

ARTICLE II.

PRESBYTERIAN POLITY AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

No subject has called out more discussion in the Presbyterian Church for some years past, or led to the expression of more divergent views, than the one as to the more scriptural mode of conducting the work of Foreign Missions. Almost every branch of the Presbyterian Church, both in this country and Europe, has been less or more agitated by the discussion, without any two of them, so far as is known to the writer, having reached views that are entirely coincident. Nor is it surprising that such should be the case. The subject is encompassed with real difficulties, which none but the closest and most patient study can solve.

It need scarcely be said that Presbyterian Church Polity has been profoundly studied for generations past, especially in this country and Scotland, and that a system of Church government has been evolved which is now very generally accepted as both wise and scriptural. But in the application of its principles there is an almost endless diversity of views, so that one who is a frequent attendant upon our church courts is almost tempted to doubt whether there can ever be unanimity of views. Now if such variety of views prevail in this country and Scotland, where Presbyterianism has so long been established, and where Church polity has been so frequently and so thoroughly discussed, what might naturally be expected, when the Church takes up her march for the conquest of the great outlying unevangelised world? Here she enters upon new and untrodden ground, encounters difficulties and emergencies that were scarcely known to exist, and shoulders responsibilities that nothing less than the arm of Almighty power can enable her to sustain. The difference between her position now and what it was before she left the home field is most marked. It may be compared to a great army quietly engaged in consolidating victories already achieved, and the same army on the march with the view of making more extended conquests. The army is the same, the object aimed at is the same, the laws by which it is governed are the same in all important

respects; but there must be some variation in the application of those laws, growing out of the altered condition of that army in different circumstances. So in relation to the Church of Christ. The fundamental principles of her Church polity being based upon the word of God are fixed and unalterable. The government of the Church by elders or Presbyteries is the corner-stone of that system, and the number and order of her church officers are also fixed and cannot be changed. But in relation to many of the minor details necessarily growing out of this general system, there may be diversity of administration. These details cannot always be enforced with the same regularity in the foreign field, where Christianity is to be established for the first time, as in the home field where it has had a long standing.

These general principles being conceded, we are prepared to show that our Church, with a few slight modifications of her newly adopted Book of Church Order, is better equipped by her Constitution for carrying on the work of Foreign Missions than any other branch of the evangelical Church.

In entering upon the general discussion, our first remark is, that each one of our four church courts comprises in itself all the essential elements of Presbyterian Church government, and under proper circumstances each one might exercise all the powers and functions pertaining to it, these powers and functions having been conferred by the great Head of the Church. But the growth and spread of Presbyterian Christianity necessitates the multiplication of church courts. If individual churches were multiplied indefinitely, without any connecting link or any general superintending control of the whole, it would be Congregationalism or Independency, but not Presbyterianism. Wherever a separate church is formed under the government of elders, we have the germ of a Presbyterian Church. When two, three, or four such churches are brought together under such a government, we have a classical Presbytery. But as the multiplication of church courts in the same field, all having the same powers and all exercising the same functions, would necessarily lead to conflict and confusion, it becomes necessary that these courts be graded and the powers belonging to the whole be so distributed

as to prevent discord and promote harmony. The, law by which these powers are regulated is our Book of Church Order, or, as it is frequently denominated, the Constitution of the Church. This Book of Church Order has been formulated by human wisdom, but, as we all believe, under the promised guidance of the Holy Ghost, and is at the same time in strict accordance with the principles of Church government as enunciated in the word of God. It has also been adopted as a covenant among the people of God, by which they are to be guided in all the affairs relating to the government and welfare of the Church.

Now, if these brief and, important statements are correct—and we do not suppose that they will be questioned—then it necessarily follows that whilst all these courts have naturally and inherently the full powers of Presbyterian government, nevertheless by the adoption of the Constitution they have solemnly agreed to such distribution of those powers as are embodied in that code. To the church Session has been conceded the power to govern the individual church, to ordain ruling elders and deacons, and to send one of their ruling elders as a commissioner to the Presbytery. To the Presbytery is granted the power, in a certain district, of reviewing and supervising the affairs of the churches, of authorising the organisation of other churches, of ordaining ministers, and other duties of a similar nature. She may follow with her jurisdiction one of her ministers who goes beyond her proper boundary, provided he retains his connexion with that Presbytery. But the Presbytery may not undertake to discharge any of the functions which have been definitely assigned to the church Session, to the Synod, or to the General Assembly. So every other court is under similar restrictions. Matters may, of course, go up from a lower to a higher court by way of appeal, complaint, review, or reference, but in no other way can one court interfere with the proper duties of another. A Synod or an Assembly, for example, cannot, within the bounds of the acknowledged and settled church, ordain a minister of the gospel, that being a function that has been assigned exclusively to Presbytery. But we need not enlarge upon these general principles which are well known, and which, perhaps, will be universally

conceded. But it is important to the argument we have in hand, that our readers keep distinctly in mind these principles, though they are so well known and so generally admitted.

Now the question arises, To what particular court does the Constitution of the Church commit the work of Foreign Missions? It is freely admitted that any one of them has all the natural and inherent powers to engage in the work. But if all of them, without any concert of action, were to engage in it, there would result the same conflict and confusion that would exist in the home field under similar circumstances. Hence the necessity of acting through one court, not, however, that the one court, as such, is to have complete and irresponsible power over the whole work, irrespective of the other courts. In other words, the General Assembly is the only Presbytery that is common to the whole Church, and is therefore the Church's natural agent for the conduct of all matters that are common to the whole Church. The Assembly, the highest of our courts, is undoubtedly the one to which the Constitution assigns the duty of evangelising the benighted nations of the earth. She is, according to the Constitution, "to superintend the affairs of the whole Church." She is "to institute and superintend the agencies necessary in the general work of evangelisation; to appoint ministers to such labors as fall under its jurisdiction." Again, "The General Assembly shall have power to commit the various interests pertaining to the general work of evangelisation to one or more commissions," those commissions being, of course, evangelical commissions. Here, then, is a work, the great work of Foreign Missions, that is especially assigned to the General Assembly. Whatever inherent rights other courts may have, none of them can engage directly in this without violating the constitutional compact.¹

In other words, the Church, as a whole, has agreed to work through the General Assembly, her highest court. Furthermore,

¹ The Presbytery is the only one of the courts that can obtrude itself in the foreign field, and she can do this, not to interfere with the work there, but to maintain her jurisdiction over the ministerial character of the missionary, who of necessity maintains his connexion with the home Presbytery. On this particular point we frankly confess to some modification of previous views.

when the Assembly goes beyond the bounds of the settled Church and commences a work among the benighted nations of the earth, she is not restricted by any of those constitutional laws or limitations that govern in the home field. All of her natural and inherent powers come into full play here. She can exercise, in the first instance, all the powers and functions which have been distributed among the four courts at home. Especially can she act as any single Presbytery would act, *i.e.*, she can organise churches, can ordain ruling elders, deacons, and ministers of the gospel, and can perform any function whatever that belongs to any one of the four courts. In the prosecution of the work, however, let it be observed, she is to adopt no measures inconsistent with the teachings of God's word, and at the same time all of her plans shall be so ordered as to bring about in the foreign field a Church that, in all important respects, shall be a counterpart of the home Church.

Furthermore, let it be distinctly understood that the exercise of these enlarged and extraordinary powers is only temporary. They are necessary, but only necessary in the formative condition of the native Church. As soon as one native church is fully and completely established, the Assembly must surrender to it all the rights and functions that belong to the individual church in the home field. The Assembly cannot afterwards interfere in the internal affairs of that church, except in such cases as the Presbytery might interfere in the settled church. The same course must be pursued when a native Presbytery is formed. The Assembly must yield up to it all the functions which belong to Presbytery at home. Thus step by step she surrenders all these extraordinary powers until she actually retires herself from the field altogether, but leaves behind a full grown daughter, the exact image and counterpart of the mother. This is no fancy picture, but is the natural outworking of our Presbyterian system, evincing most clearly that it was devised by infinite wisdom.

In the next place, the inquiry naturally arises, in what way or by what means is the General Assembly to carry on the work of evangelisation in the foreign field? In general, it may be replied, that this is to be done just in the way and by the agency prescribed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

To the disciples was committed the work of teaching all the nations, of organising believers into churches, and of instructing such churches more fully in relation to all that he had made known to them. So the Assembly can operate upon the heathen world only through the agency of commissioners. Every minister she sends forth is commissioned to preach the everlasting gospel. These commissioners may act separately, or they may be combined into ecclesiastical commissions for the purpose of executing such functions as require joint action. The Executive Committee of Foreign Missions is, according to the new Book, an ecclesiastical commission, acting under the appointment and direction of the General Assembly. The Assembly of course is dependent upon the Presbyteries for their coöperation. The Presbyteries must furnish the agents and confer upon them the necessary powers to execute the work. By the act of ordination, or by setting apart for the Foreign missionary work one already ordained to the work of the ministry, she confers upon him—the foreign missionary—all the powers necessary to establish the Church of Christ in a land where it has not before existed, or only in a corrupt form. She can say to the missionary candidate, We authorise and empower you in going to Africa or China to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments; and we delegate to you the power also to organise churches, to ordain ruling elders and deacons, and, in *extraordinary cases*, to ordain ministers, whether they are to act as pastors of native churches or are to act as native evangelists. We think there is no doubt that the Presbytery has the power to do as much as this, it being understood that the missionary alone is never to ordain a minister except under extraordinary circumstances; i.e., when there is no other evangelist on the ground to take part in the act of ordination.

Now the missionary thus empowered is turned over to the Assembly to act as its agent, and when the number of such is sufficient, the Assembly, in virtue of the power vested in it by the Constitution, forms these missionaries into an ecclesiastical commission, which is authorised, and which is fully competent, to perform ordination in all of its grades. Here, then, is the gen-

eral process of ordination which we advocate in the foreign field. It is not done in the first instance by a Presbytery, for there is none on the ground; it is not done by a court of evangelists, for there is no room for such a court in the Presbyterian system, but it is done by a regularly authorised *evangelical commission*. This, then, is the ground upon which we stand in relation' to the matter of ordination. It not only accords with common usage in the settled Church, but is at the same time free from all taint of Prelacy.

Furthermore, the arrangement for ordination by ecclesiastical courts is only temporary. As soon as a native Presbytery is formed, the whole matter of ordination falls into its hands, and the foreign missionary has no more to do with it. We shall have something more to say on this subject in the progress of this article.

The Assembly, so far as ecclesiastical matters are concerned, operates mainly through the evangelist, who maintains his ministerial connexion with the home Church. If he becomes the permanent pastor of a native church and of a native Presbytery as soon as one is formed, he not only terminates his connexion with the home Church, but he ceases to be an evangelist, though he may still derive his support, in part or whole, from the home Church. He may be afterwards appointed an evangelist by the native Presbytery, but he cannot be an evangelist of the native Presbytery and of a home Presbytery at the same time.

An incidental question presents itself at this stage of our argument, which must be noticed. It was stated above that the Assembly, working through the Constitution, was fully qualified to conduct the native church through all the stages of its development, even to the highest court. But as other branches of the Presbyterian Church will probably be at work in the same field and at the same time, and as arrangements will be in progress to unite these different elements into one general organisation, the question arises as to the particular point at which the oversight of the foreign evangelist should be withdrawn. By some it is maintained that the control of the evangelist ought to cease just as soon as one native church is fully organised. By such persons

it is contended that one church contains the germ of the whole Church in its perfected form, and that it ought to be left to develop itself according to its own inherent powers, without any further interference on the part of the foreign evangelist. Others hold that the superintending control of the evangelist should not be withdrawn until a native Presbytery is formed. Either of these courses, we think, is consistent with the general principles of Scripture and abstract Presbyterianism. The writer adopts the view that the care of the evangelist cannot be wisely or safely withdrawn until a Presbytery is formed. In the home field, no one church is ever set off by itself, with the expectation that it will create other churches to be associated with it in forming a new Presbytery. This is not the process by which the boundaries of the home Church are enlarged.

If separation becomes necessary, Synod sets off a number of churches and constitutes them a Presbytery. As an evangelist or a body of evangelists stand in the same relationship to a newly formed church in the heathen world, that a Presbytery does to one newly formed in the home field, his presence cannot be safely dispensed with until a native Presbytery is formed to take his place. It would be a dangerous experiment to set off one church to itself anywhere, but would be particularly so if that church was composed wholly of persons that have just emerged from the darkness of heathenism. A church in such circumstances would soon find itself encompassed with difficulties which it could not surmount. If, for example, the pastor of that church became guilty of heresy or flagrant immorality, by whom could he be tried and disciplined, except by the ruling elders of that church who are not his peers, and which would not only be contrary to Presbyterian usage, but would be a most unfortunate precedent to set before a church just struggling into existence? Other difficulties might arise. This church might be rent and distracted by its internal dissensions, just as was the case with the church at Corinth. Nobody can tell what would have been the fate of that church if the apostolic authority had not been at hand to heal its dissensions. Difficulties, it is true, might arise after a Presbytery was formed, but they would not be near so likely to occur,

and could be much more readily healed under the control of a Presbytery.

The next point claiming attention is the evangelist or foreign missionary, his office, his functions, and the powers that are intrusted to him. Clear views in relation to this particular matter will go far to clear up the obscurities that have gathered around this whole subject. We remark, then, that the foreign evangelist or foreign missionary is nothing less or more than an ordinary minister, ordained by his Presbytery, or set apart after he is ordained, to preach the gospel to the benighted nations of the earth. It is contrary alike to the Scriptures and to the Book of Church Order, to suppose that he belongs to a different class or order from the ordinary minister or preacher of the gospel. The great commission is to teach, to preach, and to evangelise the nations of the earth. At the same time, our Form of Government acknowledges only three classes of officers as belonging to the Church, viz., the minister, the ruling elder, and the deacon. To contend that the evangelist forms a fourth class, is not only contrary to Scripture, but it is to go back upon the Book itself. Any minister may be set apart, or any candidate may be ordained by his Presbytery to the work of an evangelist, if his Presbytery is pleased to confer upon him all the powers necessary to the discharge of that office. At the same time it should be kept in mind that the evangelist is not the only minister upon whom special powers are conferred. The minister is always one and the same, but the positions he may be called to occupy in the Church are different, and the powers necessary to be conferred upon him vary accordingly. If he is ordained or set apart as a pastor of a particular church, he is empowered to exercise all the functions of the pastoral office. If he is set apart as a home missionary or home evangelist, he is vested with all the powers necessary to perform the duties of that position. If he is sent abroad as a foreign missionary, he is clothed with all the powers necessary to plant the Church of Christ in a land where it has not before existed. This power, whatever it may be, does not become an inseparable personal attribute of the evangelist himself. Should he at any time retire from the work and return home, he would fall

back into the common ministerial ranks and be commissioned for any other ministerial work that might be assigned him. But the main question is, What are the nature and extent of the powers conferred upon the evangelist, first by his Presbytery, which sets him apart for the work, and secondly by the General Assembly, which controls and directs him in the prosecution of that work, and determines the extent of his jurisdiction? The Presbytery, by the act of ordination, confers upon him all the power necessary for the work, and then, by common consent, turns him over to the General Assembly, which is the whole Church in action, to control and direct him in all the details of work:¹ The transfer in this case does not differ from a transfer to a coördinate Presbytery in certain circumstances. For example, when one Presbytery consents to have one of its members labor temporarily in the bounds of another Presbytery, his work is carried on under the direction of that Presbytery where he labors, but jurisdiction over his moral and ministerial character is retained by the Presbytery where he is enrolled as a member. Another illustration of the same principle is to be found in the case of a Secretary of one of our benevolent schemes. He retains his connexion with his Presbytery, and is amenable to its jurisdiction as far as his ministerial character is concerned, while his general work is controlled and overlooked by the Assembly. The Assembly may approve or censure him so far as his work is concerned, but has not jurisdiction in the first instance over his ministerial character. This moral oversight on the part of the Presbytery and general direction of his work by the General Assembly, lead to no confusion or conflict whatever. The Assembly may dismiss a missionary from its service for incompetency, for disobedience of orders, etc., but it cannot, in the first instance certainly, try or depose him from the ministry. His ministerial character remains in the keeping of his Presbytery.

Now as to the *powers* of an evangelist. According to the Book he is to preach the gospel, to organise churches, to ordain

¹ 'All that is here said is limited to the power of jurisdiction, and does not pertain to the power of order, which is the same in all ministers, in all times and places.

ruling elders and deacons, but is not empowered to go any further. But the Book here is evidently defective; and if we were to stand squarely upon it in carrying on the missionary work, which has never been the case, it would be utterly impossible to establish a perfected Presbyterian church in any part of the heathen world. The progress of the missionary work therefore renders it absolutely necessary that there be some modification or addition to the Constitution.

But before proceeding further in this discussion, we deem it necessary to guard against a serious misapprehension. We hold most decidedly that one evangelist cannot ordain a pastor over a native church, or an evangelist to labor in more distant regions, *except in extraordinary cases*; and we hold further, that ordination in either case ought to be the joint act of all the evangelists on the ground, these evangelists acting under the Assembly and as an ecclesiastical commission under its appointment. It would not do to take the ground that one missionary should never, under any circumstances, ordain a native pastor or native evangelist. This would be equivalent to admitting that the Presbyterian Church, in certain circumstances which might frequently occur, was incapable of self-propagation. The writer was in circumstances once where he was compelled to ordain a pastor, or allow a body of believers who seemed to have been brought together by the Holy Ghost, and who were ripe for church organisation, to be scattered and lost to the general Church. He would not have done this, of course, if there had been any other evangelist on the ground to take part with him. But in Western Africa, where this event occurred, there was not, so far as can be remembered, another Presbyterian evangelist in the whole field. The act was made known in this country at the time, and so far as is known, met with universal approval. Rev. Messrs. Graybill and Hall, some eighteen months ago, ordained two native evangelists, Messrs. Leandro and Carrero, and sent them forth to gather the whitening harvest. The consequence is that two churches, embracing thirty or forty members each, have been organised, and before the close of the present year there will be a fully organised Presbytery in that part of Mexico. But while we defend the

right and propriety of one missionary's performing the act of ordination alone under certain circumstances, we are equally opposed, if not more so, to the evangelist's performing the act alone when there are others on the ground. The memorial which the writer laid before the Assembly at Staunton, Va., was especially intended to prevent the exercise of such authority by one missionary, whilst that laid before the Atlanta Assembly by certain Brazilian missionaries was intended to justify the opposite course. The same views were boldly set forth in an article in the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, and were still more openly avowed by one of their number on the floor of the Assembly in Lexington, Ky., last spring. It was maintained that ordination was joint power belonging to the individual missionary, and that he had a right to ordain in virtue thereof, whether other evangelists were present or not. The readers of the REVIEW need not be told that this is Prelacy and not Presbyterianism. The right view of the matter is that all the evangelists are to take part in the ordination of every minister, not as a Presbytery, not as a court of evangelists, but simply as an ecclesiastical commission of the General Assembly appointed to perform this as well as all other ecclesiastical functions necessary to bring the native Church into the exercise of its full powers as a Church of Jesus Christ; when that is done, all such powers on the part of the commission cease, and the commission has nothing to do but report to the Assembly accordingly.¹

Before passing from this particular subject, it is necessary to refer to a misapprehension which prevails in relation to this matter. It is objected to ordination by evangelists, whether severally or collectively, that it creates a class of native evangelists different from those sent out by the Church, and that these native evangelists, without experience or practical wisdom, may ordain other native evangelists indefinitely, and thus bring the whole matter into contempt. But this is a mistake in both particulars.

¹ These principles are not distinctly enunciated in the Book of Church Order, but they are clearly and undoubtedly implied there, and they ought to be distinctly formulated so as to prevent all misunderstanding in relation to these matters.

Only one class of evangelists exists, but the powers belonging to them are different. A foreign evangelist, in virtue of power delegated to him by his Presbytery, may ordain a native evangelist and empower him to perform certain functions necessary to his work, but he cannot delegate to him the power that has been delegated to himself.

The maxim *potestas delegata non potest delegari* is just as true in ecclesiastical as in civil matters. Any number of illustrations might be adduced in proof of this. Any Presbytery may ordain a home missionary or a home evangelist to labor within its own bounds, and besides the authority to preach and administer the sacraments which is conveyed by the act of ordination, it may delegate to him the power to organise churches, ordain ruling elders and deacons, but no one would think that he could delegate these powers to any one else. So in relation to the foreign missionary. Besides being empowered to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments, the authority may be delegated to him to organise churches, ordain elders and deacons, and, in extraordinary cases, native evangelists also. But he has no more authority to delegate these powers, especially in the ordination of an evangelist, than the home missionary has to delegate any of the special powers that have been conferred upon him. No native evangelist, therefore, can ordain another native evangelist until the power to do this has been conferred upon him by a regularly organised native Presbytery, or by the order of the General Assembly in the exercise of its essential and inherent powers.

To the "ecclesiastical commission," to which the power of ordination in the foreign field is given, it may be objected that there are conditions that cannot be complied with: 1st. That the examination of the candidate must be in the presence of the Presbytery before he can be ordained by a commission. Now this in the foreign field is a simple impossibility. If the requisition is pressed with unrelenting severity, then a fully organised Presbytery must be transferred bodily ¹to Africa or China, or the native candidate, speaking an unknown tongue, and at an expense of a thousand dollars perhaps, must be brought to this country before a native pastor or native evangelist could be ordained for either

of those countries. Here is one of those cases in which home usage, in the first stages of the work at least, cannot be enforced in the foreign field. We are not required, either by Scripture or common sense, to place ourselves in any such dilemma. 2d. The other requisition is, that the ecclesiastical commission must be a *quorum* of the appointing body. We suppose that this, though not so stated in the Book, has more special reference to judicial cases, and not to what may be called the mere executive acts of the body. Certainly the Assembly has been construing the matter in this light. None of her Executive Committees, which are virtual ecclesiastic commissions, constitutes a *quorum* of the body itself. There are two things which present themselves at this stage of the argument, however, which we think fully settle this whole matter: 1st. The Assembly, in entering upon the work of foreign missions, brings into exercise all her inherent powers as a court of Jesus Christ, and she is not bound to enforce in the foreign field every detail that is practised in the home Church, for the reason, as has already been shown, that some of them are impracticable. 2d. In the second place, she is fully authorised by the Constitution "to institute and superintend the agencies necessary in the general work of evangelisation." She can then, without transcending the powers that have been assigned her by the constitution, without violating any of the well-established principles of true Presbyterian polity, appoint any two, four, or ten foreign evangelists in the same field as an ecclesiastical commission, not only to ordain native pastors and evangelists, but to perform all other ecclesiastical acts necessary to the complete establishment of the native Church. We have only in this connexion, and in the conclusion of this part of our article, to state that the General Assembly is not independent or irresponsible in the prosecution of this great work, because all of her native and inherent powers are brought into requisition, or because she is the only one of the four courts that, the Constitution authorises to engage in the work. The Assembly itself is made up of commissioners from the Presbyteries, by whom her acts are controlled. She is not separate from or independent of the Presbyteries, but is herself the Presbyteries in action. The

control of the Presbyteries over the missionary work is very nearly as direct as if they acted through commissions of their own appointment.

It may be incidentally mentioned here that there is no incompatibility between the "ecclesiastical commission" and the "mission" (technically so called) acting harmoniously in the same field. The ecclesiastical commission embraces all those, but only those, who are qualified to exercise the functions of government. The "mission," on the other hand, comprises all the male missionaries, whether lay or ministerial. Its duties are purely financial or advisory. As an organised body it can exercise no ecclesiastical functions whatever, but can render important services to the Executive Committee at home which cannot conveniently be dispensed with.

Before bringing our article to a conclusion, it is necessary to notice, but in a very brief manner, some of the other schemes adopted for carrying on the work by other bodies of the Presbyterian Church. One of these is, that the foreign missionary should incorporate himself into the native church that he may gather, as its pastor; that he should connect himself with the native Presbytery as soon as one could be formed; and that he should continue to derive his support from the home Church, though he should have no ecclesiastical connexion with it. This scheme has some excellences, and is entirely consistent with our general ideas of Church polity. It aims to establish, as speedily as possible, an independent Presbyterian Church in the foreign field, of which we heartily approve. At the same time, a native church with a foreign evangelist as its pastor, would be a much more suitable and competent body to ordain native ministers or evangelists than a church Session made up wholly of natives. To this plan, however, there are two objections, one of which, at least, is very weighty. One of these is, that the home Church may feel an objection to contributing to the support of a minister over whom it can exercise no ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatever. The other and more weighty objection is, that the foreign missionary must divest himself of his office as an evangelist before he can assume that of a pastor of a single church. He cannot occupy

both at the same time as a permanent arrangement. The objection to this is twofold: 1st. The pastoral office is occupied by a foreigner when it ought to be filled by a native as soon as practicable; 2d. This plan makes it necessary to fill every native pulpit with a foreign minister, which is utterly incompatible with the grand idea of spreading the knowledge of the gospel throughout the world. This great object, if ever fully attained, must be achieved mainly by a native agency. Foreign missionaries can never be more than pioneers in the work. The work of a foreign evangelist should not therefore, except under extraordinary circumstances and for a brief period, be confined to the care of a single church. Unless engaged in the work of translation or education, he ought constantly to be advancing, making new conquests and extending the kingdom of Christ into regions beyond.

Another scheme, and one which has been urged with great boldness of late, is, that the work of Foreign Missions ought to be conducted, not by the Assembly, but by the different Presbyteries. No one will question the inherent power of Presbytery to do this, and in some cases it might be done with great efficiency. But constituted as the Church is, no Presbytery can enter upon the foreign missionary work without violating the constitutional compact. The Book of Church Order not only defines the powers and functions of a Presbytery, but it defines and limits the district or territory also within which those functions and powers are to be exercised. It cannot transcend those limits either in the home or foreign field without introducing confusion into the general Church work. Besides this, it would be easy to show that the resources of the whole Church would be greatly wasted, if each of our sixty-six Presbyteries were to enter separately into the work. At the same time, it is a wrong view of the matter, as has already been intimated, to say that the work belongs exclusively to the Assembly and that the Presbyteries have nothing to do with it. The Presbyteries work through the Assembly; they have a voice in the appointment of its committees and its officers; it is by their authority (as the case now in hand shows) that rules and regulations are adopted for its government; and in fact the control of the Presbyteries is almost as

direct as it would be if each of them had an executive committee of its own.

The third mode of conducting the work, the one practised by the Northern Presbyterian General Assembly, is to form in the foreign field what are called *mixed* Presbyteries. The missionaries, on their arrival in the field, if we understand their more modern plans aright, organise themselves into a Presbytery, with or without ruling elders as the case may be, into which are incorporated native ministers as fast as they are ordained, the foreign missionaries being regular members of the *mixed* Presbytery, whilst retaining their connexion with their home Presbyteries at the same time. Now this scheme, as it appears to the writer, is objectionable on a number of grounds. It is certainly contrary to Presbyterian usage for a man to be a member of two Presbyteries at the same time. In case of trial for immoral conduct or heresy, he might be condemned in one and be acquitted by the other, making it difficult to tell what would be his real *status* under such circumstances. In having the right to appeal from one Presbytery to another, it gives him an advantage over his co-presbyters that would be fatal to the great and fundamental law of ministerial parity. More than this, the missionary, being a member of the native Presbytery and of the home Presbytery at the same time, becomes an inseparable link between the home and the foreign Church, making the latter a part of the former, which is contrary to the avowed policy of our Church. There is a further difficulty connected with this arrangement. Very few missionaries would be willing to regard native ministers, just emerged from the darkness of heathenism and without the practical wisdom of experienced church officers, as their equals and peers, or would be willing to have such incompetent judges pass upon their moral or ministerial character.

A case has recently occurred in India, which shows the danger of being a member of one of those mixed Presbyteries. One of these was composed of two foreign missionaries and three native preachers, and perhaps of native elders. The two foreign missionaries disagreed, and one, by uniting the three native preachers with himself, deposed his colleague from the ministry. This

colleague, contrary to Presbyterian usage, was restored by a neighboring Presbytery, in which the American element was predominant.

A fourth, but purely theoretical, scheme, one to which allusion has already been made, is, that the local Session of the first church established on heathen ground ought to ordain pastors and evangelists when necessary.

But how is the pastor of this first church to be ordained, if not by the evangelist who first called it into being? There might be circumstances, it is true, when a church Session could with propriety ordain a minister; but this would be contrary to established Presbyterian usage; and why set the native Church on the wrong track at the very beginning of things? What might be right and justifiable in extraordinary circumstances, would not be so under the regular working of an established Church. At the same time it is obvious to common sense that a church just emerging into the twilight of Christianity ought not, except under extraordinary circumstances, to be called upon to perform the highest ecclesiastical functions known to the Church. It was not thus with the churches that were gathered by the apostles. Evangelists, such as Timothy and Titus, were sent to ordain elders over them. The arm of the fostering Church ought not to be withdrawn from the infant churches until they were able to stand upon their own feet, much less should they be called in the times of their ignorance and weakness to perform the highest functions known to the established Church.

Now, as to the particular matter referred to the Presbyteries by the last General Assembly. It is proposed by the Assembly that the following change be made: Chap. V., Section 2d, paragraph 6th, that after "ordain," it shall read, "to all the offices required to make them complete, and also with the view of the extension of the Church, that he have power in foreign fields to ordain other evangelists." To this we propose to affix the additional and qualifying clause, viz., "with the understanding (1) that in all ordinations the act shall always be performed by the body of evangelists on the ground; and (2) that the pas-

tors and evangelists thus ordained shall have no other powers than those which the Constitution gives to pastors and evangelists at home.” The amendment would then read: “and to him may be intrusted power to organise churches and to ordain to all the offices necessary to make them complete; and also with the view of the extension of the Church, that he have power in the foreign field to ordain other evangelists, it being understood that in all ordination of pastors and evangelists, the act should be done by the body of evangelists on the ground, and that the pastors and evangelists thus ordained shall have no other powers than those which the Constitution gives to pastors and evangelists at home.” More than this is unnecessary, less is insufficient.

It is necessary to add a word or two of explanation. When it is stated that the evangelist has power to ordain to all the offices necessary to make the church complete, it includes among those offices, of course, the pastor of the church; for no church has a complete organisation without a pastor. To deny the power of the evangelist or evangelists to ordain pastors over the churches they may gather, would be nothing less or more than an estoppel of the Foreign Missionary work. Surely the Church will place herself in no such position as this. But if the evangelist or evangelists have power to ordain a minister to be the pastor of a church, it is no stretch of that power to set him apart to the work of an evangelist, or to ordain him in the first instance as an evangelist, having regard to the true position of the native evangelist, as set forth in a previous part of this article. Now the clauses we propose to append, will effectually prevent any abuse of the power by any one evangelist. It estops him from performing the act of ordination alone, except in extraordinary cases, by making it necessary for all the evangelists on the ground to take part; these evangelists being regarded as an ecclesiastical commission appointed by the Assembly. The act performed in this way is strictly Presbyterian, gives no countenance either to Prelacy or Independency, and places the native Church at the very beginning on a solid Presbyterian foundation.

J. LEIGHTON WILSON.