

such things away from home. Do you know, John, there are times when I feel very queer,—there are indeed. I caught myself a singing ‘Sweet Home’ one night, among these savages in the wilderness. One wants consolation, John, sometimes,—one does indeed; and for my part, I do miss the family and the home-brewed.”

We agree with Freeman, “the family, if not the home-brewed,” is worth all Mr. D’Israeli’s philosophy, “the Asian Mystery” included; though we would not despise Sidonia’s “Sevres porcelain,” or the good dinner spread therein, or any other indication of progress in physical science. In religion and morals, we doubt all improvements, not known to certain fishermen who lived some eighteen hundred years ago.

ARTICLE IV.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America met, agreeably to appointment, in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of Richmond, Virginia, on Thursday, 20th May, 1847, and was dissolved, according to the forms of the Constitution, on Monday evening, the 31st of the same month. It is a gratifying circumstance that, whatever discrepancies of opinion exist in regard to the wisdom or propriety of its acts, no imputation has yet been cast upon its *spirit*. Every thing was “done decently and in order.”

An eye-witness of all its proceedings, we cheerfully concede to it a large share of Christian courtesy and brotherly affection, and, as a natural consequence of this temper, its debates were distinguished by the dignity, sobriety, calmness and moderation, which became the ministers of the religion of Jesus. Its history, indeed, furnishes—according to the view which we shall take of some of its decisions—fresh proofs of the fallibility of man in his best estate; yet, while we censure what we deem to be wrong, we love to linger in memory upon its delightful sessions—to recall

discussions, in which the temper was always better than the argument—good as the argument sometimes was—and to dwell upon the faces of friends, honored as brethren for Christ's sake, and respected, as men, for those sterling qualities of the head and the heart, which dignify and adorn society.

But the cup of human pleasure is seldom unmixed. Our recollections of this Assembly are tinged with sorrow, when we encounter upon its roll, the name of a brother, beloved in the Lord, who was sitting for the last time in an earthly court of the Redeemer. Our readers must excuse us for dropping a tear at the grave of PRICE. Though unknown, perhaps, to many of them, he was known to us—and we have often admired in him “a combination and a form,

Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man.”

His noble frame was a true index to his noble heart—the home, if ever earthly bosom were the home, of generous sentiments, of warm affections, and of manly impulses. We have felt the cordial grasp of his hand—we have shared the hospitality of his roof—we have gone with him to the house of God—we have been cheered by his playfulness in the social circle, and the relations of the past, and the love which we bear to his name, exact from us no less an offering than the humble tribute which we here pay to his memory. He is joined, we trust, to the General Assembly and church of the first-born. Cut down in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when his thoughts were turned to his family, his friends and his home. The suddenness of his departure, proclaims with awful emphasis: “Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye know not, the Son of Man cometh.”

DR. HODGE'S SERMON.

The Assembly was opened with a sermon by Dr. Hodge, on the support of the clergy, from 1 Cor. ix.: 14. “Even so hath God ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.” The principal point which the preacher seemed anxious to establish was, that the obligation of furnishing this support rests, not “on the indi-

vidual congregation which the minister serves," but "upon the church as one, and the church as a whole." He contended for "nothing so visionary as that every minister, in every part of the country, should receive the same salary." Much less did he contemplate the endowment of the clergy by "a permanent fund, from the interest of which all salaries should be paid. The principle, said he, "which we wish to establish, would be fully satisfied, if our Board of Missions, instead of giving a tantalizing pittance, were authorized and enabled to give an adequate support to every minister in its service, devoted to his work, i. e., not engaged in any secular employment, but consecrating his whole time to the service of the church."

The doctrine of this discourse seems destined, for a season at least, to a growing popularity. It was evidently received with great favor by a large portion of the Assembly. The melancholy failure of the churches, under existing arrangements, to fulfil their obligations to their pastors, has prepared the mind of the ministry for *any* principle, *any* plan, not obviously false or foolish, which should give a reasonable hope of efficiency and success.

That we are greatly at fault somewhere, is beyond all question—but if the source of the evil is to be found in the spiritual condition of the churches, as we are inclined to believe that it is, the remedy should be obviously sought not in a change of plan, but in serious and scriptural efforts to elevate the standard of piety. We want—*not wiser schemes*, but *more life*. If the hearts of our people were pervaded with love to God, commiseration for the souls of men, and attachment to the ordinances of the Gospel—if they had a juster appreciation of the interests of eternity, the glories of redemption, and the vanity of earthly things, the silver and the gold would not be wanting—God's house would not be left desolate, and the ministers of Christ would be free from anxiety about their daily bread. It is possible, indeed, that arrangements might be devised, by which a larger and steadier revenue might be secured, without a corresponding improvement in piety—there might be more effort without more life or zeal. But we doubt whether such a state of things is at all desirable. The efforts of the church should be healthful, not spasmodic, the result of its *life*, and not of *machinery*.

We are clear, however, that the system contemplated by Dr. Hodge, whatever might be its success among us, as a matter of financial policy, and whatever has been its success among other denominations that have partially adopted it, is not the system contemplated in the standard of our own churches. The question, upon whom does the obligation to support the ministry devolve, is answered by our Constitution, in the form which it prescribes for the prosecution of a call, and in the arrangements which it makes for planting the Gospel in vacant and destitute parts. The doctrine is obviously implied, that this obligation rests, *not upon the church as one and the church as a whole*, but upon the *party*, whoever it may be, that calls a minister to his work. If a church calls him as a pastor, that church promises to support him,—first in the call, and afterwards when the pastoral relation is instituted. If a Presbytery calls him, as an evangelist, to its vacant and destitute fields, that Presbytery engages to support him; and if the General Assembly calls him to plant churches where the name of Christ is not known, the General Assembly must support him. This last, is the only case in which the obligation rests upon the church as one and the church as a whole, and then, it is only because the church as one and the church as the whole is the party who immediately employs him in his work. The settled principle of our church seems to be directly the reverse of that for which Dr. Hodge has contended in his sermon. The change contemplated is radical, and it becomes us to pause before we overturn our ancient foundations to get quit of evils which attach, after all, not so much to our *system* as *ourselves*.

While, however, it is the obvious principle of our government, that those who employ a minister are bound to provide for his support, it is equally an article of our creed, that the strong should assist the weak. Where congregations are too feeble, or too poor, to assume the obligations of the pastoral relations, of themselves, it is their privilege to apply for aid to their wealthier brethren, and the duty of their brethren to grant it. God has indeed rendered it incumbent upon them to support the institution of the Gospel among them; but he has not required of them to make brick without straw. He has given them the right to levy contributions upon the rich when their own resources are

inadequate. Upon *this principle*, and not upon the doctrine, that it is the duty of the church in its collective capacity to provide for the maintenance of the clergy, the Board of Missions has been founded. It was designed to be a bond of communion between the affluent and needy—an organ, through which the poor might ask, and the rich might grant, whatever aid the exigencies of the Gospel demanded. The principle of the Board is a just one, whether the Board be a wise arrangement or not; and we do not see but that our system of ministerial support is as perfect in theory as the wit of man can make it.

While it institutes a near and tender relationship between every pastor and his charge, it binds the charges together in ties of mutual charity and dependence, which bless alike the givers and the receivers. It is a plan, as it strikes us, in beautiful accordance with the spirit of the Gospel—it preserves the unity of the church, without disturbing the free and healthy action of its parts.

Our object, however, is not to discuss the general question, but to express our dissent from the cardinal principle of Dr. Hodge's sermon. When the edition of Chalmers's *Economicks*, by the Board of Publication, made its appearance, we read the preface with regret. Our conviction was and is, that any thing analogous to the Sustentation Committee, there contemplated, was fraught with danger—and our apprehensions are far from being diminished by the able and elaborate efforts of one of the ripest scholars and soundest divines in our church, to establish the principle upon which such a Committee might be justified. We see no method of carrying out these general schemes, without a change in the whole system developed in our standards; and as we do not believe that the gain will be equal to the risk, we have felt it our duty to indicate our fixed and settled purpose to abide by the ancient landmarks. We appreciate the motives of our brethren—they are pure, honorable and noble—but to err is human. And we submit to them in candor, whether it is not as much the duty of the church as one and the church as a whole, to select and appoint ministers, as it is to support them—whether the right of election and the right of patron are not inseparable; and if the people delegate one to a central committee, we would farther inquire, how long they are likely to retain

the other. It is better to bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of.

PRESBYTERIAL AND SYNODICAL COMMISSIONS.

The question concerning the right of our primary courts to act by commission, was brought before the Assembly by a very able and elaborate report of Dr. Hodge, on a resolution, referred by the last Assembly to a special committee, consisting of himself and Drs. Lindsley, Musgrave, McFarland and McDowell, affirming it to be contrary to the Constitution and uniform practice of the Presbyterian church in the United States, for any ecclesiastical judicatory to appoint a commission to determine, judicially, any case whatever. This question was originally brought before the Assembly of 1846, upon a review of the records of the Synod of Virginia. Two Presbyteries, within the bounds of that Synod, Winchester and Lexington, had claimed and exercised the power; and their action having been approved by the Synod, the point was made in the Assembly, embraced in the resolution to which we have referred. The report of Dr. Hodge furnishes conclusive proof that the appointment of such commissions is contrary neither to the Constitution nor the uniform practice of the church. A motion was first made to adopt the report, and after an earnest and animated discussion, that motion was laid upon the table, for the purpose of moving the indefinite postponement of the resolution submitted by the previous Assembly to the committee, and the final disposition was the indefinite postponement of the whole subject. The Assembly, by this vote, refused either to affirm or deny that our primary courts possess the right in dispute.

The question before the Assembly was not as to the *right* to appoint committees or commissions—this was universally conceded—but as to the *powers* with which they might be legitimately invested; the precise point in dispute was—whether a *court* could resolve itself into a portion of its own members. Now, to us, this question seems perfectly plain—the commission contemplated in the resolution of 1846, is not a separate and independent body, entrusted with delegated powers—it is in no proper sense, an *agent* of the court which appoints it; but it is the *court* itself, resolving to be constituted *as such*, with less than a

majority of its members. The appointment of certain persons by name precludes none others from attending; the members of the court are, *de jure*, members of the commission; the only object of the appointment is to render certain that *some* shall attend, by making it their *sp* duty to do so.

When any ecclesiastical judicatory, therefore, nominates; a commission, it does nothing more than issue a command to the individuals specified to attend at the time and place, and for the purpose mentioned, and at the same time to declare that these persons so attending, shall constitute a quorum of the court, even if none others should be present. This seems to us to be a true statement of the case, and if commissions are to be condemned, we are at a loss to determine upon what principle the provision of our government, making the quorum of a court consist in many cases of a very small fraction of its members, can be defended.

It is quite a mistake to suppose, as some in the Assembly seem to apprehend, that the right to appoint a commission is founded upon the right to *delegate power*. According to this view, there would be no necessity that the members of the commission should be members of the court.

If a Session, Presbytery or Synod, possessed inherent powers; which it could legitimately entrust to others, we see not why it should be restricted in entrusting them to agents exclusively selected from itself. But the truth is, the right to delegate power pertains to no ecclesiastical judicatory at all. Christ, according to all Protestant confessions, is the head of the church; and all the powers of all its courts are derived from him. These courts are his agents to do his will—and if a delegate cannot transfer his commission, no more can they commit their functions to any other hands. They are to do *themselves* the work which their master has imposed upon them. Possessing no original and inherent jurisdiction, all their powers are restricted to themselves. If a commission were an agent, acting with delegated powers, we should unhesitatingly pronounce it to be unlawful.

And here we would respectfully ask of those, who, upon this ground, denied the right of our primary courts to act by commission, upon what principle they justify the appointment of Boards to do the principal business of the

church ? These Boards are possessed either of delegated powers or of none at all. Now, if the church has no original, inherent powers to delegate, how can these organizations be consistently defended ? If the church has original and inherent powers to delegate, then why may they not as well be delegated to commissions as to them. It seems to us, that the line of argument pursued in the Assembly against the doctrine of Dr. Hodge's report, is fatal to the whole system of machinery which our church has adopted. It proceeded, it is true, upon a mistaken hypothesis in regard to commissions, and therefore proved nothing in reference to *them*; but if just and conclusive in its principles, it achieves a much wider destruction than its authors originally contemplated.

M'QUEEN CASE.

On the afternoon of Tuesday, the 25th of May, judicial case No. 1, was taken up, being a complaint on the part of Rev. Colin McIver and others, against a decision of the Synod of North Carolina, confirming a decision of the Presbytery of Fayetteville, restoring the Rev. Arch. McQueen to the functions of the Gospel ministry. The history of this case is probably known to most of our readers. Mr. McQueen had been suspended from the ministry and excommunicated from the church, for marrying the sister of his deceased wife. In the fall of 1844, or the spring of 1845, (we have not the records before us,) he applied to the Presbytery of Fayetteville to be restored to the privileges of the church and the office of the ministry. This request was refused; of this refusal, he complained to the Assembly of 1845, and that Assembly having heard the complaint, came to the following remarkable decision:

“ *Resolved*, That the prayer of the memorialist be granted, so far as that this General Assembly recommend to the Presbytery of Fayetteville to re-consider their decision in the case of the Rev. Archibald McQueen; and if in their judgment it should appear conducive to the peace of the church and the promotion of religion to the region around them, to restore Mr. McQueen to the communion of the church and to the exercise of the functions of the Gospel ministry, on the ground that in his case the ends of discipline are attained, by the operation of the sentence un-

der which Mr. McQueen has been lying for a period of three years.”

The matter, having been thus remanded to the Presbytery, the Presbytery referred it to the Assembly of 1846, and by that Assembly the reference was indefinitely postponed. The Presbytery again took up the subject of his request, complied with the recommendation of the Assembly of 1845, and restored him to the privileges of the church and the functions of the ministry. Rev. Colin McIver and others, complained of this decision to the Synod of North Carolina—the Synod sustained the Presbytery, and the complainants then arraigned the decision of the Synod before the last Assembly. The Assembly refused to entertain the complaint, on the ground that it had no jurisdiction in the case. “Whereas,” is the language of the decision:

“Whereas, the Rev. Archibald McQueen prosecuted a complaint before the Assembly of 1845, against the Presbytery of Fayetteville, for refusing to restore him to the exercise of the Gospel Ministry, and did at the same time memorialize that Assembly to decree his restoration; and whereas that Assembly did take up and judicially entertain the said complaint, and pronounced judgment in the case by authorizing and recommending the Presbytery to restore said Archibald McQueen to the Gospel Ministry, provided that in the judgment of the Presbytery it was wise to do so; and whereas the Presbytery, in the exercise of the discretion thus confided to them, did restore Mr. McQueen; therefore,

Resolved, That the complaint of the Rev. Colin McIver and others, against the Synod of North Carolina, for having sustained the action of the Presbytery of Fayetteville, in restoring the said Archibald McQueen, in accordance with the judicial decision of the Assembly of 1845, cannot be entertained by this house, and is hereby dismissed.

In making this disposition of the above mentioned complaint, this General Assembly wishes it to be distinctly understood that they do not mean either to retract or modify any judgment hitherto expressed by any Assembly respecting the offence for which Mr. McQueen was suspended from the exercise of the Gospel Ministry. They simply declare that his case cannot be regularly brought before them by this complaint.”

It will be seen from the terms of this decision, that the

question of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of such marriages, and the degree of turpitude involved in them, was not before the house; neither did the Assembly directly or indirectly mean to affirm that the restoration of a minister, under such circumstances, was constitutional and right. But it was conceived, that the General Assembly of 1845, had really decided the case; so that while the complaint was *formally* against the decision of the Synod of North Carolina, it was *truly* and in *fact*, against the decision of the Assembly of '45. It is evident, that if that Assembly had *reversed* the action of the Fayetteville Presbytery, and fully sustained the complaint of Mr. McQueen, no complaint could have been constitutionally made to any succeeding Assembly. This action, whether wrong or right, would have been final. Now, this is precisely what the Assembly of '47 maintained, that the Assembly of '45 *virtually* did. It recommended to the Presbytery of Fayetteville, to re-consider the decision, and to *restore* Mr. McQueen upon certain specified conditions, of which the Presbytery was to be the judge;—affirming, at the same time, that in his case the ends of discipline had been answered by the operation of the sentence under which he had been lying for a period of three years. The Presbytery re-considers the matter, and judges that the conditions are fulfilled. What then? They are advised by the Assembly to *restore*—they *do*—and the question is, can a complaint legitimately lie against an act of compliance with the advice of a superior court. It is *virtually* the *Assembly's* act. The Presbytery was nothing but its organ, and the whole responsibility rests upon it. This, as we understood it, was the view taken of the McQueen case, by those who voted in the majority in the last Assembly: and consequently nothing was, in fact, decided but the question of jurisdiction. The Assembly said nothing more than that it could not undertake to censure a court for obeying the will of its superior.

We are inclined to think, however, that this view is not in accordance with the facts; and that the complaint might have been entertained and issued on the ground, that under the recommendation of 1845, the Presbytery had actually decided *not* to restore Mr. McQueen, and that the case complained of was really a *new* one. The Assembly of '45, recommended that the Presbytery should re-consider its

proceedings—the re-consideration accordingly took place, and the decision substantially was, that the peace of the church and the promotion of religion in the region round about them, required that Mr. McQueen should be restored, if restored at all, *not by them*, but by the General Assembly itself. They, consequently, refer the matter to the Assembly. It was not, as we understood it, a reference “for *advice*, preparatory to a decision”—that they had from the Assembly of ’45, but a reference for “*ultimate trial and decision*” by the Supreme Court. By this reference, according to our Discipline, “they totally relinquished the decision, and submitted the whole cause to the final judgment of the superior judicatory.” The case completely passed out of their hands. As to *them*, it was finally and irreversibly disposed of, unless it had been sent back by the higher Court. The Assembly of ’46, took up this reference, and decided that it should be indefinitely postponed, which was, in effect, saying, that its farther consideration should be forever dropped. The matter ought here to have ended. Subsequently to the dissolution of the Assembly, the Presbytery of Fayetteville takes up the case again—the very case which by its own previous action it had put beyond its reach; and which the Assembly of ’46 had declared should be no longer agitated. Now, by what right does this Presbytery presume to re-consider a *second* time? Not by the advice of the Assembly of ’45, for the *re-consideration* then recommended, had already taken place? It was evidently an irregular proceeding—and however the authority of the Assembly of ’45 may be pleaded in its favor, it was beginning the case *de novo* upon its own merits; and the action of the Presbytery was, consequently, a legitimate subject of complaint. This is the light in which the thing strikes our minds.

Besides, it would have been more satisfactory to all parties to have issued the case according to the forms of the Constitution, although the verdict would probably have been precisely the same as the present decision. There would, then, have been no ground for the imputation, which, however unjustly, has yet been insinuated, that the Assembly was disposed, either from motives of tyranny or impatience, to deprive the people of their rights. The sense of justice in the proceedings would have been more completely met,

though equal dissatisfaction might have been incurred by the final issue. We have no doubt ourselves that the Assembly acted honestly and in good faith, though we do not believe that the action was right.

As to the recommendation of the Assembly of 1845, it was evidently in gross defiance of the letter of our standard. It is true, that incest is a crime which admits of various degrees of turpitude, but according to our covenanted articles, *all* the degrees of it, even the lowest, are distinguished by this circumstance, that they are incompatible with the marriage relationship. Parties connected with each other by the prohibited ties of affinity or blood, can never enter into the marriage contract.*

It is no doubt a more aggravated crime to marry a mother, a sister, or an aunt, than to marry the sister of a deceased wife—but all the cases agree in this, that the marriage is invalid. It is null and void, from the simple fact that the parties are incompetent to make the contract. This is the *doctrine*, whatever may have been the *practice* of our church. The only satisfactory evidence, therefore, which can be furnished in case of incest, that the parties have repented, consists in separation. They cannot live together as man and wife. It is just as wicked to perpetuate the contract as it was to make it. Hence, according to our standard, Mr. McQueen has never repented, and the ends of discipline have consequently never been answered in the punishment to which he has submitted. He is as guilty today as he was when the Presbytery deposed him. If the law of the church is more stringent, upon this subject, than that of the bible, it ought to be changed; but as long as we profess to believe that our standards faithfully exhibit the mind of the Spirit, our practice and our creed ought to be consistent. There is something revolting in the thought, that we should extend to men the hand of Christian fellowship, and commit to their charge the solemn functions of the ministry—that we should hail them as brethren in Christ Jesus, and enjoin upon the people to receive the word of the Lord at their mouths, when, according to the Confession which we have published to the world, they are living in the daily commission of gross and flagrant iniquity.

* Vide Confession of Faith, chap. xxiv., §4.

Such trifling is horrible and monstrous. It were better that the whole law of marriage were expunged from our standards, than that we should be systematically guilty of the bad faith involved in professions which are not believed or never meant to be enforced. If it is our purpose to tolerate incest, let us cease to pronounce it to be a crime. Let us be consistent, and not make our church the jest of the mocker, and the scoff of the profane.

REPORTS OF THE BOARDS.

A very important part of the business which comes before every Assembly, consists in the reports of its various Boards. They are the organs through which the church is endeavoring to discharge her duty, in reference to the wants of a famishing world. To supply the destitutions of our own lands—to plant the Gospel in the dark corners of the earth, amid the habitations of cruelty, idolatry, and crime—to rear an educated ministry, and to furnish the church with a literature worthy of its creed; these are the objects contemplated in the system of agencies which the Assembly has felt called, in the providence of God, to establish. These are objects worthy of the church, and any body which professes the name of Christ, and looks with cold indifference upon the moral desolations of the world, is a stranger to the spirit of the Gospel, profoundly ignorant of the true vocation of the church, and has reason to tremble at the righteous judgments of the Lord. A church which *cannot* send the Gospel to the heathen, is self-condemned as to its polity—a church which *will* not send it is *dead*. But while we cordially approve the objects contemplated by the Assembly, in the organization of its Boards, we are not satisfied that the schemes actually adopted are in exact accordance with the distinctive principles of our government. It seems to us that all the advantages of division of labor, which, it must be confessed, belong to the present system, might be secured with a less cumbrous and complicated apparatus. We would gain, if nothing more, in simplicity, by dropping the *Board* and retaining only the Executive Committee. The responsibility of the Committee, on the present plan, is indirect and circuitous—it reports to an intermediate body, no more competent to investigate its acts, than the Assembly itself. Why not make it the immediate creature of the

Assembly itself? What is the *use* of the Board as distinct from the committee? We pass, every year, through the solemn formality of electing Directors, and yet, it is morally certain that these Directors contribute nothing to the efficiency of the system—while they *may* be a shield between the Assembly and the *real agents* in the case. There is something ludicrous in the importance which we seem to attach to the *Boards*, when in point of fact, the Executive Committee are Boards, Committees, and every thing.

But whether our plans be good or bad, they never can be successful, until there is a fuller comprehension of the true vocation of the church. As long as our people refuse to be strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, they will cling to the beggarly elements which render earth desirable. The spirit of the world is in the church, and until that spirit is expelled, we can expect no sacrifices for the Gospel—no labor and zeal and self-denial worthy of the cause of our Divine Master. We want a baptism of the Holy Spirit. The heart sickens at the recital of vacancies and destitutions, perpetuated, in many cases, by the *avarice* which God curses as idolatry—and we shudder at our state when a large proportion of our churches contribute *nothing* to spread the Gospel among the perishing and the lost. God grant that the Spirit of all grace may be poured out upon our wide spread communion ; and that our diligence, fervor and zeal, may correspond to the immense benefits which we profess to have received, and which God commands us to make known to others.

On Monday, the 24th of May, the Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions was presented to the Assembly, and referred to the Special Committee, consisting of the Rev. A.O. Patterson, D.D., Rev. H.K. Wilson, Jr., and Mr. Charles W. Harris, who subsequently reported the following resolutions, which were adopted:

1st. *Resolved*, That the Report of the Board of Foreign Missions be approved, and be referred to the Executive Committee for publication and distribution among the churches.

2d. *Resolved*, That the General Assembly has abundant ground of encouragement and devout thanksgiving to the great Head of the Church, in the evidence of success which has attended the operations of the Board during the ecclesiastical year.

3d. *Resolved*, That as God in his providence is opening many effectual doors, and spreading out before our Board of Foreign Missions many interesting and extensive fields, and inviting them to enter and take possession, it is the imperative duty of the church, with combined and more vigorous efforts, to promote the work in which we have embarked.

4th. *Resolved*, That as there are adequate pecuniary resources in the churches, under the care of the General Assembly, if called forth, to meet all the engagements of the Board, it be recommended to them to extend the sphere of their operations, as far as practicable, in strengthening existing stations and in establishing new ones.

5th. *Resolved*, That whilst it is our duty to labor and pray with increased energy and zeal for the conversion of the heathen, the Assembly recognizes its obligations to increase its efforts in behalf of Papal Europe, as well as the seed of Abraham, remembering that all the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

6th. *Resolved*, That whilst the Assembly learn with pleasure that there has been a considerable increase in the amount of contributions from the churches to this cause last year, it is with painful regret they learn that a large proportion of our churches, instead of sustaining their own Board, direct their contributions through other and foreign channels.

7th. *Resolved*. That all the churches under the care of this General Assembly are expected, as a matter of duty and consistency, to contribute systematically and annually, to the funds of this Board.

8th. *Resolved*, That it is recommended to the Board to adopt measures to secure the object referred to in the preceding resolution, by a wise system of agency or otherwise, and that it be recommended to the Presbyteries, efficiently to coöperate in this matter.

9th. *Resolved*, That recognizing our dependence upon the blessing of God and the Holy Spirit, for the success of this great enterprise for the conversion of the world, it be earnestly recommended to all the churches under our care to cultivate the spirit of prayer, and more earnestly and unitedly to seek the divine blessing upon the efforts of this Board, as well as of other institutions, especially in the monthly concert.

On Tuesday, the 25th of May, the Annual Report of the Board of Missions, (the Domestic Board,) was submitted to the Assembly and referred to a Special Committee, consisting of Dr. Snodgrass, Dr. Chamberlain, Messrs. Price, James Johnston and Cayce, who subsequently presented the following report, which was adopted :

1st. Resolved, That the report be approved, and it be published under the direction of the Board. Also, that the Board furnish the stated Clerk of the Assembly with an abstract to be published in the Appendix to the Minutes.

2d. Resolved, That the increase during the past year in the amount of pecuniary contributions, in the number of Missionaries commissioned, and in the good result of their labors in various respects, has been such as the Assembly may well recognize with gratitude, and receive as an encouragement to the renewed and more vigorous prosecution of the interests of this important cause.

3d. Resolved, That in the judgment of this Assembly, the enterprise of Domestic Missions has never stood sufficiently high in the estimation and affections of the American churches. In its relation to the wide extent of our territory, the rapid increase of our population, the efforts that are made to scatter the seeds of error in our new settlements, and the influence which our country is to exert upon the character and destiny of the world, it is the great enterprise which should enlist the sympathies and secure the active coöperation of the patriot, the philanthropist, and the Christian.

4th. Resolved, That this Assembly reiterates the testimonies of former Assemblies to the vast importance of this object, and calls upon the Synods and Presbyteries to take such measures as to them may seem best calculated to secure the largest possible contributions to the funds of the Board which has this interest in charge.

5th. Resolved, That in view of the increasing importance and magnitude of this branch of our benevolent operations, a sermon be delivered on this subject at some convenient time during the session of each Assembly.

6th. Resolved, That the Assembly have heard with pleasure of what has been done by this Board, in its capacity as a church extension committee; and they express the hope that the funds placed at the disposal of the Board for

this object the coming year, will be greatly increased in amount.

On Friday, the 28th May, the Board of Education made its report, which was committed to Dr. Chamberlain, Dr. Jones, and T. R. Lee, who subsequently brought in the following resolutions, which were adopted:

1st. Resolved, That this Assembly reiterate their conviction of the importance of ministerial education in its relations to all the enterprises of the church and the conversion of the world.

2d. Resolved, That this Assembly solemnly recognize the sovereign grace of God in calling the sons of the church into the ministry, and also acknowledge the obligations of his church to use all scriptural and proper means to increase the number of candidates, especially by prayer to the Lord of the harvest, ministerial instruction, parental consecration, Christian education, and pecuniary assistance to those who may need it.

3d. Resolved, That it be especially recommended to our ministers and churches, not only to pray for an increase of laborers, but also to remember in their prayers the youth of the church, who have already commenced their preparatory studies, and who are naturally exposed to many temptations which the Spirit of God alone can enable them to resist.

4th. Resolved, That the Presbyteries be enjoined to use increasing vigilance in the examination of candidates, and to retain a strict pastoral supervision over them throughout their entire preparatory course; and that the Board of Education be enjoined to continue the plan of personal visitation and correspondence, and to use their best endeavors to promote a high standard of ministerial qualification.

5th. Resolved, That the Board of Education exercise the same pastoral care over the candidates for the ministry, who are sustained by the permanent funds of the General Assembly, as over those who are sustained by the annual collections of the churches.

6th. Resolved, That the Annual Report be committed to the Board for publication.

The Report of the Board of Publication was made on Thursday, the 28th of May, and referred to Messrs. Lowrie,

I.E. Kerr, and McVean. The following is the action of the Assembly upon the Report of this Committee.

1st. Resolved, That the Report be approved and published under the direction of the officers of the Board.

2d. Resolved, That in the opinion of the Assembly, the affairs of this Board have been conducted with judgment, energy and success, calling for the continued and increased confidence of the churches in its operations as a means of usefulness.

3d. Resolved, That the Assembly cordially approves the plan proposed by the Board for circulating its books, and earnestly recommends it to the immediate attention of the churches.

4th. Resolved, That the Assembly is highly gratified that the Board has entered into a system of colportage, as an agency for the circulation of its books; and while repeating the recommendation of former Assemblies, that funds be raised by Synods and Presbyteries, for the establishment of Depositories, owned and managed by themselves, the Assembly would further recommend that they employ, in connexion with these depositories, the Colporteurs appointed by the Board.

5th. Resolved, That the Assembly approves of the charter obtained by the Board, and orders, that in accordance with the terms of the charter, it shall be hereafter known by the name of "The Presbyterian Board of Publication."

6th. Resolved, That the Assembly also provides, in accordance with the requirements of the aforesaid charter, that the annual meeting of the Board of Publication in the year 1848, on the day when the Board meets to recognize and elect its officers, it shall proceed to elect, by ballot, three persons in the room of the three first named of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, incorporated by the aforesaid charter; on the day of the annual meeting in 1849, it shall proceed in like manner to elect three persons in the room of the three first Trustees named in the charter aforesaid; and on the day of the annual meeting of the Board of Publication in 1850, it shall elect in the same manner three persons in the room of the three remaining Trustees of the aforesaid Board ; and thenceforward, annually electing three persons in the room of that class which

has served three years; provided always, that the same persons shall be reëligible.

cation may also, at any of its regular meetings, elect persons to fill vacancies occasioned by death, resignation, or other-

7th. Resolved, That the Presbyterian Board of Publi-wise.

The Reports of these various Boards, upon which we have presented the action of the Assembly, we hope that our readers will carefully peruse. They show in what measure the church is fulfilling her obligations to her Head. The business which *they* bring before the *Assembly* is emphatically *the* business which should employ its most anxious thoughts and ardent prayers; and we are inclined to think that the proceedings which take place upon them are made too much a matter of form. The Assembly has confidence in its Boards, and therefore hardly takes the trouble to go into that minute consideration of facts and details which might exert a salutary influence upon the hearts of its members. At the last Assembly, we thought we could discover the symptoms of a change; and we hope, hereafter, that a deeper interest will be awakened in matters that so preëminently pertain to the spiritual prosperity of Zion.

PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS.

The Board of Education, to whom the subject, of Parochial Schools was committed by the Assembly of 1846, made, on Saturday, May 22d, an extended and elaborate Report, which was referred to Drs. Hodge, Jones, and Jane-way, together with Messrs. Snowden and McIlvaine. The action of the Assembly is embodied in the following resolutions:

1st. Resolved, That the Report be committed to the Board of Education, in order that it may be printed and circulated among the churches.

2d. Resolved, That this Assembly do hereby express their firm conviction that the interests of the church and the glory of the Redeemer, demand that immediate and strenuous exertions should be made, as far as practicable, by every congregation, to establish within its bounds one or more primary schools, under the care of the session of the church, in which, together with the usual branches of secular learn-

ing, the truths and duties of our holy religion shall be assiduously inculcated.

3d. Resolved, That this Assembly do hereby earnestly call upon all the Synods and Presbyteries under their care, to take the subject of Christian education under consideration, and to devise and execute whatever measures they may deem most appropriate for securing the establishment of Parochial and Presbyterian Schools in our bounds.

4th. Resolved, That a committee, consisting of one minister, and one ruling elder, be appointed by each Presbytery, to collect information as to the number and condition of schools within the bounds of Presbytery; the number of children under fifteen years of age belonging to their congregations ; the state of public opinion in respect to education ; the ability of the churches to sustain teachers and build school houses, and whatever other statistical information relating to education they may deem important ; and that these committees forward their reports to the Board of Education, on or before the 1st Jan., 1848.

5th. Resolved, That this whole subject be referred to the Board of Education, and that the Board is hereby authorized to expend whatever moneys are committed to them for that purpose, in aid of the establishment of Parochial and Presbyterian /Schools.

6th. Resolved, That it be recommended to the Board of Publication, to make inquiries on the subject of elementary school books, with a view of adapting them, as far as practicable, to a system of religious instruction, and that the Board report on this subject to the next General Assembly.

On one of the nights during the sessions, Dr. Hodge preached a sermon upon the subject, which was heard by many with profound interest, and seemed to give additional impulse to the cause. The Assembly has entered upon a grand experiment. Our only fears arise from the condition of the country and the habits and associations of the American people. Religion *must* be a part of education ; and if it cannot be made so without committing education to the church, why then, the church must take charge of it. The State has advantages in some respects which the church does not possess ; but if the distinctive principles of Christianity are to be excluded from the schools of the State, these schools must be abandoned. The great problem to

be solved in this country, is the introduction of religion, THE WHOLE RELIGION OF THE BIBLE, into the public institutions of learning. That problem *must* be solved, or the church will be driven to establish institutions of her own. We hope in some future number to recur to this subject, and therefore shall dismiss it for the present.

DEMISSION OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

The subject of the demission of the pastoral office, referred by the previous Assembly to this, was committed to Messrs. Junkin, Pryor, Hoyt, Bullock, and Snowden. Dr. Hoge was subsequently added to the committee. The Assembly finally determined to send to the Presbyteries the following sections, to be embodied as a part of the Constitution of the Church:

“ *Resolved.* That it be referred to the Presbyteries, whether the following sections shall be added to the 15th chapter of our Form of Government, viz:

XVI. The office of a Minister of the Gospel is perpetual and cannot be laid aside at pleasure. No person can be divested of it but by deposition. Yet, from various causes, a minister may become incapable of performing the duties of the office; or he may, though chargeable with neither heresy nor immorality, become unacceptable in his official character. In such cases, he may cease to be an acting minister.

XVII. Whenever a Minister from any cause, not inferring heresy or crime, shall be incapable of serving the church to edification, the Presbytery shall take order on the subject, and state the fact, together with the reasons of it, on their records. And when any person has thus ceased to be an acting minister, he shall not be a member of any Presbytery or Synod, but shall be subject to discipline as other ministers. *Provided always,* that nothing of this kind shall be done, without the consent of the individual in question, except by advice of the Synod.

Nothing to us can be plainer than that he who has mistaken his call, should be permitted to retire from the labors and obligations of the ministry. He should retrace his steps. We entertain no doubt that the low views, which have too extensively prevailed, in regard to the nature of a call to the sacred office, have induced many to assume its

responsibilities whom the Lord never sent. The doctrine has been proclaimed, and proclaimed in high places, that every young man of talent and education, who could plead no clear and definite vocation to secular employments, was bound to become a preacher. The Education Societies, too, have multiplied temptations—first by making the ministry an object of desire, as a convenient means of procuring an education—and then by shutting up the candidates to the necessity of actually entering upon its duties, under the penalty of being burdened with debt. In the by-laws of our own Board, under the head of candidates and appropriations, it is provided, among other things in the 14th Article, that “if any candidate fail to enter on, or to continue in the work of the ministry, unless he can make it appear that he is providentially prevented, he shall refund, with interest, all the money he may have received of this Board.” This rule ought to be repealed. It presents a motive of interest to the young man who has mistaken his vocation, to prevaricate with his conscience, his church, and his God. It makes honesty a *sacrifice*. In our view, it would be infinitely better, that all the funds should be lost, than that a single man, without the anointing of the Spirit, should be induced, by the stringent application of a rule, however wisely intended, to curse the church with unbidden ministrations. We should give to the uncalled no facilities for entering the ministry. We should give them all possible encouragement in renouncing it. We hope, therefore, that the Presbyteries will act upon the overture submitted by the Assembly, and that something may be done to lessen an evil which cannot be wholly prevented.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

Memorials from the Synods of Pittsburgh and Wheeling, on the subject of Christian union, together with extracts from the records of the Synod of Virginia, were referred to a Special Committee, consisting of Drs. Hoge and Paxton, and Messrs. Allen, Houston and Ewing, who subsequently presented the following report:

The Committee on the Minutes of the Synod of Pittsburgh, Wheeling and Virginia, respecting Christian Union and intercourse, have considered the subject, and submit the following report.

“It is well known that the manifestation of unity among evangelical Christians, occupies a distinguished place in the public mind at the present time. Nor can it be alleged that it deserves not the consideration which it has received.

The Convention held last year in London, has greatly increased the attention given to this subject among Protestants; and it is hoped the results of that meeting may be extensively and permanently beneficial. If real Christians, who hold fast the form of sound words, and feel the purifying and elevating power of truth, shall perceive more clearly their substantial agreement, love one another more fervently, and coöperate in the work of faith and labor of love more extensively and zealously, the advantage to the common cause of Christianity will be real and great.

We would by no means call in question the organization or operation of that branch of the Christian alliance, which has been constituted in our country; but would rather bid those brethren God speed in their legitimate efforts, and pray that the blessing of the God of Peace may abide with them always. Still, it may be inquired, whether some plan of intercourse and combined effort may not be adopted, which may specifically include those denominations who hold the same faith, and the same ecclesiastical form of government and discipline, substantially and truly, which we hold, that may greatly contribute to more intimate and complete unity in sentiment, affection and practice. If this can be accomplished in a considerable degree, in a way which will be safe and will not interfere at all with denominational peculiarities and interests, it will be much gain to the cause of truth and charity. And thus, not only entire apostacy from true Christianity, in its various forms, but errors of dangerous tendency may be more effectually resisted, and the system, of salvation by free and sovereign grace, may be more favorably exhibited before the Christian public.

It is to be particularly observed, however, that such a plan should bear no relation whatever to the amalgamation of those denominations who may be willing to enter into such an arrangement. This must be left to each in its own ecclesiastical capacity. Only that unity which is consistent with denominational distinctions should be embraced in the plan.

It is, therefore, respectfully recommended that the Gene-

ral Assembly offer for consideration to the supreme judicatory of those denominations in the United States, who are of the description above mentioned, the following propositions.

1. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the Synods of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Associate Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Dutch Protestant Church, and the German Reformed Church, will appoint both ministerial and lay delegates, in such numbers as they shall deem proper, to meet in conference, at such time and place as shall be hereafter designated, and consult and decide respecting a suitable plan of intercourse such as may be deemed profitable and safe.

2. The results of this conference shall be reported to the several bodies, and shall be regarded as adopted only so far as they shall be approved by each body.

3. This Assembly will appoint a committee who shall have the charge of previous arrangements, so far as we are concerned, and shall be authorized to communicate with the bodies above named, and confer with any committee by them appointed."

The committee contemplated in the third proposition, consists of W.W. Philips, D.D., J.W. Alexander, D.D., Dr. Snodgrass, Dr. Krebs, Dr. Potts, Mr. Lenox, Mr. Oliphant and Mr. Steel.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

The letters from the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, and the General Assembly of the Church of Ireland, were presented by the stated Clerk, on the second day of the sessions, and referred, without being read, to the Committee on Foreign Correspondence. When the answers of the committee were reported, the reading of these letters was called for. They were occupied almost exclusively with the subject of slavery—and as the terms, particularly of the Irish letter, were any thing but decent and conciliatory, there was a strong disposition at first to resist the reading, on the ground that it ill-comported with respect for ourselves and the dignity of the Assembly, to listen to lectures, in which it were hard to say whether ignorance, vulgarity or fanaticism, were the predominating element. The letters, however, were finally read, and the answers adopted. The substance of these answers was

briefly this, that our correspondence with Ireland and Scotland must cease, unless Ireland and Scotland shall be content to drop the subject of slavery. We desire no instruction from foreign lands—we know and understand our duty.

These letters assume what never can be proved from the Word of God, nor the light of nature, that slavery is essentially a sin. That there are abuses connected with the institution, may be freely and honestly conceded; but let it be remembered that in this fallen world, disfigured with the curse of the Almighty, the nearest, tenderest, holiest relations of life are liable to enormous perversions, and may be made the parents of unspeakable wretchedness, the occasions of aggravated crime. To infer that the Presbyterian church in this country, because it tolerates slavery as an existing institution, licenses the cruelty of tyrants, or approves the oppression which inhumanity may inflict, is foul injustice and reproach. We stand upon the platform of the Bible; God's word recognizes the relation of master and servant, as a relation that may lawfully subsist, and defines the duties incumbent upon the parties. The church, as a spiritual body, should attempt no more, and can do no less.

There are two extremes of opinion, against which we should guard. The first is, that slavery is exclusively a civil institution, and that the church possesses no jurisdiction in regard to it. The second is, that as it is a natural evil, like poverty or disease, a state pregnant with temptations and inconveniences, the church should endeavor, by wise and judicious means, to effect its ultimate abolition. Both propositions are false. Though a civil and political institution, it is the subject of moral duties; and the church has a right to exact the faithful performance of these duties from all her members who are masters or slaves. Cruelty to a servant, is as much the subject of ecclesiastical censure as cruelty to a wife. The church must rebuke *all* sin in all the relations of life. The slave she must require to be faithful; the master, merciful and just.

As to the other opinion, it mistakes entirely the true vocation of the church. It is a spiritual body, and has no right to interfere directly with the civil relations of society. Whether slavery shall be perpetuated or not, whether arrangements shall be made to change or abolish it, whether

it conduces to the prosperity of states or hinders the progress of a refined civilization, these are questions not for the church but the state—not for ministers but statesmen. Christian men may discuss them as citizens and patriots, but not as members of the Church of Jesus Christ. As it is clear from the bible, that slavery is not a sin, the church, *as such*, has no more right to seek its extinction than to seek a change in the political structure of a nation. We might just as consistently demand from the Church of Scotland, or the Irish Assembly, the adoption of measures to subvert the monarchy and peerage of the realm, as they can exact from us the institution of efforts to abolish the condition of the slave. As Christian men and as Christian ministers, we are bound to seek not the freedom but the salvation of our race. We are to know no man after the flesh; the pardon, conversion, holiness and peace of all mankind, whether bond or free, male or female, these are the objects of the church's prayers and the church's zeal. Her mission is accomplished, when she has brought them all, as well the master and servant as the husband and wife, to the knowledge of Christ, and trained them by the word, the ministry, and ordinances for the inheritance of the saints in light—their political and social relations here, are not within the province of her immediate labors. She has no commission to make, the poor rich, nor the rich poor, the bond free, nor the free bond—it is not her province to subvert monarchies and institute republics, nor to overturn republics and establish despotism—she is to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's.

If the churches of Ireland and Scotland could be induced to recognize these principles, a pleasant and profitable correspondence might be conducted with them. We honestly believe, however, that the gain would be greater to them than to us. The leaders of the Free Church have displayed amoral heroism and magnanimity, which are worthy of all praise; but as a church, upon the primitive plan, untrammelled by the state, trusting in God and supported by the voluntary contributions of the people, we are more than half a century older than they are. Scotland has just emerged from a dreary bondage, and though delighted with her freedom, there are still symptoms that she lusts for the flesh pots of Egypt. The Free Church has never re-

nounced the *principle* of alliance with the State. She is still afraid to commit her ministry to the liberality and affections of the people, and seeks in funds and splendid endowments, the patronage from Mammon which she was obliged to relinquish from Cæsar. It has evidently much to learn; and we, of all others, are the people whom the providence of God has qualified to teach her. Ours is, and by the blessing of God, always shall be a *free* church. We wish neither state patronage nor permanent endowments. We have no treasury but the pockets of God's people, and our ministers go forth to the work of the Lord without purse or scrip, in firm reliance upon his gracious providence and the love which his children bear to his name. We know of not a single element, essentially characteristic of a church, in which Scotland can claim a superiority to us. Accidental advantages she may possess. Profounder scholarship and more varied learning may distinguish her divines, but in the practical exemplification of the true theory of a church, it is no arrogance to say, that we are far, very far, in advance of her. Still, the freshness of her zeal, and the warmth of her first love, might exert a salutary influence on us, if a fair and honorable correspondence could be maintained.

But if she and her sister in Ireland choose to become abolition propagandists, and to denounce the country and constitution which we love, then we should not submit to insults, which are none the less arrogant, because they pretend to be Christian admonitions, and we should not listen to counsels which cannot be consistently carried out, without shaking our glorious union or laying our Republic prostrate in the dust. A correspondence, purchased at such a price, is quite too dear for American freemen and American Christians—we should deserve the castigation we receive, if while the Bible sustains us, we could tamely consent to be impleaded at the bar of a Scotch or Irish Assembly, as a pack of reprobates and sinners—to have the vocabulary of reproach exhausted upon our heads and the curse of heaven denounced against ourselves and our children. Christianity and nature forbid us to bear it. The sympathies of the world, we know, are against us; we are blackened and reviled upon the right hand and the left, but we have the testimony of a good conscience, the earnest of

God's approbation, and we ask no more. Our position cannot be successfully assailed, without impugning the authority of the scriptures. We stand or fall with them.

In the present position of affairs, the probability is that the cessation of the correspondence would be of advantage to the Free Church itself. Its connection with us has been trying to the last degree. The pressure of public opinion, instigated by infidels, fanatics and abolitionists, has been tremendous against it, in consequence of the comparatively moderate tone which its masterspirits have given to its testimonies and deliverances on the subject of American slavery. This dead weight, which its fellowship with us imposes, it would no longer be doomed to carry, if the correspondence were brought to a close.

WAR WITH MEXICO.

The Assembly near the close of its sessions, adopted appropriate resolutions, in reference to the war with Mexico. We commend this subject to our churches. The signs of the times are ominous that peace may be even more disastrous than the war. Those who have an interest at the throne of grace, should beseech the God of heaven to interpose and to save our union from dismemberment and our country from disgrace. To His hands we would humbly commit our destinies, and we close with the fervent prayer, that He would give to our Senators wisdom, to our magistrates fidelity, and to all our people the fear of His own Almighty Name.

ARTICLE V.

An Effectual Control of the Will and Conduct of Men by the Spirit of God, compatible with their free agency and accountability.

This subject involves two questions. 1. Does the Spirit of God effectually control the "will and conduct of men?"

2. If he does, is the "free agency and accountability of man" thereby destroyed or infringed? The design of the