

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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ARTICLE I.

THE CHRIST OF JOHN.

1. The germ of the doctrine of the Christ was cast into the soil of Eden. Straightway it sprang up into a vigorous plant, which has outlived and far surpassed all the glories of Paradise. Its growth through the centuries has not been constant or uniform. Long periods have elapsed without any perceptible progress; but these have been followed by epochs of great and sometimes even startling development. In the fulness of the times God was manifest in the flesh, and dwelt among us for a third of a century. For about another third of a century the Canon of Scripture was not extended beyond the limits of the Old Testament. Malachi had uttered the precious promise, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple." This was the latest promise in the Hebrew tongue. Through the long succeeding night, in which there was no vision and no revelation, it lingered in the air like a sweet presence, cheering the hearts and sustaining the hopes of all who in that troublous time waited for the consolation of Israel. But now the messenger had prepared the way. Christ, born in Bethlehem of Juda, had finished the work given him to do; had been crucified under Pontius Pilate; had been dead and buried; had risen again on the third day, had ascended on high, led cap-

arguments the minority would not now present. His position on Foreign Missions is not held by the minority. The propriety of his views is one thing; that he held them is quite another. Many that hold the position of the majority will doubtless agree that Dr. Thornwell did maintain the views of the minority on the points here set forth.

J. A. QUARLES.

ARTICLE V.

A BRIEF REPLY TO DR. WILSON ON OUR HOME MISSIONS.

Our beloved and venerable brother, the Secretary of Foreign Missions, in his article on Home Missions, in the April number of this journal, referred so pointedly to the present writer as to make it necessary for him to rise to a personal explanation. His profound respect and affection for his life-long friend, and his knowledge of the paramount influence wielded by him all over our Church, demands that he make the effort to roll off from himself the weight of the criticism and the censure with which he feels that he is in danger of being crushed. Dr. Wilson says of the present writer: "The charge of combination for mutual protection was preferred against the Secretaries at the last (Staunton) Assembly, and when proof was demanded, it could not be brought forward; but the speaker explained that it was to the *liability* to such abuse of power that he had special reference;" and then came an *argumentum ad hominem* about Seminary Professors, levelled against both the writer and Dr. Dabney.

Now, it is not denied that the present writer did say that "the fellow-feeling natural to these executive agencies, as children of a common mother, results in a combination of influence for each other, and to resist criticism." It was expressly declared, however, that it was not intended to charge "the conscious formation of any corrupt 'ring power.'" The "tendency to combination," it was said, "was uncalculated and unconscious, and, therefore, the more a subject of solicitude." "It was not the fault of the

men; they are good men and true, honorable, and incapable of calculated usurpations; it is the fault of the system. Yes, you have an established system of central agencies, all of which have a common life, and when you touch one of them, all of them feel and resent it."

This was the charge. But, so far from its being correct, as alleged, that "when proof was demanded it could not be brought forward, and the speaker explained that he spoke of a *liability*" merely, the fact is, that he proceeded in this wise to give the proof of what he said: "What is there, in the nature of the case, to make it certain that your Education work, for instance, is arranged in the best possible way? And yet, if it is proposed," (alluding to a well-known case.) "to make any changes therein, your Secretary of Foreign Missions, and every other secretary, will be found quick to come forward in defence of the established system." All this is correctly reported just so by Dr. Dapney, in his review of the Staunton Assembly in this journal for July, 1881, pp. 552-3. Still further, it will be found there that the speaker went on to maintain that it was certainly not well, as a permanent arrangement, to concentrate three out of four of our Executive Committees in one corner of the Church, viz., the Synod of Virginia, and two of them in the one city of Baltimore. And then he added: "Last year, at Charleston, a strong effort was made to separate them; but, to every observant eye, there was a rallying of the forces which effectually prevented it."

It is plain, therefore, that there *accompanied* the allegation proof enough from two well known cases. But when Dr. Wilson replied to the speaker, it is his distinct recollection that, so far from demanding and not receiving proof, he acknowledged the truth of the charge as made against himself by asking the speaker whether he could expect that a father would be indifferent to the prosperity of his own children? He claimed, in part, at least, the paternity of the system of these committees, and said it was quite natural (as of course it is) for him to rush to their defence whenever assailed.

Touching the *argumentum ad hominem* it is manifest that our brother misapprehends what is objected to the power conferred

on our Secretaries. Evidently he conceives it to be insinuated that the Secretaries have not enough "piety and good sense" to prevent them from attempting to "pervert the power intrusted to them to the accomplishment of selfish or ambitious ends." The Professors have (he avers) even greater and more "special advantages for exerting extraordinary powers" than the Secretaries. But against the Professors there are no charges that they abuse their opportunities, and "why should the Secretaries of our benevolent schemes not stand on the same high ground of confidence before the churches?"

Now, he who supposes that power is ever free from the danger of being abused is, of course, ignorant of men and of affairs. And he who imagines that we can intrust the education of our rising ministry to any men who are competent to be their instructors, and no danger of abuse be involved in the committing to them of such a high and sacred trust, is, of course, unlearned in the history of the Church's past. But it has become, after serious misgivings for a long time on the part of wise men, the settled judgment of the Church that in no other way can we educate our ministers so advantageously as in seminaries under theological professors. The writer is not aware that any amongst us hold that there is a single principle violated or endangered by setting apart men to be teachers in our schools of the prophets, albeit great power is thereby intrusted to them. But there are not a few, and some of them good and true and wise men also, who maintain that our system of Secretaryships does violate or endanger some important principles of Presbyterianism. Some of them insist that our Secretaries of Home and Foreign Missions have committed to them the power of governing other ministers which makes them of the nature of *prelates*; while others again maintain that these officers, being ministers, are yet charged with financial duties, which makes them, on the other hand, of the nature of *deacons*. These are certainly very serious charges to bring against our system of Executive Committees and Secretaries of the same, and they are such as nobody pretends to allege against our system of education by theological professors. So that it would be by no

means "easy and natural," as Dr. Wilson alleges it would be, to reason from the one system to the other, and his *argumentum ad hominem* falls to the ground.

Our honored brother closes his article with a rather severe diatribe against controversy. He says we are suffering from overmuch of it. This is not a graceful appendage to the elaborate specimen of controversial writing he has just given us. Moreover, he has all along done perhaps as much controversy *for* as almost any two other men have done *against* this system. How can any one blame him for it? But if he means to cry out against controversy, let him first stop controverting himself. And let him give those who oppose his views credit for equal honesty with himself. His brethren who differ with him should not be twitted with "a natural love for controversy for its own sake." They may be no less sincere than he is. And we would fain hope that in the end good, and only good, will come out of all these discussions.

One thing is certain, we stand in great need of finding out what is the best way of managing the operations of our Church, and if there is any better way to do this than for brethren to compare views with one another, we do not know it. It is not controversy respecting what Dr. Wilson calls "the scaffolding of the superstructure," "our Church order and discipline," our "organisation," our "orthodoxy," our "creed;" it is not discussion about Presbyterial action or Assembly action; it is not debate about "Our Church Policy, whether to be progress or petrification?" or "Our Home Missions, how shall they be conducted?" it is not the amount or degree of attention given to these questions, whether they be of the *scaffolding* only, or of the *superstructure* itself, which will account for the fact that our methods draw forth for all the various objects of our Church less than one dollar on the average for each church member. Because during the year ending April 1st, 1881, which was pre-eminently a year of sharp criticism and earnest discussion amongst us, such as Dr. Wilson intimates must destroy confidence and cripple our agencies, there was actually a considerable though still an inadequate progress. And so it has been this

year now closed. Notwithstanding Dr. Wilson's lamentations over the harm that his controversy-loving brethren have been doing, he and his colleague, Dr. McIlvaine, publish that the past year has made an advance over the preceding one; and in *The Missionary* for April we read from his pen: "It is gratifying to witness the growing interest among our Christian people in the cause of Foreign Missions." We must needs, therefore, discount somewhat from our brother's complaints against free discussion. And so he obliges us to withhold somewhat of full assent to his predictions that the separate and independent management of its own Domestic Missions by each Presbytery "will lead to the entire overthrow of the Domestic Missionary work, and that at no very distant period." And when he tells us so gravely how profoundly he is "impressed with the conviction that if the policy [of Presbyterianial action in Home Missions] he is opposing becomes prevalent, it will lead necessarily to the weakening of all those bonds which now hold our beloved Church together and ultimately, if not restrained by the providence of God, lead to its disintegration," we are disposed to be thankful that great, good, and wise men so often make mistakes.

Here let us refer to another great and good and wise man, the late Judge Thomas Thomson, of Abbeville, South Carolina, who expressed to the writer his "profound conviction" that these Executive Committees run every General Assembly of our Church that is held. He said no observer could fail to notice how we have created a system of powers which completely regulate and govern our Church through her Assembly. Here are half a dozen bodies, he said, officered by our best and ablest men, which always pull together, and draw the Church any way they choose her to go. Now, Judge Thomson was not infallible; but, on the other hand, he had no parental responsibility for this system which blinded his eyes to any dangers that may attend it.

Our respected brother tells us that "from the organisation of the Southern Presbyterian Church he has always contended for coöperation through the General Assembly in carrying on her general schemes of benevolence." And he tells us plainly what he means by *coöperation*. It is that "*all the funds raised in the*

churches for this purpose [Home Missions] should be placed under the control of this Committee for the benefit of the whole Church." He wants all the Presbyteries "to allow all their funds to go into the Central Treasury, and receive back again such a proportion as will place all the poorer Presbyteries, so far as this particular fund is concerned, on the same footing with themselves." This, he contends, is "the broad and solid foundation upon which all Christian coöperation ought to rest, and that the future prosperity, not to say the permanency, of our own branch of the Church depends, under God, upon the steady maintenance of this great principle." If we will send all our Domestic Missionary funds to Baltimore, to be there divided out as the Committee of Sustentation (which had also the whole charge of the Foreign Mission work in its hands) shall consider right and proper, then he confidently predicts that our Church will live and prosper; but if we will not do this, then his "profound conviction is, the entire overthrow of the Domestic Mission work, and that at no very distant day, and the complete disintegration of our beloved Church"!!

Can Dr. Wilson bring himself to conceive of the possibility of ever getting our Presbyteries to agree to any such arrangement as this? Can he get himself seriously to believe that any such arrangement would be *right*? What he means is not, of course, to have these funds all gathered in Baltimore, with no power or authority for their subsequent division in the hands of the Sustentation Committee. What he advocates is no mere mechanical collection of these funds into a central treasury, and then, with no discretion anywhere lodged, their dispersion according to fixed, invariable law. The funds are to be "placed *under the control of the Committee* for the benefit of the whole Church." The Sustentation Committee is to divide out these funds according to its discretion. Does Dr. Wilson soberly consider that this would be wise, or that it would be *right*? If he does, then, indeed, we are ready to join with him in saying, Let us have an end of discussion; it can do no good; we are hopelessly divided in judgment.

We have just read what a zealous and earnest writer in one of

our Presbyterian weeklies says of Dr. Wilson's programme. He holds that this plan is "what Sustentation should have been from the first, or should have had in view as its aim or end from the beginning." This (he says) is "a true sustentation; he has the true idea if he had the power to carry it to its full and legitimate end." He insists that we "must leave our narrow and contracted plan, and adopt the broad working basis the Secretary lays down, and so reach out to a full coöperation." He understands Dr. Wilson to aim at this: "That there should be a fixed *minimum* salary for every minister that is preaching the gospel, no matter what his charge may be, rich or poor; and upward from that *minimum* there should be a constant effort to rise year by year. Let the fixed salary for the first year be, say, \$600, keeping ever in view the lifting this up to a higher figure, \$700, \$800, to \$1,000, or above, if it can be reached. How is this to be done? By a capita tax on our whole Church sufficient to pay every preaching minister, from the \$5,000 salary downward; let each have his \$600 drawn from the general fund, and then let his congregation supplement up to the full amount of salary they see fit. The main work will fall on the Presbyteries—seeing their churches supplied; collecting the funds and forwarding them to the Executive Committee; enforcing the tax or cutting off the supply. Let no church receive the benefit that does not meet the demand, and in this let the Presbytery exert its Presbyterial authority, and there will be fewer churches with 'V.' opposite to their names in the Assembly's Minutes, and fewer ministers with 'W. C.' By this plan the Church will be more securely bound together in one ligature, the rich and poor together all receiving alike out of the common fund. The Secretary has sounded the key note of an alarm which must have been reaching every minister: 'The tendency of the times in which we live, so far as religious matters are concerned, is not so much to centralisation or Prelacy as to Independency. Church authority as such is at a discount.' . . . The great remedy for this, if it could be done, is to put every minister's full salary into the Sustentation Fund, and after the *minimum* has been paid out, *pro rata* the remainder according as the churches have paid in."

Such is the interpretation an intelligent man puts on Dr. Wilson's plan. And if Dr. Wilson says this is not his idea, we say, it might, as well as not, be his idea. For, if coöperation be essential to our Church's unity, and if all our Presbyteries should have but one fund for Domestic Missions, as for Foreign Missions, then why might it not be well for all our churches to have one fund out of which to pay their pastors, and let the Sustentation Committee at Baltimore disburse it all? If "the great principle of unity and brotherhood" demands coöperation in *missions*, why not in *pastorates*? Certainly this was the idea which Dr. Hodge urged on the General Assembly in 1847. He placed the obligation for the minister's support, not on the individual congregation which the minister serves, but upon the Church as one, and the Church as a whole. He wanted the *Board of Missions* to give an adequate support to every minister in its service devoted to his work. Dr. Thornwell, reviewing this discourse, said: "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. . . . When the edition of Chalmers' *Economics* by the Board of Publication made its appearance, we read the preface with regret. . . . Our conviction was, and is, that anything analogous to the Sustentation Committee there contemplated is fraught with danger. . . . We submit to our brethren 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 further inquire how long they are likely to retain the other?" (Collected Writings, IV., 485-6.)

But why quote from Dr. Thornwell, when it is so easy to say, with Dr. Wilson, that had he edited his own works, he "would no doubt have made important changes and modifications"—would doubtless have approved of all our churches sending all their Domestic Mission funds to the Committee at Baltimore, and possibly might have approved of having the Church as one supporting all her pastors? Because Dr. Wilson asserts that Dr.

Thornwell assisted in forming the present Constitutions of our Committees,¹ and "approved of the structure of our present schemes," and Dr. Wilson insists that the only "solid foundation on which all Christian coöperation ought to rest" is a "provision for the whole Church to rise and stand together, as one compact, united body." This being *no doubt* what Dr. Thornwell, if now alive, would hold, it would, with *just as little doubt*, be his doctrine that Presbyteries ought to coöperate through the Sustentation Committee in their Home Missions, and churches, through the same Committee, in their pastorates; for is not this the "broad and solid foundation on which all Christian coöperation ought to rest," and does not the permanency and the very life of our Church "depend on the steady maintenance of this great principle"?

JOHN B. ADGER.

ARTICLE VI.²

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1882.

The Assembly and the whole Church are to be congratulated that the complications growing out of the development of small-pox in Atlanta were not allowed to interfere with the attendance of the Commissioners nor with the business of the body. The facts were about as follows: Some weeks before the time appointed for the meeting of the General Assembly this loathsome disease appeared in the city. It was confined chiefly to the colored population, large numbers of whom steadfastly declined vaccination. But this population furnishes domestic servants to such families as were most likely to entertain our brethren,

¹Our Sustentation Committee was not in being during Dr. T.'s lifetime.

²This interesting and able review of the late General Assembly, prepared at our request, may fail on several points to meet the views of many of our readers. No man could expect on some of these topics to satisfy all. Ours to a large extent is, and has ever been, and must always be, a free journal, open to writers of different opinions.—EDITORS OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.