

told, that about a hundred years ago a number of infidels met together in the magnificent saloon of Baron d'Holbach. The doctrines and the person of Christ were discussed; and every one of the assembled guests aimed his shafts of ridicule at the Christian religion. At length Diderot, one of the fiercest and most impetuous of the number, rose and said:

“Excellent, excellent, gentlemen! in all the world none will be found better able to combat traditional beliefs than you. But yet of all the evil we have meditated against that accursed book, the Bible, I challenge you all to compose a history so simple, and yet so dignified, as that of the sufferings and death of Christ—a history which, after so many centuries, still exercises such an influence.”

When these words had fallen from the lips of Diderot, an ominous silence took possession of the assembled infidels.*

And as we watch the course of events, we have no reason to fear. Another Armada may be sent to extirpate Christianity ; but of this it will be said in future ages, as of the first, “*Flavit Deus, et dissipati sunt.*”

ARTICLE VII.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT NEW ORLEANS.

This was justly said to be the fullest Assembly of our Church that has yet been held, and also one of the strongest. Certainly there never was one that excelled this in patience and good temper. The unanimity of its voting on nearly all the chief questions was wonderful. Let this be noted by any who are afraid that our Church is not fully at one. As to the debates, the proportion was unusually small, perhaps, of commissioners who burned with a desire to air their logic or eloquence. If there were any of that disposition, the Assembly's good nature submitted quietly to the infliction. A large proportion of the

* This story is told by Stier, in his *Reden Jesu*, and quoted by Van Oostersee, *Voor Kerk en Theologie*. i. p. 2. It was related to Hess in the last century, by an eye-witness.

members were new men and young men, of whom many were perfectly silent until called on to vote; but some took an active part in the debates, and bore themselves well. Let it never be said that the Presbyteries should always send their oldest men to the Assembly—there is no fool like an old fool. The Presbyteries ought to send their ablest, wisest, and best men to this high court. The idea of sending every member in rotation deserves to be scouted by all. It is *an election* the case demands—an election of whomsoever the Presbytery shall choose to send to this free representative Assembly of the whole Church. Each Presbytery is privileged to elect, but the representative commissioned is not the representative of his own Presbytery, but a *general* representative—a representative of the whole Church. Now it is not every man who is competent to fill such a high and responsible position, and the Presbyteries ought to send their best men to occupy it. But George Gillespie, perhaps the ablest as well as most learned member of the Westminster Assembly, (his colleague Henderson excepted,) was perhaps the very youngest member of that illustrious body.

THE MODERATOR'S SERMON.

The opening sermon by Rev. Dr. B. M. Smith, of the Presbytery of West Hanover, on the promise of the Holy Spirit and his work in the redemption of man, from Luke xi. 13. and John xvi. 8—11, was just what was expected from such a scholar and divine. Sound and orthodox, learned and instructive, pervaded throughout with a manifest sense of the power of the Holy Ghost and our dependence upon him for all grace, it closed with an earnest appeal to the Assembly, justly presumed to be “filled with anxious forebodings” concerning several of the questions before it, to pray “for the promised Spirit.” The preacher declared his conviction that in the midst of “the perplexities and anxieties” which marked the closing scenes of the Savannah Assembly, there was felt a deep sense of the need of the Spirit's guidance and earnest prayer offered for the same, and that we had evidence of the bestowal of that blessing “in the unanimity with which conclusions were reached upon very perplexing ques-

tions and the wide spread approbation of our people giving their seal to those conclusions. It is not too much to say that the same sense of dependence on the guidance of the Spirit was felt in the New Orleans Assembly; the same earnest prayers put up for that blessing, and the same gracious answer received.

If there must needs be offered some criticism of this excellent discourse, let it be that, considering to how large an extent the congregation which heard it was a popular body and not purely a company of learned scholars, it perhaps evinced too clearly how the eminent preacher's chosen and favorite studies are occupied habitually with the critical study of the Scriptures.

ORGANISATION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

Commissioners were present from all our Presbyteries excepting the remotest ones. The number in attendance was one hundred and thirty-eight. We must soon begin to guard against the Assembly getting to be too numerous and unwieldy a body.

Drs. Stillman, Woodrow, and Rutherford, were nominated for the Moderator's chair. Somewhat strangely the vote stood. Woodrow, 42 ; Stillman, 41; and Rutherford, 40. According to custom, the choice was now confined to the first two, Dr. Woodrow receiving 58 votes, and Dr. Stillman 68, who thereupon was declared Moderator, took his seat and presided with dignity and ability. The Rev. Mr. Lacy was elected temporary clerk. It was then made known to the Assembly that the Rev. Mr. Wolfe, elected reporter by the last Assembly, had expected to be present but was prevented by sickness. The clerks had therefore applied to the Rev. Wm. P. Jacobs, of the South Carolina Presbytery, at the last moment, to take his place, to which Mr. Jacobs, (a competent stenographer.) had consented. Subsequently it being supposed that Mr. Wolfe had declined the position, it was moved that Mr. Jacobs be appointed by the Assembly to be its reporter. This, however, being explained to be not the fact, the matter was left just where the Savannah Assembly had placed it. Very much is it to be desired that Mr. Wolfe may find himself able to fill this important and useful office.

THE REVISED BOOK OF ORDER.

The Rev. Dr. George D. Armstrong moved that a committee *be* appointed to take charge of all the papers coining up from Presbyteries touching the Revised Book. Dr. Adger enquired whether the proposition was simply a committee to report to the Assembly what the returns might be from the Presbyteries, or to take the whole matter in hand and mature action on the subject for the Assembly's adoption. It was explained that the latter was the object proposed, and the Assembly voted to have such a committee! George D. Armstrong, John B. Adger, A. Cowan, J. R. King, W. H. Davis, T. W. Erwin, and R. R. Houston, Ministers, and S. P. Greves, James Carson, T. Frierson, and R. L. Beall, Ruling Elders, were appointed. Dr. Armstrong, the chairman, it was, as the reader may remember, who rendered such eminent service to the cause of revision in that curious debate at the Richmond Assembly. He seems to have attended the Assembly at New Orleans, having in view, as his one great end, to help forward the revision. It was a very arduous work which was imposed on him by his chairmanship of this Committee, to collate and digest all the Presbyterial reports, but he went through it *skilfully*, and also successfully carried through the Assembly all that his Committee reported to that body. Let those who love our Doctrine and Order, as they stand associated in vital relations, see that to Dr. Armstrong there shall be erected for this service done the Church *monumentum ære perennius*.

On the seventh day of the sessions. Dr. Armstrong read the report of his Committee. Answers had been received, either official or through the commissioners present, from all our sixty-three Presbyteries except Indian, Central Ohio and Sao Paulo. These answers were to be classified thus: Twenty-five Presbyteries have adopted the Revised Book as it now stands, and thirty-five have not adopted it, but twenty of these express approval in the main, and ask that the revision may go on. Two Presbyteries wish the work of revision to be stopped. The Presbyteries are therefore overwhelmingly in favor of prosecuting the work, and that on the basis of the present Revised Book. Two plans

of doing this have been suggested by Presbyteries: The one to commit the work to a convention to perfect a book on the basis of the present revision, which should be sent down to the Presbyteries for adoption or rejection before the next Assembly ; the other, to carry on the work under the auspices of the Assembly, as follows: (1) That certain articles in the Revised Book, on which there is a difference of opinion in the Church, be submitted to a separate vote in the Presbyteries; (2) that certain amendments in the revision desired by the Presbyteries be acted upon by this Assembly, and the Book, thus amended, be sent down to the Presbyteries for their adoption or rejection. The latter plan was recommended by the Committee, chiefly on the ground that outside the six or seven points to be submitted to the separate vote, there is very little difference of opinion in the Church. Nine-tenths of the amendments suggested by the Presbyteries are mere verbal changes, affecting only the style. The *first recommendation* of the Committee, therefore, was that the Assembly consider seven articles to be submitted to a separate vote in the Presbyteries. The *second recommendation* was to consider eleven amendments of the Revised Form, and thirteen amendments of the Revised Discipline proposed by Presbyteries. And the *third recommendation* was that this Assembly should remit the whole work of amending and polishing the style and language of the Book to the next Assembly, which shall appoint a committee for this purpose, to whom shall be referred all the criticisms sent up by the Presbyteries, and who shall revise it, but make no alteration affecting the sense, and who shall have it printed.

The Committee's *recommendations* were then taken up in their order: *first*, the seven articles to be submitted for a separate vote. They were as follows:

1. The restriction of a right to vote in Presbytery. (Revised Form, Chap. V., Section 4, Art. II.)
2. The whole matter of Ecclesiastical Commissions. (Ditto. Chap. V., Section 7.)
3. The question of voters in the election of a pastor. (Ditto, Chap. VI., Section 3, Art. IV.)

4. The examination rule. (Ditto, Chap. V., Section 4, Art. V.)
5. The case of an offence voluntarily confessed. (Revised Discipline, Chap. XII., Art. I.)
6. The transfer of the unregenerate communicant. (Ditto. Art. II.)
7. The demission of the ministry. (Ditto. Art. III.)

Gen. W. L. T. Prince, ruling elder from Mecklenburg Presbytery, thought there should be sent down, as an eighth article, the question of the revised definition of offence. But there was no debate at all about submitting the seven named above, excepting as to the third article. Dr. Armstrong's report stated that there had been reported by the Revision Committee three propositions, submitted by various Presbyteries, as follows: (1.) Allowing adults regular in attending on the common ordinances and contributing regularly to the support of the pastor to vote in such elections along with Church members. (2.) What is known as the Memphis Assembly's compromise rule, allowing a separate vote to non-communicating members, to be submitted to the Presbytery as information. (3.) Confining the election strictly to members of the Church in full communion. Dr. B. M. Smith moved to withhold the first form and submit only the two last. Dr. Adger said he had hoped the Assembly's time would not be occupied at all with these seven articles which were to go to the Presbyteries for a separate vote, seeing there are some five and twenty other amendments to be discussed and decided by this body. But he was very desirous that all three propositions, touching the election of pastors, should be submitted together for the choice of the Presbyteries. There is a very great difference of opinion in the Church on this subject. Numbers one and three are the extremes, number two is a compromise, which he feared must work badly, by setting the inside and the outside elements in opposition. It is an invitation to contention between them. If either form is to be dropped, let us drop this compromise and leave the Presbyteries to choose between the extremes. For himself, he was decidedly in favor of the liberal rule, as were large numbers of brethren and possibly whole Presbyteries,

and he hoped the Assembly would not refuse to let the Church consider its merits. The class of outsiders whom it would favor are the most hopeful class, and we should seek to attract them and not repel. Gov. Marye, ruling elder from East Hanover Presbytery, earnestly opposed the liberal rule. He was not insensible to the social value of the non-communicating element in the Church, but was not willing to let it ever have control in the election of a pastor. Dr. Smith's motion was lost; 34 yeas to 71 nays. And then the seven propositions were sent down. Subsequently Gen. Prince's motion was carried without any debate, and an eighth article, touching "offence," was added.

The *second recommendation* was taken up, and eleven amendments in the Revised Form by various Presbyteries were considered and acted on. None of them were of any fundamental importance, and yet they could not be classed with mere verbal emendations. The *first* one proposed to strike out the title *missionary* from the names given to the minister of the word, on the ground that this one alone is not found in Scripture. It was adopted. The *second* amendment proposed to add to Chapter Fourth, Section 2d, an article coming in betwixt the sixth and the seventh, in these words: "When a minister is called to labor through the press or in any other needful work, it shall be incumbent on him to make full proof of his ministry by disseminating the gospel for the edification of the Church." The idea evidently is to recognise the press as a legitimate tool of the gospel ministry. There was opposition made to this view. The Rev. R. T. Berry said that the editing of a newspaper is no part of a minister's work. You are violating the Scriptures and our constitution in recognising this as a ministerial calling. If there be anything calculated to injure our church, it is the course of the so-called religious press. The Rev. A. J. Loughridge demanded to be informed from whom comes this "call" to be an editor. Dr Armstrong replied, it comes from the Holy Ghost, and the Presbytery must judge of it as of any other "call." Mr. Loughridge rejoined, that the religious paper, so-called, is an agency of strife that is doing immense evil in our Church. The editors should be held responsible for everything that appears in

their columns, even for those humbug advertisements they frequently admit. Dr. Adger called attention to the place in which this amendment is to be inserted. The doctrine of the Revised Form, Chap. IV., Section 2, Art. III., is that "the Church is authorised to call and appoint ministers to labor as pastors, teachers, and evangelists, and *in such other works* as may be needful to the Church, according to the gifts in which they excel." Then the duties of the pastor are defined, then those of the Theological Professor or College Chaplain, and then it is proposed to say that the *editor*, who is called by the Church to be such, must preach the gospel and teach sound doctrine with his types, and, in fine, must do just what the last speaker said that he ought to do, but does not. The judgment of our times is so settled that the press is a mighty instrument for good or for evil. We are irrevocably committed as a Church to the legitimate use of the press. He was prepared to have the Church elect its editors as the Methodists do ; and perhaps that is the very way to cure the evils that have been charged on our editors. Does any one want Scripture for the use of the pen and the types in disseminating the Word ? Why, is not the Scripture itself just the written and the printed word of God ? And who will venture to decide whether Paul the Apostle was most useful when he preached, or when he wrote the Epistles ? The amendment was adopted by a vote of 73 yeas to 27 nays.

The *third* amendment proposed to make it obligatory on the Church to commit the temporal matters of the Church to the deacons, by substituting the word "shall" where the Revised Form has used "may." It was not agreed to.

The *fourth* amendment related to Chapter V., Section 1, Art. III., where it is written : "The pastor is moderator of all congregational assemblies." Naturally enough, some of the Presbyteries, as well as members of the Assembly, supposed the reference must be to meetings of the congregation, and it was proposed to insert after *Moderator*, the words "of the session and." Dr. Adger pointed out how the obscurity of meaning in the Revised Form had arisen from a too close following of the terminology of the present Book. It says the Church is to be "governed by

congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies,” and, of course, “congregational assemblies” means simply *sessions*. The Section is describing our various courts, and has no reference to meetings of the congregation as such. Accordingly, the Assembly, by vote, made the clause read thus: “The pastor is Moderator of the session.”

The *fifth* amendment provided for the calling together of a session, where there is no pastor, by two elders. It was adopted.

The *sixth* amendment makes a distinction in Chapter V., Section 4, Art. X., between “corresponding members” and “visiting brethren.” Adopted.

The *seventh* amendment strikes out of Chapter VI., Section 4, Art. I., the words “the session shall hold free conference with reference to his vocation and obligation to accept the office.” Adopted.

The *eighth* amendment strikes out of the same Chapter and Section, Art. 5, the words “*of the ceremony of.*” Adopted.

The *ninth* amendment strikes out of the same Chapter, Section 5, Art. III., the last sentence of the paragraph relative to a fast day. Adopted.

The *tenth* amendment proposed to alter Chapter VII., Art. II., so that it would not be necessary for a second Assembly to sanction any proposed change in the Book of Church Order. The Assembly rejected the amendment.

The *eleventh* amendment proposed a substitute in Chapter IV., Section 1, Art. I., of the words “united them to the household of faith,” for the words “formed them into one body.” The object was to guard against the error that the New Testament Church is not the very same Church established by the Lord at the beginning. Adopted.

The Assembly then passed to the consideration of the fourteen amendments in the Revised Discipline, which had been proposed by various Presbyteries.

The *first* one proposed to leave out of Chapter II., Art. I., the words “continues during the minority of their children and.” The Assembly rejected it.

The *second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh* and *eighth* amendments, being verbal, though valuable, were all adopted.

The *ninth* proposed to alter Chapter IX., Art. XIII., so that on the discovery of new evidence, either the accused party or the Church itself may demand a new trial. A lively discussion ensued, and several ruling elders of the legal profession took earnest part in it. Mr. Brooke, of Chesapeake Presbytery, said it was a fundamental principle of criminal law that no man shall be twice jeopardised for the same cause. He would be sorry to see the Presbyterian Church adopt a principle which the civilisation of the world repudiates *in favorem libertatis*. Col. Billups, of Augusta Presbytery, fully concurred with Mr. Brooke. It would be subversive of right to allow a movement for a new trial to be made by the officers of the law. Col. Anderson, of the Presbytery of South Alabama, said this provision is in the Constitution of the United States and of every particular State. It is a part of the common law, and has grown out of the experience of many past ages. It is also a part of the civil law, and reaches back beyond the days of Justinian. And then it is a maxim of law that there should be an end of litigation—*ut sit finis litigationis*. If this be a good maxim for the State, much more for the Church which wants peace and quietness. Of all disturbing elements in any community, a criminal trial is perhaps the very worst. The provision for a second trial would just open the way for the inroads of malice. It would only be malice that would, in general, call for the second trial. The amendment was rejected.

The tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth amendments were all adopted, without giving rise to any discussion. They are not without value, but require no comment here.

Subsequently, another amendment was made, so altering the whole of Chapter VI., Art. V., as to make it read thus: "In drawing the indictment, the times, places, and circumstances should, if possible, be particularly stated, that the accused may have full opportunity to make his defence."

Having disposed of the amendments, the Assembly passed to the *third recommendation* of its Committee, providing for the appointment by the next Assembly of a committee to perfect the style of the Book, should the Presbyteries send up favorable answers respecting it, as now amended and submitted to them. The

Rev. W. H. Davis objected that, unintentionally this committee might modify the teachings of the Book. Dr. Adger said there were perhaps hundreds of these merely verbal changes proposed by the Presbyteries, and that no Assembly could possibly deal with them directly. The Rev. G. W. Finley offered as a substitute for the Committee's recommendation, the following:

“Resolved, That the Revised Book, as amended by this Assembly, be put into the hands of a committee of five, to revise the style and language of the same in the light of the criticisms sent up to this Assembly, and that the same be printed and sent down to the Presbyteries.”

Dr. Adger seconded and urged the adoption of the substitute. It was carried. Then the report was recommitted, with instructions to report an overture, to be sent down to the Presbyteries, proposing the Revised Book, as amended, for their adoption, and specifically presenting the eight points for their separate votes. On the next day, Dr. Armstrong, the Chairman, presented the report of the overture, which was adopted, as follows:

“The General Assembly, having carefully revised the Book of Church Order, amending it in a number of particulars suggested in the papers sent up by the Presbyteries, and through its committee corrected its language and style, now send it down to the Presbyteries to be acted upon as follows, viz. :

“The Presbyteries are directed—

“I. To vote upon the adoption of the Book as a whole.

“II. To take a separate and distinct vote upon the adoption of each of the following parts of the Book, viz.:

- 1. Form of Government, Chapter V., Section 4, Article II.*
- 2. Form of Government, Chapter V., Section 4, Article V. The first sentence of the Article.*
- 3. Form of Government, Chapter V., Section 7.*
- 4. Form of Government, Chapter VI., Section 3, Article IV. The Presbyteries will adopt one of the three forms of this Article contained in the Book.*
- 5. Book of Discipline, Chapter III., Article I., and Chapter I. Article II. of the present Book of Discipline, as alternative propositions, adopting one of them.*

6. Book of Discipline, Chapter XII., Article I.
7. Book of Discipline, Chapter XII., Article II.
8. Book of Discipline, Chapter XII., Article III.

“The Presbyteries are further directed to send up to the next General Assembly a properly authenticated record of their vote upon each of these several points.”

On motion of Dr. Armstrong, it was

“*Resolved*, That the Committee of Publication be instructed to have the Book of Church Order, as now revised, printed, and, as soon as practicable, that a copy be sent to each minister and each session in the Church.”

Drs. Adger, Palmer, and Armstrong, with Ruling Elders Marrye and Anderson, were appointed the Committee on style and language, under Mr. Finley’s resolution. This Committee met on the morning after the dissolution of the Assembly, in Dr. Palmer’s study, and accomplished their task before separating. They felt it to be their duty to confine themselves strictly to such merely verbal and literary amendments as were sent up from Presbyteries.

PLACE OF NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY.

On the second day, on motion of Dr. Welch, nominations being called for, Knoxville, St. Louis, the Second church, Charlotte, and Wilmington, were nominated, and very warm pleas in favor of each were urged by various advocates. It was not a little gratifying to see what a cordial welcome was held out from so many different places. The Rev. Mr. McCallie said the First church, Knoxville, would take good care of the Assembly and treat them well. Knoxville had never had the meeting ; and has had its trials, both during the war and since. That First church building was battered and abused and the pews torn out of it, and for a long time after the war possession of the building was withheld. But through years that church had stood up nobly and sublimely in the midst of much opposition for true Presbyterianism, and to every call of this Assembly that scarred and battered church has cordially responded; and now then, in answer to their earnest invitation, go there and give them the

blessing of your presence. Ruling Elder J. A. Caldwell, of the Presbytery of Knoxville, seconded and warmly urged the motion. The church which invites you is an old church, organised in the last century, and has done good work for the cause. And the two churches there can take good care of the Assembly. The hospitality of these mountain people only wants an opportunity to manifest itself. And it will do the Assembly good to breathe the pure air and drink the clear crystal waters of that region.

Ruling Elder I. M. Veitch, of the Presbytery of St. Louis, claimed that that city is the centre of the continent, being half-way from New York to San Francisco. The Assembly was there two years ago, but for special reasons was wanted there again. And Dr. Rutherford was persuaded that St. Louis was the best place for the meeting. In no place could it possibly meet with better prospects of good effect. To this day they are feeling in St. Louis the good effects of the Assembly's meeting there.

Ruling Elder W. L. T. Prince urged that Charlotte is the true centre. That is the headquarters of the Presbyterian Church. There are our Trustees of the Assembly. There we hold our charter. A warm welcome awaits you to the centre of Presbyterianism. It would add much to the efficiency of the Second church there, if you would meet with them. The Assembly has not met in North Carolina since the war, but it has met twice in Tennessee, and but two years ago in St. Louis. The favors of the body ought to be distributed. The Rev. W. H. Davis read a resolution of the First church, offering to unite with the Second, in the entertainment of delegates

Then Ruling Elder B. G. Worth, of the Presbytery of North Carolina, very modestly but warmly urged the invitation of Wilmington. But it was a foregone conclusion. St. Louis and Wilmington each got 3, Charlotte 23, and Knoxville 90 votes: and so the next Assembly is to meet in the grand Tennessee mountains.

THE BIBLE CAUSE.

This came up on the third day upon an answer from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, to overtures from the Presbytery

and Synod of Memphis and the Synod of Alabama, asking that collections for the Bible Society be ordered in all our churches, and a column added to our statistical reports to show the amounts contributed. Dr. B. M. Smith, Chairman, reported, recommending to answer, 1: That the Society is not under control by our Church; 2. That its contributions are made through channels other than the Church; and 3. That recognising the zeal of the Synods, and commending the cause of the Bible as heretofore, we feel bound to decline the requests. Dr. Smith explained that there is really no room mechanically for another column in our report, but that the main difficulty is that the institution is not of our Church. It was urged by Rev. Eugene Daniel and Rev. W. D. Morton that we ought not to receive so much from the American Bible Society without making any return or doing adequately our duty to that cause. Dr. Hoge, also, in a somewhat extended and very eloquent speech urged the same view. The foundation on which our whole structure of doctrine and order rests is that Word of God which this Society publishes and circulates, and if we have not yet given it our official sanction, it is time that we were doing it. And if we cannot endorse the American Bible Society as a Society, because not under our control, we can endorse the Bible work. Now the Synod of Virginia had been recommending by resolutions (which so often prove to be nothing but ecclesiastical extinguishers of good things) this Bible work, but no fruit came until their churches were enjoined to take up a collection every year. He did not care about the statistical column, but wanted our churches enjoined to take up a collection for this cause and report it in some way. Our impoverished South owes a great debt to the American Bible Society. It has often made grants unsolicited. Last year it gave in this way to our Virginia Bible Society twenty-five hundred dollars' worth of Bibles.

The Rev. J. K. Hazen said the Bible Society had changed its plan of working—giving up its own agents and seeking to work through the churches—and, therefore, if we wish to cooperate, it must be as churches. And then we want, in some way, to show what our Church is doing for this cause.

Ruling Elder D. N. Kennedy, of the Presbytery of Nashville, bowed to no man in his love for the Bible cause, but opposed enjoining. Let us fill the six columns before we add any more columns.

The Rev. Alex. Cowan said that, in his section, the contribution of the Presbyterian Church is larger than that of other Churches, and not for vain-glory, but the truth's sake, some way should be provided to keep a record of gifts.

Mr. Daniel moved a recommitment. There was manifest a general agreement, the drift being that the Church must not be mixed up with voluntary societies, but must work for the general cause. The Chairman, Dr. Smith, seconded the motion, and the report, was recommitted. It was afterwards reported back, declining still the requests made, but commending the cause and enjoining on Presbyteries to take such action as will best advance the Bible cause in their various territories ; and so it passed unanimously.

Certainly no intelligent Christian man can wish otherwise than well to every endeavor to disseminate the Scriptures. This, in fact, is expressing it very feebly—every Christian man and every Christian Church will certainly try and do all that is possible in aid of every such endeavor. This discussion, however, must make it plain to every one of us that there is and must ever be a serious difficulty in the way of our cooperation, whether as individuals or churches, with the Bible Society. The difficulty is, that we Presbyterians are *Church men*. We believe in the Church and not in voluntary Societies, however excellent for any moral or religious ends. We believe in Church action for all such ends, and not in action by any man-made Society, however wise or earnest or orthodox. It is the Church to whose care the Scriptures are especially committed of God; and what Society so proper as this which God himself founded to do the work of disseminating his Word ? Moreover, how can the God-made Church turn over her own proper work to any man-made institution instead of doing it herself? It appears now, from what Mr. Hazen and others said, that the Bible Society itself perceives this difficulty, and has taken a very important step towards meet-

ing and removing it. It abandons all agencies in many sections and seeks to operate through Churches. So far, so good; but this is not going very far—at least, it is by no means going far enough—to remove our difficulty. Let us make a suggestion : Might it not be possible, under the charter of the American Bible Society, to have all its work done directly by the Churches? Might not the Society itself arrange to have its Executive Committee composed of Commissioners who should be members of the different Churches and appointed by the different Churches to do this work ? We suppose no Presbyterian could object to have his Church work in connexion with other Christian Churches in spreading the Bible. Then we should have, indeed, a grand cooperative union of all Christian Churches which would be a real thing, presenting the advantages of a true organic-union, without its difficulties and disadvantages.

REPORT ON THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.

The history of this report is as follows: The Assembly of 1874 appointed Drs. Smith, Palmer, Kirkpatrick, Stillman, Howe, and Robinson, to report on desirable changes in our methods of educating candidates. The Committee could not be got together, but the Chairman endeavored to obtain its views by correspondence, and then presented a report to the Assembly at Savannah, stating that he assumed its entire responsibility. That Assembly resolved to defer action until this year, but ordered the publication in the *Appendix* of so much of it as sets forth proposed modifications. To the Assembly of this year the Presbytery of New Orleans sends an overture on Theological Education, in reply to which Dr. Smith, Chairman of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, presented, on the fourth day, the following for the adoption of the Assembly :

“This General Assembly, in view of the suggestions of the report on theological education, referred to it by the Assembly of 1876, respecting the desirableness of sundry modifications of our methods of training candidates for the ministry, hereby solemnly enjoin on the Presbyteries, and recommends to the theological seminaries under its care, to take order in their respective spheres

of service, in such training for carrying forward that training in the methods herein commended.

“I. 1. Applications to be received under the care of the Presbytery, by a candidate not well known to most of its members, shall not be acted on for a period of less than three months.

“2. The Presbyteries shall observe with increased strictness the provisions of our Form of Government, Chapter XIV., Sections 3-6; and to avoid precipitate action in the licensing of candidates, they shall be required to pass through a probation of at least one year, involving an attendance on at least two meetings of Presbytery, at each of which a portion of their examinations shall be held. The examination of candidates in the seminaries shall in no case supersede the examination by Presbyteries.

“3. Every candidate, except as regarded as an ‘extraordinary case’—Form of Government, Chapter XIV., Section 6—shall be required to prosecute successfully the scholastic course prescribed in the Form of Government, and, at the discretion of Presbytery, exhibit any other evidences of piety, literature and aptness to teach which may be required by the Presbytery.

“4. To improve candidates in aptness to teach, the Presbytery shall provide opportunities for such as need additional advantages for that purpose, by granting them license for a limited period, and prescribe a field of labor, to conduct public religious services, involving the exposition of the Scriptures, and provide for the adequate superintendence of such candidates, and for a reasonable compensation for their services.

“5. Candidates whose residences are at an inconvenient distance from a seminary for a frequent attendance on Presbytery, may be placed under the care of some Presbytery more convenient to the seminary; but, ordinarily, such candidates shall be required to pass their final examinations and receive their licenses by the Presbytery under whose care they had first been taken.

“II. 1. The seminaries shall so arrange their programme of study that candidates may abridge or extend the time of scholastic study according to previous preparation and ability for its successful prosecution. But in no case shall such programme lessen the requisitions of our Form of Government.

“2. In no case, except under the authority of Presbytery, shall a candidate be allowed to pass to a higher grade of study till he shall have sustained a satisfactory examination on the studies of the grade preceding.

“3. The authorities of the seminaries shall annually report to the Presbyteries with which candidates may be connected, by a formal relation or by residence, their scholastic progress, and whatever else respecting their merit which the Presbyteries may request.

“4. They shall also provide a course of ‘vacation study’ of such a character that the student shall pass a satisfactory examination. This provision is designed to meet the wishes of candidates, who, in the judgment of their Presbyteries, ought to complete the prescribed course of study in a less period than three years, either to enter on the work of the ministry, or to spend an additional year in prosecuting such a post-graduate study as the faculty may prescribe.”

Dr. Smith said he would not discuss the terms “undigested and vague,” by which the Presbytery of New Orleans had characterised his report presented last year. Brethren will differ on such matters. This short abstract covered his views on the subject.

There were two extremes touching theological education, one being that the requisitions of our Book are not high enough, and we must alter our organic law. But there is a clause which gives Presbyteries full power to demand whatever will satisfy them. The other extreme is that our training for the ministry is above the heads of the people. A clamor has rung through the land for an order of ministers of more practical turn to go and preach to the ignorant. But the best preacher to the poor slave he ever had known was Dr. Archibald Alexander.

There is no method for training young ministers which is acknowledged in our Book—the words “Theological Seminary” are not found there. Seminaries, in fact, are recent experiments, commencing about 1811-'12. They are all constructed on the model of Andover. That was a curriculum school—so are Princeton, Union, Columbia, Danville. The Theological Seminary is an American, indeed, a New England institution. In the old

countries, usually the candidate for the ministry goes to the University ; and perhaps it would be better that our theological students associate with young men training for other professions.

Two parties, then, are connected with the training of our young ministers—the Presbytery recognised in our Form, and the Seminary not so recognised, but added in the wisdom of the Church. Accordingly, this paper presents *first*, the relations of the Presbytery to the student, and *secondly*, the relations of the Seminary to the student.

Dr. Woodrow expressed thanks to the Committee for the time devoted by them to this matter ; but before entering on any examination of these propositions, he would express his sympathy with Dr. Hoge as to the value of any mere resolutions. He did not wish the Assembly to adopt any resolutions which must necessarily be inoperative. Now how are we going to put any part of this paper to work ? Take the first proposition—a Presbytery shall not receive a candidate till he has knocked three months at their door. Where does the Assembly get authority for any such rule ? In its proper sphere the Presbytery is as independent as the Assembly. The constitution puts the whole matter of licensing and ordaining in the hands of the Presbytery, and the Assembly has no more right to legislate about it than the Session has. We cannot ordain constitutional rules in this body. We are supreme only in what the constitution commits to our care, and it does not commit this matter to our care. We are asked now to say, and do that which can have and ought to have no effect. This is the first objection I have to that which constitutes the bulk of this paper. Every direction given to the Presbyteries is cut to pieces by this one principle.

In what way much of the residuum of the paper affects the Seminaries may next be shown. Union Seminary, we are told, is a law to itself—what will that which is a law to itself care for anything you may do ? It does not belong to the Assembly. You might as well give orders to the South-western Bible Society or other outside bodies, and begin to exercise the functions of adviser-general. Then, how is it going to affect the Columbia Seminary ? The chief recommendation touches what is func-

tional, and not what is organic. It recommends the Professors to be more careful in applying tests they are already bound to apply. I refuse to be advised to do what I am already doing to the best of my ability—your recommendation comes in the form of a condemnation. But further, suppose there were an organic difficulty, this is not the way to reach it. The Assembly has prescribed in a constitution the way in which we are to obey you. All these recommendations are worthless paper, unless you put them into the constitution.

Rev. S. W. Watkins said it was singular for Dr. Woodrow to put his Seminary under the care of the Assembly, and then refuse positively to listen to or obey any counsel from the Assembly.

Rev. J. C. Graham, from the Presbytery of New Orleans, said the answer was not full enough. We can wait a year or two, if necessary, but we want an elaborate report on the subject.

Rev. W. D. Morton moved a discussion of the resolutions *seriatim*, but Dr. Howe called for more free and general discussion first, and the debate went on.

Dr. Smith believed abstract principles were important, yet we may become so straight-laced as to squeeze all life out of the Church. He did not attach much importance to these “*high pints*.” The Assembly cannot make a constitutional rule, but what hinders it from interpreting the rule which declares how Presbytery shall examine a candidate, and to see that Presbyteries carry out their rules? He didn’t want the Church choked with tight lacing. The Assembly had legislated in Columbus about the Seminary at Columbia. As for Union, he thought she would submit to the care of the Assembly in the premises and gladly receive any advice or direction from the Assembly. If Dr. Woodrow’s (Augusta) Presbytery believed the Assembly had no right to enjoin, why did it memorialise and so bring this subject before us? He did not approve of the thistle’s idea, “Don’t touch us, we’ll stick you.” Dr. Woodrow had placed himself in a position liable to be misunderstood.

Now look at the suggestions of the paper. They advise our Presbyteries, fifty or sixty in number, to avoid precipitancy—not to take a man under their care in the morning and license him at

night, but allow a year, at least, to pass, so that part of his examinations may be at one Presbytery and part be postponed till the next. Is this to break through the constitution ? We cannot guard the door too closely. We need to make it harder to get into the ministry rather than easier. One reason of so many failures, is, that there is not sufficient care as to receiving ministers. He had been present at a Presbytery once where candidates were licensed almost as fast as you could sort a barrel of apples.

As to the third resolution, about the full course, he had been asked how did they graduate at Union Seminary twenty-five, and yet only thirteen had taken certificates? The answer was, the rest did not deserve certificates. If we send you a man with one of our certificates, it signifies "interrogate and examine him as much as you please," but it does not signify "license him." I know we don't do our duty fully at Union ; but if you tell us so, we will take it gracefully. See how I took the thrashing of New Orleans Presbytery, when they called my report an *indigesta moles*, although I think the trouble is there are some things in that report which do not suit the stomachs of some brethren.

Fourthly: to improve candidates in aptness to teach. It is necessary to send out the young men to practise teaching and conducting prayer-meetings. A man in Louisville, not a member of the Church, had sent him \$200 to educate a student who should not be a "reader of essays."

The last resolution is surely a good one, which requires those students who put themselves under the care of Presbyteries near the Seminary, to go back to the Presbyteries "to which they naturally belong" for their final examination.

Then as to seminaries, this paper provides that they may abbreviate and alter their courses of study. The juniors at a seminary may be all graduates, and yet one may be an A. M., and another hardly know his Greek alphabet. Why should the former be kept back for the other ? Why hold back the better scholars to drag forward the poorer ones? But the student must not be allowed to pass into a higher class, unless he can pass a good examination on the studies of the class below? Then the report directs the Seminary to report to the Presbyteries, so as to help

them in their oversight of the candidates. The last resolution is an experiment to provide a course of study for vacations, to meet the wants of those who desire to go forward rapidly. For himself, he thought the system of vacations a humbug.

Dr. Howe was sure we understood better the object of this paper from the general explanations entered into by Dr. Smith. This subject lies at the foundation of everything in the Church. One of the propositions is that our course of studies be elective. Were this plan adopted, many a young man would be glad to pass by the study of Hebrew. Yet it was the study of the original Scriptures that brought on the Reformation. Another proposition is to mark our students, grade them, appealing thus to their vanity and ambition. The judgment of most teachers in theological institutions has been that it is better to appeal to their love of God and their love of men. Then again, it is true that men differ as to their degree of intellectual power, but it is not the finest scholar in the class room that makes the most useful minister. There are young men who get puffed up and imagine they can do anything. It is best to make our appeals to their higher and nobler feelings. Then again, as to whether the men of quick perceptions are to be pushed forward, there is enough for any of them to do, if he will but turn to the mass of information that is around him at the Seminary and push his researches. There is no advantage in his rushing forwards. And then suppose that, under the new plan, a student wants to be examined for certificate at the end of two years, there may arise a difference of opinion between himself and his professors, advantageous to neither. As to the vacations, our waste places need the services of our young men, if they are not employed in teaching. But it is very important to prevent their imagining themselves to be ministers before they are such.

The Rev. James Stratton said that in our theological training the Hebrew begins too late. Students ought to stand in Hebrew about where they stand in Greek at the time they enter the Seminary.

The Rev. G. W. Finley moved to amend the report by substituting "urge" or "recommend" for enjoin.

Col. Billups, ruling elder of the Presbytery of Augusta,, seconded the motion. He would have words advisory every where—substituted throughout this report for words mandatory. Loyalty is conformity to fundamental law—it is not obedience to the mandates of any usurper who tramples under foot the requirements of the fundamental law. The Presbyteries and the Seminaries both have the right to pursue the course here marked out, and the Seminaries are now practising what is contained in these resolutions. If so, where is the necessity for adopting this report? If this is aimed at a particular Seminary, it is not the best way to reach it; charges should be made and names given.

The word “enjoin” was stricken out and the word “recommend” was substituted. Then the resolutions were taken up *seriatim*. When the first one came up, Dr. Welch moved to lay the resolution on the table. Lost by a vote of 45 to 47. The Rev. E. W. Bedinger moved to substitute *any* for *most*. Agreed to. Dr. Welch called attention to the fact that the action of the Assembly last year (see Minutes, p. 230,) covered this very ground. Rev. W. D. Morton moved to recommit the whole paper, but on motion, the Assembly then decided to lay the first resolution on the table. Then the Rev. Mr. Cowan moved to postpone the whole matter indefinitely. Pending this motion, Dr. Woodrow asked leave to say that he agreed with almost every proposition in the report, but objected that the effort was not made in the right way. He was surprised that Brother Watkins and Brother Smith had so misunderstood his remarks as to suppose him disloyal to this Assembly. They could not possibly have meant *him*. He did not claim merit of any other sort, but he did claim the merit of *loyalty*. But what is loyalty? It was well defined by his legal friend from Augusta Presbytery. It is obedience to law. The loyal man is he who cares for the “high points.” What are the high points? Principles. I do care for the high points. The high points are the principles on which we stand. I apply to these principles that terrific sentence of Scripture: He who adds to or takes from the word of God is cursed. I am too loyal to add to this Book or to disregard its principles. The Assembly has no more loyal son than myself. My loyalty requires me to

spurn your commands when you command me to reject these "high points," as they have been sneeringly called. So much I felt it obligatory upon myself to reply, touching matters in which I feel it necessary to be sensitive. In some places we ought to be sensitive.

Mr. Watkins said he humbly begged Dr. Woodrow's pardon, if he had misconstrued his words.

Dr. Smith said he did not misunderstand Brother Woodrow, and never doubted his loyalty, and if he felt that necessary, also begged his pardon.

The second resolution or proposition was then adopted, and also the third. To the fourth, the Rev. Mr. Cozby objected that it made two classes of licentiates—one *licensed* and one *permitted*. Dr. Smith explained that this was to be a part of their training for licensure. The clause was adopted.

On the fifth day, the business was resumed, and the fifth clause of the first part was adopted. The second part, relating to seminaries, was proceeded with and the first recommendation was read.

Dr. Woodrow said the Assembly had in the Columbia Constitution told the Faculty not to do the very thing you are now asked to require of us. There it ordained a close curriculum, and now you are asked to tell us not to have such a curriculum. The paper will necessarily be inoperative and void. You are asked to put us into the position of necessarily refusing what you require at our hands. He hoped, therefore, the paper would be referred to the Committee on Theological Seminaries, with instructions to bring in amendments to our Constitution, and then we will do as you bid us.

Dr. Smith asked whether Dr. Woodrow's idea of a close curriculum was that the students shall take no additional studies, the object of the paper is to make it proper for students to take up additional studies.

Dr. Woodrow answered that it would be utterly impracticable in Columbia Seminary.

Rev. S. W. Watkins thought this recommendation would be a temptation to the young men to shorten the course.

Rev. Mr. Daniel hoped we would give no permission to depart from this curriculum. Many a man would think he had peculiar reasons for hurrying forwards. And at the end of the session the Faculty would perhaps think that he had failed, and so at the close of every term we should have several dissatisfied men.

Dr. Smith called attention to the fact that the more hasty course could only be pursued under direction of the Presbytery,

Dr. Howe urged that this proposition would embarrass the Faculty, for students would be for pushing forwards.

The motion to recommit was lost, and the first clause was adopted.

The second clause being read, Dr. Woodrow again pleaded with the Assembly that it was in contravention of the Constitution imposed on the Columbia Seminary.

The second clause was, however, passed, and also the third. The fourth clause being read, Professor Campbell, ruling elder from Lexington, said he was in favor of the first of its two provisions. In many cases a young man may save a whole year by a vacation course.

Rev. W. H. Dodge said all these propositions must needs be inoperative.

Dr. Smith said they might be in advance of the age, but it would be seen that it could be done.

The last recommendation and the preamble were then adopted. Dr. Woodrow made another effort to have the matter committed to the same gentlemen, that they might meet, as they had never done, and report as a Committee to the next Assembly. He warned the Assembly that their recommendations must needs be thrown away unless made to consist with the constitution.

Rev. Mr. Cowan offered as a substitute for Dr. Woodrow's motion, to commit the papers to the Committee on Theological Seminaries, to report at this meeting the necessary amendments to the constitution of the Seminaries.

Dr. Smith opposed the motion and it was withdrawn, and the question recurring on Dr. Woodrow's motion, it was lost. Col. Billups moved to amend by adding a clause stating that the Assembly regarded the action as merely advisory and not as intended

to override any constitutional principles. It was in these words: "In adopting this report, the General Assembly distinctly disclaims any purpose to exercise any right not clearly given in the constitution or to restrict, in the slightest degree, the rights of Presbyteries in the premises. This action is merely advisory." The vote on this clause was a tie—51 to 61—but it was adopted by the Moderator's casting vote. The report was adopted as a whole, and Mr. Cowan's motion was then renewed and lost. Such was the very singular termination of this very singular debate.

WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS.

On the fifth day, Dr. Smith presented this reply from his Committee to an overture from the Presbytery of Atlanta, asking the Assembly to interpret the law of the Church in reference to card playing and promiscuous dancing:

1. The Assembly has uniformly discouraged and condemned the modern dance in all its forms, as tending to evil, whether practised in public halls or in private parlors.

2. Some forms of this amusement are more mischievous than others—the round dance than the square, the public ball than the private party, but none of them are good.

3- The extent of the mischief done depends largely upon circumstances. The church session is, therefore, the only court competent to judge what remedy to apply; in most cases it is the result of thoughtlessness or ignorance. We recommend to sessions great patience in dealing with those who offend in this way.

The Rev. J. W. Montgomery thought the Assembly had passed papers enough on this subject. He was not prepared to condemn all dancing. He did not know who were present at the festivities at Cana in Galilee, and could not go further than the Bible went.

The Rev. E. O. Guerrant opposed all dancing. It was more injurious than horse-racing and drinking, as presenting to our Church members and to young persons a more fascinating temptation and a more dangerous snare. There is no difference between the square dance and the round dance—the devil will cut off all the corners after the second round. We need just such a deliverance as this.

Ruling Elder J. W. McPherson, of Muhlenburg Presbytery, said the word "promiscuous," in the past deliverances of the Assembly, was a promiscuous kind of word adopted as a compromise to suit conflicting views and leave each church to determine for itself what the law is. He would like to have the truth on this subject clearly defined. Is playing cards or dancing *per se* sinful, or is it their concomitants that make them wrong? Promiscuous dancing he understood to mean a general ball, to which every body might go who had a dollar to pay. This and the round dancing is wrong, of course, and we need no deliverance respecting these. But he doubted whether every other kind or form of dancing is *per se* sinful.

Ruling Elder R. L. Beall, of the Presbytery of Concord, wished to have the phrase "are not good" changed to "all are evil."

Ruling Elder J. A. Minniece, of Tombeckbee Presbytery, offered the amendment that "dancing in all forms, whether round, oval or square, is not to be engaged in, and is a disciplinable offence."

The Rev. E. O. Guerrant preferred the report as it was. He held that the ancient sacred dance of Scripture was dancing before the Lord; the modern dance was before the devil. The dance-houses in New Orleans are the most dangerous evils in the city. So of card-playing. He had known a young man who learned to play cards in the family circle, and was found afterwards night by night in a gambling-hell with a revolver by his side.

Ruling Elder D. N. Kennedy, of the Nashville Presbytery, said that card-playing and dancing had almost obliterated the line between the Church and the world. He moved to substitute for "are not good" the words "all are evil and should be discounted."

The Rev. A. Cowan came from a church which had its spirituality well nigh destroyed by dancing and card-playing. His blood runs cold when he hears an elder in any way defend dancing. When ministers of city churches allow it, how can a humble country pastor successfully oppose it? The cities have their

dancing-masters, and some ministers there plead that nothing else gives such grace of carriage to children. He wanted the Assembly to condemn dancing-schools as well as dances.

The Rev. A. R. Banks moved to add, "and we affectionately urge all Christians not to send their children to dancing-schools where they acquire a fondness and an aptitude for the dangerous amusement." This amendment and Mr. Kennedy's were both adopted, and so was then the whole paper.

The modern dance we suppose to have come out of the French school of manners and morals. It is, if we do not mistake, the offspring of modern French gallantry. Its distinguishing feature—that which separates it from all ancient forms of this amusement—is that the sexes dance together. This is the charm of it. There would be no dancing if the boys had to occupy one ball-room and the girls another. And here lies, in our judgment, the evil and the danger of it. It is a form of dalliance between the sexes. No man would suffer a stranger, sitting on the same sofa, to lay his finger on the shoulder or on the hand of his sister or his daughter. But liberties of this sort are freely and of necessity allowed in the dance. And we therefore are of those who look upon it, whenever it is *promiscuous*, as inherently wrong. This word "promiscuous," in our Church deliverances, is not any word of compromise. It expresses the vital idea that familiarities which may be innocent between the members of one family or between near relatives or very intimate friends, become dangerous and improper when allowed outside of such a sacred circle. So much as to the essential nature of the modern dance. But there are many concomitants of the modern dance which aggravate the necessary evil of its nature and give emphasis to the constant testimony of the Church in all ages against it.

We have thus expressed our opinion on this subject; but it is only an opinion, and other persons have a right to entertain and do entertain a different opinion. This is our way of understanding and interpreting the modern dance; but the Scriptures do not mention that particular subject at all. It gives general laws against being conformed to this world, and inculcates sobriety of behavior and a constant sense of the powers of the world to come.

But men have to apply these general directions of the Word according to the best light they can obtain. And what is more, all are free to judge for themselves in such matters. The Church can make no new laws, nor is the Church infallible in interpreting Christ's laws. And the right of private judgment is sacred and inviolable.

It follows that the Church should be very careful in dealing with questions of this sort. Where the Word is not express, and men, consciously fallible, have to apply its principles, sobriety and modesty are indispensable—such as the resolutions proposed do certainly display, but the speeches not all so very fully. The Assembly must not only be moderate and wise lest its utterance should slide into some fanatical extreme, but it is under the imperative necessity of carefully considering how far what it enacts can be made operative. If the Assembly must make a rule, the Sessions should always be prepared to carry it into practice. But is not Calvin manifestly right when he says that we must not attempt to carry out discipline where the disease to be extirpated is widespread and we are not therefore going to be sustained by the judgment and sympathies of the people? In such cases of prevailing evil, the remedy to be employed is preaching and not discipline. Our brethren, therefore, whose congregations have been so much injured by dancing and card-playing always had a far better remedy, each in his own hands, than any new deliverance of the Assembly could possibly be. Let them preach in public, if they judge it needful and wise, or let them reason the case in private with offenders. Two of our most eminent and successful pastors in two of our largest cities told us at New Orleans that they had no difficulty in their churches on this subject, and that was their way of dealing with it. What can be the use of any more deliverances by the Assembly? It has often spoken already. A mere verbal fulmination which its Sessions are not able to carry out in the way of actual discipline cannot be the medicine a diseased congregation or community requires. We have the effective weapon of a faithful ministry. We have the sweet and gracious potency of a loving pastorate. Let these be employed, and the Assembly will have no need to

reiterate its warnings. Worldly amusements, like temperance, covetousness, marriage, etc., etc., are subjects involving many nice questions somewhat difficult to be wisely and safely determined in a hasty discussion of the Assembly.

On the eighth day, the Rev. J. W. Montgomery presented a protest against the Assembly's reply to the overture of the Presbytery of Atlanta on the subject of dancing, which was admitted to record, and is as follows:

The undersigned respectfully requests the Assembly to record his protest against so much of its deliverance, in reply to overture No. 7, from the Presbytery of Atlanta, as relates to dancing, which protest is made for the following reasons:

1. Because the Assembly, by condemning actions as actions which may or may not involve an element of sin, weakens the force of its own protests against real and acknowledged wrong.
2. Because in the judgment of your protestant this deliverance controvenes Sec. 2, Chap. XX.. Confession of Faith, which declares that "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to His word or beside it." &c.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERIANS.

On the fourth day, in response to a letter received from this body through Rev. Dr. Hatfield. its Stated Clerk, Dr. Adger, Chairman Committee of Correspondence, reported the following paper for the adoption of the Assembly, and it was adopted by vote of 109 to 4, and ordered to be transmitted immediately by mail. But those who voted in the negative afterwards explained formally that they did not think it consistent with self-respect for this Assembly to press its ultimatum after its distinct and repeated declinature by the Northern Assembly.

WHEREAS, The General Assembly of this Church, in session at St. Louis in 1875, adopted a paper tendering special thanks, in the name of the whole Church, to our Committee of Conference at Baltimore, for their diligence, fidelity, and Christian prudence, and in particular approving and endorsing, "as satisfactory to the Southern Church, the condition precedent to fraternal relations suggested by our Committee, viz.: 'If your Assembly could see its way clear to say, in a few plain words, to this effect, that these obnoxious things were said and done in times of great excitement, and are to be regretted, and that now, in a calm review, the

imputations cast upon the Southern Church (of schism, heresy and blasphemy) are disapproved, that would end the difficulty at once.' ”

And, whereas, our General Assembly in session at Savannah in 1876, in response to a paper from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which met in Brooklyn, adopted the following paper, viz.:

“We are ready most cordially to enter on fraternal relations with your body on any terms honorable to both parties. The Assembly has already, in answer to an overture from the Presbytery of St. Louis, spontaneously taken the following action :

“*Resolved*, That the action of the Baltimore Conference, approved by the Assembly at St. Louis, explains with sufficient clearness the position of our Church. But inasmuch as it is represented by the overture that misapprehension exists in the minds of some of our people as to the spirit of this action, in order to show our disposition to remove, on our part, all real or seeming hindrance to friendly feeling, the Assembly explicitly declares that, while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Northern General Assembly, no acts or deliverances of the Southern General Assemblies are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Northern General Assembly, or of the historical body of which it is the successor.”

And, whereas, The said General Assembly at Brooklyn, in response to the foregoing paper of our Assembly at Savannah, adopted the following, which has been communicated to us at our present meeting, viz.:

“The overture of this Assembly having been received by the General Assembly in the South with such a cordial expression of gratification, the Committee recommend that the same resolution, declarative of the spirit in which this action is taken, be adopted by this Assembly, viz. : ‘In order to show our disposition to remove on our part all real or seeming hindrance to friendly feeling, the Assembly explicitly declares, that, while condemning certain acts and deliverances of the Southern General Assembly, no acts or deliverances of the Northern Assembly, or of the historic bodies of which the present Assembly is the successor, are to be construed or admitted as impugning in any way the Christian character of the Southern General Assembly, or of the historical body or bodies of which it is the successor.’”

Therefore, be it resolved by this Assembly, that we cannot regard this communication as satisfactory, because we can discover in it no reference whatever to the first and main part of the paper adopted by our Assembly at Savannah, and communicated to the Brooklyn Assembly. This Assembly can add nothing on this subject to the action of the Assembly at St. Louis, adopting the basis proposed by our Committee on Conference at Baltimore, and reaffirmed by the Assembly at Savannah.

If our brethren of the Northern Church can meet us on those terms,

which truth and righteousness seem to us to require, then we are ready to establish such relations with them during the present sessions of the Assemblies.

On the fifth day, the following was offered by Dr. Adger, to be sent as a telegram to the Northern Presbyterian Assembly, so that no time should be lost in communicating to them our action. Some objection was made to the Assembly "going again into the telegraphing business," after what we had suffered from it last year at Savannah, but the Assembly overruled the objection and voted, 75 to 35, to forward the telegram:

NEW ORLEANS, LA., May 22, 1877.

The Rev. Edwin F. Hatfield, Stated Clerk General Assembly :

This Assembly has adopted, by 109 to 4, a paper which recites the action of our Assemblies at Savannah and St. Louis, which also refers to the communication from your Assembly received at our present session. It concludes with expressions of dissatisfaction with this last named paper, because it contains no reference whatever to the main part of our paper, sent from Savannah to Brooklyn, and declares that this Assembly can add nothing to our action at St. Louis approving the ground taken by our Committee at Baltimore, which approved what the Assembly reaffirmed at Savannah. The paper adopted here concludes thus: "If our brethren of the Northern Church can meet us on those terms which truth and righteousness seem to us to require, then we are ready to establish such relations with them during the present sessions of the Assembly."

Our letter has gone by mail.

JOSEPH R. WILSON. Stated Clerk.

No response was received to either of these communications. It is understood that in the Northern Assembly Dr. Marquis, Chairman, presented a paper which their Committee of Correspondence had unanimously adopted, in which occurs a resolution, which, had it been adopted, would no doubt (like Dr. Talmage's resolution last year) have been perfectly satisfactory to our Church. It also reported a delegation to be sent to our Assembly, in the confident expectation (which would not have been disappointed) that a similar appointment would be made at New Orleans. The resolution was as follows:

Resolved, 2. That, without casting any reflection upon past General Assemblies of our Church, and without touching or changing any of their deliverances or testimonials, (a thing which this General Assembly is entirely incompetent to do,) we do nevertheless declare that the language

specially complained of by the Southern Assembly is a part of that sorrowful past which we in the day of peace and fraternity would wish to forget; and it is to us a matter of sincere regret that terms of "schism," "heresy," or "blasphemy" should ever have been applied to Southern Presbyterians by any General Assembly of which this Assembly is the successor.

But as at Brooklyn, so this year at Chicago, the influence of Dr. Van Dyke, claiming to know better than any other man what would be acceptable to the Southern Church, was successfully employed to prevent the adoption of this paper.

Here is what the Northern Assembly did adopt in lieu of Dr. Marquis's resolutions:

Resolved, That, while we *an* sincerely desirous to be reunited in closer relations with the brethren from whom we have been separated, we do not deem it expedient at present to take any further action upon the subject, except to repeat the declaration of the last Assembly that we are ready cordially to receive a representative from the Southern Church, and to send a delegate to their Assembly whenever they may intimate a willingness to enter into fraternal relations upon such terms.

It is worthy of record that this action of the Northern Presbyterians was taken in the face of an earnest plea by Dr. Plumer for them to adopt the paper of Dr. Marquis. Here is a portion of what Dr. Plumer urged:

Another thing I wish to say, and that is that this body will candidly, I have no doubt, vote as it has done hitherto—candidly vote what it wishes to say. It will be understood. It will be settled. I would love to see the hindrance removed in my time, but there will be a great many good things after my head goes down to the grave; and if God denies me that privilege, be it so. Can't you do it? There isn't a man in the Southern country that doesn't desire fraternal relations on terms equal and honorable. [Applause.] There isn't a man in the Southern country that wishes this body to humble itself, to abase itself before anybody. But this is true: If I have said, Moderator, that you are not a gentleman, it is due to me—it is more due to me than it is to you—that I should say, "I ought not to have used those words." [Applause.] We ask no regrets in the sense of repentance. Nobody asks it. There isn't a man in the South that would esteem a man more if he were to humiliate himself. That is not it. But, sir, if Dr. Dickson had said of the Moderator something unhandsome, I might truly say to Dr. Dickson, "I am very sorry, Dr. Dickson, that you said that of the Moderator." I regret it. I don't repent of it. Can't you say that? One thing is clear: if the resolutions

reported by your Committee are rejected, it will be understood everywhere North and South, and it will be a finality on this whole subject.

We think little more need be added. What has been done we consider to be indeed "a finality on this whole subject." And we commit the matter to the Adorable Head, to be overruled and made to work to His glory and the establishment of what is true and right. But one word further. In view of this final result of negotiations with the Presbyterians of the North, many will appreciate more highly than ever our friendly relations with the Reformed. *There* is the proof patent that our spirit is not sectional, and that we are not lovers of strife. Our demands of the Northern Church were reasonable. She cannot well afford to stand where the refusal of them puts her.

COMPLAINT BY DR. SAMUEL J. BAIRD.

The Judicial Committee, through its Chairman, Dr. Woodrow, reported that, inasmuch as Dr. E. T. Baird had appealed to the Synod of Virginia, it would not be proper for the Assembly to entertain a complaint touching the same case, and therefore the Committee recommend that the complaint be referred to the Synod of Virginia. Ruling Elder I. M. Veitch made a minority report that the complaint be entertained on several grounds, which may be called technical or constitutional, and also on the personal or moral grounds of the undue severity of the sentence and the propriety of giving immediate relief, in justice as well as in mercy, to a brother and a minister whose welfare, temporal and spiritual, is most seriously involved.

The Rev. R. T. Berry moved to take up the minority report. Reference and appeal have to go up in regular gradation, but not so with complaint. Dr. Samuel J. Baird had a right to complain, and Mr. Berry wanted fair play.

Ruling Elder J. A. Billups said it is a principle in law that a multiplicity of law suits must be discouraged. The adjudication of this complaint would not dispose of the appeal. Does this Assembly wish to receive questions just to discuss them? It will be for the Assembly of 1878 to settle this matter finally, and we cannot afford to engage here in useless work. Col Billups pro-

ceeded to show from our Book that where an appeal is taken, complaint cannot lie.

Dr. Woodrow said we all desire fair play, and not only that justice be done, but that it be tempered with mercy, and every doubt be in favor of the accused. Our Book says the cases in which complaint is proper are, *first*, where the judgment was favorable to the accused, so that of course he would not appeal ; or, *secondly*, it has wronged no individual, and so there is no appeal; or, *thirdly*, the aggrieved party may decline the trouble of an appeal. There being no appeal, the Book says some other than the aggrieved party can complain. But here there is an aggrieved party and he has appealed, and it is the complainant himself who has been at pains to inform us all that this appeal has been made, so that we have the best possible evidence of that fact. Dr. Woodrow went on to explain that the reason why the Committee proposed to refer and not dismiss the complaint, was their desire to preserve the rights of the complainant. Possibly the appellant may conclude not to press his case before the Synod of Virginia ; and the object of the report is that in such case the complainant, by the action proposed, will be preserved from having lost his opportunity of complaint to the Synod by the lapse of time.

Ruling Elder I. M. Veitch urged that we had no *official* information that Dr. E. T. Baird had appealed.

Ruling Elder D. C. Anderson said the question of Dr. E. T. Baird's having appealed was one of evidence, and that the evidence was abundantly sufficient. It is the appellant himself who furnishes it, for we read his announcement in the *Richmond Dispatch* that he has appealed. Col. Anderson proceeded to show that it is contrary to all jurisprudence for two tribunals to have one case before them at the same time. And also, that it is unprecedented to suffer one condemned in an inferior court to be deprived of his right of appeal to a higher court. If a party accused has appealed, who shall interfere and take away his rights from him ? If another party can jump the next superior court and carry the case by complaint to the court beyond, the appellant might be forestalled and cut off, for the other might get

the case determined in the highest court adversely to the appellant in advance of his being heard in the Synod. The appeal having been taken, it would be in violation of all rule and of the rights of the appellant for this court to listen to the case. He has a right to a fair field and an open way. He is not here. He has no witnesses here. He has not been heard. It would be the grossest injustice to press the case.

Dr. Hoge said the Assembly would notice that no one from East Hanover had taken any part in this discussion. That the appellant should have an open and a fair field is what East Hanover desires. Moderator, the gentleman whose name has been heard so often in this discussion lived amongst us for twelve years and never had better friends. There has never been the first ripple in the smooth current of our social harmony. At one time he was a member of my family, and one member of his family is a member of my church. Our desire to protect him is inferior only to our desire to protect the honor of the Presbyterian Church.

The motion to take up the minority report was lost, not more than eight members voting for it, and the majority, report was then adopted.

REPORT ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

On the second day, Dr. McIlwaine, Secretary, read the annual report of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions. The death of one missionary, the Rev. Wm. LeConte, and the loss of health amongst other missionaries, along with the interruption of their labors in Colombia and in the Creek country, are mentioned as unfavorable facts; but, on the other hand, notwithstanding severe financial restrictions imposed, all or most of the missions had been carried on with no apparent diminution of energy, and accessions to the churches have been numerous. There had been a falling off in the receipts of \$6,152.12, but by the most rigid economy the expenses had been brought down to \$50,098.75—so that the debt is now reduced to \$4,826.27—an amount every year liable to be found on the one or the other side of the account.

ACTION TAKEN ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

On the fifth day, in the evening, the usual Foreign Missionary meeting was held. The Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Houston, himself a Missionary formerly to Greece, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions, presented the report. It set forth the encouragement given in an increased spirit of liberality manifest towards this cause, and commended the good management of the Committee in the removal of the burden of debt. It also approved of the manual prepared by the Committee. Drs. Houston and McIlwaine followed the report with very interesting addresses, as did also the Rev. Jacob Chamberlain, M. D., the delegate of the Reformed Church, who was a missionary for eighteen years in India. His address was interesting in the extreme and highly instructive. The report was adopted, and the Assembly adjourned.

REPORT ON EDUCATION.

On the second day, Dr. Waddel, Secretary, read the annual report of the Executive Committee of Education. Seventy-four candidates, thirty-three of them in their theological course, have been recommended for assistance by their Presbyteries. The collections from the Lusk legacy have amounted to \$769.55, which, with other contributions and collections, have reduced the debt to \$1,789. The Committee hold this legacy as a kind of reserve fund sacredly for the extinguishment of their indebtedness, devoting it to that object as rapidly as it is collected, and, as it is nearly double the amount of the indebtedness, there is no reason to doubt that the debt will be ere long cancelled. The income of the year has been sufficient to pay in full all the appropriations made to students. But there are two circumstances which have contributed to this result—one, the smaller number of students: the other the curtailment of the amounts appropriated. But why—such a diminution and such a curtailment? These are questions which the Committee press on the Church.

The example of the churches of the Presbytery of Brazos is especially signalised, every one of which had made a contribution for Education during the year.

The report made reference to the Institute for the training of colored Presbyterian ministers, respecting which Dr. Stillman would make a full report separately.

The whole amount of funds raised during the year is \$13,-077.99. Economy in the management has been rigidly enforced. Salaries, travelling expenses, printing, postage, and revenue stamps, did not reach the sum of \$2,000.

The last Thursday of February is suggested as a day of special prayer for the youth of our Church and country, and for God's blessing on this cause.

ACTION TAKEN ON EDUCATION.

The Standing Committee offered resolutions, *first*, requesting Presbyteries to report the names of candidates and their places of study to the Secretary, Dr. Waddel; *secondly*, calling attention to Dr. Stratton's report on beneficiary education in the Assembly's Minutes for 1876; *thirdly*, directing attention to the Institute for colored candidates; *fourthly*, calling on all our churches for a collection in aid of the Executive Committee; and *fifthly*, recommending earnest and united prayer for more laborers to be sent forth into the Lord's harvest.

The discussion which arose went largely into the question whether, as is alleged by some, beneficiary education tends to make weak ministers. The Rev. G. W. Finley insisted that it is not true that it takes the pith out of men. Was the pith taken out of Lee or Jackson by their education on a national fund? The Rev. W. H. Davis said we are urged to pray God to send forth laborers. The men present themselves and we say, we are not able to send you forward—go back to your secular work. Sir, we ought to help this cause or stop our prayers, else we shall stultify ourselves before Almighty God. The Rev. Mr. Neel endorsed all that had been said, yet there was a truth that ought to be brought out: some Presbyteries were extremely lax in receiving candidates, and this undermines the Church's faith in this cause. The Rev. A. Cowan said it is the fault of the ministry if the churches do not contribute to education. Dr. Howe, Prof. Campbell, and Dr. Waddel, all testified that beneficiary

candidates were in no respect inferior to others; and Dr. Waddel said that Foreign Missions were one pillar and Sustentation another pillar of our Church's work, but Education was not to be seen ; it is out of sight, because it is the foundation.

REPORT ON SUSTENTATION.

The Rev. Dr. McIlwaine, Secretary, read the report on the second day. There are five departments of the Sustentation work : it calls for funds to assist feeble churches; to sustain evangelists in our Presbyteries; to promote the evangelisation of the colored people; to support the families of disabled or deceased ministers; and the fifth department constitutes an effort to provide annuities for the families of deceased ministers in whose favor regular payments, according to a fixed rate, are made by their churches or themselves. The securities belonging to this fund now amount to \$21,000, and they are all considered good and more than sufficient to meet all the obligations of the fund. During the past year annuities were paid to the amount of \$1,200 to the families of three deceased ministers. The receipts on account of interest have been this year more than enough to pay all annuities which fell due.

The whole receipts of the year have been \$43,102.90. There has been some decrease in receipts for Sustentation and for the Invalid fund—the former due to the fact that some of the Presbyteries have been acting independently.

The sixty-one home Presbyteries are thus classified:

1. Requiring large help to carry on their work efficiently, 29 Presbyteries. 2. Able to conduct their own work, but unable to help others, 11 Presbyteries. 3. Estimated to be strong, 21 Presbyteries.

But with reference to this third strong class, the Committee report that four of them received from the fund more than they gave to it, and eight others gave only a pittance more than they received !

For several years Concord and Wilmington Presbyteries have conducted their work separately from the Assembly's Committee, and they do not direct collections for the Assembly's work.

Nashville Presbytery has also conducted its work separately, but gives the Committee one-half of its collections. During the past year Augusta and East Hanover, amongst our strongest Presbyteries, have also withdrawn and are acting independently ; but each of them sends the Committee ten per cent, of the funds they obtain. This has brought to the treasury of the Committee from the Augusta Presbytery \$12.35, and from East Hanover Presbytery \$180. The report dwells in very strong terms on these facts, and depicts in emphatic language the consequences which may flow from them.

ACTION TAKEN ON SUSTENTATION.

The Standing Committee's report, on the evening of the sixth day, commends the wisdom and fidelity of the Executive Committee, and exhorts the Presbyteries to persevering efforts to enlist the interest of all our churches in this work. Dr. Rutherford, the Chairman of the Standing Committee, presented the report and followed it with an able and interesting address. Then the Rev. Dr. Palmer and the Rev. Dr. Marshall addressed the Assembly to the delight and edification of all present. Dr. McIlwaine also spoke earnestly and effectively. And then the report was made the second order of the day for the morrow.

When the subject came up next day, Dr. Woodrow remarked that it was evident the members of the Committee had given their whole hearts to the work intrusted to them, but some portions of their report called for some comments. What is the relation betwixt the Executive Committee and the Assembly ? Is the former the hand or the head of the Church ? And does it come to the Assembly to tell how the hand has been employed, or to direct the Assembly and criticise the Presbyteries? In former days the Boards forgot that they were mere hands, and year after year the Assembly had to receive a kind of Presidential message. If this or that Presbytery had not done exactly as this self-constituted head had supposed to be proper, it received the lash—and this led to the withdrawal of our portion of the Church from the work. That such a condition of things might never come to exist amongst us, he would utter, with all gentle-

ness, a few words of criticism of the report of our excellent and devoted Committee. We are told, on page 7, that one or two Presbyteries have done admirably, but that some of the Presbyteries "are lamentably behind." Moderator, I did not listen with pleasure to language of this kind when it was uttered by an agent. The agency was not constituted for that purpose. The report proceeds: "How this painful dereliction"—of which you, my brethren, have been guilty—"may be remedied, is a question to which the Assembly may properly apply its wisdom."

I am not willing to listen to such language as this. I cannot but remember that I am a member of the Presbytery of Augusta, and I find that the Presbytery of Augusta has not pleased, at all, our agents in the matter of Sustentation. They are "sorry" to inform us that the Presbytery of Augusta has terminated its connection with the Assembly's work. The "unavoidable tendency" of which action is, we are told, "to narrow the sympathies, and contract the benevolence of those who are subjected to it." I plead not guilty for my Presbytery. We have not shown any lack of sympathy in the work of Sustentation. I may say, sir, that I was opposed to this action of my Presbytery. I have always been in favor of cooperating with the Assembly's Committee ; but it never occurred to me, when pleading with my brethren of the Presbytery not to sever their connection, to use as an argument the sorrow of the Sustentation Committee. I thought that the matter was entirely in our own hands. Such rebukes, however, will alienate one after another of the friends of the cause. I do not forget, Moderator, that we are told that it is not intended to "censure" the Presbytery whose action is being considered, but only to have a "statement of facts as they exist." But this action of Presbytery is spoken of as "unwise," which "prompts the Committee to bring the matter to the intelligent consideration of the Church before irreparable damage has been suffered." I will not speak ironically and say that we are much obliged to the Executive Committee for not censuring us; but their statement certainly implies that they think they have a right to censure. If this course is pursued much longer, there will not be much need for the Sustentation Committee. There has already

been presented a memorial from one Presbytery of the Church, asking that the cause of Sustentation be remitted to the Synods. And the question may soon be asked, Why not, rather than be subjected to criticisms of this kind? The report shows that from only five Synods are the receipts in excess of the amounts paid back to the same Synods. The amount of excess was \$2,490. The expenses of the Committee were \$2,200. If we are to be put in a position that is in any way antagonistic, we would be forced to look at these figures and inquire if it would not be better to accept the policy of East Hanover Presbytery. The result will be to put us beyond the power of this annual criticism. Therefore I have felt obliged to say what I have said, though second to no one on this floor in my admiration of the zeal and fidelity of the Committee, and of the way in which their work has been done.

Dr. McIlwaine—I will not pretend to justify every word in that report after having heard it criticised by Dr. Woodrow; perhaps the word “dereliction” ought not to have been there, and other individual words; but I can say this, that when they were used, they were not used for the purpose of conveying any sense that would be injurious to the feelings of any Presbytery or brother. The part of the report to which Dr. Woodrow specially objects, was one that gave me more earnest and anxious labor than all the rest of the report put together. The view that I took in preparing this report was the view which I found common with the Committee when I took charge of this department, and has been the view upon which I have acted for the five years during which I have written the reports ; that it was the duty of the Committee to inform the Assembly of the exact state of the work, as we understand it, in all its departments, and that as laid down in the constitution of the Sustentation Committee, namely: “In the exercise of its advisory power it shall report to the General Assembly the condition and wants of the whole field, and also communicate to the Presbyteries such information with respect to the necessities and progress of the work as will tend to incite them to greater liberality.” How can they be incited to do more, unless they know how little they are doing ? How would

a Presbytery be incited to get its churches to come up more liberally in contributions, unless they have it brought before them that a number of churches have failed to contribute ? This is all we had in view. If we have failed to make the real state of things so plain that everybody could see it, it was not because we have desired to injure the feelings of any presbyter or brother. With reference to the criticism of Augusta and East Hanover Presbyteries, it was not intended as a criticism. What we intended was to make a distinct, plain statement of facts, and then present the difficulties which lay in the way. If this system should be pressed, as to the question of continuing the Sustentation, Dr. Woodrow is not the first man who has asked that question. I have asked myself the question, Is it best to maintain this Committee? And standing here, the Assembly's Secretary, I do say it, that unless the work progresses, I cannot see that it is of use to keep it. I was called to this office, not of my own seeking. I did not know that such an office was to be created until the very day before I was elected to it; and I do say, sir, that not one moment longer than I believe in my heart that I can be of service to the Church, do I want to hold the position. For five years I have labored to this end, and while I have, no doubt, made mistakes, my sole object has been to labor for the good of the Church and comfort of God's people. We have on that Committee such men as Dr. Lefevre, Judge Inglis, and other brethren of like mind and like spirit. No, brethren, if such an attempt were made by anybody, it would obtain resistance no where sooner throughout the breadth and length of the Church, than among the members of that Committee. I have said about all that I think needs to be said. We had no idea of taking anybody to task; all we wanted to do was to put the Assembly in possession of the facts. If the language is too strong, it did not so appear to us at that time.

Rev. Mr. Neel heartily endorsed Dr. Woodrow's remarks, which he did not consider as captious. The Committee had fallen into the error of preaching to the Assembly. What we wanted from the Committee was the information that our brother has given us: but we also want the poor privilege of acting for ourselves, and let the facts stimulate us.

The Rev. Dr. Rutherford concurred in what Dr. Woodrow and Mr. Neel had said, and yet it was the Committee's duty to bring to the attention of the Church the action of the Presbyteries, and especially when any of them withdrew from cooperation.

Rev. Mr. Daniel said the Secretary had done only his duty. We talk of the unity of the Church, but what we want is not sentimentalism, but practical unity and hearty cooperation.

Dr. Armstrong explained that the situation of East Hanover Presbytery was peculiar. A large proportion of their churches are feeble. A rule of the Committee required churches receiving aid to be dropped after five years. As that rule cut off all our feeble churches from aid, we had to take the matter into our own hands, resolving to give ten per cent, of our collections to the Committee, and use the rest ourselves for our own bounds.

Rev. S. H. Isler said Wilmington Presbytery had no fault to find with the Committee, but its circumstances were peculiar and justified its separate action.

The report was adopted.

It appears to us a duty to add our testimony as to the dissatisfaction with which portions of the Sustentation Report were heard. It was too much in the style and manner of a lecture from the high powers to their subordinates. It brought to our recollection those old times when Dr. Musgrave and his Board of Missions used to come down annually to the Assembly to tell it all about its duty and to objurgate the Presbyteries for not having done theirs. The Boards in those days, too, made common cause if anybody ventured to criticise either of them, and uniting their forces to crush all opposition, well-nigh made themselves the masters of the Assembly. This, of course, would be a very odious comparison for us to make, but we do not make it. All that is designed is simply to state why the portions of the Report criticised were to us so disagreeable, as reminding us of a condition of things which we trust never to witness in this Church.

There is another observation which we venture to make. The meeting on Wednesday evening was a meeting of the Assembly to tarry on its business. A report was submitted for its action. There are no corresponding members allowed on the floor of the

Assembly as in our Synods and Presbyteries. The Secretaries of our Executive Committees, by special enactment, are allowed to be heard on the business committed to them. Delegates from corresponding churches bring us the salutations of their churches, but they take no part in our debates, unless the case of the Reformed Church, with whom we stand in close cooperative union, is a solitary exception. Dr. Chamberlain, the delegate from that Church, spoke at the Foreign Missionary meeting in his character of delegate from the church that cooperates with us. But on what principle or by whose authority was the Assembly treated to those two admirable speeches which were interjected into its business on Wednesday evening ? If there is any precedent warranting it, we do not know it, but we can see how there might grow much evil out of such a practice, which runs directly counter to our principles.

REPORT ON PUBLICATION.

This report, signed W. A. Campbell, Secretary *pro tem.*, was read on the third day of the sessions. It consisted of two parts—the one making the usual statements, the other giving a full account of the case of Dr. E. T. Baird's defalcation.

ACTION TAKEN ON PUBLICATION.

On the evening of the seventh day, Dr. Welch presented the Standing Committee's report. It closed with several resolutions. The first one expresses the Assembly's sympathy with the Committee in its embarrassments ; approves its maintaining the honor of the Church, by offering to pay the liabilities incurred by the late Secretary ; and commends its fidelity and zeal in obtaining money to pay those losses. The second instructs the Committee to carry on the sale as well as the publishing of books by contract, if it be found practicable to effect such contract. The third instructs it to sell the Publishing House as soon as may be, without unnecessary sacrifice of value, unless means are raised in a reasonable time to pay the debt on it. The fourth requires the *Earnest Worker* to be published only once a month, and devoted exclusively to Sabbath-school work. The fifth takes off all restric-

tions as to the terms on which the Committee shall sell its publications. In the sixth, the Assembly expresses the opinion that on these plans expenses can be much reduced, and yet great good be accomplished; and it recommends the churches to raise the money to repair the losses and protect the honor of the Church. The seventh reappoints the same Treasurer and Committee, with two names added, those of Messrs. H. H. Hawes and M. M. Gilliam.

Dr. Welch stated that the report of the Standing Committee made no reference to the second part of the Executive Committee's report, as the parties interested would appear before another tribunal.

The Rev. W. H. Davis vigorously assailed the Executive Committee's management, and was unwilling to have them reappointed.

Ruling Elder J. L. Marye dwelt on the high character of the gentlemen in question. Their misfortune was that they had not expected fraud. Even banks are sometimes overreached. He was not here to say that the salaries paid the secretary and book-keeper, store-keeper and treasurer, were as moderate as they might have been. But this work of the Church must not be looked at simply in its monetary aspect. When the Assembly allows the \$20,000 that we lost on the sale of hymn-books, at cheap rates, by the Assembly's orders, the present loss will not appear so great.

Ruling Elder J. L. Campbell said the resolutions offered were the unanimous judgment of the Standing Committee, one vote excepted ; and that, differing very widely at first, it was only very slowly that they had come to one opinion.

Ruling Elder R. M. Patton, of the Presbytery of North Alabama, said, let us not be discouraged because we have lost a little money. By the blessing of our all-wise Saviour, good will come out of these troubles.

Dr. Woodrow asked Dr. Welch to state if the Committee had got a business-like statement of the affairs of the Executive Committee from its books.

Dr. Welch replied that the Committee's statements were made on the judgment of others ; they were able to give no information of their own knowledge.

Dr. Woodrow said, that answer means that although all the books of the Committee are present, yet with them all it is impossible to get a business statement of the assets and liabilities of the Executive Committee.

Dr. Hoge said, had a volcano broken out at Richmond, they would not have been more surprised than at the Secretary's involving himself and the Committee in this calamity. They immediately, by telegram, called brethren from various points ; and they all appeared on the day appointed, and for an entire day it was considered what should be done. The first thing was to repair the material damage and provide for the notes falling due. Dr. Brown went to the Valley of Virginia, and he to Georgia. He had a sad and mortifying story to tell ; but when, at Augusta, he told the simple story, one said, "There is but one thing to do : put me down for \$300;" and another, not a member of our Church, said, "Yes, put me down for \$300, and more, if necessary, to protect the honor of the Presbyterian Church." The only thing lacking was time. I could have obtained the whole amount, could I have visited more churches. Dr. Hoge went on to speak of the very high character of the Treasurer and all the members of the Committee. But he acknowledged that some things about the situation cannot be made plain. Dr. Baird himself cannot fully explain all of his own transactions ; but by two methods of calculation, the same conclusion is virtually arrived at, within a few hundred dollars. One thing I do know: we got our printing done at the lowest rates ; and another is, we never undertook to manage a printing-office. Dr. Baird had printing-presses, and we made contracts with Dr. Baird, and he printed and bound our books well.

But if Dr. Woodrow should get up and say, "Do you think your Committee have managed this work in the best way possible ?" I would answer, "No, Doctor." Why not? Because we trusted too much to a single man, and grievously have we suffered for it. We all have to learn in the school of adversity. He wished all guards and checks put on the Committee's business, so that disaster may be prevented for the future. He would go home encouraged; for instead of being disbanded, his breth-

ren seemed disposed to say to the Committee: "You have met with a great disaster, and have our sympathies, and we will help you." He did not regard the publication work merely in a commercial light. If that is the test, every Theological Seminary is a failure. We give largely for their endowment; and yet we have seen four Professors getting comfortable salaries sometimes to teach a dozen or two students. That is the commercial view of the value of the ministry of reconciliation. Dr. Hoge concluded by saying, as two new business men had been put on the Committee, and as we are going to manage economically, don't take advantage of a great disaster to put needless burdens on us.

The next day, Dr. Welch, chairman of the Standing Committee, endorsed all that Gov. Marye and Dr. Hoge had said of the Executive Committee. Had he been on that Committee, he must have done just what they did. The whole case is in one word : it was an instance of over-confidence. And now, like the skilful mariner after a storm, we must take our bearings. And we shall find that we are all agreed on almost everything : as to continuing the work ; as to the Committee exercising a control over the whole work ; as to conducting the business by contract, and as to keeping prominently before the mind of our people the missionary part of this work. One word as to the statement made in the report, that it is impossible for us to obtain an *exact* account from the books. When a balance sheet is made up, it ought to balance to half a cent. Now the difference is not a great one, but the accounts do not balance. This is what we intended to be understood as saying. And now for the differences amongst us: some favor selling, as well as publishing by contract, and the Committee do recommend that course to the Assembly ; and some are for holding the house, if the money can be raised to pay for it: and the Committee wish to give the brethren the opportunity of doing so, for this would furnish them the full amount of endowment they need, inasmuch as the house, in good times, would be worth the sum of \$50,000.

Dr. Hoge moved that a committee of three of our best business men be appointed to go to Richmond, make full investigation, and report through the religious papers.

Ruling Elder D. N. Kennedy, of Nashville Presbytery, had had something to do in the past in criticising the Committee and the late Secretary. And now he was in the position of a man who had studied John Calvin's works, and was called suddenly to make a speech in support of John Wesley's views. He would say nothing intentionally to wound the feelings of the Executive Committee, although he might utter what would not be pleasant for them to hear. As to the late Secretary, he would appeal to the Synod of Virginia to throw the mantle of charity over that brother, and do all that might be possible to save him.

He was glad to hear Dr. Hoge stand up like a man last night, and acknowledge that the Committee had not been as scrutinising as they should have been. There was all the fault, and he has made the *amende honorable*. I give this reason publicly for the course I am pursuing, as otherwise my Presbytery might misconstrue my position. At present we must excuse their unbusinesslike statement of their condition just now, because at this time they are in a disjointed state. They are to be censured for the want of accuracy in former reports, but we must overlook this fault now at this unfortunate juncture.

The Committee did right in assuming those obligations for materials used for its benefit, though not signed by Dr. Baird as Secretary. Although there is a close legal question here, we must assume this debt; it will not do to have the shade of dishonor brought on our fair name.

The Executive Committee can be relieved of its embarrassments, and the work carried on more efficiently than ever. The trouble in the past has been largely attributable to enormous expenses. They trusted the whole matter to one very confident, efficient man, and he made such expenses as must necessarily have led to bankruptcy. But we can do what the Boston Tract Society did. Having gone on as we did, (only for fifty instead of eleven years,) they found themselves bankrupt. But seven years since they changed front, and took the very plan now proposed. And in six years they paid off their indebtedness, and had money to lend. The old plan was for the Committee to print by contract, but also to keep a store, and pay \$2,000 to a business

agent, and then salaries to four or five other employés. The new plan is, that the *publishing* is done by contract; and instead of our paying clerks, etc., to the amount of \$4,000, we propose to be paid by a publisher for the privilege of selling our books. If you give your contract to a publisher, you introduce him throughout our entire Southern Church, and he can secure the sale of large amounts of his own publications. One word as to any change in the Committee : admit that they did make very considerable mistakes, yet they showed their love for the Church by their efforts to repair the wrong. "When you are swimming a river, and are in the middle of the stream, it is no time to swap horses." If you try it in the middle of this river, you will all be drowned. This Executive Committee is the only Committee that can extricate the work from its difficulties.

The Rev. W. H. Davis said, whoever has studied Turretin knows that whenever he gets into a tight place, he always says, "Let us stop here and make a distinction." So I wish now to make a distinction. I venerate the noble men on that Committee; but I distinguish between the men and their mode of doing our business.

Last night he had made remarks based on the figures furnished by the Committee. The intimation of Dr. Hoge to-day is, that if one of their business men were here, a different showing could be made. I am not responsible for any mistake based on information that was not here at that time. I only took the figures of the Committee, and based my calculations on them. The brother intimated that I am ready to lay the axe at the root of all the trees in our garden of missionary enterprise. Sir, that would be to draw a knife across what is dearest to my heart. I have a brother beloved a missionary on a foreign shore. Would I lay an axe at the root of that, to destroy which would send agony through my heart? I am secretary of the Sustentation Committee of our Presbytery. Would I lay an axe at the root of that? In his section there is a deep conviction amongst the Scotch-Irish, that these men are not the men to carry on this work. He pledged himself to cooperate cordially when the vote

was taken, but he would fight for his position as long as it was an open question.

Ruling Elder W. L. T. Prince, of the Mecklenburg Presbytery, spoke as representing principles embodied in the memorial he had read here. Who were these memorialists for whom he spoke? He paid a glowing tribute to Gen. D. H. Hill, Dr. Arnold W. Miller, and other signers of it. The work of the Church is spiritual. It has no right to engage in business speculations. He differed from the Committee in only one or two points—one was the method of conducting the sale of books. Too much discretion was left to the Executive Committee. Another was that he wished the house sold outright. There was no use for such a house, if the work was to be done by contract. Yet he would not sacrifice the property. It was argued that the house ought to be kept as an investment. Is the Church to be a speculator in real estate? The expense of keeping the building was another great objection. Taxes, repairs, insurance, and interest would consume all the profits there might be from rent.

The Rev. E. Daniel wished to strike out the clause, “unless the means be raised to pay the debt on it.” He was satisfied that disaffection would not be removed if the house was retained. We have no objection to parties presenting this house to the Assembly; but we object to the Assembly’s assuming this debt of \$31,000. Let this clause be removed, and the Assembly can be unanimous for the report.

In the evening the resolutions were taken up *seriatim*. The *first* was adopted. Upon the *second*, Dr. Smith said, if a contract were made with any bookseller, and he be thus introduced to all your people, he might sell many books to them which you would by no means approve. Dr. Hoge wanted to know whether the Assembly intended to give discretion to the Committee regarding this matter of selling by contract. Dr. Woodrow answered, that if the Assembly should adopt, there would be no discretion with the Committee as to making a faithful effort, to carry out this plan. Having done this, the Committee has discharged its duty, though the plan should fail. As to Dr. Smith’s question, the Committee is not required to contract with book-stores already

existing. One source of large revenue could be made from the fact that \$5,000 worth are given away every year. I presume this is at catalogue prices—costing the Committee about \$3,000—so that there is about \$2,000 a year clear gain. If the Publishing House would not give a royalty for issuing your works, here is an opportunity for, making your contract with the seller more profitable, and one that any man would be glad to take hold of. The *second* resolution was adopted. When the *third* came up, Mr. Daniel made his motion to strike out all after the word “unless.” The Rev. S. M. Neel said the Committee are now in trouble, and this necessity of selling should not be made imperative ; besides, it may be a perversion of trust funds to sell that house. And in view of the financial troubles of the times, it is better to postpone this question. Dr. Hoge said, if we fail to make arrangements for sale by contract, you may need this house to give you place for your business and your books. Let us retain the house till we can see what we can do with our books. Ruling Elder J. L. H. Tomlin, of the Presbytery of Western District, asked. Is the house paying the insurance and interest on it? Dr. Hoge replied that it was, and also what we should have to pay for another building. Mr. Daniel’s amendment was lost, and the third resolution was adopted.

On the next day, the fourth, fifth, and sixth resolutions were adopted. The seventh, which appointed the members of the Executive Committee, was made the order of the day for twelve o’clock, when the new Secretary was to be elected. When that hour arrived, the Rev. J. K. Hazen of Alabama was nominated, with the highest testimonials to his fitness from Col. Anderson and others. The Rev. Dr. R. L. Breck of Kentucky was also nominated, with very high testimonials from Col. Kennedy and others. The vote stood, Hazen, 65 ; Breck, 32. Dr. Hoge renewed his motion for a Committee of three business men to investigate and report through the papers. The motion prevailed, and the following are the names of the appointees, three of them being alternates: L. O. Inglis, Baltimore; J. J. Gresham, Macon ; W. S. Macrae, Louisville ; J. Adger Smyth, Charleston ; Joseph R. Mitchell, Knoxville; G. W. Macrae, Memphis.

INSTITUTE FOR COLORED MINISTERS.

On the second day, Dr. Stillman presented his report. The Rev. A. F. Dickson had been engaged to take charge of the Institute. Many applications for admission had been received. The Seminary had two Presbyterian, one Baptist, and three Methodist students. The raising of funds for its support had been no easy matter. Recent aid had been received from the Reformed Church. The Institute had been conducted on the simplest plan—a single room, rented for two dollars per month, and the simplest furniture, all borrowed, were its only outward appurtenances.

This report was sent to the Committee on Theological Seminaries. On the ninth day it reported the appointment of an Executive Committee, consisting of a Secretary and four members, to present to the next Assembly a complete Constitution for itself and for the Institute. It also recommended that Presbyteries provide for the education of the colored candidates under their care, and that such as have none be expected to send contributions to the Executive Committee, and that the first Sabbath in December be appointed for the taking up of the annual collection for this purpose. Dr. Stillman was nominated to be Secretary, and Messrs. W. P. Webb, Jonathan Bliss, J. T. Searcy, and R. D. Webb, with Dr. Stillman, to constitute the Executive Committee.

The Rev. Mr. Dickson was invited to address the Assembly. He said it was not possible at once to establish a full curriculum of studies. Good Bible knowledge, some business knowledge, soundness in the Confession of Faith, and aptness to teach by preaching—these are for the present the main points to be acquired by our candidates. They have been deeply interested in studying the Greek Testament.

Dr. Stillman said he believed that the plan adopted was the true plan for our working amongst the colored people. As to the proposed Executive Committee, he would say the Secretary would ask nothing for his services. Of course Brother Dickson's salary must be provided for. Let the Presbyteries provide for 1877.]

the support of their candidates, and send them to us, and we will do our best for them.

The report was adopted.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

Besides what has just been mentioned as part of this report, the Rev. Mr. Dickey, Chairman, reported on Union Theological Seminary, noting a decrease of students; that only a portion of the senior class had received certificates of graduation; that the institution was more prosperous financially than hitherto; and also commending the Seminary to the hearts of the people.

Touching Columbia Seminary, the report related chiefly to changes in the constitution, which had been revised. There was a majority report objecting to the revised constitution, and a minority report approving of it. On motion of Dr. Smith, the minority report was considered first. According to this report the election of professors is given to the Board, with a veto power in the Assembly. After debate, the minority report was adopted by vote of 79 to 12. The remainder of the report was also adopted.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH OTHER CHURCHES.

There were present at New Orleans delegates from the Reformed (Dutch) Church, the Associate Reformed Church, and the Reformed Episcopal Church. The Rev. Jacob Chamberlain, M. D., (who attended all the sessions, from beginning to end,) represented the first; the Rev. John Miller, D. D., the second, and the Rev. Benjamin Johnson, the third. On the third day, Drs. Chamberlain and Miller addressed the Assembly; the former dwelt much on the interest felt by his Church in our evangelistic work amongst the negroes, and the latter said that deep down in the hearts of his people there was a feeling that they and we ought to be one. On the eighth day, Mr. Johnson made his address, filled with the most catholic sentiments. The Moderator replied to each in the most felicitous manner.

THE TITLE S. S. OR STATED SUPPLY.

On the sixth day, Dr. Smith presented a report on an overture from the Presbytery of Ouachita, asking the Assembly to dis-

continue the term *Stated Supply* in the Minutes. The Committee recommend the letters A. P., *Acting Pastor*. Dr. Woodrow objected that the pastor is as member of Session, but "acting pastor" would be a new officer not recognised by our constitution. It would be giving the authority of a member of Session to one who is not such. Dr. Adger said the name *Stated Supply* was very unpopular amongst Presbyterians, and rightly. Very often the man is really an acting pastor and is not called and installed simply because an adequate support cannot be promised. But, of course, an *acting* pastor is not a *proper* pastor, and has not the rights of such. He is *acting* but not *actual* pastor, and, of course, while presiding and keeping order in the Session, he could not be allowed to vote. He would recommit with a view to having the term *Acting Pastor* more fully defined. But it was evident the Assembly was not prepared to act. Various substitutes for S. S. were proposed, such as L. E., *Local Evangelist*; L. P., *Local Preacher*; P. E., *Pastor Elect*. To end the discussion, Dr. Welch moved to lay the matter on the table, and it was so voted.

EPISTOLARY CORRESPONDENCE.

On the ninth day, Dr. Adger called from the docket the report on epistolary correspondence. It consisted of the following resolution from the Committee of Correspondence:

Resolved, That, in accordance with the strongly expressed desires of a number of our Presbyteries—some of them among the largest—this Assembly will, after the present session, hold its correspondence with all the churches with whom we maintain that sort of relation, by letters instead of deputations, always excepting the Reformed Church, with which we are united in peculiar co-operative alliance. The Assembly will appoint a Committee of Correspondence amongst its regular standing committees, which shall prepare the letters to be sent by us to our corresponding churches; and this Assembly does hereby invite all churches with whom we are in correspondence to communicate with us in this form.

Dr. Adger said: If this plan were adopted, a great deal of time and money would be saved. That is one argument. He moved the adoption of the paper.

Dr. Welch said that our present mode of correspondence was not official; that our delegates did not receive direct authority to

speaking for the Church. They could only give their individual experience. It would be very much more suitable and satisfactory to have a letter carefully prepared, amended, and adopted, and then sent as a message from the church corresponding with us, to be replied to in the same official manner by us.

The report was adopted.

Mr. Daniel reported, nominating as principal delegate the Rev. J. B. Adger, D. D., and as alternate Rev. E. H. Rutherford, D. D., to the Reformed Church in America.

The motion was adopted.

THE ASSEMBLY'S THANKS.

Dr. Welch introduced the following resolution:

Resolved, That the thanks of the Assembly be returned to the members of the First Presbyterian church, and other citizens, for their hearty hospitality to the members of this Assembly.

A resolution of thanks was also adopted to the railroad companies, and to the churches that have opened their pulpits to the Assembly.

On behalf of the First Presbyterian Church, the Pastor, Rev. Dr. B. M. Palmer, came forward and said: "Moderator, if it had been possible to have a conference of the pastors and sessions of this city, I think they would have reversed the order of this resolution, feeling that they are the parties who are put under obligation. Certain it is that you have been welcomed with great cordiality by us, and there is no other feeling, now that you are about to depart, but that of regret and sorrow. Let us remember that there is no meeting in this world that is not followed by parting, no smiles that are not followed by tears.

"I have heard it said, again and again, as I have been thrown into communication with the different families that have entertained the Assembly: 'We have the most pleasant guests of any family in the town.' So I take it for granted that the families have been as much pleased with the guests as the guests with the families that entertained them.

"Moderator, I have been exceedingly encouraged by the decisions and discussions of this Assembly. I feel that there is a future—

a future that is noble—before our Church, and I shall address myself to the labors in my own sphere with a lighter heart and a stronger hope than ever. I have been a member of many General Assemblies; but I have never seen an Assembly which has exceeded this in the patience which has been exhibited under the pressure of business, the courtesy extended by members to each other and to the officers of the body, the fairness with which the work has been done, and the unanimity with which conclusions have been reached. This has been a notable Assembly. May God bless you, Mr. Moderator! The blessing of the Church rests upon this General Assembly. May it be ours to meet, without a solitary exception, in the General Assembly and Church of the First-Born which are written in heaven !”

DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY.

After the reading of the final minutes, the vote for dissolving the Assembly at New Orleans was taken, and then the Moderator, as required in the constitution, said, from the chair: “By virtue of the authority delegated to me by the Church, let this General Assembly be dissolved, and I do hereby dissolve it, and require another General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, to meet in the First Presbyterian church in Knoxville, Tennessee, on the third Thursday of May, 1878.” Then with singing and prayer and the Moderator’s pronouncing the Apostolic benediction, the sessions came to a close.

Thus ended, as Dr. Palmer justly characterised it, one of the “notable” Assemblies of our dear Church !