

## ARTICLE VI.

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1860.

## I. OPENING SERMON.

In the absence of the last Moderator, the Rev. Dr. W. A. SCOTT, of San Francisco, preached the opening sermon from 1 Cor. ii: 2: "For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." It was an able, eloquent and earnest discourse on the work of the Ministry. Dr. Scott set forth, with unction and power, the subject, and manner and method of true Gospel preaching, and we feel sure that the whole Assembly were edified by his instructions on this occasion. He expressed, in concluding, his earnest desire that this Assembly "might be known hereafter as the *Praying Assembly* ; as the Assembly that was remarkable both for harmony and for fervent "prayer—for the warmth of our communion, both with one another and with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ." It appears to us, in looking back upon the Assembly, that, indeed, an eminent degree of the spirit of prayer did characterize the body. And as to harmony, it will be universally admitted to have pervaded most fully the entire proceedings. There was earnest debate, and a clear and decided avowal of contrary views on several points, but the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace, we think, was preserved throughout. Good temper and kind brotherly behaviour characterized all the deliberations, from the beginning to the end. It seems to us that the speakers of the last Assembly are all bound to acknowledge that it was a remarkably patient and good natured house.

On several occasions we were amused, as well as gratified, to observe how the wearied Assembly, its mind made up on the points in debate, would cry out loudly for "*the*

*question,*” as successive speakers rose to deliver themselves, and yet would shortly give up the contest in every case, and let the speakers have the opportunity they craved, of ministering to its enlightenment, until the discussion had resulted in relieving every one who felt a fire in his bones. “We believe, in but one case was the previous question called for, and that discussion, the chief one of the Assembly, had certainly been quite protracted. But if the speakers had good reason to be satisfied with the behaviour of the house, perhaps it might be said, with equal truth, on the other hand, that the house had no particular reason to complain of the speakers. The good Lord graciously delivered this Assembly from that plague of deliberative bodies generally, *troublesome members*. We suppose that there was not one individual at Rochester, who either deserved, or acquired, the reputation of being forward to speak on every occasion.

One point made by Dr. Scott, in this discourse, we are not sure that we correctly apprehended. In his account of the Ascension gifts of our Lord, he referred to “Ministers of the word of reconciliation, who, also, are to rule in the House of God, and dispense its ordinances, teaching us the will of God for our salvation.” Quoting the text, Eph. iv: 11-15: “And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers,” etc., etc., etc., he proceeded to say it was “obvious from this passage, that living teachers are set in the Church of God by Divine appointment. At one time they were patriarchs and prophets; then apostles and evangelists; and now they are bishops or pastors and teachers, who are the bishops and overseers of the people.” “As men commissioned by God, the living ministry have authority to preach Christ crucified, and to demand your obedience to the Gospel; they hold the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; they neither speak nor act for themselves, but in the Master’s name.”

Did Dr. Scott mean to be understood as ignoring the right of the Ruling Elder to the Scriptural title of Bishop and Pastor? Did he mean to confine the power of both the keys—the whole claim upon the people’s obedience—to the teaching ministry? Perhaps not;—yet such was the impression made upon our own mind when we heard him, and such is the impression we get now from reading his sermon, as reported in the “Presbyterian.” He seems to entertain the same idea of our three highest Church Courts with Dr. Hodge, that they are *bodies of Ministers* into which Ruling Elders are admitted for the purpose of deliberating and of voting—these Ruling Elders not being members in full of the body, but delegated members; and not having the powers of full members, but only those of inferior ones, just as corresponding members are admitted to some rights of these bodies but denied others.\* Accordingly, in preaching a sermon to the General Assembly, he addresses the Ministers almost exclusively. He speaks of them alone as the Bishops and Pastors, as well as Teachers, whom Christ gave to His Church. The body he addresses is a body of Ministers, among whom the Elders sit by secondary and not primary right—and of course he need not address any part of his discourse expressly to them!

It is enough to object, for the present, to every such view of our Assembly, or of our Synods and Presbyteries, that it makes them all differ essentially and specifically from our Sessions, whilst our system contemplates all these judicatories, from the lowest to the highest, as essentially the same, being composed of the very same elements. This view makes our Sessions to be bodies of Ruling Elders, presided over by a Minister; but the other Courts, bodies of Ministers, receiving Elders amongst them for certain specified duties, and with certain limited rights. We believe this view to be subversive of our whole form of gov-

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\* See *Biblical Repertory*, July 1843, p. 438.

ernment. Our Book represents no one of our Courts as a body of Teachers, but all of them as bodies of Rulers. It is true the Book speaks of Ministers distinctly, and of Elders distinctly, as members, of these Courts, but they are both viewed as Rulers when they enter those Courts. It is not because the Minister is a Teacher that he is admitted there, but because he is a Ruler; and it is not the *teaching function*, primarily or directly, that they assemble there to exercise together, but it is the *power of rule*. It is agreeable to Scripture (says our Book) that the Church be “governed by Congregational, Presbyterial and Synodical Assemblies,” and then it proceeds to define the powers to which alone these rulers or governors of the Church in all the various Courts alike are entitled.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

There never were so many commissioners gathered at the opening of the Assembly before. The votes cast in the election of Moderator amounted to 297, and the number in attendance afterwards rose to 329. The choice of the Assembly for presiding officer fell upon the Rev. J. W. YEOMANS, D. D., of Pennsylvania. He discharged his duty with dignity and impartiality throughout. Perhaps his own personal gentleness and urbanity of manners may have passed by contact into the spirit of the body itself. He contributed, we are sure, very much to the successful despatch of the business of the Assembly, by his firmness in insisting on, its observance of its own rules relative to the hours of adjournment. This leads us to remark, that the plan adopted at Rochester, of *short sessions*, has certainly commended itself anew to all who desire to see deliberation and despatch united in the conduct of our business. We do not care to insist upon short sessions during the last few days, and yet in this case the plan was successful even to the end. Meeting at 9 A. M., and spending the first half hour in religious devotions, and adjourning at 12; meeting

again at 3 P. M., and adjourning at 5½—the committees all had time to prepare their business thoroughly, so that the house could easily despatch it. The Judicial Committee, for example, which had five cases committed to it, and found *four of them in order*, were enabled, by having plenty of time allowed them, so thoroughly to understand these cases that they could propose a disposition of every one of them which was fair and just, and, on the whole, acceptable to the parties, and according to which it cost the Assembly not more than half an hour to dispose of all four of the cases ! Had the Committee not had full time for their part of the work, the Assembly must have devoted three or four days, at least, to judicial business.

It is not our design to speak of the whole proceedings of the Assembly, but to select the topics which will most interest our readers. We pass on, therefore, to

### III. THE DISCUSSION ABOUT THE BOARDS.

This came up, necessarily, in three different ways. *First:* There was a Committee appointed by the last Assembly to consider the expediency of reducing the number of members of the Board of Domestic Missions, and of the removal of the seat of its operations from Philadelphia nearer to the Western field; and to report such other suggestions as are deemed important to increase the efficiency of that Board. Of this Committee, Dr. E. P. Humphreys was chairman, but not present at this Assembly. Drs. Thornwell and Boardman, were the only present members of the Committee. The latter read the Committee's report, which was, necessarily," a patched-up and indefinite affair, inasmuch as the Committee stood equally divided upon the main points they had in hand. "We could wish that, instead of uniting in one common report that could mean nothing, they had brought forward two separate reports, each of them presenting, in writing, a clear and definite statement of the views held on that side.

*Again:* There was a Committee also appointed, by the last Assembly, on the re-organization of all the Boards, and of the Church Extension Committee. Dr. B. M. Smith was chairman, and he induced the present Assembly to enlarge the Committee, so that it might be made to consist of fifteen members.

*Thirdly:* This same discussion came up, naturally and necessarily, upon the report of the Standing Committee, to whom the Domestic Board's Annual Report was referred.

Coming up in these three ways, on the first Friday afternoon of the session, the discussion ran on with frequent, and some times long intervals, until the second Friday afternoon, when debate ceased, and the vote was taken upon the question of "organic changes." Subsequently to this, other points of the subject were disposed of by vote, without regular debate, several of them on the last day of the session.

The report of the first named Committee was presented by Dr. Boardman on Friday morning. It made no recommendation of any change in the organization of the Domestic Board, because the Committee were divided equally upon that subject. Besides this first point, there were three others reported on by this Committee, two of them favorably, the third, by consent, merely brought before the house for consideration. They were, 1. No change of location of this Board. 2. The abolition of the Executive Committee at Louisville, so that there should be no Executive Committee but the central one; yet advisory committees might be appointed where required. 3. One of the two Secretaries of this Board to be a "*Traveling Secretary.*"

In the afternoon, Dr. Boardman re-stated the points of the report in anew and brief form, which, with Dr. Thornwell's consent, he had given to them during the interval. As thus drawn put, the first point was in the shape of a resolution, that "it is inexpedient to make any organic

change in the organization of the Board of Domestic Missions. "In this form the subject was debated, and in this form the question was at last put. "We think an undue advantage was generously conceded by Dr. Thornwell, in allowing this form to be given to the really undecided recommendation of the Committee, for it brought insensibly upon the house the influence of the whole Committee against any organic changes. But, however this may be, we know positively that the employment of the term "organic" operated unfavorably for the minority. There can be no doubt that the majority of the Assembly favored changes, the very changes which the minority were urging; the subsequent votes made that unquestionable. But very many of the voters did not consider these changes to be "*organic changes*," and they were not willing to vote that there ought to be any "organic changes." Accordingly, they voted thus against the *principle*, of changes, although, afterwards, for the actual *practice* of them.

Dr. B. M. SMITH, of Union Theological Seminary, led off the debate. He began by saying :

There are two ways of administering Church government: one is *upon the principles* of Divine government, and the other is *by expedients*, devised of men to meet present emergencies. Upon the former plan, the Church may incur particular inconveniences from time to time, but, in the end, that plan must always be found wisest and best. Upon the latter, the Church may be relieved of present evils, but at the expense of greater ultimate disadvantages. He then traced the history of our Boards as mere *expedients* of men in distinction from the direct action of the Church as such, "which is the divinely revealed principle. Boards were a necessary expedient amongst Congregationalists, for their Churches are independent of one another, and of course cannot act together in Missionary work, except through some such contrivance. The Congregationalists had given us many of our best men. These excellent brethren had brought with them into our Church, very naturally, an attachment for Congregational expedients, and this attachment had spread itself, and had spread itself widely, amongst our people. For a long time, voluntary societies had been allowed to do the work of the Church as her agents. When our Church determined to take her work into her own hands, that wide spread confidence in expedients, to which the

Church had so long been accustomed, made it difficult for her at once to adopt the principle of direct action. Moreover, all through her borders the voluntary societies had spread themselves, and they had their honorary members and their corporate members scattered all up and down the land. With a view to cope with them in influence and power, *the expedient* was devised of our also having Boards of our own, with the names of distinguished "brethren all over the land held up as members of them. What had been the result? Very good in many respects—but the real good done he claimed as the fruit of ecclesiastical action, imperfect and indirect as it was. The good done he ascribed to the Executive Committees of the Boards, and not to the Boards themselves, for the Boards had always been mere names. Let the Church act herself, directly, through these Committees, calling them Boards if you please, but making them a simple and a real executive agency. He described "the annual farce" of electing the Boards, and how loosely and blindly the members were appointed; men were elected who never attended, could never attend, and were expected never to attend, a single meeting of the Board. Many of the men elected never heard of their election. Once, a dead man was elected ! At Buffalo, by mistake, the outgoing class (whom the farce, commonly, just re-elects) were substituted by the class who had only been elected the year before; the mistake was not discovered till after the adjournment, and so the Clerks did for the Assembly what they knew the Assembly intended doing! He adduced facts to show that the larger the Board the less responsibility was felt by its members, and the less attention was paid to their duties. He quoted from a table, drawn up by request of Dr. Humphrey's Committee, at the office of the Board, to show that in but three of the meetings of the Board during the whole year had there been present 20 members out of the 90 who composed the Board.\* He deprecated the "cant" which branded those brethren who desired a simpler organization as "enemies of the Boards," "agitators," "innovators," &c. It was an arrogant claim, by friends of the existing state of things, that only they are friends of the Boards. He spoke earnestly against that false conservatism which would retain" its hold upon a present system, however faulty, rather than venture one step in advance. In conclusion, he referred to the happy results which had followed the abolition of the system of agencies, and the holding up to the Church, instead of it, by Assemblies and by Pastors, of the *doctrine of giving as worship*. But the abolition of agencies had long been resisted by some friends of the Boards. Now, the Boards themselves rejoice in the change, for their receipts are actually greater in consequence. So,

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\* We are not absolutely sure that we state these figures correctly, as we write from memory. The whole table we would like to give to our readers, if we had it. They would see how complete a sham is the whole system of our Boards.

predicted the speaker, shall we all rejoice in the greater, good which must result from a return to right principles upon the subject of Boards.

Dr. SPRING, replying briefly to Dr. Smith,

Regretted dissension should be thrown into the midst of us upon a subject so vital and practical. The sentiment of the Church is united on this system. This system is one of the golden, spiritual cords that bind us together, and our union as a Church is one of the bonds that hold this land together, which is now threatened to be torn apart. Our system has done well hitherto, and there are no fours for the future : let us trust God and go forward with it.

Several other speakers also deprecated the continuance of this discussion.

Dr. THORNWELL said:

The Report under discussion exhibits a diversity of opinions as to the most effective organization for the Board. This diversity has long existed, and it is a diversity of opinion, deep, radical and sincere. It has been agitated in the Assembly and through the press. It is curious to notice the manner in which the friends of the present organization have treated the opinions of their opponents. It is not very long since they earnestly insisted that the difference between us and themselves was merely nominal, "mere hair-splitting," the difference merely "twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee." But the obvious inference then was, that they ought to have conceded the change. Suppose those who desire the change are weak, but conscientious; if there be no real difference in principle why not yield to the weak? Why not give up to the conscientious the trifling boon they ask? We do not profess to be strong or large minded, but we do profess to love Christ, and to feel bound to see, so far as in us lies, that the Church does execute His commands; and if you think there is no principle that divides us, why not indulge our conscientious objections?

But *note*, the ground of our brethren is shifted. The difference between us and them is now admitted to be one of importance. It is vital and essential. The things at stake are substance, and not shadow. At first we were mere theorists, advocating what did not differ from the system actually existing; but now the thing that was declared a mere abstraction begins to be viewed as something very dangerous. Moderator, I accept that view of our differences which makes them real and important, and I will proceed to show the *source* of these differences.

The discussion now resumed is deprecated by some of the brethren here as evil, and likely to beget more evil. I do not deprecate it. We are met to discuss great questions that concern the Redeemer's

glory and the interests of His kingdom. We all love the truth, and are equally concerned for the honor of Christ's Kingdom and His Church. We have no by-ends to subserve. I am no party-man, but I am thoroughly a Presbyterian, and having come here to deliberate and vote for the good of the Church, I wish to state the grounds upon which my vote shall be cast.

This whole question is but an offshoot from another question dividing the minds of brethren amongst us, and that question is *the organization of the Church itself*. Our differences about Boards spring legitimately from our differences as to the nature and constitution of the Church. There are amongst us those who hold that God gave us our Church government, as truly as He gave us our doctrines; and that we have no more right to add to the Church government, which is Divine, than to add to the doctrine, which is Divine. They hold that while the Church may, of course, employ whatever agency is really necessary to do the work entrusted to her, for that is implied in the very command which enjoins her duty, yet she has no discretionary power to create a new Church Court or judicatory, or body, of whatever name, to stand in her own place.

Others, as wise and as good men as the first, believe no definite form of Church government is of Divine origin, but God has left it to *man* to organize His Church; and that just as civil government was ordained of God in the general, but man is left to arrange its particular form as may, in his view, best suit particular circumstances. So Church government may be modified according to circumstances—according to human ideas of expediency, at the whims of men. God gave only general principles, and man is to work out of them the best system that he can. Thus, one party amongst us holds that Christ gave us the materials and principles of Church government, and has left us to shape them pretty much as we please. But the other holds that God gave us *a Church*, a constitution, laws, presbyteries, assemblies, presbyters, and all the functionaries necessary to a complete organization of His kingdom upon the earth and to its effective operation; that He has revealed an *order* as well as a *faith*, and that as our attitude in the one case is to hear and *believe*, in the other it is to hear and *obey*. And of one of these parties the motto is, "you may"? do all that the Scriptures do not forbid;" of the other, "you can do only what the Scriptures command."

There is no use in blinking this question, for we know that this radical difference respecting the Church does exist, and that those of us who hold the opinions first referred to contend that man is not to be the *counsellor of God*, but is to accept the Church as it comes from God, and do what He enjoins. We cannot appoint another co-ordinate body to do the work which God appointed us to do. The General Assembly is, and ought to be held to be, the Board of Missions itself. Christ never authorised us to put this work into other hands. It will be said these views are narrow, but are they not true? They are founded on the *jus divinum* theory of Church government,

which recognizes all the members of this Court as members of it, because God has appointed them to this trust. We contend, Moderator, as sincerely and as conscientiously for the great principles of Presbyterian order as for those of the faith allied to it. The oneness of the Church, its federative unity, is one of these principles. Another is the representative principle, upon which principle it is that any of us are here, and upon which principle it is that all of us are alike here—Ministers and Elders—upon precisely the same footing, as members of this Court. We are all here as Ruling Elders; only rulers can enter into the Assemblies of the Church; we cannot admit here any person that is not recognized as a ruler in the Holy Scriptures. And the Ruling Elder is not here simply by appointment of the people. Both come here as the representatives or chosen rulers of the people, equally of Divine right and authority, and equally entitled to be here as rulers of the Lord's House. And it is in this capacity, as rulers in Christ's Kingdom, that the members of this Court have committed to them, for the Church, that work which they may not delegate to any other body. Is it said that thus I deny the right to any other denomination to call itself a Church of Christ. I do not deny it. A Church maybe a true Church though imperfect in its organization, as a man may be united to Christ by a saving faith, yet deny doctrines which I deem essential to the perfection of Christian character.

Here Dr. THORNWELL was interrupted by the hour of adjournment. On the next day, (Saturday, May 19,) he resumed his argument, and recapitulating what he had gone over the preceding afternoon, stated as his fundamental principle, that

The Church has a charter of faith and of practice, and wherever she cannot plead the authority of God, she has no right to act. She has no opinion ; she has a faith. She has no contrivances; she has a law. This is the doctrine of our Confession of Faith. Her authority is all ministerial and declarative. She only declares the law of the Lord, and only exercises the powers He gives, and only executes the work He enjoins. No other regulations are left for her to make and to enforce, save those of circumstantial details; and the power to make these is implicitly contained in the general command given to her. It is, also, explicitly given in the precept to "do all things decently and in order." Whatever executive agency is requisite in order to do her appointed work, she can, of course, employ; but she may not go outside of this necessity and transfer her work to another body, to be performed by them.

If this notion of Church power be conceded, and if we correctly apprehend the real nature of Church Courts as Divine institutions, and if we duly conceive of the solemnity and responsibility of all their

action, we are prepared to see how all this bears upon the question of Boards. Now, what is a Board ? Have the brethren distinctly conceived in their own minds what it is ? I do not ask for the meaning of it, in the etymological sense, as when we speak of a Board of Health, or of Commerce; but in the sense defined in the Constitution of this Board of Missions, as an actual part of the machinery of the Presbyterian Church. I ask for the meaning of the word, as the thing is actually understood among us, and differenced from a simple Committee. What is a Board of this General Assembly ?

*In the first place:* It is an *organism* and not an *organ*. It is a complete body, to which the General Assembly has entrusted a department of the work committed to it. It is a complete whole; all the parts of a separate; self-acting organization belong to it. It has head, body, limbs, hands, tongue, and now they want to give it feet, that as it exists alone, it may, also, go alone. It has a President for its head, with a body of many members; it has an Executive Committee for its hands; and now our brethren propose, by a "Traveling Secretary," to give it feet to travel—to travel over the whole land, and if they could, they would enable it to fly with the wings of the wind.

Now take this body, thus organized and equipped, and wherein does it differ from a Church Court ? Talk of it as a mere organ!—a mere hand to be directed and moved and used by the Church ! It is a hand that has an arm of its own to move it, and a head of its own to direct it; and, as experience has lately shown, it moves more obediently to its own head than to the Assembly. It is as completely a moral person, with rights and powers to all intents and purposes complete and definite, as any Court in the Presbyterian Church. It stands up, side by side, along with the Courts which Christ has ordained, and we have handed over to it the work we ourselves ought to do. Wherein, I ask, does it differ from a Synod or a Presbytery ? The sphere of those may be larger and more varied, but the nature of the power conferred upon this is the same. You say the Board is responsible to the General Assembly; so is a Synod. You say a breath can annihilate the Board; so it may a Synod. The Assembly has as much power over the Synod as it has over the Board, and it can dissolve the Synod just as it can dissolve the Board. In fact, we see the Board standing side by side with the General Assembly itself, as fully officered, as complete in its organization, and even more perpetual in its existence, so far as it regards its component members ! What are the Courts of the Church but organisms of the Church, through which Jesus Christ has ordained that she shall act. But in these Boards you have set up other Courts coordinate with His Courts, and as supreme in their own sphere.

Now, sir, the question comes up, who gave you the power to make such coördinate Courts ? You say they are confessedly lawful, because mere circumstantial details. These mere circumstances ! All this needed to be supplemented to the equipments of our Church !

Then is any other Church as well equipped as ours for the missionary work, for any other Church can append to itself these human contrivances as well as ours! You say it is not forbidden, and is therefore allowed, because necessary. But have we not always boasted that our Church is adequate, *as organized in the Scriptures*, to do all the work required at its hands? Have we not gloried in our polity as complete, with all the muscles, veins, and arteries of a perfect system of life and motion? Have we not said to Congregationalists, you are radically defective in coherency, and have to form societies unknown to the Word of God: and to Prelatists, you have to borrow, of us a General Convention of Presbyters? But our brethren have actually formed within our own Church bodies which Independents were driven to form, because their polity is inadequate to the work Christ requires of His people! We are throwing away our birth-right, and putting on the rags and tatters of Independency! Yes! we take up its rags and tatters, and endeavor out of them to patch up something which we offer to Christ and to the world as a substitute for His divinely organized Church! The whole thing is a virtual reproach upon that Divine organization which we profess to have received from the Holy Word, and in clinging to it we pertinaciously repudiate in practice the very Church in which we profess to glory! Is our Church competent or is she not competent to do her work? Is she so organized and so equipped, and so officered, that she can, in the use of her own Courts and her own powers, do what the Master has bid her to do? If not, then openly acknowledge your beggary, and cast about for the best system you can find! If not, then openly acknowledge your impotency, and pronounce your Divine institutions a failure!

*In the second place:* What is the relation to the Assembly, of the Boards, as thus completely organized? They are the *vicars* of the Assembly. God gave the Church a work to do *in her organized capacity*—she refuses to do that work in that organized capacity, but appoints another organization to do it *in its organized capacity*. The Boards are the *vicars* of the Assembly, and *in its place*. They are the representatives of the Church *as an organized body*. This is, in fact, admitted privately by our brethren, for they hold that in acting through a Board the Assembly acts. They will tell you that the Boards are the Assembly's representatives, doing the work in the place of the Assembly; and they quote the maxim which we admit to be applicable here, "*Qui facit per alium facit per se.*" But, Moderator, who gave the Courts of the Church a right to act *in their organized capacity* by *vicars* or *representatives*? Congress has power to make certain laws: can Congress delegate these powers to another body? Would the country submit to let Congress confer upon a Board of its appointment the power of legislation, for it to go home and take its case? Now, Jesus Christ has commissioned his Church to carry the Gospel into all the world, and has furnished you in full for the work, and you are, *in your organized capacity*, through your *courts and their own executive agencies*, to carry on that work. And now, can you

come to that Saviour and say: It is too troublesome to do Thy bidding ourselves—too inconvenient to superintend and carry on this work directly with our own executive agency, and in our own organized capacity, as the Church; but here is our *vicar*, here is our *representative*, here is a Board “which we have constituted, and to which we have delegated these prerogatives and duties thou didst enjoin upon us?”

Can you act in this matter by a *vicar*? Have you a *right* thus to act? You can not; you have no such power conferred upon you, as a Church. And let me, then, remind my brethren that this binding limitation of Church power is what the people of God have always contended for. This was the very point in dispute between the Puritans and the Church of England. That Church maintained that the Scriptures did not forbid the Liturgy, nor the sign of the Cross, nor kneeling at the Supper, nor the gown and surplice, and so these might all be ordained by the Church. But the Puritans contended that none of these is required in the Bible, and so none of them might be imposed. The absence of the grant (they said) is the negation of the power. And what did our covenanting Fathers in Scotland fight for but the same principle, that the Church can claim no power not granted in the Bible? And how did the Popes get their foot upon the necks of the nations, but through this same principle of the Church’s having powers not given to her in the Word? And we, sir, to-day, are standing up for the only principle that can keep this Church of ours from flying off out of her orbit and dashing into the orbits of other stars—the principle that the Church has no right to act, except as she has the authority of God for acting!

*In the third place:* Let us look at the principles of action which have governed these creations and we shall see still more plainly that they are complete organizations, and, also, that they work evil and not good. The practical ends of the Boards have been two. 1st. They aim to awaken interest; 2d. To increase funds. As to the first end, the idea was that there must be a body specially devoted to awakening the missionary spirit in the Church. The missionary spirit was not to be the healthful action of the Church’s life, but a substitute for it; something worked up in the Church’s bosom by special influences and excitements. There must be a large institution or society in the bosom of the Church, corresponding to the American Board of Missions, and men must be stimulated into missionary zeal by being invested with the honorable distinction of membership. Thus a set of men were selected who were, by this means, to have the spirit of missions kindled *in them*. Now, was not this destructive of the idea that the Church is the body to be interested? Must not this have weakened the general influence of the idea that the Church herself is a Missionary Society, and that every member of the Church is to have a part and to be responsible for a share in the work?

But the other end to be gained was the increase of funds. This was sought to be attained by the sale of these distinctions. Sir, it has been my lot to have part in many earnest debates in the Church

Courts, and I do not know that I was ever yet betrayed into saying an unkind word of any man in the Church, or of any institution in the Church I was called on to oppose. But, sir, every instinct of nature, and every holy impulse implanted within me by the Spirit of God, rises up with indignation and horror against this principle that men may buy places of honor and trust in this free, glorious commonwealth of Jesus Christ. I do revolt against this paid membership—this entitling of men for money to become consulting members of the Church or of her Boards (which they tell us are the same thing)—this selling distinctions and honors in the Church of Christ, for filthy lucre, when nothing is plainer than that the love of Christ should form the only motive of all our contributions. Whatever shall be the result of this discussion, Moderator, were it in my power I would at least expunge and utterly and for ever blot out this organic feature of our present system, as I hope God will wash out the sin and shame of it in the blood of His dear Son.

But there was, also, at first, and for a long time, connected with this scheme for raising funds, a system of agents, as part and parcel of the same arrangement. The first indication of healthful action in the Church upon this whole subject, was her revolt against the employment of agents to do a work which the Pastors, Elders, Deacons and People were organized into a Church on purpose to do. Slowly and reluctantly, sir, some of the very brethren, who confront us to-day, consented to dispense with this system. Slowly and reluctantly they were persuaded to rely upon the Church-organization, which the Lord gave us for the collection of the benefactions of His people. But it was done, and the “innovation” proved, as they all now confess, most advantageous. And, Moderator, I look for the time, and I predict that it is not far off, when the Church, acting in the spirit of similar “innovation,” shall, with a whip of small cords, drive out all the buyers and sellers from our temple.

Here there was a complete system, a regular and perfect organization, a Church of men by the side of the Church of God, and doing a work committed only to the Church of God. Such is the scheme of the Boards as established in the Presbyterian Church. Moderator, I have confidence in the men who control our Boards, and whilst in their hands we may escape the more serious evils which we dread, yet, even now, there is discernible in the Boards a disposition to act independently of the Assembly. Like Lord Chatham to his constituents, the Boards have been heard to say to the Assembly, “We regard not your *instructions*, for we have too much regard for your *interests*.” In worse hands all these evils which we have pointed out would grow worse. The egg of the serpent is harmless, but it contains a serpent. The Boards may be harmless now, but they contain a principle fraught with mischief in the day of trial. It is safer to adhere to the Word and the system we have derived from it, than to be ever consulting the suggestions of human wisdom, and mere expe-

diency. While we stand by principle Christ is with us, but when we forsake our principles we desert Him.

Now, Sir, let us look at the opposite system.

It's *first* principle is, that the Church, in her organized capacity, is a society for all spiritual purposes. Every Church Court is a Board of Christ's appointment, and every Christian is a member of a Missionary Society. We assume this as our cardinal principle. This was the great point in dispute in the New School controversy.

The *second* principle is, that the Church, being a Missionary Society, the measure of its power, in relation to the details of its action, is whatever *is necessary to execute these functions*. To this point we are restricted. Now, what are the things that are necessary for the discharge of the work given to the Church? Three things seem to be essential: 1. Wisdom in council. 2. Efficiency of action. 3. responsibility. All these ends are answered by a Committee (or by a Commission) appointed by the Assembly, as a *bond fide* organ. The Committee unites deliberation, simplicity and direct and immediate responsibility to the Assembly. Every desirable end can be secured legitimately, without delegating our work to another body, as our vicar in our stead.

But, *thirdly*, the organization must of course look to the raising of funds, and here comes in the idea of systematic giving, of giving as worship, and completes the system. With the machinery of the Church accommodated to its Divine charter, you may confidently trust to the life of the Church, that, by the grace of God, it will answer to the doctrine of giving, as it shall be held up by a faithful ministry. When this doctrine was first held up as a substitute for agencies, our brethren opposed it as an "innovation," and would have clung to the agencies. When we pleaded that systematic giving was to be viewed as a *part of religion*, our brethren still viewed it as a *scheme*—a piece of machinery, and called it "*your plan*." So, now, this doctrine that the Church, in her organized capacity, must do her own work, and not delegate it to vicars, is called by these brethren, "*your theory*." I contend that it is *of God*. We then contended that systematic giving is part of our religion, part of our worship, and a part which cannot be performed by proxy, any more than can prayer or praise. So in reference to the Church's work of Evangelization. She is responsible for it herself, in her organized capacity, and may not undertake to do that work by vicar, any more than she may pray by vicar. And the great need of the Church, is a sense of her *obligation to give*, and her *obligation to work* for her Lord.

*Fourthly* : The difference between such a Committee and the Boards is seen in the directness of its relation to the Assembly, and in the simplicity of its action. A committee is the very hand of the Assembly, and not the hand of its servant. A *commission* is *the Assembly perpetuated*. It is the living body. The Church acting through her General Assembly, or a commission of the Assembly, which is the same thing; or, again, through a committee of the Assembly, is like a

man that uses his own limbs—limbs with which he was born, and which are *living legs*, forming part of his living body. But the Church acting through these Boards, is like a man with a *cork leg*, fastened on by a strap and socket and buckle, which can never answer fully the purposes of a living limb.

If any one should insist that, nevertheless, the relation of Board and of Committee to the Assembly are of the same general kind, and if we were to grant this, I must still maintain that the complications attaching to the Board are unnecessary, and are, therefore, unlawful. I contend for this limitation of the powers of the Church as an essential principle. It is the legacy of our Puritan and our Covenanting Fathers. The Church can not ordain unnecessary complications of agency amounting to the transfer of her work to *another body*.

My argument is finished, but I must notice some objections.

*First:* There is the presumption which exists against all change. Our brethren say we must not have “innovation.” Sir, we propose no innovation—only a return to Bible principles and Bible practice. Our doctrine is as old as the New Testament—our plan as old as the Acts of the Apostles. Moreover, the Assembly has of late virtually decided that the principles for which I contend are the true development of its life. At Nashville, some of the ablest men in the Church advocated a Board for Church Extension, but the idea of a Committee, though feebly advocated, prevailed. The Assembly decided against these complicated Boards, and took one step towards the simpler and director organization which I advocate.

*Secondly:* It is urged, “let well enough alone.” O! sir, is it well enough? What do brethren mean? I am no accuser. I do not blame the Boards. They have done as well as they could with this stiff and cumbrous organization. But have they done “*well enough?*” Can any man say that this great Church, in any department of its work, is doing well enough? O! sir, when I think of eight hundred perishing millions abroad, and of the moral wastes of our own country; when I look at the power of the Gospel and the Master’s blood to redeem and save, and then think how little progress has been made, I cannot say “let well enough alone.” I must put it to my brethren, *is it well enough?* I must urge this Church to inquire if she be not neglecting some power God has given her. She is capable of far higher and more glorious things, and I want her to put forth her own *living hand* directly to this work.

Dr. THORNWELL closed with an earnest appeal to the Assembly to look carefully and prayerfully at this matter, expressing the belief that if the views of himself and of his brethren should prevail it would make a new era in our history. He drew (says the *Presbyterian*) a glowing picture of our future, and concluded with a fervent wish for its

realization, with “amen and amen!” “He closed (says the New York *Observer*) with a thrilling appeal that moved all hearts, holding the Assembly and the thronged galleries in breathless attention, while he summoned the whole host of God’s elect to come up to the great work of giving the Gospel to a lost world.”

Dr. HODGE said :

If the members of Assembly have been affected as I have been by the eloquence of Dr. Thornwell, their minds have undergone rapid and surprising changes. At one time they have felt that fundamental principles are at stake, that our practice has been always and radically wrong. Again, they must have felt that, after all, this is a mere difference of words, so fine, indeed, that I cannot see the difference; for, after all, what does it amount to? to what, indeed, has it come, when, to our inexpressible relief, he tells us that it is nil comprehended in the distinction between the Board of Missions and the Church Extension Committee? He thinks it a *radical* difference. I do not think it worth *that*. [Snapping his fingers.] If this were all, it would not be worth while to spend our time in the discussion.

But, sir, there have been so many things said, which I think that many of this General Assembly cannot endorse, that I feel constrained to attempt a few remarks upon some of them. We cannot receive, and our Church has never held, the High-Church doctrines about organization for which the brethren contend. The Spirit of God dwelling in the Church and guiding her by His Word and providence, in our view, must shape her efforts and her agencies; and, under the dispensation of the Spirit, far more is left to the discretion of the brotherhood of faith than under the ancient economy. But now we are called upon to believe that a certain form of Church government and order, in all its details and with all its appliances for the evangelical work, is revealed in the Word, and that we are as much bound to receive this form as to receive the articles of faith: That *order* is as much a matter of revelation as *faith*. We *cannot* do it and we *wont* do it. The burden was too heavy for our fathers, and we cannot bear it. Dr. Smith gave us, yesterday, a history of our Boards and of their rise and progress, and in doing so has drawn largely on his imagination for his facts. He insisted that the principles and plans of their organization were derived from New England, and that Congregational influence gave form to the Boards. Brother Smith is a young man—at least not old enough to have personally witnessed the events that resulted in the formation of these Boards, or he never would have ventured to give the theory of their organization which he gave in his speech. He farther asserts that their present form was adopted from motives of *expediency*, and under the influence of men who were of New England origin and opinions.

Sir, was ever statement more apocryphal! Can any man acquainted with the real facts believe the statement for one moment? Not at all. Was Ashbel Green a New England man? Was Jacob J. Jane-way a New England man? Was William M. Engles a New England man? Was George Junkin a New England man? Was George Baxter a New England man? Were David Elliott, and Elisha P. Swift, and Walter Lowrie, and Samuel Miller, and the Breckinridges, New England men? The whole theory adduced by the brother is historically absurd and preposterous. The truth is, this Church has, from her very origin, acted on the commission, "Go ye and preach my Gospel"—always been a missionary Church. She has, as a Church, sent forth the living minister from her earliest history. It has been her fundamental principle that she was sent to spread the Gospel throughout the land in which her lot was cast, and to commit this work to such of her faithful sons as she might choose. The Church, in her whole history, has acknowledged that this work was laid upon her. But it could not be done by the scattered members of the Church, widely dispersed over a new and extended country. The several congregations and Presbyteries were too sparsely spread but for frequent conference and cooperation; and yet they needed to employ combined effort, that the strong might aid the weak. There was a necessity for a Committee or Board of the Assembly, and one was appointed: but from the apathy of the Churches the work went slowly on, and voluntary associations sprung up all around, and, to a great extent, took the work, and the means of prosecuting it, out of the hands of the Church's Committee; and when the Church proposed to take this great work into her own hands, the friends of Voluntary Societies said the Church has no right to have Boards—she must not sully her hands with such work—her function is to supply the preachers; we will attend to the collecting of funds, and send them forth. And it cost a great struggle before the Church could obtain control of this work, so as to entrust it to the hands of a Board of her own creation and control. Thus, and from this quarter, did opposition to Boards first arise; now it comes from an opposite quarter. *Then* the opposition came from Congregationalism. Now it comes (I say it with great respect for my brother Thornwell) from hyper-hyper-hyper-High-Church Presbyterianism. Then we were told that all power is from the people: now, that all power is lodged in the clergy; that Presbyters are all of one order, all pastors, all teachers, all rulers; then it was the theory of the distribution of power; now, of centralization.

But let us look at this new theory of Church authority. Principles are often stated in debate without careful limitation, and I may not correctly apprehend the doctrine, but I understand it to be: 1. That Christ has ordained a system of Church government, not in general principles, but *in all its details*, and that we have no more right to create a new office than a new doctrine or a new commandment of the decalogue, unless we can show a "thus saith the Lord" for it. 2.

That power inheres in the Church, and cannot be delegated, any more than praying or giving alms can be done by proxy; and 3. That all power is *joint*, as opposed to *several*. These are the green withes by which it is proposed to bind the limbs of our Church; or rather, this is the Delilah who is to cut the locks of our Samson, and send him shorn of his strength to be the sport of the Philistines.

Now, sir, our Church never did receive this yoke, and she wont receive it. We believe that all the attributes of the Church belong to the Holy Ghost. He is to be her guide, by His Word and providence, and under the general principles laid down for her guidance in the Holy Word, Ministers, Elders, and *people* are to do the work of the Church, and to their best judgment. She *has discretion*, sir; she cannot be bound.

In opposition to this theory, I have been taught by lips now silent in the grave, but vocal in the General Assembly on high,—and I will never forget it nor cease to defend it while life and being last,—that all the attributes and prerogatives of power in the Church arise from the indwelling of the Spirit, and where He dwells, there is the Church, with authority to do its own work in the best way; and as He does not dwell in the clergy exclusively, therefore the power is not confined to the clergy; but the Church may in her discretion adopt such modes or agencies to carry out the commands of Christ as she deems best. She must be free. She must breathe. The power of the Church is where the Holy Ghost is: but in externals He has given her *discretion*. I glory as much as does my brother Thornwell in the *principles* of Presbyterianism; they are the glory of the land, and are working for the salvation of the world; but one of those principles, and a most important one, is freedom in that which the Bible leaves to the discretion of His people. We must not forget our great distinctive principles—1st, the parity of the clergy; 2d, the representative element—the right of the people to take part, by suffrage, in the government of the Church; and that power, indeed, is originally deposited with the people. And 3d, the *unity* of the Church; that all its members are parts of one great whole, and that all must suffer, and labor and rejoice together; and these are not compatible with the new theory. In regard to what I have regarded as the *High-Church theory*, I call attention to the fact that no Church on earth *has ever carried it out*; and it is an utter *impracticality*. Even the Pope, and the High Church prelatists, in their practice abandon it, and employ such agencies as may best suit their purpose. It is not only inconsistent with the practice of every Church, but especially with those of the Protestant branches. Luther had not this theory, nor even our theory of Presbyterianism; Calvin had it not; Zwingle had it not; Knox, nor any of the Reformers. The theory is emphatically no part of American Presbyterianism; it was never held by the Tennants, Smiths, Blairs, Alexanders, and Millers of the Church. But, above all, the theory is utterly *unscriptural*. Let any man open the New Testament and say if our form of government is there as our *faith* is there? No, sir,

this is making the scaffolding to hide the building; it is making the body the same in value as the soul. I cannot see how any man can say that all the details of our system are in the Bible. The Jewish system in its details was not in the Old Testament. Their yoke was not so heavy as that which these brethren would bind on our necks; and it is preposterous to expect that so heavy a yoke can be received by those whom Christ has made free. This is too great a burden—the Church can't receive it—and we *wont* receive it. Our Christian liberty is not thus to be put in trammels. The shackles are worse than Jewish that they would put on our feet, and then tell us to go over hill and dale and preach the Gospel to every creature. No, I do not find their system in the Bible, but I find just the opposite. Where are our apostles and prophets? Suppose, Moderator, that Paul, inspired by God, as an apostle, sat in your seat! what would he care for our book of discipline, or our form of government? Who would want him to care for them? He would ordain whom he pleased, depose whom he pleased; deliver to Satan whom he pleased. He would decide every thing by the authority that he exercised as Christ's plenipotentiary. He would wait for no decisions of Assemblies.

This system, proposed by our brethren, cannot be carried out in our frontier settlements. Discretion must be allowed to our evangelists; they must have power to form Churches and baptize; they cannot wait to have the whole of our system inaugurated before they can dispense ordinances. Deprive the Church of discretionary freedom, to *adapt* her principles to the exigency of cases as they arise, and you tie her, hand and foot. The Church cannot submit to it—it *wont* submit to it; the Church must have freedom, and she cannot do her work, either at home or abroad, if you keep her tints hampered by a proscriptive system. Ask that venerable man (Hon. W. Lowrie) how this new theory would work in heathen lands. Presbyterianism cannot be at once introduced in all its parts amongst the heathen; the missionary must have liberty of discretion to preach and gather converts, and govern them as best he may until they are ready to receive the Church in its fuller organization. The converted heathen is a babe, unfit for the full responsibilities of a believer. Will you make Elders of infants? Bishops of babes? It can't be done. There is no use of talking about it. The missionary must be a man of sense, and he cannot commit such follies as this.

But this burden to the conscience—to it I will not submit. I *wont* be bound to a *form* of organism as I am to the *faith* of the Gospel. I will not submit my conscience to the *inferences*, even of Dr. Thornwell. [A laugh.] And yet this whole theory, which we are called upon to receive as of faith, is a matter of *inference*. I will not submit to any thing as binding on my conscience, that does not come from God's own lips. The Presbyterian Church will never submit, as long as there is one drop of the blood of her fathers in the veins of her children, to this superlatively High Church order. Will you have deaconesses because the Apostles had them?

[Here the hour of adjournment arrived, but the house suspended the order and requested Dr. Hodge to proceed.]

And finally, this theory is *suicidal*. How are you to have schools, and colleges, and Theological Seminaries, if you must have a Divine warrant for them all? You must abolish all agencies; recall your missionaries; go yourself and do the work of an Evangelist. How are you to have a Board of Directors for a Seminary; or even a President of such a Board? How are the brethren able to serve under such Boards in their Seminaries. Can you find any warrant for them in this Bible? Dr. Thornwell may get it out by an inference, but I cannot find it there. And when he said that the Church Extension Committee is the model of what he wants, I felt as if a soaring angel had fallen down to earth.

If these principles of Dr. Thornwell's kill the Boards, they will kill the Committees, which our brethren would substitute for the Boards. In fact, it is a mere question of arithmetic. A Board or a Committee—one hundred men, or twenty men. And a commission amounts to the same thing. A *commission* and a *Committee*. Where the difference, in the word or the thing? No! no! this doctrine, carried out, instead of making the Church more efficient, will bring her efforts to a dead halt.

This conscientiousness, of which Dr. Thornwell so feelingly speaks, cannot be so serious a thing, after all, as my brother would make it. It is a long time since he began to advocate this theory, and to make its adoption a matter of conscience. Our brethren must have done violence to their consciences, for a long time, for they still work with our Boards, and cooperate under a system which does such violence to their consciences! [Laughter.]

But there is another ground of appeal of our brethren that ought to be noticed. They understand us to say that there is but a small difference between a Board and a Committee. If it is so small a matter, ask they, why cannot you give it up? We cannot give it up without casting reproach upon all that have gone before us—we cannot give it *up* without abandoning the pant. We cannot give it up without yielding to pretensions that we believe to be unauthorized by Scripture. We cannot give it up without sacrificing our Christian liberty! And we will not give it up. The Church has freedom of discretion in selecting the modes of her operation; and to sacrifice this freedom to the claims of a high *jure divino* churchism, which we do not believe to be scriptural, we cannot and will not consent.

At the close of Dr. Hodge's remarks, Dr. Krebs obtained the floor, but gave place to a motion to adjourn, and the Assembly adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock on Monday morning. The rejoinder of Dr. Thornwell to Dr. Hodge did not come on till Monday in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, the Annual Report of the Board of Domestic Missions was the order of the day for Monday, at 10 o'clock. From this report we take several items of particular interest.

1. The number of Missionaries in commission, March 1, 1859, was 408, to which have been added to March 1, 1860, 283, making the whole number 691, and more by 91 than the year previous.

We do not comprehend this statement very perfectly. So much appears clear, however, that there are now 691 Missionaries receiving aid from this Board in their several fields.

2. The whole amount of receipts during the past year was  
\$118,004.21

as follows:

From Legacies,	-	-	\$25,422.11
Miscellaneous,	-	-	10,179.91 — 35,602.02
Leaving for Receipts from Churches, total,	-	-	\$83,302.19

3. The increase of the year is \$19,231.18, viz : in individual or special donations and in legacies, \$13,052.24; and in contributions of the Churches \$6,178.94.

There has been an average increase in appropriations to the Missionaries of \$13.35, but the people have made an average decrease in the salary of \$7.40, making an average increase of \$5.95.

The total average salary from the Board and the people was \$536.63.

4. The office expenses of this Board and all its different branches for the past year is \$10,620.01; that is, it has cost the Church that much to manage the receipt and disbursement of \$118,904.21. Of this \$10,620.01 there is charged :

To the S. W. Advisory Committee,	-	-	-	\$800.50
To the Ex. Com., at Louisville,	-	-	-	974.37
To the Pittsburg Agency,	-	-	-	286.58
To the office at Philadelphia,	-	-	-	6,550.06
Miscellaneous,	-	-	-	2,008.50

5. Only 1,705 out of our 8,487 Churches have contributed to this Board's funds; leaving 1,783 which have acted either through other channels or not at all.

Dr. WM. M. SCOTT, of Chicago, presented the Committee's report upon this Annual Report of the Board, commending, in very moderate terms, the progress of the past year; and, according to the usual custom, introduced to the

Assembly Dr. Happersett, one of the Secretaries. He said "the past year had been one of *great progress*," and "this Board is the Church's right arm." The Committee's resolutions implied some censure of all the Churches not contributing through this Board; but, the Secretary waxing warm in his address, spoke decidedly on this point, "not half of our Churches have contributed any thing to the Board—1,783 have not given a dollar." The same kind of censure upon the Churches of all those Presbyteries which prefer to attend themselves, directly, to the work of domestic missions in their own proper bounds (many of which are earnest and zealous in this work, and are more and more convinced that this is the true way to carry on the work) is contained in the Board's Annual Report (p. 35), which was distributed in printed form through the house. This report is at pains to present, in a long list, covering whole pages, the name of every such Presbytery in the whole Church, and of every particular Church of every such Presbytery, with an appalling *blank* against its name where there ought to be found the amount given. Thus the Board, once more, in this report, seems determined to insist upon holding up to censure Presbyteries which they positively know to be doing their own work in what they believe to be a lawful and the best way.

The question coming up on the adoption of thin report, Dr. ADGER said:

There are two points in it which I cannot approve. The *first* is the censure upon all the non-contributing Presbyteries alike—which has, indeed, been explained away upon this floor, but remains in the Committee's resolutions and in the Board's report. The *second* point is in regard to our progress, as expressed moderately enough by the Chairman, but strongly by the Secretary, to whom we have just listened, and also by my venerable father (Dr. Spring) and others in this Assembly. Upon the question of our present system working "well enough," as upon the whole question of its expediency, I find myself in opposition to brethren whom I honor and love. At the feet of one of these (Dr. Hodge) I formerly sat for instruction, and would, in respect to many subjects, gladly sit there again. But that venerable Professor has been, all his life, immured within Seminary walls, and,

therefore, we cannot look to him for guidance in a practical question like this, of the operations of Boards and of the most efficient methods of developing the charity of the Church.

There is also Dr. Boardman, a *Boardman* in name, and, in fact, one of the very officers of these Boards. You might say that, of course, he knows all about this matter, because he is one of the conductors of the train, and yet a mere passenger in a back car may see what he cannot see, just because he is in front, and a mere outsider may point out ruinous obstructions in the way, which Dr. Boardman may not perceive, just because he is not an outsider. Sir, our brethren at the centre cannot afford to disregard the voice of their friends at the extremes of the Church. We can see some things better than they. And the very fact that it is they who are the drivers of the engine which is under discussion, should make them patient in enduring criticism and objections which are kindly offered.

Now, Moderator, this Board claims to be "the Church's right arm," and to be making "great progress" in Domestic Missions. It tells us, and we hear it all 'round the house, that "we are doing well enough." One of the proofs offered is, that we have missionaries, which is called "an army." Now, of these no doubt many are laboring amongst our old Churches which are well able to support their preachers themselves. And in so far as this is the fact, I ask you if it is any evidence that we are doing well that so many of our Churches are willing to be helped by missionary funds? Too many, sir, of these old Churches, there are, some of them not very remote from the seat of the Boards, that love *to suck the paps of the Church*, to the withholding of our resources from the destitute frontiers!

You are also told that the receipts from the Churches last year were \$83,302.19. Do you call this doing well for a Church numbering about 300,000 members, with 2,600 Ministers and nearly 2,500 congregations? Why, Moderator, the children of the Presbyterian Church probably spent that much last year for sugar candy! The Ministers of the Presbyterian Church, perhaps, smoked and chewed up that amount more in tobacco! Talk of \$83,000 for Domestic Missions being well enough for our rich Church! Why, sir, over one million of dollars annually would not be too much for her resources—nor would it be too much for her liberality either, if you would approach her in the right way, as you are not now doing.

We are told in the Report, that the Missionaries are receiving an average salary of \$536—now \$1,000 each, is not more than our Church could pay them if they need it, and no doubt many of these men do need it all to give them an economical support. And yet the boast is that we are doing well enough, and are making great progress!

Very much is made in the report of the advance of *contributions from churches* this year upon the last; and what is it? Why, about \$6,000. And what is that, Moderator, when you consider the numbers contributing, and the great resources of the Church! We talk

of \$6,000, and it seems a great sum, when we name it in round numbers, but look at it the other way, and it looks very small. Here, Moderator, is our 58th Annual Report, and all that we have reported is the paltry sum of \$83,000 from all our Churches! And these brethren will continue to come up here from year to year and “glorify” over this amount, and try to persuade us to believe that all is going on well. Before God, I believe, sir, that the language of lamentation befits us, and not that, of congratulation.

Moderator, you do not reach the heart of the Church with your, present organization. Our brethren at this centre are not in sympathy with its mighty pulsations. You have your power applied at the wrong place. You try to do the work of Domestic Missions by one great wheel at the centre, and what is the consequence? Why there are 1,705 contributing Churches and 1,783 non-contributing Churches.

Let me explain what I mean. The work of Domestic Missions is a two-fold work—it is a work within our established bounds, and a work, also, on our frontiers. This latter requires you to follow our teeming population, as they float over into Kansas, New Mexico, Utah, Dacotah and all those other countries which, as the Secretary very truly said, are calling on this Board to send them Missionaries. There, Moderator, is the great and noble field for our Board of Domestic Missions to operate. There is a work, surely, grand enough and arduous enough to task the energies of the mightiest minds. Now, in addition to this great work, and to the other necessary work of aiding our feebler Presbyteries, *you are undertaking to carry on the business of Domestic Missions throughout all our settled bounds, by means of this Board*, whereas, it can only be done in our whole bounds *by the Presbyteries themselves, operating directly each in its own field*. You might almost as reasonably undertake to do this work in the bounds of each particular Church-session, as in the bounds of each particular Presbytery. That would be an attempt only one degree more absurd than our present attempt. We have a divine system of government. Jesus Christ gives to us a system of Parochial, classical and Synodical Presbyteries, which are all so many wheels within wheels, and each of which is sufficient to do its own share of the mighty work, which is to be wrought out by the whole machine. And the work of each one it ought to be expected to do of itself; but your plan is to do the whole work of Domestic Missions by one big wheel at the centre, made up of about one hundred big men with big names and titles. The consequence is, that many of our Presbyteries and Churches are doing nothing, for they feel that they have nothing to do. I blame your system for this, in part, because you make such a great parade over the work with your great Board, that the Presbyteries are encouraged to feel no responsibility resting on them. There is a mighty Board in Philadelphia to attend to this matter (say they), and so they finish up their other business as soon as they can, and go home every man to his own particular field,

leaving the common domain of the Presbytery for your Board to look after; and look after that common field in all our Presbyteries, the Board never will nor can, and so your system must be changed, or the work remain undone.

We are not all so generous, Moderator, as Dr. Smith and Dr. Thornwell, whose generosity our brethren on the other side are disposed to abuse. They tell you they will cooperate with the Boards if you will have Boards, and then the answer they get is, "your objections to the Boards can't be very conscientious ones." I say we are not all as generous as these two brethren. Many of us hate the origin whence those Boards arose. Dr. Smith did not draw, sir, on his imagination for the history of them. Many who had a hand in framing them at first, and many more who tolerated them at first, were, indeed, Presbyterians, yet these Boards—it is useless for Dr. Hodge to deny it—are Congregationalist in their origin. And we hate the mixing up of Congregationalism with our system. In their own place I love good Congregational brethren as much as any body, but we hate their invention of Boards—as substituted for the Divine arrangements given by Christ to our Church. We want to cooperate with you, but if you insist on your present system we must claim our right to work apart in the way our Lord ordained.

What I would desire the Assembly to do, then, is:

1. To reduce the Boards to an effective size, say seven, or eleven, or fifteen men, so that every meeting may be attended by all the members.

2. Confine the Board first to the work of planting missions on the frontiers, and secondly, of simply receiving and distributing the abundance of the richer, according to the necessities of the poorer, Presbyteries. Free them altogether from all charge of the work within the bounds of any Presbytery.

3. Throw the work of domestic missions, within our settled limits, upon the respective Presbyteries. Let no one of them draw any thing from the central fund that does not first earnestly strive to do its own work. Require each Presbytery to aim first at overtaking its own destitutions, and then at furnishing a surplus for the aid of the weaker Presbyteries. Enjoin upon the Presbyteries and Churches the grace of giving for domestic as for foreign missions.

Let not any say such a change will paralyze the work. Many Presbyteries have made the experiment of bringing the work of domestic missions nearer to the home feelings and home sympathies of their people, and with great success. Harmony Presbytery, in South Carolina, conducts its own missions, and it raises \$2,500 annually. Until three years ago, the Presbytery of South Carolina was in connection with the Board, and raised about \$300 annually. They separated from the Board and undertook the work themselves, and they now raise annually \$1,500, which is but the beginning of what they can and will do.

What I am now about to add, I hope will be taken as kindly as I

mean it. We are acting upon a report of our Committee on the Board's annual Report, which, also, is, of course, before us for approval or censure. I must call the Assembly's attention to the claim set up by the Board on pp. 27, 28. They first state that since 1828, when the Board was reorganized, our Church has increased 17 Synods, 78 Presbyteries, 1,292 Ministers, 1,519 Churches and 133,322 members. And then the Board says of all this, "and let it be remembered that this increase and expansion were mainly effected by the instrumentality of her Board of Missions." Moderator is this true? Is this just? Or, if true and just, would it be modest? Would it be Christian? Does it become this Board thus to ignore the influence and labors of all the Pastors, and of all the Teachers and of all the pious people in our Church, during all this period, and claim that it, "the right arm of our Church," has done all these great things? And ought such a claim as this, thrust thus upon us, again and again, from year to year—ought it to attract no attention from the Assembly? Does it convey to the Church no lesson of warning? Ought she not to watch the development of this arrogant and domineering spirit with seasonable care?

In conclusion, for the sake of our country and the Church, let me implore the Assembly to consider candidly the objections made to the Boards as a system. As to the Church's portion of the case, do but confide in your Divine Church government, and instead of \$83,000, the Church will give \$1,000,000, for Domestic Missions. And as to the peace and happiness of our country, which were made the ground of a patriotic appeal to us, for these Boards, by our venerable father from New York, let me just say that it is not these Boards, Moderator, which are any bond of union for the different sections of this country. No, sir, the people of the United States do not know, they do not feel, our Boards. But they do know, and they do feel, this General Assembly. That, sir, is a bond of this union. Increase its influence, Moderator, by giving it the direct sway, it ought to have, over all these works of the Church—make it your Board of Missions, and let it appoint and direct your Executive Committee, and you will thus increase its power as a bond of union for our whole country.

After some remarks from the Chairman and Hon. SAMUEL GALLOWAY, Dr. ADGER moved to re-commit the report for some modifications of the Committee's language, which motion prevailed, and the report was afterwards adopted as amended.

"When the unfinished business, viz: the question of re-organising the Boards, came up, Dr. KREBS agreed to yield the floor to Dr. THORNWELL, who

Desired to say a few words in reply to my illustrious brother from

Princeton. If my respected brother had written out a speech to deliver, before the Assembly, in opposition to my views, he could not possibly have written one which it would better suit me to answer, than the one delivered here on Saturday. He accepts the issues which are the true issues in this case, and has set before us the type of Presbyterianism of which the Boards may be regarded as the natural development. There was a little preliminary skirmishing, which seems necessary before coming to the main issue, and to that let us first attend.

Dr. Hodge has concluded, from my principles, that I *make the Clergy the Church*. I am amazed at the charge, but still more amazed at the logic which sustains it. I have paid some little attention to logic. I once wrote a book which that good brother criticised, in his Review, as having too much logic. I have studied Aristotle, and several other masters in the science, and have, probably, the largest collection of works, on the subject, to be found in any private library in the whole country. But, in all my researches, I never did meet any logic, before, so peculiar as that by which my distinguished brother has deduced from such premises such a charge as he has brought against me. It reminds me of the logic of the hard-shell Baptist preacher, in Alabama, who had announced that, on a given day, he would prove from the pulpit that, in due time, the whole country would become Baptists. Repudiating, as they all do, any previous selection of a text, and making conscience of opening the Bible in the pulpit and taking the first text upon which the eye may chance to rest, and trusting to the Spirit to aid in the exposition, this good brother happened on the text, "the voice of the turtle is heard in (all) our land." It rather stumped him at first, but he soon rallied, and said: "My brethren, you may think there is nothing in this text to prove what I have undertaken, but you will see before I am done. You know what turtles are. Go through the country and you see hundreds lying on the logs, in the ponds, sunning themselves, and as you pass one after another they will 'PLUNGE' into the water. Now a turtle is remarkable for its having no voice of any kind. It is perfectly dumb, and no man ever heard it emit any sound. But, the text says, '*its voice* shall be heard in all our land,' and, therefore, the text must refer to the sound it makes as it 'PLUNGES' into the water. And so the text clearly proves that, in all our land, men are to take to the water and turn Baptist." The logic which proves me guilty of abetting a clerical despotism is about as conclusive as this.

Again, my brother has said that my principles are "hyper-hyper-HYPER-High-Presbyterianism," and I must retort that his principles are no, *no*, NO Presbyterianism, no, *no*, NO Churchism! His speech, sir, presented us with a little touch of democracy, a little touch of prelacy, and a considerable slice of quakerism, but no Presbyterianism. Surely, sir, Dr. Hodge's statement that the Church is found wherever the Holy Ghost is, cannot be taken without much qualification. Does not the Holy Ghost often dwell in the heart of the soli-

tary individual? But the Church is an organism, uniting many individuals into one body.

Again, the good brother appeals to *authority* for sanction to his views of Boards. We can appeal to Fathers too. There have, been martyrs who laid down, their lives, rather than deny the Divine right Presbytery. The great author of the second book of discipline, and many others of the glorious men of Scotland, held the views we now maintain. And we have living authorities, too—among whom is one who has no superior, and few equals, in either hemisphere—the great author of the Act and Testimony, the document that separated this Church from error, to whom all Presbyterians are, therefore, under everlasting obligations. But, Moderator, this question is not to be settled by human authority, but by the Word of God,

Again, my brother twits me with supporting the Boards while professing to be conscientiously opposed to the principles of their constitution. Would he have us to be factious? Moderator, I never have said to my brethren, to whom I promised submission in the Lord, “I can’t submit, I wont submit.” I will submit to my brethren, even where I think they are mistaken, if the submission be not sinful.

The good brother complains that we wish to lay a heavier yoke than the Jewish upon his neck. The burden we want to impose is more grievous than he can bear—he must have liberty. Well, sir, what we bring him is (1.) God’s authority, and (2.) God’s guidance, and these constitute our notion of perfect freedom.

But it is charged that we regard the body too much, and the spirit too little. So far from this, what we contend for is the true spirit of the scheme of missions and of the organization of the Church. What we prize is the soul of the Church, but of course a soul must do better in a body which suits it. The soul of a man could not act well through the body and organs of a hog, or of an elephant. The spirit of a man needs the body of a man, and so the spirit of the Church needs the true body and organism of the Church, for its complete and perfect action.

The idea of the brother, that if Paul were here he would pay no regard to this Church Court, but, act independently of it upon his own authority, filled me with astonishment. Paul surely would not despise order nor condemn the authority which his Divine Master has left in His Church. Sir, we claim to be a true Apostolic Church. Paul is here. All the Apostles are here. We have the very principles they inculcated, and the very order they inaugurated; and would Paul condemn these.

But I made the good brother’s remarks the occasion of consulting Paul on this very question before us, and I have his answer. He declares (Eph. iv. ii.,) that the Lord, as His ascension gifts, “gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers,” and that “*God has set*” these in His Church, and “appointed helps and governments” for it.

But now let us now pass to the main issue—the Presbyterianism of

my brother from Princeton, and that which we hold to be the Presbyterianism of the Bible and of our Constitution. The good brother, in his account of Church Government, has not signalized one principal element of this Presbyterianism. He named: 1. *The parity of the clergy*. Why, sir, this is not a distinctive feature of *Presbyterian Church Government*. All the Evangelical sects, except the Episcopal, hold to that. 2. He named *the authority of the people*. Why sir, that, also, is not distinctive of Presbyterianism. The Congregationalists hold that in intenser degree, than we do. 3. The Doctor mentioned *the unity of the Church*. And is that peculiar to us? Why,—Rome holds that with a vehemence we do not put forth! Such are the three points signalized by the brother as the main points of our system. Look at them, and see what they compose. Is that Presbyterianism? A little of every thing, but nothing distinctive.

Sir, the principles which really distinguish us from other Evangelical Churches are,

1. The principle of representative government—of government by parliamentary courts, composed of Presbyters duly appointed and ordained. A single congregation is governed by the parochial Presbytery; several associated congregations by the classical Presbytery; the whole Church, by a Presbytery of representative Presbyters, from all its bounds. This is the first element that distinguishes us from Congregationalists and from Prelatists—government not by individual rulers, but Assemblies of Presbyters. Do we ignore the people, then? Far from it, the people are there representatively; they are there in Presbyters, all alike of their own choice.

2. The members of these representative Assemblies must be of two classes, belonging to the one order of Presbyters. All of them belong to the one order of rulers, and *only as rulers*, chosen rulers, or representatives of the people, can they appear in these Courts. But they are of two classes, viz: 1. Presbyters who only rule; and, 2. Presbyters who rule and also labor in the word and doctrine. This gives us the second element of our representative government, and answers to the two houses, which are found to be so excellent a help to wise and sale legislation.

Presbyterians, therefore, hold to the *parity of the Eldership*, not only, as Dr. Hodge seems to think, to the parity of the “Clergy,” (that is, of the teaching Elders or ministers,) but, also, to the *parity of all Presbyters*, as Presbyters or Rulers of the Lord’s House. I take my brother, the Ruling Elder, when I meet him in any Church Court, by the hand, ‘as my brother and my *peer*. As Presbyters, as members of any Presbytery, from the lowest to the highest, we are all perfectly equal in authority, although some of us have another function or office, being ordained to labor, also, in the word and doctrine. Dr. Thornwell then referred to an article in the last number of the *Princeton Review*, as going to abolish, and overthrow, altogether, the office of the Ruling Elder and this Presbyterian doctrine of the parity of all Presbyters.

8. A third distinctive feature of Presbyterian Church government is, the way in which it realizes the unity of the Church. It realizes this idea by the *elasticity* of its Parliamentary Representative system. If there was but one congregation on earth, its session would be the Parliament of the whole Church; if half a dozen, the representatives from each, would constitute a Parliament for the whole Church; if a still larger number, the same results would follow. And representatives from all the Churches (or from the smaller Parliaments, which is the same principle,) constitute the Parliament for the whole Church.

Only two Churches on the earth realize this idea of Church unity—Rome and our own Church. But these are the poles apart as to the system by which they realize it. Rome, with her infallible Pope at the head, and with graded authorities extending over the whole earth, one class subservient to another, and all to the Pope, secures a terrible unity—binding all, abjectly, to a single throne. Our system, on the other hand, secures unity in consistency with the most perfect freedom.

Now look, brethren, at the Presbyterianism advocated by the brother from Princeton, and then at that which I have feebly attempted to portray, “Look first on this picture, and then look on that,” and say which of them is the Presbyterianism of the Bible—which is your Presbyterianism. Sir, methought, as the brother portrayed what he called the main principles of our system, that the old Covenanters’ blood which runs in the veins of my brother, your permanent clerk, must have earnestly protested that that was not his Presbyterianism, nor the Presbyterianism of his fathers then in Scotland. I am happy, sir, in being able to say that the system enunciated in the speech of my brother is not the system taught by his colleague who has that department in the Seminary at Princeton.

Dr. HODGE here interposed, with Dr. THORNWELL’S consent, and said that he was unwilling that the few undeveloped statements made by him on Saturday, should be held up, especially in a misapprehended form, as an *exposé* of his views. He had elaborated his views upon that subject in a tract which his colleague (Dr. McGill) approved and used in his classes. He could not permit the impression to go forth uncorrected, that he and his colleague held different views, nor that the delineation given by Dr. Thornwell was a correct delineation of his views. “Moderator,” said Dr. Hodge, “I can agree to every principles set forth by Dr. Thornwell here to-day.” “Do you then mean, Dr. Hodge, to be understood (asked Dr. Thornwell,) as saying that you

hold the Ruling Elder to be a Presbyter? “I will answer that question (said Dr. Hodge,) if you will tell me whether you hold the Apostle to have been a Deacon.” The Moderator interrupted this conversation by announcing that the hour of adjournment had arrived.

On the next day, the discussion being resumed, Dr. THORNWELL

Disavowed any intention of being discourteous, or of wounding the feelings of any brother in his remarks of yesterday, which produced the interruption. Without reiterating the points already made, he would merely refer to one more, which he had neglected in presenting, yesterday, his view of the essentials of our Church Government. He alluded to the power of the representative Assemblies of Rulers. It was simply ministerial and declarative. They could not make laws for God’s people, but only declare and administer the revealed laws of the Lord’s house. They have a certain commission entrusted to them, and no power beyond that which is necessary to execute that commission. Now, the ground which he took in opposition to the present organization of our Boards was, that there was an exercise of power *beyond* what the Church was authorized to exercise, in constituting a society separate from the Church for Church purposes. The Board is a missionary society beyond the Church—outside of the Church—a distinct organism, and the Executive Committee is the hand of this Society, not the hand of the Church. Brethren mistook in saying that the *Board* is the executive agent of the Assembly; it is not. It is, in fact, not an executive agency at all. The Executive Committee is the hand of the Board, and the Board stands off as a missionary society, and to it the Executive Committee reports. Instead of creating a *hand*, and an executive agency of the Assembly, we created a *society*, in imitation of the American Board or the American Home Missionary Society, and transferred to it the work of missions. The Board is not expected to do any thing but appoint the Executive Committee and receive its report, adopt it, and then report to the Assembly. Now, by a true construction of our system, the General Assembly *is* the Board of Domestic Missions. The Executive Committee ought to be the hand of the Assembly, and directly responsible to it. But this is not the case. Another organization—a Society whose members are not identical with the members of the Church, and whose officers are not Church officers, is interposed between the active agency and the Assembly which ought to control. What, then, do you want? To abolish the Board and have the General Assembly act as the Board of Missions for the Church, or rather the Church act through the Assembly.

I want the idea to get out amongst our people, that *every member* of the Church is a member of a Board, not appointed by men, but by

God himself. I wish every Church member to feel that, by the fact of his being a member of the Church, he is a member of a missionary society, and that the privilege of membership is bought with Christ's blood, not with money, and that he owes the duty of a member. The Presbyterian Church is A BOARD OF MISSIONS, OF EDUCATION, and of every other effort that the Church ought to undertake. And to lose sight of that idea, or hide it from the people, is to diminish in their minds the sense of responsibility to labor. It is clear, therefore, that to the extent to which we recognize the propriety of organizing missionary societies without the Church, we propagate the notion amongst our people that a man may be a Christian, and yet not a member of a missionary society; whereas, if you adopt our idea, which is certainly the scriptural one, they will feel that membership in the Church is membership of a missionary society, and to pray and give is a part of a member's duty. I care not for the name. Let it be called a Board—a Committee—no matter; but let it be the *hand of the Church*, to collect and disburse her benefactions, and do her work.

What has a Board ever done? You see from the Report of the Board it does nothing. Many of its members never attend. Many don't know they are members, and others don't care. Its meetings are mere matter of form, and the only effect is to make the members of the Board rely upon the Assembly for supervision, whilst the Assembly relies upon the Board, and supervision is defeated.

I desire to ask one or two questions :

1st. Do you believe that the Church will be more efficient in doing her work, with every member of the Church a member of all her missionary schemes, and with the obligation to perform the duties of a member pressing on his conscience, than as things now are ?

And, 2d. Is it consistent with the dignity of the Church to be offering membership in her Boards, and certain honors supposed to be attached thereto, for thirty or fifty dollars ? Is it not humiliating ?

You ask, why make so much ado about so small a matter? It is not a matter of small importance. Moses was as particular to see to every pin of the tabernacle as to the more important points. No point that God saw proper to order could safely be neglected; and we cannot rightly esteem any thing a small matter which God has directed us to employ.

I love simplicity. I love simplicity of organization. God's works are simple; the organization of His Church is sublimely simple; her worship is simple, and just, as we seek after complexity of schemes, we depart from his example. I want to see this Church placed in such a position that every member may consider himself a member of a society, part of whose *worship* and whose *work* it is to spread the Gospel. I want to see the entire energies of this Church called out in the Master's service, and I want to get clear of every encumbrance that will retard her progress, or embarrass her energies.

Let me say, in the last place, that great events turn upon small principles. The difference between a Board and a Committee of the

Assembly may seem to be small, but the difference is immense. The one is a separate society, the other the Church's own hand.

When you lay down the proposition that the Church is the missionary agency, you make every Church member a member, and lay upon him the responsibility of doing his duty. Under our present organization we know that is not felt.

Moderator, I have now discharged, according to my ability, a solemn public duty. I have stood up for principles that I solemnly believe to be fundamental in our system, and of incalculable importance to the welfare and advancement of our glorious cause. I love the whole catholic Church; but I love the Presbyterian Church with a fervor and a devotion which I cannot utter, and I do desire to see her put in that position that I believe she must occupy in order to the accomplishment of her mission in pouring the blessings of peace and salvation upon our whole land and upon the nations. I want the Church to come up to this mission in her own proper organization, with her own Assemblies, her own officers, in her own power, executing her commissions herself, without delegating to any outside organism those functions and duties, to perform which is her highest glory. When they ask the people to contribute, let her ministers speak, not in the name of this Board or that Board, but in the name of Zion and her glorious King. Let them ever press the idea that it is not the cause of a Board of human creation, but of the blood-bought Church and her exalted Head.

Dr. THORNWELL closed his long and able argument (says the *Presbyterian*)

With one of those impressive apostrophes, and earnest appeals, which few men can equal; and, although his argument may not have been deemed conclusive by some of his hearers, all felt that his utterances were as honest as they were earnest, and they left a profound impression upon every hearer.

Rev. Mr. Janvier asked, what are supposed to be the particular benefits of the present system? He was prepared, as he thought, to vote three days ago, but he had heard much since that led him to ask what the advantages of the present system were, and he hoped some of those fathers and brethren that had long known the working of our Boards would set forth the reasons why they preferred the present organization.

Rev. Dr. Krebs got the floor, but yielded it to the

Rev. Dr. Hodge. He rose, with great reluctance, and proposed to occupy the time of the Assembly but a few minutes. He rose rather in obedience to the wishes of friends and brethren, than by the impulse of his own mind; but it was, perhaps, due to himself and his position to say a word or two. He said that, on Saturday last, in the few remarks which he made, he did not design to eliminate a theory of the Church, or Church Government. His aim was to show the

impracticability of the proposed scheme and theory, rather than to declare his own. He had uttered three sentences which Dr. Thornwell had held up sometimes in a ludicrous, sometimes in a portentous light, and out of them had constructed, and attributed to him (Dr. Hodge) a theory of Church government which he utterly repudiated. He held no such theory. If Dr. Thornwell's was the sentiment of this house, then he (Dr. Hodge) was unworthy to hold, at the hands of this Assembly, the place in which he had labored for almost forty years—nay, he would be unworthy to be considered a Presbyterian. He had, himself, developed those three sentences into a system of Church government, in a pamphlet, entitled "What is Presbyterianism?" presenting a theory of our system as a divinely instituted, *jure divino* form of government. That pamphlet has received the sanction of our Board of Publication; it has been circulated by thousands through the land; it has been commended by theologians beyond the borders of our own country more warmly than by our brethren at home; it has been adopted by Dr. McGill and put into the hands of his pupils. I have, therefore, after all, some reputation as a sound Presbyterian.

Permit me, Mr. Moderator, to state, in very few words, what that theory of Presbyterianism is. It involves the following principles :

1. That all the attributes and prerogatives of the Church of God on earth are derived from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

2. Consequently, that the prerogatives of the Church belong, in the first instance, *in sensu primo*, to the people, and not exclusively to the clergy. This is the great distinctive principle of Protestantism.

3. That these prerogatives are to be exercised through the organs and according to the rules prescribed in the Word of God.

4. That the Holy Spirit dwelling in all the children of God, making them one body in Christ Jesus, distributes gifts to each one severally as He wills. To one he gives the gifts of an Apostle, to another those of a Prophet, to another those of a teacher, to another those of ruling, etc., etc.

5. That of these organs or officers of the Apostolic Church, some were intended to be permanent, others temporary: The criteria for discriminating between the permanent and temporary offices are, 1. The nature of the gifts involved in them. It was plenary revelation and inspiration which constituted an Apostle. If that gift has ceased the office has ceased. It was occasional inspiration which constituted a Prophet; if that gift is no longer granted, we have no longer a class of living Prophets. 2. When there is an express command that a given office should be continued; or, 3. When the qualifications which are to be required in candidates for the office are prescribed, then the office is permanent. 4, and finally, when it can be proved, historically, that an office has, in fact, been continued from the apostolic through all succeeding ages.

6. That the officers thus ascertained to be permanent, are Ministers of the Word, Ruling Elders, and Deacons.

7. That as there is no class of officers above the Presbyteries, no gifts higher than those which constitute a minister of the Word, Presbyters are the highest permanent officers of the Church, and stand all on the same level; all have the same office and the same prerogatives. This is the parity of the clergy. There are no Apostles, no Prophets, and, of course, no prelates.

8. That the right of the people to take part in the government of the Church, is exercised through their representatives, the Ruling Elders. Here is the principle of representation, and here is the foundation of the peculiar character of our Church Courts. They are composed of two elements, a lay and clerical, Ministers and Elders. This representation of the people is first in the Session, then in the Presbytery, then in the Synod, and then in the General Assembly. In all, the Elders have the same right with the Ministers to participate in the exercise of all the powers of the Church—executive, legislative and judicial. They are in our Courts, not by courtesy, not by human ordinance, but of Divine right.

9. That as the Spirit of God dwelling in all believers makes them one body; as the command to obey our brethren in the Lord is not limited to those brethren who may belong to the same congregation with ourselves; as it is not founded on mere proximity, nor on any mutual covenant, but on the fact that they are our brethren, in whom the Spirit dwells, therefore the Church is one; therefore, a smaller part is subject to a larger, a larger to the whole; a Session to the Presbytery, a Presbytery to the Synod, and the Synods to the General Assembly.

This is my Presbyterianism. I am not ashamed of it. I am willing to avow it here and elsewhere, and stand or fall by it. What, then, are the points of difference between this system and that advocated on the other side? That is a question, not easy to be answered. The difficulty arises partly from the fact, there seems to be no consistency or agreement between those who set themselves in array against the common doctrine; and partly because it is not easy to catch up every thing that is uttered in the heat of debate. So far as I understand matters, the essential points of difference are these :

1. That Ruling Elders and Ministers, being alike Presbyters, have the same office; all are Bishops, Pastors and Teachers, as well as Rulers. [Here Dr. Thornwell interposed, and said that was not his doctrine.] Mr. Moderator, I cannot pretend to state Dr. Thornwell's doctrine. I state the doctrine which has been advanced and strenuously advocated in different parts of the Church. The point stated is radical, and changes the whole character of our system. But as it is disavowed by Dr. T. I will not dwell upon it.

2. A second point of difference is, that all Church power is joint, and not several. It is all in the hands of Church Courts, and can be exercised only by them. Then, Moderator, you cannot carry out your system. You cannot send out missionaries either to the destitute or the heathen. A missionary goes often alone. He preaches the

Gospel. Men are converted. They profess their faith. They are baptized, and received to the Lord's table. There is no Session. There is no Church Court. The Minister exercises the prerogative to admit to the sacraments. He constitutes the Church, and when Elders are elected he ordains them.

The third point of difference is, that all the details of Church government, even to the nails in the tabernacle, are prescribed in the Word of God, either in express terms or by necessary inference. We have no more discretion in matters of government or modes of operation, than we have in matters of doctrine or morals. This was the main, and, so far as my remarks were concerned, the only point. The subject under discussion was the Boards. The Boards were declared to be unscriptural, because not enjoined. No "Thus saith the Lord" can be adduced in their behalf. It is this doctrine against which my whole soul revolts. This pleading the authority of the Almighty God for the opinions of men; this asserting that the commands of the Almighty extend in externals to the infinitesimally small difference between a Board and a Committee; this is a doctrine to which I am persuaded Presbyterians never will submit.

Dr. KREBS obtained the floor when the question came up again, and expressed a wish that Dr. McGill should define his position, as his name had been involved in this debate. Dr. McGill declining to speak, Dr. KREBS

Proceeded to endorse all Dr. Thornwell's great principles, and all they involve, even to a preference for directly ecclesiastical agency. But he thought they were not logically applicable in Dr. Thornwell's way of applying them. It is the glory of the Church that she receives nothing for which she has not directly or implied a "Thus saith the Lord." But if this principle be so applied as to insist upon an explicit precept for every circumstantial and every detail in the operations of the Church, he must beg leave to dissent. It could not be done.\*

He proceeded to notice the argument from the inability of Congress to delegate their legislative authority. Although they could not delegate legislative authority, they could authorize the appointment of a Department of the Interior, or the appointment of Foreign Ministers, or even a Plenipotentiary Minister. Neither do we demit

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\* The reader will notice that this was not Dr. Thornwell's application of the principle. He said the circumstantials came under the rule, "do all things decently and in order." He did not say there is an "explicit precept for every one of these details." He said the command implied all the *necessary executive agency*, but did not authorize an organism like our Boards, with President, Vice President, honorary members, etc., etc. We think Dr. Krebs ought to have voted with the minority.

our office or authority when we appoint a Board or Committee to carry out the orders of the General Assembly, or to execute certain ministerial functions during the eleven months of the interval between the dissolution of one Assembly and the meeting of another.

In fact, the moment these brethren allow a committee, however small, however direct and immediate the responsibility, that moment they demolish their whole argument. He liked simplicity himself, and if the brethren desired the utmost measure of simplicity, the best way would be to appoint a *single man*, or at most two, to manage each of these great interests of the Church.

He then drew a distinction between the dissolving of a Board and the dissolving of a Synod or Presbytery, to show that the Assembly had more complete power over the destiny of the one than of the other. When the latter is dissolved, its component parts still live, and are attached to some other bodies; but if the Board is dissolved, it is annihilated, its "*disjecta membra*" are scattered to the winds; or, to draw an illustration from the waters, they are seen, "*nantes in gurgite vasto*." The Assembly has complete control over a Board, it is its creature.

He contended that our present system is as legitimate and normal an outworking of the Presbyterian system as would be any thing in the shape of a Commission or a Committee. And this he said as a Presbyterian; for, although he had not derived his Presbyterian lineage from North Britain, or North Ireland, yet, he could trace it directly to the banks of the Rhine and Palatinate, where *his* Presbyterian ancestors had drawn it direct from Geneva, which the glorious Calvin had made the centre of the Presbyterian world.

What we contended for, Moderator, is, that the Head of the Church has not prescribed the mode of organization and activity, but has left us at liberty to do His work the best way we can, under the general guidance of His Word. The doctrine of our brethren is an invasion of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free—free from the traditions and commandments of men.

Now comes the practical question: Which is best, a Board or a Committee? A hand growing *right out from the shoulder*, or a hand *attached to an arm*, and connected with the body *by the arm*, and obeying the behests of the *head* and the *heart*. He would notice only some of the points of comparison:

1. A paid membership our brethren object to. And what is it? A pious mother has a beloved son, just consecrated by her in baptism to the Lord; she gives thirty or fifty dollars, and has his name enrolled as an honorary member of a Board. It is a harmless expression of her love to her boy and to the cause.

2. Another objection is the appointment of members all over the country. No little fun has been poked at us members of the Board, on the score of our constituting a fifth estate in the Church:—they say the first estate is *Professors of Seminaries*; the second, *Secretaries of Boards*; the third, *Editors of Religious Papers*; the fourth,

*Doctors of Divinity*; and the fifth, which many a man aspires to when he cannot get into either of the other four, is the estate of *Members of the Boards*. But the plan just lays hold of a principle of human nature which it is lawful to suborn for good. By appointing men all over the country, the Assembly awakens an interest in the cause in the minds of influential men, and of others whom they can influence.

3. Another objection is to what is called the farce of the election. Any little mistake may be turned into ridicule—but these mistakes are not the fault of the system. So it is not the fault of the system, but of the officers, that some members of the Board do not know that they are members.

Dr. KREBS was here interrupted by the hour for adjournment. In the afternoon he moved that Dr. McGill be *invited by the Assembly* (of which he was not a member) to define his position. The motion passed *nem. con.*

Dr. MCGILL expressed his thanks; stated that Dr. Thornwell *was authorized* to say that he agrees with him in his views of Church government—they are the views he teaches in the Seminary at Princeton. At the same time, he had no sympathy with the application of them made by Dr. Thornwell in regard to the activities of the Church. “I also substantially agree with Dr. Hodge, for I see very little difference between them. I go with Dr. Hodge and with Dr. Thornwell. I have but one remark with respect to any supposed diversity of opinion between my colleague and myself. I confess I read with deep regret an article in the last *Princeton Review* upon the Eldership. I cannot approve that article, and if Dr. Hodge does, *quoad hoc*, there is a diversity of opinion.” Dr. McGill proceeded to express his kind feelings for Dr. Hodge, and his knowledge of the mutual respect and kind feelings entertained by Drs. Hodge and Thornwell for one another.

Dr. Krebs then proceeded with his argument, insisting that by our present arrangements of large Boards the whole land is covered with a sort of net-work, by which the people are drawn to the performance of their duty to the cause. By these admirable arrangements the whole body is pervaded with nerves that sympathize with the centre, and cooperate with it.

He ridiculed the idea of asking the Boards to send up their

minutes and papers for review and control. Said he had no objection to it, except the difficulty of transportation. A small steamboat, a car of Adams' express, or an ox team, would be required to bring them; and, if piled up on this platform, the Moderator and Clerks would all become invisible behind the rampart. And then he would like to see the Committee appointed to examine them at work in the lecture-room. It is about "as much as they usually can do to attend to the business as now before them. How they would accomplish the additional labor, he was glad it was not for him to say. If this thing should be attempted, we should have other farces than those of electing members of the Board. Try it, brethren, and I hope you will have, amongst these masses of books and papers, a good time generally.

The time of adjournment came, but a motion prevailed to suspend the rule for adjournment until Dr. Krebs had finished. And he proceeded

To argue from the history of the Boards, and their rise and progress, from 1789 to 1860, that they now were in the state to which the wisdom of our fathers and our own—the experiences of the past—the trial of other methods, and the success of our schemes, had brought them. He appealed to what had been accomplished by the Board system; asserted that the Church never dreamed of being in rebellion against God, or its own Constitution, and urged the importance of abiding by the present system until we were sure of a better. God has given us good prosperity; shall we fling it all in the face of his Providence? Shall we go back to discarded systems? Must we go back and lay new foundations? or, shall we go on to perfection? Shall we cripple ourselves, our Boards and our work, by perpetual vacillation? Shall we not hold to something? We know what we *have*, we know not what we shall get if we go backward. The Church will lose its confidence in you, sir, amid this perpetual agitation. It needs repose. The change proposed will not add funds. Whatever plan we have, we want more of the Spirit of God. We have the altar, the wood, the material for sacrifice; we want fire from Heaven to kindle it. O! for that fire, to warm our own hearts, and that of the Church. Then, brethren, would we see eye to eye, be joined hand in hand, and this glorious system, disparaged as "a wheel within a wheel," would soon appear as "full of eyes," spangled with intelligence, and moved as a thing of life, by the Spirit of the living creature that is in the wheels—guided and impelled by the power that governs and directs all providential things and human agencies; and all our plans and systems, whither they shall go, and what they shall do!

Rev. Dr. Henry A. Board man having the floor, said that the time chosen for the discussion was most propitious, because never, in the history of the Church, had God so signally blessed the operations of

the Boards. We had reason to lament that we had given so little and done so little, and yet, what they had done had been accomplished through the agency of this system. And yet we hear, from a learned Professor in one of our Theological Seminaries, that our system is not in accordance with the Word of God, and that in the establishment of these Boards we are invading the prerogatives of Jesus Christ.

He referred to the division of the Church in 1837 and 1838, and said that the New-School brethren had at length learned by bitter experience the truth of the principles they discarded then, and for which we are now contending.

In reference to Dr. Thornwell, he stated that he was an eloquent speaker, who charmed by his tones; and he hoped it would be said of him, as of one of old, that his voice is as one who plays well upon an instrument, and the people love to hear his words, but they do them not. And so he hoped it would always be, as long as he teaches the doctrines he has advocated here.

As he understood the brother, his doctrine was that the Church was absolutely prohibited by the Great Head of the Church from creating any agency that was not absolutely necessary, and that agency, too, must be of the simplest form.

Dr. Thornwell had said that in creating Boards, we were casting a reproach upon the Saviour. The speaker could hardly credit his hearing—it was an astonishing declaration. They contended for a “Thus saith the Lord” for every thing. Where do they get their authority for a Board in a Theological Seminary? And yet, two of these gentlemen are here as representatives of Theological Seminaries. How do they sleep quietly upon their pillows while these Boards remain?

The speaker referred to the paraphernalia of the tabernacle, and styled the speech of Dr. Thornwell as Levitical in the extreme. He did not believe that Presbyterianism, in all its details, was found in the Bible, although its fundamental principles were. He referred to Dr. Baird’s *Assembly Digest* in high terms, and stated that he had carefully examined that book, and from beginning to end he could not find a single footprint or ligament of this High-Church Presbyterianism.

Dr. B. M. Smith dwelt on the unquestionable fact, that a large number of men in our Church have long had serious objections to the cumbrous organization of our Boards. After the Buffalo Assembly, we were told that the question was adjudicated and settled. But in 1855, at Nashville, the question revived, and it seemed to be then settled the other way. Last year the Assembly appointed Committees upon the reorganization of the Boards, although gentlemen there said the question ought to have no further discussion, because it was a settled question. But gentlemen are mistaken—the question must be discussed until the right principles are determined, and the proper and true forms agreed upon. Dr. Smith proceeded to show that, although there had been no attempt at organizing a party, yet there

had been a voluntary and very wide spread opinion favorable to modifying the present organization.

He dwelt on the notable fact, that resistance to modification begins and is led on by men who hold the power, and exercise control.

He had himself had a little taste of official life, in a brief service as Secretary of the Board of Publication, and the result of his own personal observations there was, that the present system is an incubus upon the Church's energies.

His remarks on the origin of our present cumbrous forms had been misapprehended. He had not said that the men who founded our Boards were Congregationalists, but that the interspersion of many men through our Church from Congregationalist Churches had produced a public sentiment among us which led to the adoption of our present system, as adapted to the preferences of such.

The true contest between us and the New School was as to the *right* of the Church, *as such*, to conduct missions.

Why did not some of the brethren on the other side answer the very pertinent question of the Missionary from India (the Rev. Mr. Janvier), and tell us what are the peculiar advantages of the present system to be set over against all the objections made against them?

Here it occurs to produce a certain paper, prepared in Philadelphia last Monday week, and circulated here. He read the paper. (It was the document of the Executive Committee of the Board of Publication, expressing opposition to any change in the constitution of the Boards.)

Dr. Smith doubted the right of the committee to express any such opinion about matters which this General Assembly only had a right to decide: It was an improper attempt to exert influence upon members. But it was not the first time such influence had been attempted from such quarters; and sometimes even the action of one Assembly had been reversed by another under such influences.

Dr. BOARDMAN interposed to say they had only done that to enlighten Dr. Smith, the Chairman of the Committee appointed by the last Assembly. We knew the gentleman held certain views on this subject, and as, by the constitution of that Committee, he represented the Board of Publication, we wished to inform him of our views.

Rev. Dr. SMITH (bowing respectfully) thanked the Committee for their benevolence—would have acknowledged his obligations earlier had he understood the object of that action. It is, Moderator, but another added to the many marks of the *understanding* and *will* of that Board. But still it is true that neither the Committee nor the Executive Committee of the Board of Publication were asked by this Assembly to give their views.

He said, further, that the arguments used now in favor of these Boards was the same used in defence of the continuance of the "Plan of Union." "Why disturb a plan that bus enlarged our Church so much, by bringing Congregationalists into it? Why disturb the Home Missionary Society? Has not it done good?" We replied, it

may have done good, but we want to act as a Church—we want to put honor upon the organization that Christ has given us. We are now asked, why disturb the Boards? Have not they done well? We answer, we want to act more directly as a Church—they have, or rather, their Executive Committees have, done well; but, we believe that the Committees would have done *better*, under the immediate control of the Assembly, without this *tertium quid*, called a Board. And we further say, we are not disturbing the Boards. We ask for no great change—chiefly a reduction of the *number*, and dispensing with paid membership. He would have preferred the name *Committee* of Assembly to Board, but that was matter of small importance.

As to the danger of forfeiting the civil corporate powers of the Boards, there was none—that was a mere bug-bear. He parried the argument of Dr. Boardman, in regard to the *Boards* of Directors of the Seminaries. Dr. Boardman had wondered how we could sleep under a Board of Directors? Very soundly, sir, because our Board of Directors are elected *directly* by the Synods of Virginia and North Carolina. So in Princeton, so in Columbia. They are no more than Committees of the ecclesiastical Courts—the very thing for which we contend. We sleep soundly, sir, and have no bad dreams, as if the incubus of a Board were pressing upon our breasts.

The Rev. Mr. BLAUVELT got the floor, and moved the previous question. The Assembly sustained the call for it. Dr. WHITE called for the *yeas* and *nays*, upon the main question, and they were ordered. The proposition voted on was

That it is inexpedient to make any organic changes in the Board of Domestic Missions.

The vote stood, yeas 234, nays 56.

Dr. Spring moved the indefinite postponement of the remaining portion of the report.

Dr. Boardman said that in this report he had no more interest, personally, than those around him; but this subject had been so much discussed—the Church so much agitated by it—that he thought it due to all—to the last Assembly, and to the peace of the Churches—to have it definitively settled. He thought the indefinite postponement would be of mischievous tendency. He hoped that after appointing a large Committee, and having a report laboriously and carefully prepared, they would not throw it out of the House.

On Monday, the 28th of May, Dr. Thornwell presented, for himself and others, the following protest against the action of the Assembly with reference to the Boards. It

was admitted to record, and referred, for answer, to a Committee consisting, of Drs. Brown, Hodge and White, and Elders Clarke and Buel. The Protest found, with no particular efforts to circulate it, the twenty-six signers whose names are here appended to it. It would have been very easy to increase greatly the number.

#### PROTEST.

The undersigned beg leave to record their very respectful protest against the decision of the Assembly, touching the expediency of making organic changes in the Constitution of the Board of Domestic Missions. Their reasons are :

I. That said decision is understood by them to imply, that it is not expedient for the Church to conduct her missions by a ministerial agency, directly related and immediately responsible to herself. One organic difference, as they apprehend the matter, between the present system of Boards, and the scheme of Executive Committees is, that the Boards are not expected to do the work themselves, the election of a large proportion of those who compose them is intended to be simply a complimentary distinction, which imposes no obligation, and the bodies when organized are only designed to appoint and superintend the real agents, which do the work. The Board, therefore, seems to us to be an organization within the Church, occupying the place and exercising the powers which belong to her own judicatories.

II. We protest, in the next place, because the decision seems to imply, that it is expedient to concede the right of sitting and deliberating, as honorary members of these bodies, for a pecuniary contribution. This strikes us as an organic feature of the present system.

III. We object, in the third place, to the principle which underlies the Constitution of our Boards, to wit: that the specific grant of a power imposes no precise limitations upon the choice of instruments to execute it. The only things concerning the worship of God and government of the Church, left to Christian prudence and discretion, according to our Confession of Faith, are "some circumstances common to human actions and societies." The legitimate construction of this principle, in the case before us, restricts the discretion of the Church, not only to the instrumentality which is most in harmony with her Divine organization, but to the instrumentality which is most direct, simple and efficient. As the Church cannot, upon any conditions, under the plea of this discretion, employ outside associations as her ministers to do her work, no more can she, upon the same plea, create within her own bosom institutions analogous to them.

IV. We apprehend, in the fourth place, that the effect of the vote will be to weaken the Church's impressions of the great fundamental truth, that it is her duty, in her organized capacity, to do the work committed to her. We believe, indeed, that in respect to Domestic

Missions, especially, every Presbytery is primarily responsible for the culture of the field included within its bounds, and should earnestly and vigorously undertake itself to carry on the work throughout the whole extent of its territory; and we hold that in the nature of things it is impossible for any central agency whatsoever to supervise this whole business throughout all our established Presbyteries. And we, therefore, apprehend that this vote will tend to hinder the successful prosecution of Domestic Missions in these Presbyteries, by encouraging them to remit their own proper and necessary duty, to an agency, which, while it seems to supplant them, is moreover utterly unable, and must ever be utterly unable, to perform this work. But, at the same time, we believe that the General Assembly is the proper body to carry on the Domestic Missionary enterprise in all our wide frontiers, now opening so rapidly to receive a teeming population, and that an executive agency of the Assembly is necessary for the conduct of this business; and, also, for the purpose of equalizing the abundance and necessities of our established Presbyteries, that the weak may be assisted by the strong, to overtake their missionary work in their own bounds. And this work of the General Assembly, which is our highest court, and represents, by Divine authority, the whole Church, we hold to be committed to the Church, as such, to be done by her in her organized capacity, and not delegated by her to another body, that it may appoint the needful executive agency by which it is to be accomplished.

V. We protest, lastly, against this decision of the Assembly because it perpetuates a system which obviously does not enlist the sympathies of the Church, nor develop its energies, as is shewn by the comparative insignificance of its results. The receipts of last year, from the Churches, were only some \$88,000, while our Church numbers about 300,000 members! It seems to us that, seeing we have for more than a quarter of a century been operating upon the present plans, with no adequate response from year to year, during all this period, by the Churches, to the demands of this sacred cause, it is high time for us to conclude that our operations fail to touch the springs of the Church's life and activity, and that some changes in the arrangements of our machinery are both necessary and expedient.

In brief, we hold that the Church is required to conduct the work of missions; that she is limited in her discretion to the appointment of strictly executive agencies; that these agents must be directly responsible to herself; and, that any organization which she may institute, not in harmony with these principles, must prove inefficient, and cannot be expedient, because not agreeable to Scripture. Our vote, and this protest, are intended to record our adherence to these principles. If, on the other hand, the decision in question is not liable to the objections which we have mentioned, as having been really based on a different interpretation from ours of the ambiguous words "organic changes;" and if our brethren, in voting against "organic changes," only intended to signify that the Assembly must

continue to act through organs of some kind, and not directly in its capacity of a Court, then we have no objection to the decision against which we have protested. Our brethren of the majority may still agree with us that changes are desirable, only they would call these changes "*modifications,*" and not "*organic changes.*" Thus interpreted, there is, obviously, nothing in the decision of the Assembly to the prejudice of efforts to improve our system.

J. H. THORNWELL,	ARTHUR M. SMALL,
JOHN B. ADGER,	JOHN G. RICHARDS,
E. T. BAIRD,	HENRY WALSH,
Z. CONKEY,	W. K. MARSHALL
D. D. MCBRYDE,	JAMES P. MCMULLIN,
JOHN F. MATHESON,	A. C. MCNEILL,
C. M. ANDREWS,	DAVID MCCAW,
GEORGE D. ARMSTRONG,	JESSE CARTER,
JOHN H. RICE,	C. B. HILLHOUSE,
SAML. J. PRICE,	J. H. ALEXANDER,
ROBT. S. MCALLISTER,	M. MCQUEEN,
B. M. SMITH,	J. SIMPSON FRIERSON,
DAVID H. PORTER,	PHILIP P. GILCHRIST.

On the next day (Tuesday, May 20,) Dr. KREBS offered the following resolutions, which were adopted without debate:

*Resolved, 1st.* That it shall be the duty of the Secretaries of the Boards to notify the members thereof of their appointment, and of all the meetings of the Boards, whether stated or special, and when such meetings shall be for special purposes, the subject of discussion shall be named in the notice.

*Resolved, 2d.* That it shall be the duty of the above named Boards to send up to the Assembly, with their Annual Reports, their book of minutes, and the books of minutes of the respective Executive Committees, for examination; and it shall be the duty of said Committees to bring to the attention of the Assembly any matters in these minutes which, in their judgment, calls for the notice of the Assembly.

*Resolved, 3d.* That it is not lawful for either of the above named Boards or Committees to issue certificates of life membership to any person, or any testimonial, by virtue of which any person is permitted to sit, deliberate, and vote with the Boards; but the Boards may devise and grant certificates, or testimonials, of special donations to the class of persons hitherto known as Honorary Members, it being understood and provided that such person can in no sense be allowed, by purchase or gift, to exercise any sort of right or position to deliberate and vote with the members appointed by the General Assembly.

Dr. Thornwell immediately came forward and said, that inasmuch as the resolutions just adopted carried out so very considerably the needful reorganization of our Boards, he would, for himself and others, ask the Assembly's leave to withdraw the protest he had offered yesterday. Leave was granted, in the midst of subdued applause.

The remaining portions of the report on reorganization were taken up on the last day of the Session, and the *second resolution*, viz: not to remove the seat of the Domestic Board from Philadelphia, was adopted.

The *third resolution*, viz: to abolish the Louisville Committee, was earnestly pressed for adoption, by Dr. Boardman, and as earnestly opposed by Rev. J. H. Rice. It was referred to the next Assembly.

The *fourth resolution*, viz: to ordain that one of the two Secretaries of the Board should be a traveling Secretary or Agent, was also earnestly urged in the Assembly by Dr. Boardman, but it was rejected by an overwhelming majority.

On the last afternoon, Hon. Judge Lord, of Oswego, New York, moved the reduction of the number of the Board from ninety-six to forty-eight, the reduction to begin going into operation by the election, at the next Assembly, of twelve new members instead of twenty-four, so that in four years the reduction should be accomplished.

The Rev. Mr. Halliday, of Peekskill, N. Y., objected, on the ground that a large number of the members of the Assembly had already taken their leave, and that the body was on the eve of its adjournment. The resolution was accordingly laid on the table.

We have thus brought to a close our sketch of the debate on the reorganization of the Boards. We crave the attention of the reader now to a few comments upon some points of it, before we dismiss the subject.

1. We repeat that the vote on the first resolution, respecting "organic changes," was no indication at all of the rela-

tive strength of the two sides in debate. We know positively that many were induced, by the mere wording of the resolution, to vote in the affirmative, who yet agreed fully with the minority. It is always an awkward thing to debate a negative proposition, and so it is always both awkward and confusing to vote upon a resolution that is at once negative and equivocal. We are not casting any reflection, of course, upon Dr. Boardman for so wording the resolution, for it was accepted by Dr. Thornwell. Earnest objection was made, however, on the floor, at the outset of the debate, against the form in which it was brought forward. Whose was the fault of its not being possible to get the error rectified, we will not say. All we care about is, to assert that the vote did not fairly exhibit the real opinion of the Assembly, and we think it proof enough of the assertion to refer to the subsequent action of the Assembly, by which three of the "changes" desired by the minority were ordered by the Assembly, and a fourth only tabled on the ground of the close of the session being so near at hand; and by which, on the other hand, two changes desired by the immediate representative of the Boards, were refused to be ordered by the Assembly.

There was some chuckling of the Assembly over this vote when first taken, and there has been some, also, in the *Presbyterian*, and perhaps one or two other papers devoted to the present system, whose editors were not present to understand the real spirit of the body. There may, perhaps, be more of it, although we rather expect the shouts of triumph will not be as loud as they have been on former occasions. We make our friends in Philadelphia welcome to all the satisfaction they can derive from this vote. Another such victory as this will ruin their cause. This is not the first time that the apparent minority have been the real victors in the struggle. We think it must begin to be apparent to all parties, that the question was not for ever

settled at Buffalo, nor at Nashville, against all change of our system.

2. The real question at issue, after earnest efforts by the friends of the present system to keep it out of view, begins to be understood by the Church, viz: Ecclesiastical Action in its simplest, directest, purest form, or Action by a body intervening between the Church and her executive agents. It was really amusing to hear Dr. Hodge insist, in his first speech, as others have done before, that the ground *we* occupy in this discussion is the very ground formerly maintained by the New School! But, even the *New York Observer*, since the late debate, is able to see and to point out how great is the misapprehension here. "If any one (says its editor) has inferred that the opposition to the system of Boards was meant to indicate a desire to return to the old plan, (that is, of acting through voluntary associations,) the misapprehension is the greatest possible. The opponents of the *Board* system wish to make the agency *more purely ecclesiastical*; they assert the duty of the Church in her organized capacity to do her work, without the intervention of a delegated body, and, more emphatically, without entrusting it to an outside society." Such a clear testimony from this source we hope will be decisive, and that we shall hear no more of this stale device. Our brethren will now cease, we trust, to use their argument, *ad invidiam* against us, by thus misrepresenting our ground of opposition to the Boards. If the late discussion had only cleared up this fog, it would have been something gained. Our Church got rid of the voluntary Boards twenty years ago. We trust the day is not far distant when she will have thoroughly worked herself clear of all the substitutions for them, which she has been obliged so long to tolerate. What thanks shall we not send up to her Divine Head, when, through His grace, she shall be seen thoroughly confiding in the instruments He gave her, with her simple machinery ac-

commodated throughout to the sublimely simple principles of the divine Church government He Himself ordained!

3. And here we must introduce a few remarks on the representation which the vendible Professor from Princeton made of those who “set themselves (as he expressed it) against the common doctrine.” His first statement about them is, that “there seems to be no consistency or agreement between them”—which, of course, if it were so, would certainly have insured their complete discomfiture long ere this late day.

Dr. Hodge then states the “*first* essential point of difference” between them and “the common doctrine,” to be “their making Ruling Elders and Ministers, being alike Presbyters, to have the same office: all are Bishops, Pastors, and Teachers, as well as Rulers.” Well might Dr. Thornwell interpose, and say that that was not his doctrine! But Dr. Hodge proceeded to assert that he was, nevertheless, stating “the doctrine which has been advanced and strenuously maintained in different parts of the Church!” Now, we acknowledge his great learning, as perhaps the best read divine of our Church, and of course we would not presume to dispute his declaration that such a doctrine has been advanced and advocated in different parts of our Church. All we dare assert is, that, in our limited reading on this question, we have never met with any such statement. We have, indeed, often met with, and as often accepted, the doctrine (for it is scriptural) that Ruling Elders and Ministers are alike Presbyters; have the same office of the Presbyterate; and accordingly are alike Rulers, and of equal right, as such, in all the Courts of the Church. We have often read, and as often believed, that both these classes of Presbyters are Scriptural Bishops and Pastors. But we never did read or hear of such a theory as that which Dr. Hodge ascribes to some “strenuous” persons in different parts of our Church. We must live and learn.

The *second* essential point of difference, as Dr. Hodge

states, is that “all Church power is joint, and not several.” Who they are that teach this doctrine, is, also, unknown to us. But we have often heard, and as often believed, that all power of rule in the Church is joint, and not several. The power of doctrine is several, and not joint, and, therefore, is committed to Ministers individually—but the power of rule is joint. With Presbyterians, no single Minister can ever exercise the power of rule, in the settled Church state. Government, in the settled Church state is, for Presbyterians, always by courts of Elders. “Well, (says Dr. Hodge,) then you cannot carry out your system, because single Missionaries have to exercise the power of rule.” Yes, we answer, the Missionary is the Evangelist, an *extraordinary* officer, not belonging to a settled Church state, and having, as all Presbyterians have always admitted, extraordinary powers. The Missionary is an *extraordinary* officer, needed, indeed, even in our great cities, but only in so far as the Church is not settled and established there. Yes, we can carry out our Presbyterian system, which in every settled Church state calls for the Pastor to succeed the Evangelist as soon as a Church is organized, and for the latter to pass on to regions beyond. We can carry it out, though denying to Ministers, in the midst of our settled Churches, the power we all yield to the *extraordinary* officers of the Church in foreign lands and distant frontier settlements.

But one word here upon a kindred statement of Dr. Hodge, in his first speech. When objecting to the “more than Jewish burden,” which he alleged Dr. Thornwell would fasten on the Church’s shoulders, the burden of a Divinely appointed Church Government—“a burden which, if fastened on her, she would have to carry, over hill and dale, to all the heathen nations,” he seems to have all at once strangely forgotten his own language about the people’s essential right to a substantive part of Church power; and he inconsistently declares, in the very strongest

expressions, that no converted heathen were prepared to take any part in the government of the Church. The essential right of the people to a share in the government has vanished! Dr. Hodge appeals to Walter Lowrie to confirm his statement that "Presbyterianism can't be introduced at once." "Would you make Elders (he asks) of infants, bishops of babes?"

Now, of course, the ordinary government of the Church cannot be introduced among any people before there are converts enough from amongst them to be organized into a Church. If this were all Dr. Hodge intended to say, no one could dispute his position. But he seems to have intended to say, that, for an indefinite period after the conversion of numbers of a heathen people, and their organization into Churches, proper Presbyterianism still may not be introduced amongst them. Now this, we are obliged to say, is a position quite equal to Rome of the other extraordinary things Dr. Hodge has put forth concerning Presbyterian Church Government. It is enough to say, in opposition to it, that *we* have heard Walter Lowrie, and both the other Secretaries, declare that just as soon as any Foreign Missionary of ours has been ready to organize a little Church among any heathen people, he has always found some persons of the little flock qualified to take the place of elders, guides, shepherds, head men and rulers over them. It would be, indeed, strange if this were not always the case. At the very beginning, the Master gave these scriptural pastors to all those little Churches which Paul and Barnabas, or which Titus, those ancient missionaries to the ancient heathen, organized in every city; and would it not be strange, indeed, if he should now cease to do the same for all those little Churches which modern missionaries are organizing amongst the modern heathen?

The *third* essential point of difference, as stated by Dr. Hodge, is, that all the details of Church government are prescribed, either in express terms or by necessary infer-

ence. We accept this statement of our views as a sufficiently correct one. We do hold that the substantial of Church government are laid down in Scripture, in particular rules, respecting the officers, the Courts, the discipline and, also, the circumstantials, in general rules of order and decency. We do hold that the Presbytery, even in its smallest forms, has the keys of the Kingdom committed to it; and not only that, the Church, in all her Courts, possesses, *by* Divine right, all needful executive authority to carry out her Master's commands, but, also, that whatever regulations these Courts make, are *of jure divino* authority, if in accordance with Scripture. And this it is which invests all the doings of Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions, with so much solemn responsibility. Dr. Hodge makes it an infinitesimally small matter whether the Church transcends the bounds of necessity in constructing her executive agencies. We make it a great matter. His whole soul revolts against the doctrine that the Church is not at liberty to construct new Courts to be her vicars. We believe that Christ's own Court, the General Assembly, is the only Board of Missions that is necessary, and so, the only one that is lawful. We hold that the Church, in her organized capacity, must herself do the work committed to her, through her own executive agency, and that she may not delegate that work to any other organism or body.

4. In his *second* speech, Dr. Hodge repudiated his own brief statement, made in his *first*, of the three "distinctive" features of our Church government, and referred his brethren, for a full and complete exhibition of his doctrine upon that subject, to his little work, "[What is Presbyterianism?](#)" We profess to be well acquainted with Dr. Hodge's views on Church government, having carefully studied a great deal proceeding from his pen on that subject, in the *Biblical Repertory*. This work, however, we happen never to have seen or heard of till we read it

after its author's reference to it in the debate. Let us here state, for the information of our readers, many of whom are probably as unacquainted with it as we were, that it is an address delivered before the Presbyterian Historical Society, and published by the Presbyterian Board of Publication. We also crave their patience while we quote a paragraph from this address, and offer one or two remarks thereupon, for which our apology must be the prominence given to it in the Assembly.

“The fourth theory is the Presbyterian, which it is our present business to unfold. The three great negations of Presbyterianism, that is, the three great errors which it denies, are, 1. That all power rests in the clergy. 2. That the Apostolic office is perpetual. 3. That each individual Christian congregation is independent. The affirmative statement of these principles is, 1. That the people have a right to a substantive part in the government of the Church. 2. That Presbyters who minister in word and doctrine are the highest permanent officers of the Church, and all belongs to the same order. 3. That the outward and visible Church is, or should be, one, in the sense that a smaller part is subject to a larger, and a larger to a whole. It is not holding one of these principles that makes a man a Presbyterian, but his holding them all.” (p. 7.)

Now, let us look for one moment at these negations, with their corresponding affirmatives, which are thus held forth as the leading and distinctive features of Presbyterianism. Dr. Hodge says, we deny that “all power rests in the Clergy,” and we affirm, on the contrary, that “the people have a right to a substantive part in Church government.” His discussion of these points is quite full and very explicit, and we think we do not misapprehend his meaning. He holds that “Church power vests in the Church herself, and all Church officers are servants of the Church.” We hold this, too, but we add a limitation, omitted just here by Dr. Hodge, viz : that this power vests

in the Church *as an organized body*, with her Divinely appointed Rulers, all whom she, however, herself elects. But, as he goes on, he appears to separate “the Clergy,” somehow, to themselves, as having some official power of an independent kind, and what he denies to them is only the “*exclusive*” government of the Church. “If all Church power (he says) vests in the Clergy, then the people are practically “bound to passive obedience in all matters of faith and practice, for all right of private judgment is then denied. If it vests in the whole Church, then the people have a right to”—What would the reader suppose ought to follow? A right to exercise this government, *all of it, every whit of it*, through the Divinely appointed office-bearers whom they have freely chosen to represent them. No, this does not follow in Dr. Hodge’s statement, but he only says, “a right to *a substantive part* in the decision of all questions relating to doctrine, worship, order and discipline.” “The vital cord in our Church (he says) is that the people take *part* in the government.” If the people have a right only to “a substantive *part* of the government” the question, of course, arises, who has a right to the *remaining portion*? This question Dr. Hodge, in this address, seems to answer thus: It belongs to the *Clergy*.

“Well, then, the people have a right to a substantive *part* of the government, and how are they to exercise it? Dr. Hodge answers that they are to exercise it “through Ruling Elders, who are chosen to do, in the people’s name, what they are entitled to do in their own persons,” and accordingly he says, “the powers, therefore, exercised by our Ruling Elders, are powers which belong to the lay members of the Church.” (See p. 16.)

In his discussion of his second great principle, he appears to make the same distinction between the nature of the clerical power, and that of these *lay Elders*. “Ministers derive their authority from Christ, and not from the people.” (p. 38.) “He, and not the people, constituted

or appointed the apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers.” (p. 89.) It seems here to be implied, that Christ makes the Ministers, but the people make the Elders. Throughout his whole discussion of this point, and of the *third*, also, Dr. Hodge confines the name Presbyter to Ministers—broadly distinguishing every where between the Presbyters and the representatives of the people.

Now, we say, that all this seems to us simply a mongrel production of Prelacy and Congregationalism, unnaturally and forcibly brought together by the mighty powers of a great mind, intent on constructing a theory. We never heard, at Princeton, such a doctrine of Church Government as this, from the venerable Dr. Miller, the former colleague of Dr. Hodge. And this is not the Presbyterianism of our Confession of Faith and form of government—nor of our forefathers of Scotland. They ascribe no power to Ministers any more than Ruling Elders, *separately from the Church*, neither do they ascribe any power at all, either *in part* or *in whole*, to the people, except *as an organized body acting through Representative Rulers* ; and in that aspect they ascribe it *all* to the people. All the office-bearers, whether Pastors or Teachers, are alike gifts from the ascending Saviour to His Church, *to serve her in administering rule and in declaring doctrine*. And, on the other hand, neither Dr. Miller, nor our Book, nor our Fathers in Scotland, ever viewed the Ruling Elder as exercising powers which the people are entitled to exercise *in their own persons*—that is, which the people, *as such*, and *independently of their officers*, have the right to exercise. They never said, with Dr. Hodge, “The powers, therefore, exercised by our Ruling Elders, are powers which belong to the *lay members* of the Church.” They do not speak, as he does, of the Elders as *lay element* in our Courts.” The Presbyterian doctrine is, that Ministers, *as Rulers, are representatives of the people as truly as Elders*, although they have the additional office of teachers ; to which, however, also, they must be called

by the Church, and in which, also, they are, therefore, her *representatives, or chosen rulers*. The Presbyterian doctrine is, that Ruling Elders are “properly Representatives of the people,” that is, they *are simply representatives*, chosen to rule, and they are nothing more than mere rulers. They have not the call to labor, also, in the word. The Presbyterian doctrine is, that the Ruling Elder is the Presbyter of the Scriptures. This being denied, as it is by Dr. Hodge, where docs he find in Scripture any authority for the people to appoint Ruling Elders to exercise that “substantive part” of the government which belongs to them? “Where does he find authority for the introduction of a “lay element” into our Presbyteries? Was this one exercise of that *discretionary* power which he claims for our Church Courts? Did they invent this expedient? And, while Christ constituted and appointed Ministers, was it thus that Elders were constituted and appointed by men?

#### SERMONS IN BEHALF OF THE BOARDS.

The Assembly unanimously resolved to abolish this institution.

#### WORK FOR THE BOARD OF DOMESTIC MISSIONS.

Dr. Scott, of California, offered a resolution, which was adopted, calling the Board’s attention again and earnestly to the importance of its encouraging the preaching of the Gospel, by traveling Missionaries and itinerant preachers, in the mining regions of the United States and in the other frontier Territories.

#### NEW SYNODS.

Two new Synods were erected, one to be called *St. Paul*, to be composed of the Presbyteries of St. Paul, Chippewa and Lake Superior. The other to be called *Sandusky*, to be composed of the Presbyteries of Findley, Toledo, Michigan and Western Reserve.

## THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY, ETC. ETC.

The last Assembly's decision, that the Church is a Kingdom not of this world, and that she can have no relations with voluntary societies, whether formed for purposes of art and literature, or of secular benevolence or morality, had been pronounced "a new and startling doctrine," and it was expected that an effort, would be made to procure a contrary deliverance from this Assembly. Especially was it desired, by many, that this Assembly should be induced to do what the last refused to do for the *Colonization Society*, viz: to recommend it once more to the confidence and patronage of our people. An overture was sent up to this effect from a Synod in the North-West. The agent of the Colonization Society (Rev. Dr. Pinney) also appeared at the Assembly, and for days sought very diligently for an introduction upon the floor, that he might present his cause. A deliverance was also desired by some against the slave trade. Various other outside institutions sought the Assembly's endorsement. Amongst these numerous applicants for our patronage, as an Assembly, comes the *Presbyterian Historical Society*, forgetting, with all the rest, how they all put in jeopardy the peace and harmony of the body, and seeming to be little concerned for that, if they could only make capital for themselves. On behalf of the Historical Society, a kind of half-and-half resolution was reported by the Committee of Bills and Overtures, which was docketed and, we hope and believe, never came up again for adoption. As to the others, the Assembly unanimously adopted the following resolution :

That while the General Assembly, on the one hand, disclaim all right to interfere in secular matters, and on the other assert the right and duty of the Church, as God's witness on earth, to bear her testimony in favor of truth and holiness, and against all false doctrines and sin, wherever professed and committed, yet, in view of the often repeated action of the Assembly, in reference to the subjects above referred to, it is inexpedient to take any further action in relation thereto.

Thus, once more, the fraternal predictions of the New School, that this year we should certainly split up into opposing factions, have failed to be fulfilled. Will they repeat them next year?

#### DISPOSITION OF PAPERS OF THE ASSEMBLY.

An effort was made to have sundry papers of the Assembly, such as the stated Clerk does not preserve, committed to the care of the Historical Society. The Assembly declined to do this, and appointed the stated and permanent Clerks, with the Treasurer of the Assembly, a Committee to enquire what papers are worthy of preservation, and to recommend a method for preserving them.

#### CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIANS.

The Assembly resolved to open a correspondence with the Cumberland Presbyterians, by appointing a delegate to their next General Assembly. Dr. Edgar, of Tennessee, was appointed principal, and Dr. McMullen, of Alabama, his alternate.

#### CHURCH COMMENTARY.

This subject came up by a memorial from the Presbytery of Tombeckee, which was adopted, and a Committee of the friends of the object, from various parts of the Church, was appointed, to report to the next Assembly, on the expediency and practicability of such a design. It was subsequently made their duty to publish their report at least two months before the meeting of the next Assembly.

#### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BOSTON.

At an informal meeting of the Assembly and others, the Moderator in the chair, very interesting statements were made about this youthful Church. They have bought out a Unitarian Congregation, who wished to retire from business, and were willing to sell a property worth \$70,000 for

\$35,000. The conditions of the sale are, that the money must all be paid by 1st July, and only \$20,000 had been raised. Over \$2,000 was pledged or subscribed at the meeting. Would that we had the opportunity to buy out all the Unitarian Congregations of Boston, on the same terms! We think New England a most hopeful Missionary, field for a Church like ours. We are sure that both her doctrine and order would form an acceptable refuge to many pious souls there, weary of strifes of words and the vain janglings of men of corrupt minds.

FATHER CHINIQUEY IN THE ASSEMBLY.

It was a great privilege to hear this servant of the Lord plead the cause of his suffering brethren. And it was a peculiar satisfaction to us to say to the meeting, that where we lived there was the same God, and the same Holy Spirit, and the same operations of Divine grace, as father Chiniquy had told about, even amongst our servants, the conversion of whom felt very much to us like that of our own flesh, and blood; and that as God had within a few weeks past graciously blessed the speaker in the conversion of four of his servants, and he had fifty dollars left, of a thank-offering which he had devoted to the Lord in acknowledgment of His great goodness and mercy, he would now offer it to father Chiniquy's people, and so seek to realize the communion of saints. Our suggestion for the opportunity to be given to others present to contribute, was well received, and about \$2,000 subscribed and pledged that evening, which was increased next day to about \$3,300. A large part of it came from Southern members, the other brethren having, many of them, contributed before.

The Committee of Bills and Overtures, reported one from the Synod of Philadelphia, asking the Assembly to send to the Presbyteries this question: "Shall the clause of the Constitution be stricken out, which forbids marriage with a deceased wife's sister?"

Rev. Dr. Boardman called for the reading of the Overture of the Synod. After which he remarked that the Synod did not presume to say that the clause in the Confession of Faith has not sufficient warrant in the word of God, but there are many who doubt it, and therefore question the propriety of continuing in the Confession an article so doubtful. The Overture came from the old mother Synod. Moved and seconded, that the "recommendation of the Committee to send it down to the Presbyteries be adopted.

Rev. Dr. B. M. Smith—He had serious doubts whether any article in the Confession could be altered in this way. A second objection was that it had often been sent down to the Presbyteries, and they had refused to alter it. And in the third place, though the overture came from the old mother Synod, he would not give silence by saying she was in her dotage, but he did not think that considerations of this kind should have any weight. It might not have been the vote of a majority. (Here Dr. Smith gave way to an explanation by Mr. Stevens.)

Rev. Mr. Stevens—Dr. Smith is right. It was laid on the table by a majority when the Synod was full; and when the Synod was thinned off, it was taken up. We were called away on Saturday evening to preach on Sabbath, and by the time we got back on Monday morning the whole was done.

Rev. Dr. Boardman wished to correct or add to Mr. Stevens' historical recollections. He forgot to tell the Assembly that at a full Synod, held in Philadelphia, in the fall of 1858, it was sent up to the General Assembly by a majority of votes.

Rev. Dr. E. T. Baird read from the Digest, to show that when alterations are proposed to be made in the Confession of Faith, then the proposition must come up from two-thirds of the Presbyteries to the General Assembly; but in changes not pertaining to the faith of the Church, but its discipline, the General Assembly may send down to the Presbyteries for the purpose of obtaining their views. In his view, the Assembly of 1842 so decided; or in accordance with the principle. The Assembly has no authority to send down this overture to the Presbyteries, as it implies a change of the faith of the Church.

Rev. Dr. B. M. Smith resumed his remarks, which he had suspended to admit the explanation of Mr. Stevens. The Synod gives as a reason for sending up this overture to the General Assembly, the fact that the scriptural truth of the Article in our Confession of Faith, which it was proposed to expunge, was doubted by many. Our good old mother is a little forgetful. Twenty years ago the mother Synod did not reason in this way. Doubts with regard to the doctrines of the book were not deemed a sufficient reason for changing the book.

Rev. Dr. Hodge thought that Rev. Dr. Baird was mistaken with regard to the Article to which he had referred in the Digest. The minute to which reference was made always remained in manuscript, by some oversight. In consequence, the Scotch mode was adopted,

namely, for the Assembly to send down proposed changes to the Presbyteries.

Rev. Dr. E. T. Baird, by request, read from the Digest the manner in which the Confession and Discipline may be altered.

Rev. Dr. S. J. Baird—Dr. Hodge's statement is correct, with this modification:—The organic law or adopting act of the Constitution, as it stood originally on the records of the Synod, provided that amendments to the Confession, Form of Government, and Book of Discipline, should require the approval of two-thirds of the Presbyteries. This, being on the manuscript records, was soon lost sight of, and a question, arose as to the meaning of the provision in regard to the alteration of "standing rules," (Form of Government, Chapter XII., Section 6,) under the supposition that it referred to amendments of the Form of Government and Discipline. This question was decided by the first alteration of the Form, by which the phrase "standing rules" was changed to "constitutional rules." This alteration passed by two-thirds of the Presbyteries, although the requirement of that number was not recognized at the time. This is the only change which has been made on the subject; and, being merely on one point, as to constitutional rules, it leaves the original provision in its integrity, as requiring two-thirds to alter the doctrinal standards.

Question by the Rev. Dr. Hodge—Were the first changes made in accordance with the old provision, that all changes should originate with the Presbyteries?

Rev. Dr. S. J. Baird—I cannot say.

Rev. Dr. Thornwell said it was impossible to discuss the constitutional question at this time; and therefore moved that the whole subject be laid on the table.

Rev. Dr. Boardman would remind the Assembly that, the sentiments of the Synod are the views of large numbers in our Church, and ought not to be disregarded. The motion to lay on the table was carried.

#### REVISED BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

This was recommitted to the same Committee, with the addition of Drs. Peck, Yeomans, Paxton (and one other minister, whose name we could not learn,) and Elders T. C. Perrin, Scott, Lord, and H. A. Clark, with instructions to print the old and new books in parallel columns, and to send copies for the use of their commissioners to the next General Assembly.

Dr. G. T. Baird moved that the Committee have power, if they deem it proper, to propose a new section, defining the relations of baptized children to the Church, and pre-

scribing the mode in which the government of the Church is to be administered in respect to them. It was adopted. The Committee is, also, authorized to propose modifications of the Form of Government, such as may be necessary, in order to accommodate it to the changes proposed in the Revised Book of Discipline.

THE ASSEMBLY'S DIGEST.

It was ordered by the Assembly, that \$1,000, additional compensation, be paid to Rev. S. J. Baird, D. D., for his laborious and invaluable services in the preparation of this work.

PLACE OF NEXT MEETING.

The 7th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, is the next place of meeting.

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

This was accompanied with an earnest vote of thanks by Dr. Boccock, of Virginia, to which Dr. McIlwaine, the Pastor of the 1st Church, Rochester, responded, expressing the regrets of every citizen of Rochester at the termination of the Assembly's visit

And thus ended a very pleasant, and, we hope, useful meeting of our supreme judicatory.

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NOTE.—The following letter of Dr. WILLIAM L. BRECKINRIDGE, Moderator of the General Assembly of 1859, whose official duty it would have been to open the Assembly of 1860 with the usual discourse, had he been present, will account for his absence, and is here inserted at his special request. It was not forwarded to us until the printing of the preceding article was considerably advanced :

DR. BRECKINRIDGE'S DECLINATURE.

OAKLAND COLLEGE, (MISS.) April 23d, 1860.

*Rev. Dr. Hill, stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Louisville :*

DEAR BROTHER: The *Presbyterian Herald*, of the 12th inst., has brought me the proceedings of our Presbytery, in session at Owen-

boro', on the 5th inst. They make known to me that I was chosen a Commissioner to the General Assembly, and further, that "the Presbytery heartily approves (and request the Commissioners to sustain) the action of the General Assembly of 1859, and also that of 1848, on the subject of the relations of the Church of Christ and voluntary societies, formed for the purposes of art, literature and secular morality."

In the report of the proceedings it is added, that "this resolution called out an earnest and animated discussion, in which its passage was advocated by Messrs. Robinson, Rice and others, and opposed by Messrs. Matthews, Hopkins, Hill and others. The motion was finally adopted without a count."

I recognize the absolute freedom of the Presbytery in the choice of its Commissioners. I acknowledge the right of the Presbytery to see that its mind is represented in the Assembly—whether by positive instructions, or by making known its wishes and controlling the subject in some other way. I disown all claim to a seat in the next Assembly in virtue of my position as Moderator of the last, except such as may arise from the usage of the Presbyteries and the courtesy which is due to the General Assembly, and to a minister who has not forfeited the respect and confidence of his brethren. The duty imposed upon me by the will of the last Assembly, of opening the next with a sermon and presiding until another Moderator shall be chosen, is subject to the pleasure of the Presbytery; and, by the Presbytery, I mean the actual majority in a lawful meeting, whether that majority be accidental or whether it truly express the mind of the persons who properly and usually compose the body.

There is a very clear and wide distinction to be taken between the action of the Assembly of 1859 and that of the Assembly of 1848, cited by the Presbytery. The latter declares that the Church has no power to require of its members the support of the societies in question; while it asserts the right, and, on occasion, the duty, of the Church to favor or oppose them, according to its judgment of their merits. This view of the subject I do heartily approve. I trust that I shall be ready at all times to defend and support it.

But the action of the Assembly of 1859 denies to the Church all right to have any thing to do with such institutions. Believing this view of the subject to be false in its principle, narrow in its spirit, and every way hurtful in its influence, I do heartily condemn it, and I can do nothing under any circumstances to support it. It is plainly in conflict with the sentiments and usages of our branch of the Church from the beginning. I think it has been justly described as setting forth a "new and startling doctrine." I find no warrant for it in the letter of the Divine Word, or in the spirit of the Gospel. I believe that it was inadvertently uttered by the last Assembly without arresting the attention of the body, and now that it has fairly engaged the thoughts of the Church, I do not doubt that it will be disavowed by the coming Assembly. My brethren were not ignorant that I enter-

tain these opinions. They were not uttered in the Assembly, because I was in the Chair, and not on the floor. But they were freely expressed in the Synod of Kentucky, and came into the newspapers through the report of the proceedings of that body, whose mind was very clearly and strongly declared to the same effect. And they have never been concealed in private, while they have not been pressed upon others.

My brethren certainly do not expect me to change them, unless on the conviction of reason. They can hardly expect me to support the opposite of them in the General Assembly. Under these circumstances there seems to remain nothing for me to do, with a becoming respect for them and, for myself, but to decline the service to which they have appointed me.

You will be assured that I do this with much regret, while the necessity for it has taken me altogether by surprise. Had any of my brethren intimated to me, before I left them, the purpose which has now been executed, I would have relieved us all of the present embarrassment by declining the appointment in advance—excusing myself to the Assembly as well as I could. It would afford me great pleasure, if the will of God were so, to represent the Presbytery of Louisville in the General Assembly once more before dissolving my connection with it, which must follow my removal to my new and distant home—a connection which has subsisted very happily through so many years. I shall not cease to cherish a deep concern for my brethren in the ministry and for the Churches in this venerable and honored Presbytery.

Peace be to the brethren and love with faith from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!

Will you do me the kindness to give this letter an early place in the *Herald*, that the members of the Presbytery and of the General Assembly may know why I shall not be present to perform the service which the ancient usage of the Church requires of me.

I am, very truly, yours,

WILLIAM L. BRECKINRIDGE.