and to what extent.

As a step toward the accomplishment of this end, the letter tells how they had come to be an independent Synod; makes a statement of the doctrines and principles for which this Synod and its Presbyteries had been contending in their controversies with the General Assembly, North—setting forth their views concerning the doctrine of the Kingship of Christ, and the manner in which Christ executeth the office of a king in his visible church; concerning the origin, nature, and functions of church government as contrasted with and related to the civil government; concerning the powers of the several courts of the church, their relation to each other and to the office-bearers and people; concerning the interpretation of our Form of Government and Discipline with reference to the functions, powers, and mutual relations of the courts of the church.

The Synod expressed a desire to have its letter embodied in the historical records of the church as a record of the church's appreciation of the inestimable value of these principles as the bulwark of Christian liberty, wherewith Christ sets his people free, and a definitely expressed statute testimony, to which ready appeal "might be made thereafter" as direct authority in support of "those who stand for the truth as it is in Jesus against those who again may treacherously attempt to subvert the doctrine and order of Christ's house."<sup>1</sup> The Kentucky Presbyteries were warmly welcomed. Their commissioners appeared in the Assembly of 1868.

The Southern Church had again taken a large body into her bosom; but it was no alien body. It was a mar-

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<sup>1</sup> For the entire letter see "Minutes of the General Assembly, South, of 1867," p. 784.

riage between two who saw alike substantially. The Synod of Kentucky had been an Old School body. It had been a witness for “the supremacy of Christ’s crown and covenant.”

In 1870 the *Associate Reformed Presbytery of Kentucky* was received into organic union with the Southern Church, on the same terms that the Associate Reformed Presbytery of Alabama had been. It brought four ministers, their elders and churches.

Union with the *Synod of Missouri* was effected in 1874. The history of this Synod between 1861 and 1867 is so like that of Kentucky that it may be dispatched in a few words. In October of 1861 it unanimously declared that the Assembly of 1861 had in the notorious Spring Resolutions taken an action that was “unscriptural, unwise, and unjust; of no binding force whatever on this Synod, nor upon the members of the Presbyterian Church within” its bounds. Nor did it feel less keenly the apostasy and usurpations of the successive Assemblies while the war lasted. Its ministers and people suffered grievously at the hands of the “loyal” brethren at the North: witness the case of the devoted and heroic McPheeters.<sup>1</sup> It, too, was horrified at the measures of the Pittsburg Assembly of 1865, which, at a time when “the soldiers who had stood arrayed against each other on the battlefield were meeting as friends,” and when “wise men in the councils of the nation rejoiced in the hope of a speedy restoration of fraternal feeling throughout the land,” passed orders at once ungenerous and unscriptural—“required all sessions, Presbyteries, and Synods of the church tinder its jurisdiction to examine persons, not from the North, but from the South, touching their relation to the Confederate Govern-

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<sup>1</sup> See Grasty’s “Life of McPheeters.” Nothing more heroic than the life of Dr. McPheeters happened during our Civil War.

ment and their views of slavery,” and compel them “to make confession of sin under pain of exclusion from the fellowship and sympathy of their brethren in the Lord,” if they had voluntarily supported the Confederate Government or had certain views touching slavery.

Many Missouri ministers and elders had signed the noble “Declaration and Testimony” in the fall of 1865.<sup>1</sup>

The reader recalls that the St. Louis Assembly of 1866 adopted the Gurley *ipso facto* order, declaring the dissolution of such Presbyteries and Synods as should allow a signer of the “Declaration and Testimony” to take his seat as a member of the court. The Synod at its next meeting resolved, on the ground that “the Standards of the church are authoritative above the order of any church court,” “that the signers of the ‘Declaration and Testimony’ are not slanderers, schismatics, and rebels against ecclesiastical authority, but have simply exercised a great Protestant right and discharged a solemn duty; . . . that the Synod, having no evidence that these brethren are not in good and regular standing in their respective Presbyteries and Sessions, cannot, without violating the constitution, deny them seats.”<sup>2</sup>

Upon the adoption of these resolutions a minority of the Synod withdrew from the house. The Synod organized by the seceders has been popularly known as the Assembly’s Synod. The Constitutional Synod continued to be known up to 1874 as the Old School Synod of Missouri.

The Old School Synod proposed to continue its connection with the Old School Assembly, North, but not to sink its witness for the non-secular character of the church. The Assembly of 1867 declared that the commissioners

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), 1869,” pp. 22 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Alexander’s “Digest,” pp. 431, 432.

who represented the Presbyteries in connection with the Assembly's Synod were entitled to seats, "and ordered the signers of the 'Declaration and Testimony,' and those who had acted with them, to repair to "the Presbyteries and Synod, thus recognized, "and to sign a paper disowning any intention of disrespect to the Assembly or of rebellion against its authority in all that had been done by them during the controversy." The Old School Synod of 1867 renewed its stand of 1866. It would abandon neither its right to a place in the Old School Assembly, nor its witnessing for the non-secular character of the church.<sup>1</sup> But it was never able to convert the mother-church to the truth.

The Presbyterian Church, North, in spite of the difference of faith, ruthlessly paid court in 1872 to our Synod; but to no purpose. The Synod resolved, 1873, to unite with the Southern Presbyterian Church. The Synod could not unite with the Northern Church without merging its witness for "*the great principle—the exclusiveness of the spiritual vocation of the church—which it had preserved intact.*"<sup>2</sup> It could not extinguish the lamp of its "own history by hiding under the bushel of any church stained with political corruptions." But it could unite with the Presbyterian Church, South, for that church had maintained equally with the Synod of Missouri the non-secular character of the church, and "the subordination and fidelity of the church courts, and especially of the General Assembly, to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church."<sup>3</sup> It had been against the unconstitutional rule of a bare majority.

In 1874 the commissioners of the six Presbyteries of the

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<sup>1</sup> See for these quotations and for authority for the statements, "Minutes of Old School Synod of Missouri of 1869," pp. 22-26.

<sup>2</sup> Laws' letter to the Synod of Missouri of 1872, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Laws' letter to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) of 1872, p. 26.

Synod of Missouri were welcomed and enrolled as members of the Assembly, South, at Columbus.<sup>1</sup>

Union with other Associated Reformed Presbyteries in North and South Carolina is perhaps near at hand.

3. *Fraternal Correspondence with Other Bodies.*—In 1861 the Constituting Assembly, out of its appreciation of the precious import of that memorable prayer addressed by the adorable Redeemer to the Father, in full view of the agony of the garden and of the cross—“ ‘That they all might be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me’—and impelled by a sincere desire to meet the full measure of responsibility which” devolved upon it as a branch of Christ’s visible church in the accomplishment of this vastly important endeavor avowed that it would earnestly try to draw closer the bonds of Christian intercourse and communion between all the churches of like faith and order in the Confederate States of America.<sup>2</sup> The Assembly has been true to its avowal. As a result of its endeavors it has been able to point to several unions, whose history has just been detailed.

The same Assembly, in the “Letter to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the Earth,” as we have seen, expressed its desire to cultivate peace and charity with all fellow-Christians throughout the world. The Assembly of 1862 affirmed its belief that the unity of God’s people is a reality, and that it is of the highest importance that this unity should be manifested to the world; and declared its determination, in cases where such manifestation was not practicable, to do all consistent with truth to promote peace and charity between itself and other churches.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Synod of Missouri brought 67 ministers, 141 churches, and 8000 communicants.

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes of 1861,” p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> “Minutes of 1862,” p. 14.

The Assembly of 1866 went so far as to appoint a committee of "chosen brethren"—Drs. Hoge, Palmer, and Girardeau—to bear the church's desire for fellowship, as far as practicable, with all true disciples of our common Lord and Saviour in all the world, "to such Christian churches and societies in the kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and, if it deemed best, on the continent of Europe also, as the providence of God might designate, and to explain to them, as opportunity might offer, the character, condition, work, and prospects of our beloved Zion; and to receive such contributions in money as might be voluntarily offered in aid of our general schemes of evangelization.<sup>1</sup>

In accord with the desires thus expressed, the church has, in addition to the correspondence eventuating in the cases of union of which we have related, carried on a genial correspondence with the Reformed Episcopal Church in the United States; has enjoyed similar interchanges with several European churches, notably with the impoverished but heroic Waldensian churches, for whom it has long maintained the successful Mission School of Miss Ronzone.

The Southern Church has recognized the Christian character of non-Presbyterian ecclesiastical bodies by the interchange of Christian greetings, e.g., that of the Methodist, Cumberland Presbyterian, etc. It has also recognized the Christian character of, and exchanged Christian greetings with, certain non-ecclesiastical bodies, e.g., with the Y. M. C. A.,<sup>2</sup> though with some scruples as to the propriety of the course. It has continued to be chary about the Evangelical Alliance. But after a little hesitation in recognizing "the principle of an irresponsible alliance," the church, under the lead of Dr. Stuart Robinson

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1866," p. 433.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of 1881," p. 394.

and others, bore an influential part in framing the constitution and insuring the success of the General Presbyterian Alliance. This great confederal council, in "seeking the welfare of the weak and persecuted churches, disseminating information concerning the kingdom of Christ, commending the Presbyterian system as Scriptural, distributing mission work," etc.,<sup>1</sup> has met hearty sympathy at the hands of a large part of the Southern Church.<sup>2</sup> The Southern Presbyterian Church is allowed about thirty delegates in the council.

In 1871 a correspondence was begun with the *General Synod of the Reformed Church in America*, popularly known as the Dutch Reformed Church. Owing to the non-secular character of this body, its thorough-going Calvinistic creed and Presbyterian polity, this correspondence, opened for "the cultivation of a mutual spirit of Christian sympathy and brotherly love," bore fruit very soon in a plan of active cooperation in several important departments of church work.<sup>3</sup> This plan has been fruitful

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1877," p. 488.

<sup>2</sup> For the constitution of the Alliance see "Minutes of Presbyterian Church, South, 1877," p. 492; Alexander's "Digest," p. 508.

<sup>3</sup> In 1875 an elaborate plan of cooperation was adopted by the Assembly on the one hand and the General Synod on the other. This plan embraced features of co-working in publication, home missions, foreign missions, and education. The publishing-house of each denomination was to be "the agent and depository for the sale of the publications of the other denominations." The publication board and committee were "empowered to unite in the publication of a child's paper." It was "recommended that the members of the Reformed Church consider with great sympathy that department of the Assembly's home missionary work" which was concerned with the "evangelization of the colored population of the South," "and send their contributions to the general cause to the treasurer of the Assembly's Committee."

The plan settled the important principle that the contiguous foreign missions of the two churches ought to aim at the establishment of one united church, and decided that the principle should be carried into practice wherever such contiguity should exist, that such churches should "treat each other as though they had been planted and nurtured by one and the same denomination." It decided that young men in either church who should contemplate the work of foreign missions should upon recommendation from the board or committee of their own church be as eligible to the appointment

of much good in the foreign mission fields. The missionaries of the two churches, who are contiguous, labor together for the upbuilding of one united church. In general there is no other church with which the Southern Church has enjoyed such hearty and noble good-fellowship.

*Correspondence with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was begun in 1870.* The relations with this church up to 1870 had been by no means pleasant. The unconstitutional and Erastian measures which the Old School Assembly of 1861 enacted—the Spring Resolutions—were the forerunners of a long series of acts of usurpation and bitter hostility. The reader can guess at these from what has been brought out in connection with the histories of the Synod of Kentucky and Missouri. Passing over, therefore, all the irritating, rasping acts of intervening years, we come at once to the Pittsburg Assembly, Old School, of 1865, some of whose acts, even at the cost of slight repetition, it is necessary to place before the reader at this point.

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by that of the other as by their own, and that such persons should come under the care of the board or committee appointing them, but should not be required to transfer their ecclesiastical relations to any American Presbytery or classis of the body into whose missionary service they should come. The churches were to encourage an equal acquaintance with the missions of the two churches, in order that the variety of missionary fields thus presented might give scope and stimulation to the missionary spirit of the two bodies. To this end there was to be speedy communication of matters of special interest in the missions of either board or committee to the other.

The students of either church were to be allowed to study in the seminaries of the other; and such students as chose to study in a seminary of the other church were not to suffer adverse discrimination in the appropriation of funds for their support by the board or committee of their own church.

It was provided that any provision of this scheme of cooperative union might at any time be omitted or abrogated by either body without impairing the validity of those other provisions on which they should agree. The joint publication of the paper was discontinued early. The cooperation has not been as active in home missions as might reasonably have been hoped. But there has been much earnest and hearty cooperation where circumstances have called for it along other lines. (See "Minutes of 1875," pp. 25 ff.; Alexander's "Digest," pp. 446-448.)

In response to an overture from the Presbytery of Richland, O., and certain members of the Presbytery of Madison, Ind., “asking the Assembly to drop from its roll the names of certain ministers, Presbyteries, and Synods in the so-called Confederate States,” the Assembly replied:

WHEREAS, during the existence of the great rebellion which has disturbed the peace and threatened the life of the nation, a large number of Presbyteries and Synods in the Southern States, whose names are on the roll of the General Assembly as constituent parts of the body, have organized an Assembly denominated “The General Assembly of the Confederate States of America,” in order to render their aid in the attempt to establish, by means of the rebellion, a separate national existence, “and conserve and perpetuate the system of slavery,”<sup>1</sup> therefore,

*Resolved*, 1. That this Assembly regards the perpetuation of negro slavery as a great crime, both against our National Government and against God; and the secession of those Presbyteries and Synods from the Presbyterian Church, under such circumstances and for such reasons, as unwarranted, schismatical, and unconstitutional. 2. That the General Assembly does not intend to abandon the territory in which these churches are found, or to compromise the rights of any of the church courts, or ministers, ruling elders, and private members belonging to them, who are loyal to the government of the United States and to the Presbyterian Church. On the contrary, this General Assembly will recognize such loyal persons as constituting the churches, Presbyteries, and Synods in all the bounds of the schism, and will use earnest endeavors to restore and revive all such church courts. 3. The Assembly hereby declares that it will recognize as the church the members of any church within the bounds of the schism who are loyal to the government of the United States of America, and whose views are in harmony with the doctrines of the Confession of Faith and with the several testimonies of the Presbyterian Church on the subject of domestic slavery. And where any three ministers who entertain the views above mentioned belong to the same Presbytery, such ministers are hereby authorized and directed to continue their organization as a Presbytery; or any two such ministers are authorized to receive any minister of the same views, regularly dismissed to them, and thus continue their organizations with the churches above described in the same bounds, in connection with this Assembly. But if a sufficient number are not found in one Presbytery, they are authorized to unite with the loyal ministers and churches of one or more adjacent Presbyteries, retaining the name of one or both such united Presbyteries as shall be deemed expedient. A similar course is also authorized with regard to Synods.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A misquotation.

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes of 1865,” p. 560.

In answer to an overture from the Presbytery of California inquiring what course should be pursued in admitting to their body ministers who were known to be disloyal to the government, or who might be suspected of disloyalty, the Assembly replied: that the Presbytery had a right to examine the intransigent "on all subjects which seriously affect the peace, purity, and unity of the church"; that it was an imperative duty in the current "circumstances of the country, when, after the crushing by military force an atrocious rebellion against the United States for the perpetuation of slavery, many ministers who "had aided this revolt "might seek admission into Presbyteries located in the loyal States." Further, the Assembly ordered that all "Presbyteries examine every minister applying for admission from any Presbytery or ecclesiastical body in the Southern States, on the following points": first, as to whether he had in any way countenanced the rebellion; second, "as to whether he holds that the system of negro slavery in the South is a divine institution, and that it is the 'peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve' the institution." It ordered that a man holding these views should be required to renounce them before reception into Presbytery. It gave a similar injunction to its Synods about receiving Presbyteries. It laid the same order on sessions to regulate their reception of private members.<sup>1</sup>

It is no wonder that each of these sets of resolutions irritated the Southern Church. It was not true that the Presbyteries and Synods in the Southern Church organized an Assembly in order to render their aid in the attempt to establish by means of the rebellion a separate national existence and to conserve and perpetuate the existence of slavery. It was antichristian for the Northern Assembly "to set up a new test and establish a new term

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1865," pp. 562-564.

of membership in the church and of standing in the ministry—a test authorized neither by the Word of God nor the Confession of Faith, and contrary to the uniform declaration and practice of this church from its foundation up to the year of 1861.” The recognition of two or three members of a Presbytery as a Presbytery because they had been “loyal,” and two or three members of a local church as the church because they had been loyal, and the investing such loyal parties with all the rights, religious and secular, belonging to the whole Presbytery or the whole church, was calculated to stir up strife and enable the “loyal” twos and threes to filch away the ecclesiastical property throughout the South. These resolutions were iniquitous. Their falsehood was clearly revealed and their iniquity nobly withstood in the Assembly by Dr. S. R. Wilson and other protestants.<sup>1</sup> But in answer to Dr. Wilson’s protest the Assembly again charged the Southern States with sinful treason, and again misrepresented the Southern Church in relation to slavery, and reaffirmed the necessity of confession and repentance for the grievous sin of treason before the rebels could be received into the bosom of the church.<sup>2</sup>

The Assembly of 1866, at St. Louis, made an impression not a whit pleasanter. That was the Assembly of the notorious Gurley *ipso facto* order, which did such foul wrong to the Synods of Missouri and Kentucky. That Assembly avowedly indorsed the anti-Southern attitude of the Pittsburg Assembly as to the conditions on which an ex-rebel might be received into the bosom of the mother-church.<sup>3</sup> That was the Assembly, too, that wrenched the Wall Street Church property in Louisville from the Southern

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of Assembly” (O. S.), 1865, pp. 580-584.

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes” (O. S.), p. 586.

<sup>3</sup> “Minutes (O. S.) of 1866,” pp. 79, 85, 114-117.

members by the aid of machinery prepared by the Pittsburg Assembly. And that Assembly gave place in its minutes to the memorial of the St. Louis Convention of May 15 to 18, 1866—a paper, if possible, more unworthy of a body of Christian Presbyters than the other we have referred to.

The Assembly of 1867 maintained the ground taken in the preceding Assemblies. But if the Old School Assembly had made herself somewhat disagreeable up to 1867 to the Southern Presbyterians, much more had her sister, the New School, as the curious may see by consulting her minutes from 1861 to 1866.

In 1868 the Old School Assembly acknowledged the separate and independent existence of the Presbyterian Church, South. In 1869, on the claim of “holding the same ancient symbols of faith, the same forms of government and of worship,” the Old School Assembly expressed a desire to be united with the Southern Presbyterian Church.<sup>1</sup> In 1870 the United Assembly<sup>2</sup> of the Old and the New School Presbyterians sent delegates to the Southern Assembly sitting at Louisville, to confer “in respect to opening a friendly correspondence” between the two Assemblies. This overture was based on a false assumption, viz., that mutual grievances existed in reference to which it was necessary to arbitrate. The Southern Church had never made a single act of aggression on the Northern Church. It had never attempted to wrest property from the Northern Church. It had never hesitated in receiving members on the face of their credentials. From 1861 to 1867 it had given a general consistent testimony to the non-secular character of the church, for the spirituality of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.” No ingenuity of sophistry

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1870,” p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Union of the two bodies had occurred in the fall of 1869.

can transmute into political dogmas the scant allusions to the historical reality of the great struggle then pending, or the thankful recognition, in the middle of a paragraph, of the unanimity with which an invaded people rose to the defense of their hearth-stones and the graves of their sires," nor what was said about the conserving of slavery.

The Southern Assembly answered that the obstructions in the way of a cordial intercourse between the two bodies were entirely of a public nature, and involved grave and fundamental principles. It pointed to its records in proof that it had engaged in no act of hostility toward the Northern Church. It declared that it felt no enmity to that church, and that it was ready "to exercise toward the General Assembly, North, such amity as fidelity to our principles could under any circumstances permit." And it proceeded to name the difficulties which lay in the way of cordial correspondence, and which should "be distinctly met and removed," viz.: I. Both the wings of the United Assembly, North, had fatally complicated themselves with the state in the political utterances deliberately pronounced year after year. It was their duty to purge themselves of this error "and place the crown once more on the head of Jesus Christ as King in Zion." For the Southern Church to undertake official correspondence with them as they were would be for it to blunt its testimony concerning the nature and mission of the church. 2. The union consummated between the Old and New School Assemblies, North, had been "accomplished by methods which in our judgment involve a total surrender of all the great testimonies for the fundamental doctrines of grace" made in 1838. "The United Assembly stands of necessity upon an allowed latitude of interpretation of Standards."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A similar fusion took place between ourselves and the United Synod; but the difference between the two cases is wide. "The Synod of the South united with us upon the first interchange of doctrinal views, upon a square

3. Many members of the Southern Church but a short time before had been expelled “violently and unconstitutionally” from the Old School Assembly, under charges which, if true, rendered them utterly infamous before the church and the world. Every principle of honor and faith called for the unequivocal repudiation of that interpretation of the law under which these men were expelled, as a condition precedent to any official correspondence.<sup>1</sup> 4. Similar charges had been preferred against the whole Southern Presbyterian Church. They could not be quietly ignored. If true, the Southern Presbyterians were not worthy of the “confidence, respect, and Christian honor and love” which were tendered in the overture. If untrue, all that was Christian and manly called for their retraction.<sup>2</sup> This was not resentment, but the homage which should always be paid to truth.

The Northern Church was not ready to sweep the obstacles away, and efforts to establish correspondence were discontinued till 1873. In that year the Northern Assembly declared that in accordance with a resolution unanimsously adopted by the two bodies then constituting the reunited church, all action touching the brethren of the Southern Presbyterian Church and the brethren of the Old

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acceptance of the Standards, without any metaphysical hair-splitting to find a sense in which to receive them, and without any expunging of whole chapters from the history of the past, with the sacred testimonies with which these are filled. It is not, therefore, the amalgamation of these bodies at the North which embarrasses us, but it is the method by which it is achieved.” (“Minutes of 1870,” p. 539—the pastoral letter explaining to the people the treatment of the Northern delegates.)

<sup>1</sup> This the pastoral letter further explicates, as follows: “We require as an indispensable condition to all correspondence a renunciation of that theory of church government which practically obliterates the lower church courts and destroys the appellate character of the General Assembly, under which that unrighteous decision was reached against the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri.” (“Minutes of 1870,” p. 540.)

<sup>2</sup> “Minutes of 1870,” p. 450.

School Synod of Missouri had been since the reunion, and was then, null and void.<sup>1</sup> It expressed confidence in the Christian character of the Southern brethren, and affirmed its belief that the barriers of separation would be removed on more intimate communion. With regard to the relation of church to state, the Assembly called attention to certain statements and principles found in their Standards.<sup>2</sup> It appointed a committee to confer with a like committee to be appointed by the Southern Church.<sup>3</sup>

In response to this overture, and at the instance of two restive Presbyteries, the Southern Assembly showed, by appealing to its records, that in the true idea of the communion of the saints it had ever been willing to hold fellowship with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and especially to establish intimate relations with all bodies of the Presbyterian Church struggling to maintain the true principles of the same confession. It recalled and indorsed the position taken by, the Assembly of 1870 in setting forth the barriers to union. Nevertheless, because of its desire to follow the things that make for peace, it appointed an uninstructed committee to confer with the committee of the Northern Church. It candidly asserted, however, that it did not contemplate in this move organic union.<sup>4</sup> A minority in the Assembly, respectable for its size and ability, was in favor of declining official correspondence until the fundamental difficulties which had been set forth in 1870 should be removed. This minority was sagacious enough to see that the overture of the Northern Assembly of 1873 afforded no sufficient reason for

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<sup>1</sup> The resolution referred to was in these words: "That no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies shall be of any authority in the united body, except in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon." ("Minutes of 1870," p. 516.)

<sup>2</sup> It made reference to Confession of Faith, chap. xxxi., sec. iv., and to Form of Government, chap. i., secs. i. and vii.

<sup>3</sup> "Minutes of 1874," pp. 500 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 503.

appointing the committee of conference. It saw that the overture evaded "the very point it pretended to meet, assuring us that both bodies composing their Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution making 'null and void and of no binding effect all action touching their brethren adhering to the Southern Assembly,' " whereas the united body had lately adopted, and made a part of their record, a paper which indorsed in the most formal and unequivocal manner the very principles which the Southern Church has always protested against, viz., a decision of the civil court in the case of the Walnut Street Church, Louisville, Ky.<sup>1</sup>

Nor was the minority gifted with a constitution so contradictory as to be able to appreciate the expressions of confidence in the "soundness of doctrine and Christian character" of the Southern Church, contained in the recent overture, in the face of the abusive and slanderous charges, touching doctrine, character, and motives, so often preferred and never once openly and squarely retracted. As for the reference on the part of the Northern Church to the definition in their Standards touching the relation of church to state, it was puerile. It had held those Standards in 1861; had held them through all those years from 1861 to 1867. It was known to have formed the habit of breaking them. It gloried in having broken them, in hav-

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1874," p. 465. For the estimate which the Northern Assembly put on the decision, see its "Digest" (Moore's), pp. 250, 251, where we have these words: "In an elaborate opinion the judges have held for substance that the courts of law must accept as final and conclusive the decision of the General Assembly on subjects purely ecclesiastical, and must give full effect to these decisions in settling the property rights of litigants. The Assembly will not be slow to appreciate the value of this opinion." (Moore's "Digest," p. 251.)

Herein we see that the General Assembly, North, has solemnly and formally adopted the theory that the General Assembly is the judge of the constitutionality of its own acts. It can, if it chooses, by the voice of its bare majority deprive all lower courts of every right. It can, if it chooses, plunder, *ad infinitum*, Synods, Presbyteries, and congregations.

ing wheeled the church into the political fight. It had never gone over its records. It had made no confession of error for discrowning Jesus and putting Caesar in his stead. For these and such reasons the minority held that to change posture toward the Northern Assembly was for the Southern Church to suppress its testimony to the truth and break the church's glorious record in the past.<sup>1</sup>

The committees of conference met in Baltimore in January, 1875. The Northern committee proposed that the Southern committee join with itself in recommending to the respective Assemblies the interchange of delegates, and thus their reciprocal recognition of each other as corresponding bodies. It professed its hope that such a course would speedily lead to an adjustment of matters of equal interest to both bodies, in the work of missions at home and abroad, and to cooperation in the great work of evangelization. It did not know of any reasons why fraternal relations should not be established.<sup>2</sup>

The Southern committee proceeded to set forth in a manly and Christian way the obstacles which had debarred the Southern Assembly from holding official intercourse with the Northern Assembly, and what was necessary for their removal. It stemmed up these obstructions under two heads: "*Unjust and injurious accusations preferred against the whole Southern Presbyterian Church; and the course pursued in regard to church property.*" Under the head of "*unjust and injurious accusations*" it specified "*the charge that the Southern Assembly was organized in the interest of and to subserve the ends of the Confederate Government*"; the charge "*that the Southern Assembly had changed its grounds on the subject of slavery so as*

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<sup>1</sup> Compare "Minutes of 1874," pp. 497 ff.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of 1875," p. 82. It may be doubted whether the sons of Jacob had shown repentance if they had been as strong as Joseph when they discovered him.

*to hold opinions which were heretical and blasphemous*"; *"the charge of schism which is made against the Southern Church."*<sup>1</sup> The committee refuted the charges by an appeal to the records, and justified its church in her past course by a reference to the acts of the Northern Church. It denied that the "Concurrent Declaration"<sup>2</sup> had removed the difficulties mentioned. The declaration when made was made without any reference to the Southern Assembly. If it is any sort of retraction of the slander which the Southern Church has suffered, it is not a square and open retraction. And since its passing the Assembly had persisted in a course—the Walnut Street case—"which by implication made many of the same charges over again."

Finally, the committee affirmed that the course pursued in regard to church property by the Northern Assembly was a serious obstacle. And the iniquitous methods of settling disputes about church property, upon legal technicalities, the false and ridiculous principles adopted by the Supreme Court of the United States in settling the Walnut Street Church case—that of making the judgment of an accidental majority of the highest church court of final authority in interpreting the constitution of the church—and the adoption of that decision of the Supreme Court formally by the Assembly of 1872, were animadverted upon and condemned. A proposal was made to settle the property disputes by arbitration and upon moral rights as a basis.

The Northern committee rejoined that in order to the establishment of fraternal relations, the interchange of delegates, it was not necessary that all the doings of the corresponding bodies be approved. It overlooked the fact that there were hindrances to even fraternal relations. It claimed not to be negotiating with reference to organic

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1875," pp. 83-85.

<sup>2</sup> See this in Note 1, p. 465.

union. It seemed to forget that organic union had from the start been the ultimate aim. It asserted that if the Northern Church had made deliverances unconstitutional and inconsistent with the proper functions of ecclesiastical assemblies, the Southern Assembly had committed the same offense.<sup>1</sup> It recited its Assembly's declaration to Dr. J. H. Brooks and others of the Old School Synod in Missouri in 1874, declaring everything done in the past contrary to the "Confession of Faith, Catechism, Form of Government, and Book of Discipline" to be null and void.<sup>2</sup> It affirmed that by "the concurrent resolutions" the charges of "heresy and blasphemy" against the Southern brethren had been declared "null and void, and therefore of no binding effect and not to be pleaded as precedent in the future"; that the charges made had been made in peculiar times, but were a part of history, and that it was idle to talk of erasing them. It recounted the several overtures for union, made in 1869, 1870, and 1873. Finally, it reaffirmed its belief that there was no sufficient cause for not establishing fraternal relations.

The Southern committee replied that there were hindrances in the way of official fraternal relations. It challenged a comparison of the records in disproof of the assertion that the Southern Church had prostituted herself to the state as the Northern Church had herself. It showed the utter insufficiency of the Concurrent Declarations to atone for the slander done the Southern Church. It desired a plain and direct expression of regret on the part of the Northern Church for these wrongs—wrongs such as

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<sup>1</sup> For a sufficient refutation of this position, see the first section of this chapter. The mistakes of the Southern Church in this respect were transient lapses.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of 1875," pp. 90-93. This declaration to Dr. Brooks is mere farce. Who is the judge as to whether the Assembly has done anything unconstitutional? The accidental majority of an Assembly!

no other evangelical church in modern times had dared to heap on another.

The Northern committee was not disposed to ask its Assembly to make this expression of regret. It expressed the pious desire that the Southern Presbyterians might look as leniently on the sins of the Northern Assembly as the Northern Assembly would look on the proceedings of the Southern Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

This virtually ended the conference. The action of the Southern committee had been in all respects worthy. The Northern Church went far in her apostasy, meddling with the affairs of Caesar. She must repent of this apostasy before she can be trusted. He who knows anything of the power of habit over a church, as over an individual, to make it tread down principle by moral inertia and under external inducements, knows that for years to come, in similar circumstances, the Northern Church would go to equal lengths again, unless she repent most deeply. She shows no repentance for what she did, she rather glories in her political measures of the war time.

The Southern Assembly of 1875 approved the action of its Baltimore committee, particularly of the statement of the issue between the churches by the committee, and its demand for a disapproval of the imputations cast upon the Southern Church by the Northern Assemblies from 1861 to 1867.

But the Assembly of 1876 at Savannah, in response to an overture from the St. Louis Presbytery, in order to remove a misapprehension existing in the "minds of some of our people as to the spirit" of the action of the Baltimore Conference, and "in order to show our disposition to remove on our part real or seeming hindrances to friendly feeling," explicitly declared that "while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Northern General As-

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1875," pp. 96 ff.

sembly, no acts or deliverances of the Southern General Assembly are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Northern General Assembly, or of the historical bodies of which it is successor.”<sup>1</sup>

Subsequently the Savannah Assembly received a telegram from the Northern Assembly, then in session at Brooklyn, reiterating its belief that “no adjustment of differences” can be “accomplished by the rehearsal of the past,” and reiterating “its cordial desire to establish fraternal relations” with the Southern Assembly, “on terms of perfect equality and reciprocity as soon” as it should be “agreeable to their brethren to respond to this assurance by a similar expression.”

The Southern Assembly, on receipt of this telegram, replied that it was “ready most cordially to enter on fraternal relations with the Northern body on any terms honorable to both parties.”

In its reply the Southern Assembly recited also the action which it had just taken in answer to the Presbytery of St. Louis.<sup>2</sup> On receiving the paper from the Savannah Assembly, the Brooklyn Assembly turned parrot and chattered forth:

The overture of this Assembly having been received by the General Assembly of the South with such a cordial expression of gratification, the committee recommended that the same resolution, declarative of the spirit in which this action is taken, be adopted by this Assembly, viz.: “In order to show our disposition to remove on our part all real or seeming hindrance to friendly feeling, the Assembly explicitly declares that, while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Southern Assembly, no acts or deliverances of the Northern Assembly, nor of the historical bodies of which the present Assembly is the successor, are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Southern General Assembly, or of the historical bodies of which it is the successor.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1876,” p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243

<sup>3</sup> “Minutes of 1877,” pp. 412-413; Alexander’s “Digest,” p. 491.

The Southern Assembly of 1877, in reply to this from the Northern Assembly, resolved:

That it could not regard this communication as satisfactory, because it could discover in it no reference whatever to the first and main part of the paper adopted by the Assembly at Savannah and communicated to the Brooklyn Assembly. It further said, that it could add nothing on this subject to the action of the Assembly of St. Louis adopting the basis proposed by our Committee of Conference at Baltimore, and reaffirmed by the Assembly at Savannah ; that if the brethren of the Northern Church could meet them on these terms, which truth and righteousness seem to require, then they were ready to establish such relations with them during the present sessions of the Assemblies.<sup>1</sup>

Little more passed between the Assemblies until 1882. In that year four overtures went up to the Southern Assembly, having substantially the same object. They requested the General Assembly "to establish fully and formally what are called fraternal relations" with the Northern Assembly, "by sending delegates forthwith to that body," then in session at Springfield, Ill. In response, the Assembly adopted the following minute:

While receding from no principle, we hereby declare our regret for and withdrawal of all expressions of our Assembly which may be regarded as reflecting upon, or offensive to, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. *Resolved*, That a copy of this paper be sent by telegraph to the General Assembly now at Springfield, Ill., for their prayerful consideration, and *mutatis mutandis* for their reciprocal concurrence, as affording a basis for the exchange of delegates forthwith.<sup>2</sup>

In reply the Springfield Assembly telegraphed to the Atlanta Assembly that the message from the Southern Assembly had been received with warm enthusiasm; and that, in order to remove all difficulties in the way of that full and formal fraternal correspondence between the two Assemblies, which it, on its part, was prepared to accept, it had adopted the following: "While receding from no

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1877," pp. 412, 413; Alexander's "Digest," p. 491.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of 1882," p. 530.

principle, etc.”<sup>1</sup> That is, the Northern Assembly made its bow to the Southern with its suggested little speech of regret for whatever in its past acts might be considered as reflecting on the Southern brethren. This “Tweedle to me and I tweedle to you,” tit-for-tat passage between the Assemblies has nothing massive or grand or beautiful in it. In attempting to extort this quasi-apology the Southern Assembly stultified herself. She had committed no act for which she needed apologize to the Northern Church. She seemed to apologize. At this time she lowered her banner. She merged her witness for the truth—forsaking the nobler course under the whips of some goody-goody scolds. And the great Presbyterian Church, North, wears no aspect of dignity in saying its little speech. If it believed it had done no wrong, it should have acted differently; it should not have said its suggested speech. If it was conscious of wrong, it should have made a noble apology. Its acts concerning loyalty and rebellion, its slanderous accusations against Southern brethren, were grounds for just indignation, and should have been withdrawn as St. Paul would know how to retract if he were made conscious of fault.

But the moderator of the Springfield Assembly telegraphed to the moderator of the Atlanta Assembly that in the action just taken the Northern Assembly disclaimed “any reference to the actions of preceding Assemblies concerning loyalty and rebellion,” but referred “only to those concerning schism, heresy, and blasphemy.”

This troubled the Southern Assembly; but on inquiry it was informed that the action mentioned in the moderator’s unofficial telegram did “*not modify but explained the concurrent resolutions*” just passed, and that the explanation was on its face.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1882,” p. 541.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 552.

The Northern Church gloried too much in her political measures of 1861 and 1867 to retract them.

The Southern Assembly expressed its satisfaction, and decided to send delegates to the next Assembly North. The church was not so well satisfied. There was resiling in 1882-83.

In 1883 committees of conference on cooperation, at the suggestion of the Northern Assembly, were appointed by the Assemblies to confer "in regard to plans looking to more successful conduct of the work of the church in such regions and concerning such interests as are more or less common to the two churches." As a result of their conference the committees recommended to their Assemblies the joint occupancy of Danville Seminary, a plan of cooperation in home missions, and comity in matters of discipline such as would forbid the Northern Church throwing open its doors to those under discipline in the Southern Church, or *vice versa*. The recommendations of the committees were rejected, save the last, relating to discipline, which the Assembly adopted.<sup>1</sup>

But in 1887 the Northern General Assembly was supposed, in some quarters, to have indorsed somewhat more fully the tenets of the spirituality of the church; and in response to several overtures touching organic union, the Assembly, South, appointed a committee to meet with a similar committee of the Northern Church "for the sole purpose of inquiring into and ascertaining the facts as to the point above mentioned, and as to the position that Assembly proposes to maintain as to colored churches, ecclesiastical boards, and any other subjects now regarded as obstacles in the way of united effort for the propagation of the gospel, and report these facts to the next Assembly for such action as they may warrant."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Minutes of 1884," p. 59; Alexander's "Digest," p. 542.

<sup>2</sup> "Minutes of 1887," p. 222.

These committees met, in December, 1887, in joint conference in Louisville. The Southern committee sought information from the Northern on four subjects, viz.: I. On the doctrine of the Northern Church as to the spirituality of the church—whether the deliverance of the last Northern Assembly is to be interpreted in the light of past political deliverances, which it apparently contravenes, or whether the Northern Church, “as now constituted, holds on this subject views different from those entertained by the two Assemblies to which that church has succeeded.” 2. On the principles and policy which would be recognized as vital by the Northern Assembly in the settlement of the relation of the colored people in the South to the church, in case of union. 3. On the subject of “the powers and responsibilities of ecclesiastical boards” of the Northern Church, and the extent to which these boards are under the control of the General Assembly. 4. On the attitude of opinions within the bounds of the Northern Assembly “touching those portions of the Confession of Faith which more specifically involve the great system of truth known as Calvinistic, and particularly whether there is traceable any distinct tincture of such Pelagian and semi-Pelagian heresies as were matter for controversy in 1837.”<sup>1</sup>

The Northern committee met again in Baltimore in January, 1888, and replied to these questions.<sup>2</sup>

The Southern Assembly of 1888 was “unable to discover in these replies that the obstacles to organic union” theretofore “existing between the Northern and Southern General Assemblies” had “to any considerable extent been removed.” Hence, it continued “established in the conviction that the cause of truth and righteousness, as well as the peace and prosperity of our beloved Zion,” would be “best promoted by remaining . . . a distinct

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<sup>1</sup> “Minutes of 1888,” pp. 458-459.

<sup>2</sup> For answers, see “Minutes of 1888,” pp. 460-462.

member of that one body, the church, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme and everlasting head.”

This conclusion was a wise and righteous one. A few months was sufficient to show that the Northern committee, if sincere in furnishing information on the fourth subject of inquiry, was woefully mistaken. The cry of Revision of the Confession rose in such volume and with such strident and piercing tones, that the deaf had to hear and comprehend that Pelagianism was abroad. The Northern Church was seen to have many gangrened members. Her fifteen hundred ministers from extra-Presbyterian sources and her long-comatose New Schoolism showed themselves.

Though the boards of the Northern Church have indeed been so changed that they differ practically little from our committees, it would be a retrograde movement to go from our committees back to boards; our organization proclaims the sufficiency of the church for its appointed work and its unity. But the attitudes toward the negro differ essentially, and would inevitably fill the “united church” with strife. Northern Pharisees would dictate terms of intercourse between the Christians of the two races, South, which would lead to race amalgamation if followed out.

Moreover, the two churches do not stand together, as the blindest can see, on the non-secular character of the church. They cannot stand together in that witness soon. The past of the Northern Church is too potent on her present and her future. She has had a political past. She glories in it. She has traditions from the past which she loves, and they keep the spirit alive. Given a similar set of circumstances, and the Northern Church of to-morrow would do just as bad or worse than the two Assemblies, New and Old School, North, did in 1861-65. What if she makes deliverances on the spirituality of the church, and points to passages in her confession which set forth

that doctrine plainly! Besides, there is a fundamental difference in the view taken of the moral nature of the relation of slavery by the Southern Church and that taken by the New School wing of the Northern Church. This involves a wide difference in the estimate of the Bible as God's book. The Southern Church holds the biblical view, and maintains that it is right. The churches differ also on the true nature of the ruling elder's office, on the nature of Romish baptism, on the relation of woman to the public work of the church, etc. But while refusing organic union, in 1888 the Assembly appointed a Committee of Conference with a similar committee from the Northern Assembly to confer on such modes of fraternal cooperation "in Christian work, both at home and abroad, as might be considered practicable and edifying," the said committee to report to the next Assembly.

The joint committee met in New York in 1888, and in Atlanta in 1889. They reached agreement on four points, and were able to report a plan of cooperation which, with the exceptions that it contained no plank concerning cooperation in education and contained a provision for the union of weak contiguous congregations under a common pastor from either church—like the Plan of Union with the Congregationalists of 1801—was the close analogue of the plan of cooperation with the Dutch Reformed Church.<sup>1</sup>

Their report was adopted entire by the Assembly of 1889. The results so far have not been great. The coöperation in the foreign field is practicable. The questions which disturb and divide here are not so prominently before the missionaries and their converts. The coöpera-

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<sup>1</sup> The plank about the evangelization of the colored people was to this effect: Each church will help the other along the lines of its own preferred method of working.

tion in the home field is possible only within narrow limits. The coöperation in the colored evangelization has not been largely illustrated. Neither church is satisfied with the position of the other. Coöperation in publication under the limits indicated above is useful.

The revision movement and the controversies with the rationalistic higher critics have blown a cold breath on the movement of the churches toward each other since 1889.

The churches between which and the Southern Presbyterian Church there subsist terms of most *intimate correspondence* to-day are the *Dutch Reformed Church* and the *Presbyterian Church, North*. Formally, the relation subsisting between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church, South, is almost precisely that existing between our church and the Presbyterian Church, North. There is a difference in the cordiality. In the former case the relation sprang spontaneously from both churches. There has been no hesitancy. In the latter case the relation is half-hearted on the part of both churches.

4. Thus we have passed over the history of this church: her origin, her growth in numbers and wealth, her growth in the comprehension of the Scriptural doctrine and polity, her relation to other churches throughout the earth. It has been shown that there was good reason for her coming into being as a separate church, for her continuing to exist as a separate church till to-day. God has put high honors on her in the past, making her a witness for the non-secular character of the church, and for a Bible Calvinism, and for a Bible that makes God teach and indorse good ethics, for the government of the church according to her divine constitution, for the highest form of church organization in the Presbyterian body, perhaps. She may never merge her witness for these truths by an adulterous connection with any church that will not and cannot bear

a true witness for them, but to her eternal shame. May the God who raised up a Thornwell to lead this church in her infant days, and a McPheeters to suffer for two of her Synods and for Christians everywhere, who has given a Dabney and a Peck, an H. M. Smith and a B. M. Palmer to minister to her people hitherto, raise up spiritual sons worthy of such fathers to lead the church until another body who has the same witness to make, or can teach us a truer one, shall admit us to union with them.

No church has a right to an independent existence which has not a truth or group of truths to witness for which other churches in the country do not witness for. The church that has such a witness to make should maintain a separate existence. We believe in union, but in union with those who hold God's essential truths fully as we see them.