Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments; but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty; and, that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous; observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God.

Truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness. . . . No opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. . . . There is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty.

Form of Government, 1788, Ch. I

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The Presbyterian Church In the U.S.A.

SO far in our attempt to set forth the history behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, we have dealt wholly with the Reformed Presbyterian side. In chapter 2 we have followed the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church from her origins in Scotland through her establishment upon American soil. In Chapter 3 the 150-year history of the General Synod, from its inception in the early 1899's to the crisis of the 1950's, has been before us. However, this is only half, or perhaps we should say a quarter, of the story! Of the two streams of American Presbyterian history which merge to form the RPCES, the Reformed Presbyterian one is by far the smaller. The mainstream is that history which pertains to the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In fact, the mainstream of Presbyterian history in America concerns the history of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., by far the largest Presbyterian body in America. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church—which in 1965 joined with the old Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, to form the RPCES—is a product of this history.

Thus the present chapter, and those which immediately follow (5 and 6), deal with those developments in the history of the mainline U.S.A. Presbyterian Church which are most relevant to the formation of the RPCES. These developments covering a period of some 250 years can only be sketched in the broadest possible terms. The present chapter itself deals

The History Behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, pp. 108-151.

with the history of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., from the beginnings of its organization in the early eighteenth century to the reunion of its Old and New School branches in 1870. In surveying this period, the emphasis will be placed on those factors which are most helpful to the understanding of later developments. This includes, especially, a brief account of the beginnings of the Church's organization, the Old Side-New Side controversy, the establishment and early history of the General Assembly, and the Old School—New School division.

Beginnings of Organization

Various national groups constituted the Presbyterians of Colonial America who formed the first Presbyterian Church in the new world. There were, first of all, English Puritans of Presbyterian conviction, and later on Welsh Presbyterians. Then there were Scottish immigrants and many Scotch-Irish from the north of Ireland. Later on, there were French Huguenots and immigrants from the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland.[1]

At first there were only scattered and somewhat isolated Presbyterian congregations in the Colonies: some few in the New England Colonies, more in the Middle Colonies, and a few in the South. It was not until 1706, that the first inter-colonial General Presbytery was organized under the leadership of Francis Makemie. This, the first presbytery in the new world, was entirely independent of any old world synod. The chief purpose of the Presbytery is described by Makemie in the following terms: 'Our plan is to meet yearly and oftener, if necessary, to consult the most proper measure for advancing religion and propagating Christianity in our various sta-

1. *Cf.* R. Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America From Its Origin Until the Year 1760*, 1857, 45 ff. A readable one volume account of Presbyterianism in America, in both its mainline and subsidiary streams, through the nineteenth century is R. E. Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, 1895. This volume in the *American Church History Series* contains many important documents in a lengthy appendix.

tions and to maintain such a correspondence as may conduce to the improvement of our ministerial abilities.' Thus the basic motive behind the organization of the first presbytery in America was a missionary one.[2]

The rapid growth of the General Presbytery, as well as the fact that its members were scattered over a wide area, brought on the necessity of further organization. This was effected in 1716 with the organization of the first General Synod with three member presbyteries. Scattered from Long Island to Maryland, it was known as the Synod of Philadelphia. The member presbyteries represented 19 ministers, 40 churches, and 3,000 communicants. One of the first items of business was the establishment of a 'fund for pious uses.' Thus the Synod at its inception was setting another determinative precedent for the life of the infant Church. The missionary purpose of the Presbyterian Church, described in 1707 in terms of supplying 'desolate places when a minister is wanting and opportunity of doing good offers,' is to involve benevolent enterprises.[3]

Another characteristic of the young Presbyterian Church in America is its passion for religious liberty without interference from civil authority in the name of religion. Many of its members had experienced the ill-effects of state control of the church in the old world. In the new world they were too widely scattered to become the established church in any colony. Everywhere they stood firmly for the separation of church and state.[4]

An illustration of this sentiment is seen in Makemie's defense when arrested in New York for preaching without a

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2. G. J. Slosser (ed.), *They Seek a Country*, 1955, 36 ff. The exact date of the first official Presbytery meeting is not clear due to the fact that the first page, or pages, of the minutes is missing. Most probably it was in the spring of 1706. (*ibid.*, 34).

3. *Ibid.*, 39 f. This is the observation of W. W. McKinney, author of the article 'Beginnings in the North.' Originally the Synod of Philadelphia was to have four member presbyteries, but there is no evidence that the Presbytery of Snow Hill in the Chesapeake Bay area was ever formally constituted.

4. *Ibid.*, 28.

license from the Governor. He appeals to Parliament's Act of Toleration which allows liberty to the Quakers, for instance, who deny the fundamental doctrines of the Church of England; whereas the liberty of Presbyterians, who are closer to the established Church than any other Dissenters, is curtailed though they are ready to comply with the Act.[5] Another instance is the opinion of Jonathan Dickinson expressed in his sermon preached in 1722 at the opening of the Synod of Philadelphia: Tho' we ought to reject both the Heresy, and the Communion of those, who deny what we esteem the Fundamental Truths of our holy Religion; yet even these essential Articles of Christianity, may not be imposed by Civil Coercions, temporal Penalties, or any other way whatsoever.'

In this sermon Dickinson strongly maintains that the communion of the church should be open to all those who one can charitably hope will not be shut out of heaven. The doors of the church should be as wide as the gates of heaven. This will include, of course, many who dissent from certain articles of Presbyterian doctrine. Dickinson also argues against Synod's having any legislative authority to bind the conscience of the individual. There should be no authoritative, obligatory interpretation of the laws of Christ, for this implies a law-making faculty to which no human is entitled.

> It's true the Ministers of Christ have Commission to *Interpret* his Laws, and it concerns them with utmost application to study his Mind and Will, that they may declare his whole Counsel to his People. But then these having no claim to *Infallibility* can have no Authority to impose their *Interpretations;* nor is any Man absolutely obliged to receive them, any farther than they appear to him just and true.[6]

This outlook of Dickinson is somewhat typical of the English Puritan element in the Church. Perhaps it is sentiments like these that explain the fact that the Church had as

5. M. W. Armstrong, L. A. Loetscher. C. A. Anderson (ed.), *The Presbyterian Enterprise: Sources of American Presbyterian History* (*PE*), 1956, 13ff., 17.

6. *PE,* 27.

yet no written constitution and no official confession of faith. This circumstance increasingly alarmed many who were of Scotch-Irish background. Their sentiments are expressed in John Thompson's 1727 overture to Synod which precipitated the Church's adoption of a creed.

Thompson appeals to the responsibility of every organized visible church to maintain and defend evangelical truth, especially from perversion from within its own ranks. This responsibility is especially pertinent to the youthful Presbyterian Church in America—without responsibility to any superior judicatory, without a theological seminary, and surrounded by error on every side. Such danger of doctrinal corruption, even in fundamentals, is imminent.

> Now a church without a confession, what is it like? It is true, as I take it, we all generally acknowledge and look upon the Westminster Confession and Catechisms to be our confession, or what we own for such: but the most that can be said is, that the Westminster Confession of Faith is the confession of the faith of the generality of our members, Ministers and people. ... I think we are in a very defenceless condition. For if we have no confession which is ours by Synodical act, or if any among us have not subscribed or acknowledged the confession, . . . there is no bar provided to keep out of the ministry those who are corrupt in doctrinals; they may be received into the ministry, without renouncing their corrupt doctrines. Those that are in the ministry among us may propagate gross errors, and corrupt many thereby, without being discovered to preach anything against the received truth, because . . . the truth was never publicly received among us. . . . When Arminianism, Socinianism, Deism, Free-thinking, etc., do like a deluge overflow even the Reformed Churches, both established and dissenting, to such a degree, have we not reason to consult our own safety?

Thompson fears that too many of the Church's ministers, while they may be sound in the faith themselves, have too little zeal against these prevailing errors due to a kind of indifference or mistaken charity which assumes the Christian truths denied—such as predestination—are not 'practical or fundamental.'[7] The most expedient remedy for the situation

7. C. Hodge, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1851, Part I, 137 ff. Hodge is a most thorough and judicious treatment of the subject. Thompson continues: 'Now although I would

is for the Synod, acting with 'ministerial [*i.e.*, administrative] authority,' to adopt the Westminster Standards.

This the Synod was inclined to do. Thus, due to the fear of budding eighteenth century rationalism, the Adopting Act was passed in 1729, whereby the Presbyterian Church formally adopted the Westminster Standards as its official confession of faith. There were in the Synod at this time those who were demanding strict subscription on the part of ministers to the whole of the Confession. On the other hand, there were those under the leadership of Jonathan Dickinson who, while themselves in general agreement with the doctrine of the Confession, were opposed in principle to the Church's formally adopting a confessional position—maintaining that while subscription might exclude those who were over scrupulous as to what they signed, it would neither 'detect hypocrites, nor keep concealed heretics out of the Church.'[8] In general, the men of Scottish and Irish origin took the former position, and the men of English and Welsh origin the latter. The Adopting Act, drafted chiefly by Dickinson, was a compromise measure acceptable to both parties.[9]

The text of the Adopting Act begins with a statement disclaiming the Synod's authority to impose their faith upon the consciences of other Christians. Nevertheless the Synod

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grant that the precise point of election and reprobation be neither fundamental nor immediately practical, yet take predestination completely, as it takes in the other disputed points between Calvinists and Arminians, such as universal grace, the nonperseverance of the saints, foreseen faith, and good works, &c, and I think it such an article in my creed, such a fundamental of my faith, that I know not what any other articles would avail, that could be retained without it.' *Cf. PE,* 27 ff.

8. Thompson, 26 f.

9. L. A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians,* 1958, 56. This is a very readable account of the history of the U.S.A. Church, written from a broad church standpoint. See also L. W. Sloat, 'Jonathan Dickinson and the Problem of Synodical Authority,' *Westminster Theological Journal,* May, 1946, 149-165. It should perhaps be noted that Thompson, as a strict subscriptionist, would allow some divergence from the Confession. For instance, he asked Synod 'to enact, that if any minister within our bounds shall take upon him to teach or preach any thing contrary to any of the said articles, unless, first, he propose the said point to the Presbytery or Synod to be by them discussed, he shall be censured.' *PE,* 30.

does have the obligation 'to take care that the faith once delivered unto the saints be kept pure among us.' They are therefore in agreement that all ministers of the Church must agree to, and approve of, the Westminster Standards 'as being in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems [*i.e.,* systematic statements] of Christian doctrine.' Should any minister or candidate for the ministry have any scruple with any article of the Confession, he should declare his doctrinal sentiments to his presbytery, and it is the presbytery's responsibility to decide whether his disagreements touch upon 'essential and necessary articles of faith' so as to be sufficient to exclude him from the ministry of the Church.

The members of the Synod are solemnly pledged not to slander each other on the basis of whatever 'extra-essential and not necessary points of doctrine' might exist among them. After examining their own scruples, they unanimously agree in the solution to them and in declaring the Westminster Standards to be their confession of faith, except for certain clauses in Chapters XX and XXIII of the Confession relating to the power of the civil magistrate in ecclesiastical affairs, which clauses are unanimously rejected.[10]

When later on in 1736 some question arose as to just how much of the Confession the Church in fact adhered to, the Synod explained the Adopting Act to mean that, apart from the clauses regarding the civil magistrate, the Synod in fact held to the 'good old received doctrines' of the Confession 'without the least variation or alteration.'[11]

It should be noted that the Adopting Act, in officially committing the Church to the doctrine of the Westminster Standards, also committed it to their prescriptions respecting

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10. Thompson, 330-332.

11. *Ibid.,* 332-334: 'The Synod of Philadelphia's Explanatory Act of 1736.' *Cf.* S. J. Baird, *A Collection of the Acts, Deliverances, and Testimonies of the Supreme Judicatory of the Presbyterian Church, etc.,* 1858, 30 ff. This work is an indispensable tool in researching the history of the U.S.A. Church from 1706 to 1855.

worship and Presbyterian church government—which, however, had long been the established practice of the Church.[12] This does not imply, however, that the sense of commitment to the practical aspects of the Standards was equal to that felt toward the doctrinal.

In the 1730's and 40's the Presbyterian Church was strongly influenced by the first great revival in American church history known as the Great Awakening, which became the occasion for a serious division in the Church. It is to a brief account of this division that we turn.

Old Side—New Side

The Great Awakening had its origins among Presbyterians with the preaching of the Tennent brothers, especially that of John Tennent in northern New Jersey in the early 1730's. The brothers had been trained in theology by their father, William Sr., in the famous Log College for preachers founded in 1728. They and other 'graduates' of the 'College,' assisted by the renowned English evangelist, George Whitefield, were the foremost in spreading revival fires among Presbyterians.[13]

Gilbert Tennent was the eldest and most famous of the Tennent brothers, and by far the most important figure in the Awakening among Presbyterians and in the resultant controversy and division. Tennent insisted that an acceptance of the Bible and of orthodox doctrines is not sufficient for salvation. One has to realize his own sinful estate and experience a personal new birth. 'No one ever became a Christian,' he thundered, 'without first passing through the terror of realizing that he was not a Christian.' He was convinced that in the providence of God he had been raised up to arouse the

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12. For instance, the Synod of 1721 had declared: 'We have been many years in the exercise of Presbyterian government and discipline as exercised by the Presbyterians in the best Reformed Churches.' Quoted in W. H. Roberts, *A Concise History of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, 1917, 23. This little book is a good introduction to the history which it covers. *Cf.* Baird, 26 f.

13. For a thorough account of this whole movement, see L. J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition*, 1949.

Presbyterian Church from its carnal security and to bring about a reformation in its ranks.[14]

Toward the end of the 1730's two parties developed in the Church, the one favoring the revival and the other opposed to it. The revivalist party were known as the New Side, while the opponents of many of their distinctive practices and much of their distinctive outlook, looked upon as unorthodox and dangerous, constituted the Old Side. To the New Side the Old represented dead orthodoxy; to the Old Side the New stood for unlearned fanaticism. The Old Side ministers particularly resented the itinerant revivalists' preaching beyond the bounds of their own congregations, especially when they found their own churches deserted. Synod, under the control of the Old Side, was determined to put an end to this practice.[15]

The immediate occasion for the division of the Church came in 1740 when Gilbert Tennent, the leader of the revivalist party, preached a famous sermon on *The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry*, which was a scathing denunciation of many of his fellow ministers.

> Pharisee-Teachers, having no Experience of a special Work of the Holy Ghost, upon their own [sic] Souls, are therefore neither inclined to, nor fitted for Discoursing, frequently, clearly, and pathetically, upon such important Subjects. The Application of their Discourses, is either short, or indistinct and general. . . . These foolish Builders do but strengthen Men's carnal Security, by their soft, selfish, cowardly Discourses. They have not the Courage, or Honesty, to thrust the Nail of Terror into sleeping Souls. . . . It is true some of the modern Pharisees have learned to prate a little more orthodoxly about the New Birth, than their Predecessor *Nicodemus*, who are, in the mean Time, as great Strangers to the feeling Experience of it, as he. They are blind who see not this to be the Case of the Body of the Clergy, of this Generation. . . . And let those who live under the Ministry of dead Men, whether they have got the Form of Religion or not, repair to the Living, where they may be edified.[16]

John Caldwell replies by maintaining that the effects of

14. Slosser (ed.), *op. cit.*, 48.
15. *PR*, 39 f.
16. *PR*, 41, 43 f.

the so-called 'revival' prove that the spirit animating its proponents is not the Holy Spirit.

> Its Effects upon People, are Censoriousness and Uncharitableness to such as differ from them in that Point; speaking evil of their Neighbours, despising a holy and religious Life in all but themselves; fancying they are obliged to persuade as many as they can, to despise and leave the Ministry of their Pastors, if not agreeable to them; pretending to God's peculiar Prerogative, *searching the Heart;* taking deluded Imaginations for heavenly Visions; fancying their Noise and Uncharitableness, Religion; preferring the Discourses of an ignorant Person among them, to the most judicious and learned of such as differ from them; becoming Teachers of others, praying in public, and some laying aside all Labour for the Support of themselves and Dependents.[17]

The Old Side under the leadership of Robert Cross prepared a protest to the Synod of 1741. This document known as the Protestation of 1741 further reveals the issues between the two parties. The purpose of the protest is 'to preserve this swooning Church from a total expiration.' Whereas the Old Side is accused of holding the form of godliness while, for all practical purposes, denying the power thereof, the New Side is accused of 'unscriptural, antipresbyterial, uncharitable, divisive practices.' It is asserted that only those should be allowed to sit and vote in Synod who have subscribed to the Westminster Standards according to Synod's explanation of the Adopting Act in 1736, and who have obeyed all the other deliverances of Synod. The right to participate in Synod of those who have not taken these seriously is protested. This right has been forfeited by the New Side men with their 'heterodox and anarchical principles.' For instance, they ordain men to the ministry without proper education and strict subscription to the Standards; and they expressly deny, contrary to the Confession (XXX, iii), that Synods have more than an advisory authority. It is notorious that their doctrine and practice arc contrary to the Adopting Act. Furthermore, they undermine the respect due to the lawfully ordained and called ministers of the Church.[18]

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17. *PE,* 46.

18. For an analysis of 'deeper causes arising out of unsolved problems of growth,' see Slosser (ed.), *op. cit.,* 53 ff. One of these is the question of whether

As intimated, the Old Side contended that the authority of the Word of God, to which the Westminster Standards are agreeable, demands the strict application of distinctively Presbyterian principles to the life of the Church. For instance, no one should be ordained without strict subscription to the Westminster Standards in terms of the 1736 explanation of the Adopting Act. Furthermore, the authority of Synods is judicial and not merely advisory, so that presbyteries must be subject to the higher ecclesiastical authority. Moreover, it is unlawful to condemn one's brethren as unchristian without the judicial process of proving them guilty of heresy or immorality. Finally, we must be strictly governed by the Word of God and not by any supposed invisible workings or impressions of the Holy Spirit.[19]

In short, the Old Side emphasizes strict Presbyterian church order in terms of the authority of Scripture, the Confession, and the Church—as a safeguard for the life of the Church; whereas the New Side is more tolerant of departures from ecclesiastical strictness in the name of a cherished emphasis on experimental religion and vital piety.

To the Old Side men it was absurd, given their differences, that the union with their New Side brethren should continue.[20] Thus they attempted to push their Protestation through the Synod. The New Side men thought they were in a majority, and asked for a roll call vote. The Old Side replied that regardless of whether they were in the majority, they had no right to sit in the Synod. However, when noses were counted, the New Side, finding themselves in the minority, and in effect expelled from the Synod, withdrew.[21]

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the Presbytery or the Synod is the ultimate seat of authority in matters of ordination and procedure (56).

19. Thompson, 334 ff. 'Their industriously persuading people to believe that the call of God whereby he calls men to the ministry, does not consist in their being regularly ordained and set apart to the work, according to the institution and rules of the Word; but in some invisible motions and workings of the Spirit, which none can be conscious or sensible of but the person himself (338).

20. *Ibid.*, 339 f. This is explicitly stated in the Protestation of 1741.

21. Baird, 600. *Cf.* E. H. Gillett, *History of the Presbyterian Church in the*

The core of the New Side Church was the Presbytery of New Brunswick. In 1745 this Presbytery, together with that of New York and New Castle, formed the New Side Synod of New York as distinct from the Old Side Synod of Philadelphia. It is significant that the New York Synod's plan of synodical union reaffirms adherence to the Westminster Standards as adopted in 1729 and espouses principles conciliatory to the Old Side.[22] In general, the former tended to be dominated by more liberal Presbyterians of English and Welsh background; the latter by those of Scottish and Irish background who held stricter views regarding allegiance to the Westminster Standards. However, this generalization must not be overemphasized in that, for instance, the Tennents were Scotch-Irish.[23]

After the division the New Side was to be more active in missionary outreach and educational activity. For instance, the New Side Presbytery of New York supported the ministry of the saintly David Brainerd (1718-1747) among the Indians: 'My great concern was for the conversion of the Heathen to God; and the Lord helped me to plead with him for it.' In 1746 the College of New Jersey was founded to train reapers of souls by New Side ministers, the first classes being held in the home of Jonathan Dickinson. Although the college, which later moved to Princeton, was not organically connected with the Synod of New York, it was heavily supported by the New Side Church. As might be expected, the

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United States of America, I, 1864, 80 f. Gillett's two volumes are a very readable history of the Church.

22. *Ibid.*, 608. *Cf.* 609 ff. for the attitude of the Old Side toward the division as well as for documents relating to reunion.

23. On this point, see Hodge *(History*, 134) regarding the Adopting Act: 'The mere adoption of the Confession of Faith, therefore, is not in itself an evidence of heartless orthodoxy. And there is no evidence of any other kind that the advocates of this measure were less zealous in their religion than their opponents. It may be said it was the Scotch and Irish members who were in favour of the measure, and the English members who opposed it. To a certain extent this is true. But were not the Irish members the leaders in the great revival of 1740-1744? . . . On the other hand, some of those who were most averse to the adoption of the Confession of Faith, were most bitter in their opposition to the revival.'

New Side experienced much more growth than the Old, the number of its ministers almost quadrupling during the 17-year period of division.[24]

For some years the two Synods went their separate ways, but almost from the beginning of the division there was talk of eventual reunion; and as time wore on tempers cooled, and a more balanced outlook prevailed on both sides. Reunion was finally effected on the basis of the compromise Plan of Union of 1758. The union is on the basis of the commonly accepted Westminster Standards:

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

On the other hand, it is agreed that no presbytery should ordain to the ministry any candidate 'until he give them competent satisfaction as to his learning, and experimental acquaintance with religion, and skill in divinity and cases of conscience.'

It was further agreed that should anyone disagree with a majority decision of the Synod, he should either passively submit to it or for conscience sake peaceably withdraw from the Church without attempting to produce a schism. Also, there should be no more public charges of false doctrine or living, without judicial process in the Church courts. The New Side adherents were given opportunity to retain publicly their belief that a blessed work of the Holy Spirit had been operative in the revivals, while declaring themselves in opposition to certain of its excesses.[25]

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24. Slosser (ed.), *op. cit.,* 37; *PE,* 49, 54 f.
25. Thompson, 342-347.

One of the foremost leaders in the movement toward reconciliation and reunion was Gilbert Tennent with his conciliatory pamphlet *The Peace of Jerusalem.* When the two rival synods merged to form the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, Tennent was chosen as the first moderator of the united Synod.[26]

In the years that followed the reunion of 1758 the Church grew substantially, due primarily to labors among immigrants who came to America in the great Scotch-Irish migration of the mid-eighteenth century. The vast majority of these new settlers were Presbyterian in background if not in experience. A rough and ready people, they spearheaded the move westward across the Appalachian mountain range. The Rev. David McClure wrote in 1793: The inhabitants west of the Appalachian mountains are chiefly Scotch Irish Presbyterians. . . . The Presbyterians arc generally well indoctrinated in the principles of the Christian religion. The young people are taught by their parents & school masters, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, & almost every family has the Westminster Confession of Faith, which they carefully study.'[27]

At the same time, 'the Presbyterian way ran counter to much of the recreation of frontiersmen.'[28] For this reason, elders exercised strict discipline over church members. An example is the judgment of the sessions of the churches of Chartiers and Pittsburgh against prominent members for holding a dance in their house as well as for other questionable practices. For this they were barred from communion. This verdict was upheld by the old Redstone Presbytery:

> As promiscuous dancing is condemned by the body of the godly and judicious in all ages, as well as by our own standards, and is generally attended with bad effects, we cannot think that the sessions were too rigorous in their judgment . . . The Presbytery cannot but testify, upon

26. Slosser (ed.), *op. cit.,* 57 f.
27. *PE,* 75.
28. *PE,* 100 f. This is the judgment of the *PE* editors.

this occasion, their disapprobation of card-playing, night-revelling, and using any expressions leading to immodest ideas, as practices very unbecoming in any professor of religion, and such as would lay a just foundation for exclusion from church privileges, in any congregation where discipline is duly exercised.

For this reason closed communion was often practiced with the use of tokens to guard the Lord's table from the approach of unapproved persons, and to remind communicants both of their high privileges in the visible church and of their duty to seek with renewed earnestness the inward tokens of being a member of the church invisible.[29]

With the coming of the American Revolution, the vast majority of the Church was sympathetic with the colonial cause. However, the War of Independence was not simply a 'Scotch-Irish Presbyterian Rebellion.' Trained in the Bible and Shorter Catechism, the Presbyterians looked for the unfolding of the providential will of God in the march of events. Their main concern was 'the peaceable enjoyment of the inestimable privilege of English liberty.'[30] Nevertheless, when this liberty was threatened from England itself, they were ready to go to war to defend it. This is indicated in a pastoral letter issued by the Synod on the eve of the Revolutionary War. The churches under care are advised to maintain loyalty to a misled George III on the one hand and to the present union among the colonies on the other.[31] Indeed, many of the prominent members of the Continental Congress, such as John Witherspoon, were Presbyterians. Their

29. *PE,* 77: 'No one is to sit down at that table without delivering his token into the hand of an Elder who is to be stationed at the end of that table for that purpose.'

30. Baird, 836 ff, Pastoral Letter Upon the Repeal of the Stamp Act (1 776). *Cf. PE,* 79.

31. *Ibid*., 838 ff., Pastoral Letter Upon the Occasion of the Revolutionary War (1775). 'In carrying on this important struggle, let every opportunity be taken to express your attachment and respect to our sovereign King George, and to the revolution principles by which his august family was seated on the British throne,' *etc.* (840). Other points of advice are a strict vigilance in watching over the morals of church members in tumultuous times, 'a regard to order and the public peace,' 'a spirit of humanity and mercy,' and a habitual continuance in the exercise of prayer (840 ff). *Cf. PE,* 80 ff.

opposition to the British government did not come from a 'seditious and turbulent spirit, or a wanton contempt of legal authority,' but from a concern for the interest of their country and the safety of their posterity.[32]

With the successful completion of the War and the subsequent founding of the United States, not only the American nation but the Presbyterian Church entered a new phase.

The General Assembly

With the formation of the United States of America and the adoption of a national constitution, the Presbyterian Church felt the need for a national organization. Thus the chief event in the Church in the years following national independence was the adoption of a national constitution. The Synod formed in 1717 was not a delegated body, but had always had the character of a general presbytery of the whole. By the 1780's an annual meeting of all the ministers of the Church had become impractical. The question arose as to whether there should be several regional synods somewhat loosely related or a national assembly of delegates from the presbyteries. The national constitution adopted in 1788—the same year in which the U.S. Constitution was framed—provided for a national General Assembly of presbyterial delegates, but left the ultimate power in the Church in the hands of the presbyteries.[33] The first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. was convened at Philadelphia in 1789.

In preparing the constitution, the Synod of 1788 adopted the Westminster Standards as an integral part of it, with the following alterations: the Directory for Worship is so amended as to be substantially a new work, although the Synod would not approve anything approaching a formal liturgy. The Catechisms are adopted without amendment except

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32. *PK*. 87. *Cf.* Slosser (ed.), *op. cit.*, 150 ff., 159 ff.

33. *PE*, 95 f. 'It will be noted that this is in contrast to the Scottish system where the General Assembly is supreme.'

for the Larger Catechism's branding 'tolerating a false religion' a violation of the second commandment (Q. 109). The Confession of Faith remains the same except for a very few minor changes, chief of which concerned Chapter XXIII, 'On the Civil Magistrate.' Instead of giving the civil authority the right to supervise synods, as does the original Confession, the General Synod declares it to be the duty of civil magistrates 'to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty of discharging every part of their sacred functions without violence or danger.'[34]

The Form of Government was substantially revised, particularly to reflect this doctrine of a free church in a free state. Special attention may be called to Chapter I dealing with certain Preliminary Principles on which the Church is unanimously agreed.[35]

The *first* principle quotes the Confession (XX, ii) to the effect that 'God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or beside it in matters of faith and worship.'[36] For this reason the right of private judgment in religious matters is 'universal and unalienable.'

The *second* principle maintains the right of denominational association as consistent with liberty of conscience: that every Christian church has the right to regulate the terms of admission to communion, the qualifications of officers, and the system of internal government. In this spirit Chapter

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34. *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1900, 109, (WCF XXXIII, iii), 213 (WLC Q. 109). For the other changes, see Baird, 34 f.

35. *Ibid*., 349 ff.

36. The Confession continues, maintaining that 'to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commandments out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience;' also that one must not, upon pretence of Christian liberty, practice any sin (iii); nor oppose any lawful power whether civil or ecclesiastical (iv).

II on the Church declares: 'A particular church consists of a number of professing Christians, with their offspring, voluntarily associated together, for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the Holy Scriptures; and submitting to a certain form of government' (iv).

The *third* principle maintains the absolute necessity of church discipline.

> Our blessed Saviour, for the edification of the visible Church, which is his body, hath appointed officers, not only to preach the gospel and administer the Sacraments; but also to exercise discipline, for the preservation both of truth and duty; and, that it is incumbent upon these officers, and upon the whole Church, in whose name they act, to censure or cast out the erroneous and scandalous; observing, in all cases, the rules contained in the Word of God.

The fourth reads as follows:

> Truth [*i.e.*, revealed truth] is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness. . . . No opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd, than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. . . . There is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty.

The *fifth* principle alleges that while all who are allowed to be teachers in the Church must be sound in the faith, there are points at which such men may differ with mutual forbearance; the *sixth*, that although the authority of church officers is set down in Scripture, those appointed to exercise this authority are to be elected by the people.

The *seventh* principle states 'that all church power . . . is only ministerial [*i.e.*, pertaining to the administration of the Christian ministry] and declarative; that is to say, that the Holy Scriptures are the only rule of faith and manners; that no church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority; and that all their decisions should be founded upon the revealed will of God.'

Finally, according to the *eighth* principle, the vigor and strictness of the discipline of any church will bring blessing 'if the preceding scriptural and rational principles be steadfastly

adhered to.' Since such discipline must be 'purely moral or spiritual' in intent—that is, without any civil effects—its force must be derived from its own justice.

The period following the organization of the General Assembly in 1788 and its disruption in 1837 was one of great enterprise in the missionary outreach and benevolent ministry of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. It was also one of rapid growth. For instance, between 1800 and 1837 the Church grew from about 20,000 to 220,000 communicant members. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that the Church would have grown more if it would have had more vision for evangelism and church planting on the frontier.

This growth was partly occasioned by the Second Great Awakening at the beginning of the nineteenth century. On the frontier especially this revival produced the institution of the camp meeting. The revival in Kentucky and Tennessee led in 1810 to the secession of the revivalist Cumberland Presbytery over what was considered the 'fatalism' of the Westminster Confession and unnecessary educational requirements for ministers. Censured by the Synod of Kentucky for licensing and ordaining 'young men who were illiterate and tainted with Arminianism,' the Presbytery withdrew to form the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.[37]

Another factor in the growth of the Church was a fairly vigorous home missions advance. This work was carried on for the most part by the presbyteries and synods of the Church, but in 1802 the General Assembly erected a standing committee to direct the Church's 'missionary business.' This marks the beginning of the Assembly's practice of operating through authorized agencies. In 1816 the standing committee was authorized to have the character of a Board with full powers to transact all the business of the missionary cause, and responsibility to report to the General Assembly only once a year.[38]

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37. *PE,* 111 ff., 113, 117. For a recent, brief history of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, see T. H. Campbell, *Good News on the Frontier,* 1965.

38. *PE,* 104 f., 123 ff. 'If, instead of continuing to this body the character of

Whatever foreign missionary work was undertaken by the Church at this time was under the auspices of the independent American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, dominated by Congregationalists by whom it was founded in 1810. In 1812 the General Assembly commended this Board to the churches and afterward refused to form a foreign missions board of its own. Indeed, it was in the early nineteenth century that many of the independent national societies for Christian work arose—such as the American Bible Society (1816), the American Sunday-School Union (1824), and American Home Missionary Society (1826). Much of the support for these nondenominational agencies came from Presbyterians.[39]

Another area of endeavor, as one might expect, was that of education. The General Assembly, not content to leave the education of the Church's ministers to others, established Princeton Theological Seminary in 1811. The Seminary is to be governed by a Board of Directors directly responsible to the Assembly. Each professor must be an ordained minister in the Church and solemnly subscribe *ex animo* to her standards with the solemn promise not to teach or insinuate anything contrary to what is taught in them. Upon finishing his course, the student is to be a biblical critic, an apologist, a systematic theologian, a counselor, and a church administrator—prepared to be 'a useful preacher, and a faithful pastor.'

It is expected that every student in the Theological Seminary will spend a portion of time every morning and evening in devout meditation, and self-recollection and examination; in reading the holy Scrip-

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a committee bound in all cases to act according to the instructions of the General Assembly, and under the necessity of receiving its sanction to give validity to all the measures which it may propose, the Committee of Missions were erected into a Board, with full powers to transact all the business of the missionary cause, only requiring the Board to report annually to the General Assembly, it would then be able to carry on the missionary business with all the vigour and unity of design that would be found in a society originated for that purpose, and at the same time would enjoy all the benefit that the counsel and advice of the General Assembly could afford' (125).

39. *Cf.* Thompson, 80 f.

tures, solely with a view to a personal and practical application of the passage read, to his own heart, character, and circumstances; and in humble fervent prayer and praise to God in secret.

The aim is to avoid 'formality and indifference' on the one hand and 'ostentation and enthusiasm' on the other.[40]

In 1819 the General Assembly also established a Board of Education for the purpose of watching over, encouraging, and supporting the education of the youth of the Church with a view to their offering themselves to the Gospel. To the Board this was not simply another benevolent plan but a 'matter of fundamental importance to the cause of Christ.' In 1824 the Assembly officially recommended Sabbath Schools which had now become an established institution in the Church.[41]

Another aspect of the life of the Church during this period, and for most of the century, is 'the unbending morality of nineteenth century Presbyterians'—in the words of the editors of *The Presbyterian Enterprise*. This nineteenth century Puritanism, as they call it, is reflected in a pastoral letter issued by the General Assembly in 1818.[42]

The first vice mentioned is drunkenness which is more successfully opposed by prevention than anything else. 'For this purpose we earnestly recommend to the officers and members of our Church to abstain even from the common use of ardent spirits.' The next item is gambling regarding which the Church is obligated to testify against lottery tickets, horseracing, and betting. 'All attempts of whatever kind to acquire gain without giving an equivalent, involve the

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40. *PE,* 118 ff. *Cf.* Baird, 434 ff for the constitution of the seminary. Later on other seminaries were established by the GA, such as Western Theological Seminary in 1825 (Baird, 444 ff.). For an account of the early professors at Princeton, see E. A. Smith, *The Presbyterian Ministry in American Culture: A Study in Changing Concepts,* 1700-1900, 1962, 123 ff.

41. *PE,* 124 ff.; Baird, 185.

42. *PE,* 134 ff. 'It was only in the twentieth century that the Presbyterian ethic relaxed.' *Cf.* Baird, 802 ff, for a selection of the deliverances of the GA on moral issues.

Gambling principle, and participate in the guilt which attaches to that vice.' Next are the dangerous amusements of theatre-going and dancing. 'The Theatre we have always considered as a school of immorality. If any person wishes for honest conviction on this subject, let him attend to the character of the mass of matter, which is generally exhibited on the stage.' Dancing, however plausible, is also exceedingly dangerous.

> It is not from those things which the world acknowledges to be most wrong, that the greatest danger is to be apprehended to religion, especially as it relates to the young. When the practice is carried to its highest extremes, all admit the consequences to be fatal; and why not then apprehend danger, even from its incipient stages. It is certainly, in all its stages, a fascinating and an infatuating practice. Let it once be introduced, and it is difficult to give it limits.

The vice most frequently mentioned by the General Assembly is Sabbath-desecration. For instance, in 1810 the Assembly refuses the communion of the Church to a Pennsylvania postmaster who persists in working on the Lord's Day, and in 1812 it protests the opening of mail services on the Sabbath Day.[43]

One of the most important developments during this period concerned the Church's relationship to the New England Congregalionalists—who, it will be remembered, officially held to the doctrines of the Westminster Confession, but to generally independent principles of church government. The Plan of Union was adopted in 1801, whereby for the purpose of harmony in home missions work in New York and the West it was possible for congregations to be associated with the Presbyterian and Congregational Church at the same time, with the privilege of being served by pastors from cither.[44] Although there was much sentiment in favor of

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43. Baird, 810 ff., 57, 802, 815 ff. A similar decision was made in 1819 regarding a proprietor in a line of stages carrying mail (*PE*, 136). In 1821 and 1846 the GA refused to take a stand against Masonry (Baird, 804): 'It is inexpedient for the General Assembly to legislate on the subject' (1846).

44. *PE*, 102 ff. *Cf.* Roberts, *op. cit.*, 45 f.

Presbyterian principles among the Congregationalists, the Plan of Union resulted in the incorporation into the Presbyterian Church of congregations, presbyteries, and even synods which did not strictly adhere to the Form of Government. It also resulted in an increasing Presbyterian involvement in the support of non-Presbyterian independent agencies and New England abolitionist efforts. More significant, it deeply affected doctrinal instruction in the Church. For it was through these Congregationalist connections that the distinctive New England Theology, or what was considered the New England 'improved' version of Calvinism, began to filter into the Presbyterian Church.

These particular developments were factors leading to a new division in the Church—between the Old School which was alarmed by these trends and the New School which was sympathetic to them.

Old School—New School

The Old School—New School controversy was first openly precipitated in 1829 by the publication of Albert Barnes' sermon *The Way of Salvation.* This sermon is an appeal to sinners which casts doubt on the Calvinistic system of doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith. In 1830 Barnes was brought to trial for heresy on the basis of views expressed in the sermon; but eventually was acquitted by the General Assembly of 1831, which was under the control of the New School men. After this initial test of strength, the Old School, in their efforts to reform the Church, continued to suffer bitter defeats at the hands of the New School majority in the next three Assemblies (1832–1834). For instance, in 1834 they protested in vain against 'the prevalence of unsoundness in doctrine and laxity in discipline' in the Church.[45]

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45. G. M. Marsden, *The New School Presbyterian Mind: A Study of Theology in Mid-Nineteenth Century America* (Ph.D. Thesis, Yale University), University Microfilms, 1966, 15. This work is a first rate study of the New School mentality and theology and is filled with helpful bibliographical material. The earlier part is

By the General Assembly of 1835 the Old School men were in a state of serious alarm. Meeting a week before the Assembly, they drew up an Act and Testimony which was then presented to the highest court of the Church. This document deals first with matters of church order. For example, the Plan of Union of 1801 is attacked as having led to disorder in the Church. Indeed, brethren have occupied seats in the General Assembly who are not ruling elders; they are not Presbyterians and have no intention of becoming Presbyterians (VI). However, since the object of all ecclesiastical order is truth, certain doctrinal errors are brought to the attention of the Assembly.

> Great and fearful inroads are made on the doctrinal standards of our Church: and that too not in reference to matters of minor consequence, but in the very fundamental principles of the gospel. One alarming feature of the errors against which we would earnestly entreat this General Assembly to lift up a strong testimony, we beg leave to present. It is their systematic arrangement. Did a solitary individual here and there, in cases few and far between, touch upon a single insulated position that is false, and maintain it even with pertinacity, it would not afford ground of serious alarm. But the case is far otherwise. The errors abroad in the Church are fundamental, vital, and systematic. The maintenance of one involves the whole, and must lead a logical mind to embrace the system. . . . Another alarming feature is the boldness and pertinacity with which the very existence of these errors is denied (VIII).

The document closes in a militant spirit:

> We pledge ourselves in the face of high Heaven, the real Presbyterian Church will not shrink from the conflict; and though our earthen pitchers may be broken, our lights shall shine, and 'the sword of the Lord and of Gideon' shall turn the eye of a gazing world to that point of the field where victory perches on the 'Banner of Truth.'[46]

The Assembly of 1835 was not exactly a rout of the Midianites, but the Old School did win a temporary victory.

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an excellent introduction to the OS—NS controversy. For many important documents relating to the controversy in general and Barnes' first trial in particular, see Baird, 661 ff. *Cf. PE,* 146 ff. See also I. V. Brown, *A Historical Vindication of the Abrogation of the Plan of Union by the Presbyterian Church in the United Slates of America,* 1855.

46. Baird, 688 ff.; *cf.* 684 ff.

Finding themselves in a majority, they used the opportunity to correct some of the disorders in the Church. They hoped to consolidate this victory at the Assembly of 1836. However, after having elected an Old School moderator on opening day, their hopes were dashed with the arrival of a steamer full of New School commissioners from the West. Most of the decisions of the previous year were reversed; and in the decisive test of strength, Albert Barnes, having been suspended by the Old School Synod of Philadelphia, was acquitted in his second heresy trial.[47]

The Old School was in a desperate state, feeling that unless action was taken within the next year their case would be hopeless. Not knowing exactly what to do, and disagreeing among themselves regarding the precise action to be taken, they were basically agreed that, one way or the other, barring immediate reform, separation was imperative. The question then was: Would the Old School secede or force the New School out of the Church? The majority at the General Assembly of 1837 would decide the issue.[48]

At the pre-Assembly Convention of 1837 the Old School men prepared a Testimony and Memorial to be presented to the Assembly. The motive behind this testimony is expressed in the following terms:

> We contend especially and above all for the truth, as it is made known to us of God, for the salvation of men. We contend for nothing else, except as the result or support of this inestimable treasure. It is because this is subverted, that we grieve; it is because our standards teach it, that we bewail their perversion; it is because our Church order and discipline preserve, defend, and diffuse it, that we weep over their impending ruin. It is against error that we emphatically bear our testimony,—error dangerous to the souls of men, dishonouring to Jesus Christ, contrary to his revealed truth, and utterly at variance with our

47. Marsden, 17. *Cf.* S. J. Baird *A History of the New School*, 1868, 489 ff. Baird is a thorough history of the controversy from a diehard OS point of view. *Cf.* Baird, *Collection*, 694 ff.

48. *Ibid.*, 18. *Cf. A History of the Division of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, 1852, 129 ff., 132, 143 f. This work is an information-packed history from a NS point of view.

standards. Error not as it may be freely and openly held by others, in this age and land of absolute religious freedom; but error held and taught in the Presbyterian Church, preached and written by persons who profess to receive and adopt our scriptural form and openly embraced by almost entire Presbyteries and Synods—favoured by repeated acts of successive General Assemblies, and at last virtually sanctioned to an alarming extent by the numerous Assembly of 1836.

This error is then spelled out in relation to doctrine, church order, and discipline. Given the spirit of contention and lack of mutual confidence in the Church, the time has come for measures 'to restore at once purity and peace in our distracted Church.' Plainly the time has come when only drastic action can save the distinctive testimony of the Church.

These drastic measures include, first, the immediate abrogation of the Plan of Union of 1801 as originally unconstitutional. Second, there must be a disowning of the various independent, nondenominational agencies as 'exceedingly injurious to the peace and purity of the Presbyterian Church.' Third, the Old School men call for the immediate exclusion from the Church of all churches, presbyteries, and synods not willing to submit to strictly Presbyterian principles of order and doctrine.[49]

When the test of strength came in the Assembly, the Old School was in a majority. The Plan of Union was abrogated and the independent agencies disowned. Finally, after a plan for voluntary separation failed, they used their majority to declare the abrogation of the Plan of Union retroactive, thus declaring four Synods formed under the plan 'out of the

49. Baird, *Collection*, 710-715. Regarding independent agencies: 'While we desire that no body of Christian men of other denominations should be prevented from choosing their own plans of doing good—and while we claim no right to complain should they exceed us in energy and zeal—we believe that facts, too familiar to need repetition here, warrant us in affirming, that the organization and operations of the so-called American Home Missionary Society, and the American Education Society, and its branches, of whatever name, are exceedingly injurious to the peace and purity of the Presbyterian Church. We recommend, accordingly, that they should cease to operate within any of our Churches' (714). *PE*, 153 ff. 'This Memorial sums up better than any other document the case of the Old School.'

ecclesiastical connection of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.[50] Such action is explained by the attitude expressed by Dr. George Junkin before the Assembly: 'We must be prepared for amputation difficult and painful as it is,'[51] or by the attitude of another Old School apologist: 'When the minority of a body become unsound, there is no remedy but excision. When the majority become unsound, there is no remedy but secession.'[52]

By this exscinding action, the Old School excluded nearly one fifth of the membership of the Church—28 presbyteries, 509 ministers, and some 60,000 communicants. Those sympathetic with them had little choice but to withdraw and join forces with their excluded brethren. The New School party was somewhat demoralized by this action. Nevertheless, after the Assembly their leaders gathered at the Auburn Convention to adopt a strategy. Briefly, this strategy, refusing to concede anything to the Old School, was to stand upon the high ground of their own Presbyterian constitutionality. On this basis they declared the disowning acts null and void and urged the exscinded Synods to 'retain their present organization and connection, without seeking any other.' They also issued the Auburn Declaration, a doctrinal statement which maintains their Presbyterian orthodoxy. Finally, they advised New School presbyteries to send commissioners to the next General Assembly as usual. The result was a tumult at the Assembly of 1838. The New School delegates were not recognized and finally constituted themselves a General Assembly. Thus for the next 33 years there were two Churches each claiming to be the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The New School body with about 100,000 members represented slightly less than half of the

50. *PE,* 153 ff.

51. *Division,* 144.

52. L. Cheeseman, *Differences Between Old and New School Presbyterians,* 1848, 22. *Cf.* Baird, *Collection,* 715 ff., for the New School protests of this action and the Old School replies.

old Church. The civil courts ultimately decided that the Old School General Assembly was the legal successor of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.[53]

What were the basic issues which divided the Church into Old School and New School? New School historian Edward D. Morris lists six:

> We may note six particular causes which all will agree in regarding, though there may be varying degrees of emphasis laid upon one or another, as producing in their combination the historic Disruption. These were, first, diversity of opinion as to either the essential content of certain *doctrines*, or to the proper mode of stating or explaining these doctrines; second, difference of judgment as to the measure of liberty allowable in *subscription* to the accepted standards of belief, or of toleration to be granted to those who might vary more or less from these standards; third, diversity as to the requisite degree of conformity to the *church polity* in certain details, or of adherence to the Presbyterian system as against all other forms of church government; fourth, the question respecting the relative claim and value of *ecclesiastical agencies* as compared with voluntary associations, in carrying forward missions both foreign and domestic and other kindred forms of Christian work; fifth, difference respecting the theological soundness, the prevalent methods and the spiritual results of the *revival movements* extensively current in certain sections of the Church; and sixth, diversity of opinion as to the institution of domestic *slavery*, and to the duty of the Church toward those among its members who were not conforming in practice to its various testimonies against that institution.[54]

For practical purposes, we may boil these down to three basic areas of dispute: the first most vital to the Old School, the second most vital to the New School, and the third a vital concern to both.

The *first* area, obviously the most important to the Old

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53. Marsden, 19 ff. 'The strategy they adopted at the Auburn Convention was to have a decisive influence on nearly every aspect of the history of the New School denomination' (21). *Cf.* Loetscher, *Brief History*, 78 f.; Thompson, *History*, 121; Gillett, *History*, II, 532 ff. The NS accused the OS of violating 'the plainest general principles of Presbyterian government and the express provisions of the constitution, by disposing of individual rights, without the intervention of the primary courts, and, at the same time, destroying the right of appeal.' Whereas the OS replied: 'We do no man injustice by declaring that congregationalists are not presbyterians, and have no right to take part in the government of the Presbyterian Church' (*PE*, 163, 164).

54. E. D. Morris, *The Presbyterian Church New School 1837-1869: An Historical Review*, 1905, 46 f. (italics ours). Morris discusses these six areas of dispute (47-61).

School, concerns matters of doctrine. The New School men were strongly influenced by New England theology which in the early nineteenth century took two forms—the more conservative Hopkinsianism of the followers of Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803) and the more radical New Haven theology of Nathaniel Taylor (1786-1856). Both systems claimed to be a Biblical-improved version of traditional Reformed theology in the interest of promoting spiritual revival and moral reform. Old School men were united in their opposition to Hopkinsianism, but there was some difference of opinion among them as to whether it should be tolerated in the Presbyterian Church. The extreme Philadelphia party, led by such men as Ashbel Green, more in the Old Side tradition, wanted it condemned as a heresy; the more moderate Princeton party led by Samuel Miller, more in the New Side tradition, were willing to tolerate it in the Church. When the matter came before the General Assembly in 1817, the moderate position prevailed. However, by 1837 the Old School was united in the conviction that there was no place in the Church for the New Haven theology of Albert Barnes and others. The New School men on the other hand, while for the most part opposed to New Haven views, were willing to tolerate them in the Presbyterian Church.[55]

This is not the place to discuss these theological differences in any detail, but only to refer to the semiofficial New School position as outlined in the Auburn Declaration of 1837. The document begins with a protestation of loyalty to the Biblical and Presbyterian system of doctrine while allowing scruples in matters not essential to the system. The New School claims to be Calvinistic.

> While we bear in mind that with the excitement of extensive revivals indiscretions are sometimes intermingled—and that in the attempt to avoid a ruinous practical Antinomianism, human obligation is some-

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They are discussed more fully and with great discernment in Marsden, 16 ff. For the viewpoints of other historians, see *ibid.*, 24 f.

55. Marsden, 54 ff., 60 ff.

times urged in a manner that favors Arminian errors—yet, we are bound to declare, that such errors and irregularities have never been sanctioned by these synods or presbyteries . . . that all such departures from the sound doctrine or order of the Presbyterian Church we solemnly disapprove, and when known, deem it our duty to correct by every constitutional method.

There follows a doctrinal statement of sixteen articles in response to the sixteen errors charged by the Old School Testimony and Memorial. The statement deals with such doctrines as the sovereignty of God and election, original sin and imputation, the nature of the atonement and regeneration, and conversion and justification. It is one of the most remarkable documents in theological history. 'The Auburn Declaration is a carefully worded document written by men who knew the Presbyterian symbols in detail. Often it is significant in what it omits. None of its statements necessarily contradicts any doctrine found in the Westminster standards, but most of them reflect great care not to exclude the more controversial interpretations of Hopkinsianism and New Haven theology.'[56]

The Old School was impressed with the statement. As R. J. Breckinridge declared to the General Assembly of 1842: 'This extraordinary party could not lay aside its moral characteristics; and after doing so much to destroy the church and corrupt its faith, they drew up and recorded a confession not only at direct variance with their own published declarations, but more orthodox than many who dreaded and opposed them ever held.' However, this was just the problem: there were those in the New School who held far worse views than those expressed in the Auburn Declaration. In his excellent study of the New School mind, G. M. Marsden speaks of

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56. *Ibid.,* 84 f. Marsden's detailed discussion of the Auburn Declaration is excellent. For the Declaration itself, see *PE,* 166 ff. As a sample:

SIXTEENTH ERROR. "That the reason why some differ from others in regard to their reception of the Gospel is, that they make themselves to differ."

TRUE DOCTRINE. While all such as reject the Gospel of Christ do it, not by coercion but freely—and all who embrace it do it, not by coercion but freely—the reason why some differ from others is, that *God* has made them to differ.

'the ambiguous theological position' of the New School Church.[57]

As indicated in the Auburn Declaration, the New School apologists defended the doctrinal stance of their Church on the basis of the latitude of the Adopting Act of 1729. According to their General Assembly of 1838, Old School heresy hunters were aroused over 'the slight shades of doctrinal differences always known and permitted in the Church.' They wanted to change the traditional terms of subscription to the Confession. After affirming their love for the Confession, the Assembly proceeds: 'But it is not the Bible, nor a substitute for the Bible, nor a stereotyped page, to be merely committed to memory by unreflecting, confiding minds, without energy of thought, and a prayerful, faithful searching of the Scriptures.' To the Old School, on the other hand, this so-called conservatism and Biblicism was a front behind which lurked serious doctrinal errors. The New School ordained men who after accepting only the *substance* of the Confession preached and published radical errors.[58] At the same time, the New School men were unwilling to exercise discipline against such heretics.

This leads us to the *second* general area of difference, that which relates to matters of church life, polity, and discipline. As already intimated, this was the most vital area of concern to the New School because of their desire for a church less concerned with abstract doctrinal issues and more concerned with its appeal to, and effect upon, the life of the masses. To this end they wanted a church without strict discipline, especially on doctrinal issues, and willing to deviate from strict church order on the ground of expediency. 'Re-

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57. *Ibid*., 80 ff, 91 ff. Here Marsden tries to answer the question: How prevalent were New Haven views? 'The New School church was an alliance of those who held the controversial New Haven doctrines and others who held either traditional or moderate New England views, yet who were willing to tolerate conservative interpretations of the New Haven teachings. It is not clear, however, how extensive any of these views were in the new denomination.'

58. *Ibid*.. 28 ff. *Cf. PE.* 153, 159, 161.

gardless of their own theological positions, they were united in their resolve to grant that degree of tolerance necessary for effective cooperative action.'[59]

The Old School stress on strict Presbyterian order and discipline was in order to preserve the doctrine and life of the Church. They lamented lack of discipline for doctrinal errors; they lamented the discontinuance of the office of ruling elder in many quarters. They also lamented:

> The disorderly and unseasonable meetings of the people, in which unauthorized and incompetent persons conducted worship in a manner shocking to public decency; females often leading in prayer in promiscuous assemblies, and sometimes in public instruction; the hasty admission to Church privileges, and the failure to exercise any wholesome discipline over those who subsequently fall into sin, even of a public and scandalous kind; and by these and other disorders, grieving and alienating the pious members of our Churches, and so filling many of them with rash, ignorant, and unconverted persons, as gradually to destroy all visible distinction between the Church and the world.[60]

Another bone of contention concerns cooperation with other denominations in the work of nondenominational Christian societies. In the years before 1837 there was much rivalry between these independent agencies and the boards of the General Assembly. The New School favored nondenominational agencies as more conducive to Christian unity and evangelical success. In the words of Absalom Peters: 'We are constrained to believe that the voluntary, associated action of evangelical Christians, as far as it is practicable, is much better suited to the object of the world's conversion, than any form of church organization for this purpose, ever has been or can

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59. *Ibid*., 40. *Cf. PE*, 159.

60. Baird, *Collection*, 712 f., Testimony and Memorial (c; d, 3). 'Believing the Presbyterian Form of Government to be that instituted by the inspired Apostles of the Lord, in the early Church, and sanctioned, if not commanded, in the scattered notices contained in the New Testament, on the general subject; our hearts cling to it as to that order approved by revelation of God, and made manifest by long experience, as the best method of preserving and spreading his truth. When that truth is in danger, we hold but the more steadfastly to our distinctive Church order, as affording the best method of detecting and vanquishing error.'

be.' The Old School was charged with being exclusive and sectarian.[61]

The latter, on the other hand, opposed the existence and operation within the Church of educational and missionary societies not under any ecclesiastical jurisdiction. This opposition was based on at least two practical considerations. First, the independent agency may become unsound; and second, the control of the work of the Church tends to be in the hands of a few men rather than in the hands of the Church as a whole.[62] The opposition also stemmed from an appeal to distinctive Presbyterian principles. Some Old School men condemned independent agencies as, in the nature of the case, unpresbyterian. Others like Charles Hodge argued that, while not wrong in themselves and often helpful, such agencies are not conducive to the distinctive interests of the Presbyterian Church, which is obliged to educate her own ministers and oversee their work. 'People may cry out against all this as high churchism, but it is Presbyterianism.'[63] Hodge did say, however, that should the majority of the Presbyterian Church ever become temporarily unsound, the orthodox might have to resort to independent agencies.[64]

The *third* issue, not on a par with the other two, has to do with the nature and application of Scriptural authority with respect to the Church's ministry to the society surrounding it. This issue comes to the fore in the New School

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61. Marsden, 35 f.

62. *PE*, 151 ff. The Testimony and Memorial of 1837 speaks of: 'The unlimited and irresponsible power, assumed by several associations of men under various names, to exercise authority and influence, direct and indirect, over Presbyters, as to their field of labour, place of residence, and mode of action in the difficult circumstances of our Church: thus actually throwing the control of affairs in large portions of the Church, and sometimes in the General Assembly itself, out of the hands of the Presbyteries into those of single individuals or small committees located at a distance' (154). The OS founded their own Board of Foreign Missions in 1838.

63. Quoted in H. S. Smith, R. T. Handy, L. A. Loetscher (ed.), *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation With Representative Documents*, II, 1963, 90 ff. These two volumes are an excellent introduction to the basic themes of American Church History. *Cf.* Marsden, 37.

64. *Biblical Repertory*, VIII, 497 f.

zeal for spiritual revival and moral reform. With regard to revival the New School tended to favor the practices of such revivalists as Charles G. Finney. Whereas the Old School, while not opposed to genuine religious revivals, opposed them as contradictory to the doctrine of the Bible. Biblical authority precluded these practices in that they were inconsistent with its teaching.[65]

With regard to the issues of moral reform, such as the prohibition of the beverage use of alcohol and the abolition of negro slavery, the New School felt that Biblical authority made it imperative for the Church to take a strong stand in their favor. Whereas to the Old School the fact that the Scriptures do not directly condemn either the beverage use of alcohol or slaveholding, even though prevalent in Bible times, is a clear indication that they are not practices which the Church should uniformly condemn by legislation, much less take as a ground for discipline. Such matters which are not explicitly condemned or condoned in Scripture are rather to be left to the liberty of the individual Christian conscience. These so-called moral reforms, as well as much of the revivalism of the day, were products of 'the restless spirit of radicalism' which has 'drawn to extreme fanaticism the great causes of revivals of religion, of temperance, and of the rights of men.'[66]

As for the alcohol question, the General Assembly passed various resolutions between 1818 and 1830 recommending that church officers and members abstain from even the common use, let alone manufacture and sale, of alcoholic beverages, and that temperance societies be formed. Even the Old School Assembly of 1837 condemned the manufacture and sale, if not the use, of alcoholic beverages by church members.[67] In 1840 the New School General Assembly declared

65. Marsden, 46 ff.

66. *Ibid.*, 40 ff. These are the sentiments of the GA of 1837.

67. Baird, *Collection*, 806 ff. The 1837 pronouncement reads: 'It is with the utmost surprise and pain that we learn from the reports of two or three Presby-

that 'the only true principle of temperance' is 'total abstinence from everything that will intoxicate.' To Charles Hodge, writing in 1843, sanctioning any such resolution is a sin, a 'disregard of the authority of the word of God,' and an attack on the character of Christ himself.[68] It was not until 1865 that the Old School General Assembly recommended that ministers enjoin total abstinence upon the youth of the Church.[69]

The slavery question vexed the Presbyterian Churches through the course of the Old School—New School era. In general, there were three basic positions on the subject: 1) the *proslavery men* like B. M. Palmer who believed that the institution ought to be indefinitely perpetuated; 2) that of the *abolitionists* like Lewis Tappan who held that slaveholding as such is a sin, a moral evil to be immediately removed from society; and 3) that of the *conservatives* like Charles Hodge who held that slaveholding is not of itself sinful, and hoped for a gradual disintegration of the institution. In the light of this it is interesting that the General Assembly of 1818 unanimously adopted a report which speaks of slavery 'as a gross violation of the law of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ.' The report urges all Christians to work toward the eventual 'abolition' of the institution.[70]

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teries, that some of their members, and even Ruling Elders, still manufacture and sell ardent spirits. These things ought not so to be. They are a stumbling block to many, and have a manifest tendency to being overwhelming calamities, both temporal and spiritual, on society at large. No Church can shine as a light in the world, while she openly sanctions and sustains any practices which are so evidently destructive of the best interests of society.'

68. This position is found in C. Hodge, *Church Polity*. 1878, 227. *Cf.* 228: 'Any rule of duty founded on expedience must be variable. If I am bound to abstain from certain things only because the use of them would do my brethren harm, the obligation exists only when his real good would be promoted by my abstinence. If the obligation arises from circumstances, it must vary with circumstances.'

69. Marsden, *New School*, 42. *Cf.* G. M. Marsden, 'Historic Presbyterianism,' *The Presbyterian Guardian* (*PC*), Jan., 1964, 7 f.

70. Baird, *Collection*, 820 ff. *Cf. PE*, 199 ff.

When immediate abolition began to be pushed, this unanimity evaporated. In fact, some of the New School men accused the Old School of devising the exscinding acts of 1837 to weaken the antislavery sentiment in the Church. However, although the New School tended to be abolitionist, they were by no means united in the matter; and it was not until 1850 that their General Assembly declared slaveholding, except where unavoidable by the laws of the state, a ground for discipline. The proslavery position is opposed to the Christian religion. 'Such doctrines and practices cannot be permanently tolerated in the Presbyterian Church.' In 1857 twenty-one Southern presbyteries, unable to accommodate themselves to this spirit, withdraw to form the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church.[71]

The Old School was divided among all three positions, but most of the men were either conservative or proslavery, especially in the South. At the General Assembly of 1836 New School abolitionists tried to divide the Old School by introducing an antislavery resolution. However, the Old School antislavery men refused to divide the party on this account. The subject was postponed indefinitely with the declaration that 'no Church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws to bind the conscience.' This declaration reflected Hodge's opinion, which is in turn reflected in the Assembly's 1845 declaration, adopted by a 168 to 13 vote, that slaveholding as practiced in the South is no bar to Christian communion. When in 1861 the adoption of the Gardner Spring Resolutions, vigorously protested by Hodge and others, committed the Old School Church to allegiance to the existing federal government, the Southern portion of the Church, about one-third of her membership, withdrew to form the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. This action was justified in the Church's meek and masterly address to all the Churches of Jesus Christ throughout the

71. *PE,* 164, 202 ff.

world, authored by James H. Thornwell. In 1864 the New School United Synod and the Old School Church in the South united to form what eventually became, after the War, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, commonly known as the Southern Presbyterian Church.[72]

Within six years Old and New School in the North would also be one again.

A Reunited Church

Various factors contributed to the reunion of the Old and New School Churches in the North in 1869, chief of which was perhaps an antipathy to ecclesiastical conflict in the wake of the Civil War. Both Schools were taken up with the national cause represented by the federal union. Also, the spirit of church union was in the air as evidenced, for instance, by the Presbyterian Union Convention of 1867. Many in the various Presbyterian Churches were overwhelmed with an irresistible sense of divine providence and the leading of the Holy Spirit in the matter of church union. Moreover, the withdrawal of the Southerners from both groups had made them more homogeneous in outlook and equal in size. The Old School, which despite its reputed unevangelical character had grown much more rapidly than the New, felt the loss of some 86,000 Southerners; while the more conciliatory New School men, against division from the start, were almost unanimous in their desire to be part of a united, and larger, Church. Finally, time and change had mellowed many of the

72. *PE,* 200 ff., 211 ff. Note the similarity between the 1845 declaration and the Southern Address of 1861: 1845, 'The church of Christ is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends only to the religious faith, and moral conduct of her members. She cannot legislate where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which he has not made,' *etc.* (200). 1861, 'We have never confounded Caesar and Christ, and we have never mixed the issues of this world with the weighty matters that properly belong to us as citizens of the Kingdom of God' (213). Marsden, *New School,* 42 ff. *Cf.* C. Hodge, 'Slavery,' *Biblical Repertory,* April, 1836, 277. For the various deliverances of the Old School on slavery to 1855, see Baird, *Collection,* 817 ff. For those of the Presbyterian Churches in general, see Thompson, 362 ff. *Cf.* J. Murray, *Principles of Conduct,* 1957, 259 ff, for a discussion of the deliverances of the U.S.A. Church. *Cf.* Thompson, 150 ff.

more belligerent representatives and sentiments of both Schools.[73]

More specifically, the issues of 1837 were for the most part dead letters. With regard to spiritual revival and moral reform, the Old School had manifested its spiritual concern by its growth and vital part in the revivals of the late 1850's. With the Civil War it had come to advise total abstinence on the temperance issue and been overcome with abolitionist sentiment. Singing the Battle Hymn of the Republic, both Schools were swept up in the moral crusade symbolized by the Civil War. With respect to church polity, the New School had become ever more strictly Presbyterian through the years. For example, by 1869 almost all of its missionary work was under the direction of denominational boards responsible to the General Assembly. Finally, with regard to doctrine, the New School had become more conservatively Calvinistic while the Old School had become much less skeptical about the Reformed character of the New School teaching. Nevertheless, an issue still existed in the minds of many Old School men with regard to the New School attitude toward doctrine and discipline.[74] For the most part the issue took the form of a debate over the meaning of subscription to the Westminster Standards on the one hand and the *de facto* theological condition of the New School on the other.

One of the foremost proponents of reunion was the lead-

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73. For an excellent account of the movement toward reunion, see Marsden, *New School*, 255 ff; *cf.* 236 ff, 252 ff. *Cf. PE*, 220 f. For a contemporary account of reunion, as well as of the history of the two Schools, including statistics, from 1837 to 1870, see *Presbyterian Re-Union Memorial Volume* 1837-1871 (*PRMV*), 1870. Counting the Southern members lost in 1857, New School membership had fallen somewhat short of doubling in the years between 1840 and 1869; whereas, counting those lost in 1861, the Old School had almost tripled its membership during those same years. See Marsden, 259; *PRMV*, 493 ff. 'It is an interesting fact, that the years of most earnest controversy, pending the division, were years of special religious prosperity in the Presbyterian Church. From 1829 to 1838, inclusive, the statistical reports exhibited an unusual number of additions upon profession, though the reports of 1836, 7, and 8 were less favorable than those preceding' (*PRMV*, 8). Strangely, Thompson (125 f.) tries to argue the opposite.

74. *Cf. ibid.*, 242 ff., 256 ff., 286 ff. (*cf.* 279).

ing New School theologian, Henry B. Smith, of Union Seminary in New York. Smith maintained that honest subscription to the *system* of doctrine taught in the Westminster Standards can only mean subscription to the Reformed or Calvinistic system. Furthermore, this is the basic theological position of both Schools. To accuse New School men of holding any other would be to impugn their honesty in taking their ordination vows. This basic unanimity does not mean that there are no theological differences within the basic Reformed framework. Such there are. 'The question is not, whether there are differences. Taking both of us, as we are now, the question is, can we agree to differ?' In this spirit Smith called for reunion simply on the basis of the Standards of the Church without private interpretation, but interpreted in the spirit of the original Adopting Act.[75]

Charles Hodge, the leading Old School theologian, replied that if Smith's views were those of all New School men, he would not oppose reunion. However, this is not the case since some subscribe only to the essentials of the Christian faith in general rather than to those of the Reformed faith in particular. The chief objection to reunion is not that the New-School on the whole is basically unorthodox but that the New School Church has always tolerated some views definitely opposed to the Confession and that this spirit of tolerance could be expected to continue in the united Church. On this basis Hodge, along with such notable diehards as R. J. Breckinridge and Samuel J. Baird, opposed reunion to the end. After all, Albert Barnes, still in New School ranks, would be in the united Church![76]

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75. *Ibid.,* 256 ff. Smith also added 'interpreted in their legitimate grammatical and historical sense,' but this qualification was omitted in the final Plan of Reunion. For a brief statement of the position of Smith and Hodge, see Appendix I of A. A. Hodge, *A Commentary on the Confession of Faith,* 1869, 539-543.

76. *Ibid.,* 265 ff., 288 ff. *Cf.* the semi-official NS history, *Division,* 216: 'Our position in respect of doctrine, is that of agreement in things *fundamental,* and toleration and forebearance in things *not essential,* endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.'

However, Smith rather than Hodge would carry the day. The vast majority of the Old School were convinced that the New School was fast becoming fully orthodox, or at least that, whatever undesirable views might still be lurking in New School ranks, were insufficient to forestall the progressive movement toward unity. Despite considerable opposition in 1868, the Old School General Assembly of 1869 overwhelmingly consented to reunion. The Presbyteries of both Churches, by an almost unanimous vote, speedily concurred, and reunion was assured.[77]

The preamble to the official Plan of Reunion expresses the mutual confidence of the two bodies—'each recognizing the other as a sound and orthodox body according to the principles of the Confession common to both.' The formal basis of reunion reads:

> The reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures; and the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rules of our polity.

The General Assemblies of 1869 also adopted certain concurrent declarations, not as articles of a compact, but as proper arrangements. For example, one reads: There should be one set of Committees or Boards for Home and Foreign Missions, and the other religious enterprises of the church; which the churches should be encouraged to sustain, though free to cast their contributions into other channels if they desire to do so.' Another advised the duty of all to study the things which make for peace, and to 'avoid the revival of past issues.'[78]

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77. *Ibid.*, 284 ff. (*cf.* 279). The NS GA and Presbyteries unanimously voted for union. The OS GA approved it by a vote of 255 to 9; and of 127 voting Presbyteries, only three voted against it.

78. *PRMV*, 310-312. It should be mentioned, that the infallibility of the

Thus the reunion was on the basis of the three basic theoretical principles of Presbyterianism 'pure and simple.' There is little attempt to resolve the differences that had arisen in the attempt to apply these principles, and the re-united Church is obligated to avoid past issues. As in 1758 the reunited Church of 1870 would be considered broad enough to include both outlooks involved in the original separation.

In summary, we may discern from the foregoing survey two somewhat diverse traditions in American Presbyterianism. Speaking very broadly, there is that tradition associated with Continental Reformed Orthodoxy, Scottish and Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism, and Presbyterianism, of an Old Side or Old School variety. This tradition has emphasized a more objective, authoritarian brand of Presbyterianism, stressing a strict view of Scriptural authority—more comprehensive in doctrinal and ecclesiastical than in ethical matters. It also stresses the distinctively Reformed aspect of the Confession and a strict application of distinctively Presbyterian principles of government—along with a skepticism of revivalism and excessively experiential Christianity, and a sense of the limited scope of the specific application of Scriptural authority in the sphere of personal and social ethics.

On the other hand there is the tradition associated with English Puritanism, New England Puritanism, and Presbyterianism of a New Side or New School variety. This tradition had emphasized a more subjective, less authoritarian brand of Presbyterianism, stressing an equally strict view of Scriptural authority—more comprehensive in practical moral matters than in doctrinal or ecclesiastical matters. It also stresses the Catholic and Evangelical aspect of the Confession and the sentiment that Presbyterian polity is to serve the spread of the Gospel and not vice versa—along with an enthusiasm for

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Bible, such a bone of contention in the U.S.A. Presbyterian Church in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, was never a matter for debate in the OS—NS controversy.

revivalism and experiential Christianity, and for the personal and ecclesiastical application of Scriptural authority, in the form of the application of broad Scriptural principles, to particular evils in the life of the individual and society.[79]

Having noticed this, we must be careful to realize that this generalization must *not* be overplayed. For instance, the Old School and the New School were not simply reproductions of the Old Side and the New Side; they were not simply nineteenth century counterparts of eighteenth century prototypes. Indeed, there was much of the New Side outlook in the Old School movement; and the New School was more lenient in matters of doctrine and discipline than the New Side. It would seem that the New School—and to some extent in time the Old School as well—was partially animated by the spirit of distinctively American Christianity—less authoritarian and exclusive in Bible doctrine and church discipline and more enthusiastic and cooperative in moral reform and social concern.[80] In this connection it is interesting that in defense of their more lenient and tolerant approach to theological and ecclesiastical diversity, the New School apologists emphasized what they liked to call the distinctively 'American' character of New School Presbyterianism.[81]

In closing out this chapter, it would be profitable simply to call attention to the obvious differences and similarities between the U.S.A. Presbyterian and the Reformed Presbyterian tradition. In general, the RP tradition was far more strict in matters of church doctrine and discipline. Consequently, its affinities and sympathies were far more with the Old School than with the New. At the same time, the Reformed Presbyterian outlook on the Christian life and moral reform was more in tune with the spirit of the New School

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79. *American Christianity*, I, 262. L. A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church* (*BC*), Philadelphia, 1954, 1 ff. Marsden, *New School*, 7; *PG*, Jan., 1964, 5 ff.

80. *Ibid*., II, 66. Marsden, *New School*, 9 ff, 299 f.

81. *Cf.* Morris, *op. cit.*, 12, 21 f., 29 f: American Presbyterianism is opposed to 'extreme ecclesiasticism' (29); it is also 'more liberal and catholic' (30). *Cf. PE*, 139.

than that of the Old.[82] Finally, the RP tradition—certainly that represented in the history of the General Synod—was also deeply affected by the same Americanizing process experienced by the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

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82. It is significant that, despite affinities with the New School in the area of moral reform, the RP's uniformly sympathized with the Old School.