

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XXIII.—NO. 4.

OCTOBER, MDCCCLXXII.

ARTICLE I.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1872.

ORGANISATION.

This body held its sessions in Richmond, Va., beginning May 16th, at 11 a. m. Forty-eight ministers and fifty-four ruling elders were in attendance. Two more ministers and six more ruling elders would have made the Assembly completely full. The absentees were nearly all from very remote Presbyteries—one of these Presbyteries being in Brazil. Grace Street church, where the Assembly met, is a spacious and beautiful edifice, and was often filled with attentive and interested crowds of people gathered to witness the proceedings. Old Virginia hospitality was still itself, and was enjoyed as freely as afforded. The Moderator, Dr. Plumer, was assisted in the introductory services by Dr. Van Zandt, of the Reformed Church, a delegate; and by Dr. Porter, of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, not a delegate, but simply a casual visitor. The text of the opening discourse was from Isaiah liii. 11: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Dr. Armstrong nominated Dr. Welch, of Arkansas, for Moderator; Dr. Hendricks nominated Dr. Samuel R. Wilson; and Dr. Jacobs nominated Dr. Adger, but

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the latter begged that his name might be withdrawn on account of the imperfectness of his hearing. The first named member was elected, made a modest and manly speech, and presided with dignity, ability, and impartiality. Dr. Bunting was elected Temporary Clerk.

CORRESPONDING CHURCHES.

Delegates were received from the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, from the Synod of Missouri, and from the General Synod of the Reformed (Dutch) Church, in America. Reports also were had from our delegates of last year, and fresh appointments were made. The addresses of all the delegates to our Assembly were very cordial—that from Dr. Van Zandt, of the Reformed Church, especially so. He raised the question, whether our pleasant interchange of courtesies might not cease to be merely formal. He thought we might sometimes make an exchange of ministers and of members, they receiving ours and we theirs as occasion might arise. And he asked why we might not coöperate in the missionary work abroad and the evangelistic at home, and he specified particularly the colored field at the South. Our Moderator answered that we are ready for the coöperation proposed, and asked if they could not send us men as well as money for the work specially referred to.

The Reformed Church (formerly called Reformed Dutch) numbers 4 Synods, 33 classes (Presbyteries), 467 churches, 510 ministers, 63,483 communicants. They have Foreign Missions in India, China, and Japan, and spent in that work last year \$75,000. They have two theological seminaries and two colleges under their control. It will be observed that their numbers are considerably less than our own. Their wealth is much greater. The doctrines and order of both bodies are identical. What is there to hinder coöperation and even union? We confess that we know nothing which should do so.

REPORT ON THE READING OF THE BIBLE.

This came from a Committee appointed by the last Assembly to inquire, "What means shall be used to bring the Bible more

prominently and effectively as a means of grace before all entrusted to our care?" It urged more reading of the Scriptures in public worship, with exposition of the portions read; also more expository preaching; also more instruction by heads of families of their own children; and also efforts by private members of the Church to carry and read the Scriptures to those who cannot or do not read for themselves.

Dr. S. R. Wilson heartily concurred in the substance of the report, but desired to have it fully weighed. Dr. Armstrong held to the importance of expository preaching, using the expression in its large sense, but did not wish to go beyond the simple directions of our Directory, which leave this matter largely to the judgment of the minister. Mr. McKay said there was a looseness about the whole report, and we should hesitate to adopt it. Dr. Plumer said it was estimated that, when the last apostle died, there were in the world but five thousand copies of the word of God; but he gave no hint as to who makes the estimate, or upon what principle of calculation the estimate was reached. He stated that twenty-seven millions of copies of the word of God have been circulated in this country by the Bible Society. He thought the Scotch custom of shuffling the leaves of the Bible, in their search for the texts referred to by the preacher, a great hindrance to the power of preaching. He had himself preached fifteen months to a congregation following this practice. He asked for their eyes and their ears—they gave neither; and he does not believe a soul was converted the whole time. Dr. Hendricks said the model of preaching is in the New Testament, and it is expository. He wished we could, by following the Scotch custom, get Scotch Presbyterians all over this country. If the rustling of the leaves scares the preacher, let it scare him into preaching accurately and keeping well-posted. We want the gospel in its simplicity, not elegant essays on literature and the beauties of nature.

The subject being postponed at this stage, came up again near the close of the sessions, and Dr. Marshall of Texas objected to the whole report, as turning the Assembly into a sort of theological seminary to teach us how to preach. This is not the

province of the Assembly. He moved the indefinite postponement of the subject, and it was carried.

FORMS OF PRAYER IN PUBLIC WORSHIP.

Ruling elder J. T. L. Preston proposed the question, whether it would be in accordance with the principles and early usages of our Church, and calculated to promote decorum and devotion, to introduce a few scriptural and well considered forms, requiring responses on the part of the congregation—the use to be optional with pastors; and he moved for a committee to make to the next Assembly a report answering this question. He urged his views in a long and able speech carefully written and read. He said that, *in praise*, all can unite openly, and so in oblation; *in teaching*, but one can officiate; but, *in prayer*, all may unite openly, or one alone lead, or there may be a varied form admitting both ways of worship. Our mode of worship allows only the minister to speak. But suppose some desire to have the people bear some oral part, are they so clearly wrong that this Assembly will summarily refuse to consider the question seriously, anxiously, and conscientiously proposed? He pleaded that forms of prayer accord with the sentiments of mankind; that the utterance of devotion in words increases the feeling of it in the heart; that when religion is revived we always feel the impulse to ejaculate aloud our emotions. He maintained that liturgies are not historically unProtestant or unPresbyterian—the Reformers used them. The Scotch Church held to liturgies both in the principle and the practice. He then urged that the time given to the sermon is sensibly less than formerly, and so a little more might be given to prayers; that under the modern musical arrangements, the participation of the congregation in the praise is reduced to a *minimum*, and so it might be gracious wisdom to give them opportunity with the mouth to make confession unto God; that Presbyterians ought to stand in prayer, but had generally got into the irreverent way of *sitting*, and some brief, varied forms would tend to make them assume special postures suitable to prayer; whereas *sitting* as a posture for worship is *without example*, ancient or modern, Mohammedan, Jewish or

Christian. One more thought—the older he grew, the dearer to his heart was the great idea of Christian union. And Christendom has need now, if ever it had, to close up its ranks—a struggle, perhaps *the* struggle is before her. Less isolation from the rest of Christ's people would be grateful to him. Our principles cannot be improved; if by some slight change in external forms her garments were made more beautiful, we should love our Church not less but more.

Dr. Plumer said that prostration, standing, sitting, and kneeling are all proper postures in prayer. For sitting, he quoted: "And David sat" and said his prayer before the Lord, which however can hardly have reference to public worship.

Rev. Wm. McKay trusted the motion would prevail—it was a very modest one—only for inquiry. The subject is exciting interest in other churches besides ours—amongst others the Reformed Church is reviving its ancient liturgy. The sentiment at the bottom is the same as that which led to the building of this beautiful church edifice. From whom does it come? Not from the ministry, but from the people. We cannot afford to overlook intimations coming from that quarter.

Ruling elder F. Johnston was opposed to the resolution—even as a matter of inquiry.

Ruling elder Cassels was a representative of the people, and denied that this measure is from them. He opposed it out and out.

Ruling elder Collier was called to his feet simply, to say emphatically as a man of the people, that they do not favor this innovation upon the spirituality of the Church.

Ruling elder E. R. McLean endorsed what had just been said.

Dr. S. R. Wilson opposed the resolution out of regard, not to the rigidity, but the freedom of our system. It is not iron-cast. It admits enlarged gospel liberty in matters of indifference. His objection was, that the thing proposed is out of harmony with the freedom of our system—and introduces a prelatial principle contrary to that freedom. We have liberty to worship God in the plainest building of clap-boards or in an elegant structure like this—to preach in short gowns or long gowns, in black

gowns or white gowns, or no gown at all. [Laughter.] We have liberty if we cannot pray without a book, to have a book. If a man cannot walk without crutches, let him walk with them, and God help and bless him in doing it. But do not require men who have two good sound limbs to use crutches. His chief objection to Episcopacy, as to forms, is this intolerable rigidity—a certain set of prayers, a certain dress, etc. If rain is wanted, I must not pray for it till a form is prepared for me. If we were in a storm on the great deep, and had no prayer-book, we could not pray canonically. He meant no disrespect to those who pray in that way, but gloried in our liberty. We have a *Directory* for worship—not *Forms*. Let us never change it. But if my dear friend wishes to respond “Amen” at the close of prayer, what is to hinder? The desire for forms in our Church is growing, and another thing is growing, and some how the two generally grow together, viz., the tendency to an unspiritual Christianity—conformity to the world and formal worship in the house of God. He entreated his brethren to resist this tendency, by lifting up the magnificent free Presbyterian worship to that glorious character which can be given to it. Let us study our prayers as much as, if not more than, our sermons. Let us make the singing what God designed it to be. Every family ought to teach their children the hymns and tunes of the house of God. The songs of Zion should be substituted for the dance when Christian worshippers come together, socially, and the evening be spent in singing Old Hundred, and Cranbrook, and the sublime songs which God’s people have sung for thousands of years. Thus would our worship assume a splendor and attractiveness such as would make all mere forms seem like worthless straw. And so the reading of the Bible ought to be made a study by all ministers. Men would go as far to hear the elder Dr. Mason read a chapter, as to hear most men preach a sermon. Let such improvements be made in our modes of conducting public worship, and we shall have no need of such a measure as my respected friend has proposed.

Dr. Plumer—The Reformed Churches (all the Presbyterian Churches of the Continent were called Reformed) all started

with liturgies. Their ministry was often feeble, and the exercises confined to prayer, reading the word, and a simple exhortation. These old forms were taken up by our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal Church and made the net and woof of their liturgy. They were taken from Presbyterians and made obligatory. Meantime the Reformed Churches educated their ministers, and long since laid aside the crutches and went on "walking, and leaping, and praising God." The controversy about forms never ought to awaken strife, unless men attempt to impose them upon us. If this Assembly says I shall not use a written form of prayer in the pulpit, the first time I preach in their presence I will be sure to do it! If they say I shall do it, I will be like the boy John, whose master was calling him loudly and angrily. Said he: "Sir, the more you call me that way, the more I won't answer." [Laughter.] We live in a time when whole sermons are preached to prove that our Lord used a form of prayer on the Cross! A man in a stage-coach contended that there was not a single example of acceptable prayer mentioned in the Old Testament without a written form. One of the passengers said: "When Jonah was in the fish's belly, who held the candle for him to read his prayers?" [Laughter.] The answer he received was: "Sir, you must be either a wag or a Presbyterian." A man was preaching in the mountains of Kentucky on the excellence of forms, especially responsive forms, as adapted to the people; and when he was done, a gaunt backwoodsman stepped up, and slapping him on the shoulder, said: "Stranger, I like your doings mighty well! You give the people a chance to *jaw back!*" [Laughter.] We think, sir, we have a more excellent way. We did walk with crutches when we needed them; but we have passed out of our minority. Here Dr. Plumer told another story about Dr. Payson's prayer over the dead bodies of two officers. Why, he then asked, shut us up to these forms, however good? And, then, another story about an old gentleman telling a young preacher of "the good things that were *not* in his sermon." [Laughter.] There are a great many good prayers not in any prayer-book in the world,

except the Bible. Let our Church heed its Directory, and we shall not need anything more in that line.

Ruling elder Preston said his resolution did not ask the Assembly to decide upon the use of a liturgy. His was a different question, and being proposed in a proper manner, and being a serious question, respecting which a good many Presbyterians wish for satisfaction, he thought the Assembly should return an answer. There were questions, and he instanced several which might be put to the Assembly, where it would have the right to decline answering. But they were not like his—questions of seriousness, debatableness and conscientious concern. As to the last named of these three features of his question, he claimed that divines in this Assembly, and judges in this city, who are Presbyterians, and many others, want light to be shed on this question. The respected brother from Kentucky said, that because this sentiment is growing he wishes to put it down. But growth shows life; and to say that we must put a thing to death, must *murder* it, just because it is growing, strikes me as a very uncomely expression. He proceeded to quote from the work of the Rev. Dr. Shields, of Princeton, to show that many are dissatisfied with our services. Upon his second and first points he did not enlarge, but he insisted that the Assembly was not prepared to give an answer, and ought to refer his question to the next Assembly. The eminent brethren who had spoken, had refrained from showing any full preparation on this subject—any considerable knowledge of the history of liturgies. He himself was not prepared to vote; did not know enough about the question. He went into a considerable argument, to prove that worship must have flexibility, because intended for men under all conditions of society; and he proceeded to urge that forms had been used by the Primitive and by the Reformed Churches. Not only the weak, but the strong, like Knox and Calvin and Zwingle, used forms. He protested, in concluding, that he had no sympathy with those who needlessly and unseasonably took occasion to assail the Episcopal Church either of England or America. He preferred his own Church; but he loved theirs,

too, and never could treat the Book of Common Prayer with scorn or levity.

Dr. S. R. Wilson pleaded to the charge of murder, that there was certainly in his heart no malice aforethought; and that sometimes instantaneous murder ought to be used to stop growth whether vegetable or animal. His mother always had him, when he was a boy, murder all the docks that came up in her garden. As to assailing the Episcopal Church, he said, we stand on the defensive, and have always so stood from the very beginning. They give us over to the uncovenanted mercies of God. They deny the validity of our ordinances. They unchurch every body who will not wear the same yoke with themselves. I have no controversy with Episcopalians. But when I am asked to take one step—a very insidious step too, however sharp the logic that is used to prove it no step at all—to draw us from our primitive simplicity, I must resist the beginnings.

And now I take issue squarely with my friend as to the Primitive Church using forms. If there is one thing which can be proved in regard to the Church for the first two hundred years, it is that she did *not* use forms of prayer. Praying by book came in when ignorance and darkness came in. The gentleman wishes a direct answer. Let us decline even to commit, and that will be, I suppose, a direct answer. *We won't entertain your question.* It is not a matter of dispute in the Presbyterian Church. Let us say no, to that paper, and it is settled.

Ruling elder Preston made a brief reply, averring that he did not mean to charge the brethren with any unseemly attack on other churches, but only to express his own feelings of charity. Nor did he mean to say that the Primitive Church used forms of prayer, but that she repeated the apostles' creed, and forms of confession and supplication, of baptism and the like. He stood ready to be corrected by Dr. Wilson, who of course was better acquainted with the history.

The vote stood: Yeas, 5; nays, 102; *non liquet*, 1. This last vote, given by the writer of this *Review*, was not intended to imply any doubts in his mind, either upon the subject matter or the course proper to be pursued by the Assembly; but he

asked to be excused from voting, on the ground that neither *yes* nor *no* would fairly express his attitude, which he had not had the opportunity to set forth. The Assembly, it cannot be doubted, was right in declining to appoint the Committee which was asked for. That would have been to indicate, that the matter was, as Dr. Wilson very properly said,—“not a matter of dispute in the Presbyterian Church.” It would perhaps have been to give some room for the slander, that we are about to abandon our position as a Church on the question of liturgies. But whilst it was quite right to refuse to refer the matter to the next Assembly, there could have been, it appears to us, no objection to a committee appointed to give at that very Assembly a suitable reply in some fulness, to a perfectly fair question. We had no sympathy at all with the idea that, because it came from a ruling elder who represents the people, the question must needs be entertained. Ruling elders are indeed the more immediate representatives of the people; but ministers are just as truly their representatives also, else would they have no right to sit in these representative assemblies. But the question was a fair one, whether from the one or the other class of representatives. And it was certainly set before the body both modestly and respectfully, as well as ably. It was a fair question, because unquestionably there is ground for dissatisfaction with the manner in which our ministers often lead the public devotions of the sanctuary. The prayers in which the congregation are called to join are frequently bald and jejune in the extreme; and no honest desire to have them improved, is to be reprobated. It was also a fair question, because it indicated the wish to do nothing that might tend to destroy uniformity in our modes of worship. Mr. Preston proposed to our highest court, in open day, the question of the lawfulness of a few forms of prayer for optional use—he did not first use his influence to introduce them into the congregation of which he is a ruler. He seemed to think the General Assembly of the whole Church was to be consulted before the slightest change should be made in our modes of worship. Many Presbyterians in good health allow themselves, as he remarked, to sit in time of public prayer;

one of our ministers was reported to this very Assembly as baptizing by immersion, for which our standards make no provision; in Dr. Reid's church, where the Assembly met, the congregation (and the Assembly with them) would stand during singing. None of these are our Presbyterian ways. Mr. Preston was told, by Dr. Wilson, that he was free to cry out, Amen! whenever he desired it; that if he could not pray without a book, he was at liberty to have a book. Dr. Plumer declared, if the Assembly should say he ought not to use a written form in the pulpit, the first time he should preach in their presence he would be sure to do it. Now the answer to all this is, that in a certain true sense, and to a certain proper degree, whatever forms our Church appoints, we ought to accept and observe, because uniformity and order are decent and right. Thus it would be neither seemly nor proper for any particular minister and church to read prayers or practise responses. And seeing that Mr. Preston asked for light and instruction from the Assembly upon an important question of order, it was, we think, a very proper occasion to set forth in moderation, and with firmness, our Presbyterian doctrine concerning liturgies. Such a disposition of the matter would have strengthened our position, both with those who are inside and with those who are outside of our body. We are constrained to remark, that such could not be the effect of much which was said in the debate. For example: Dr. Wilson made a very powerful eulogium of the "magnificent, free Presbyterian worship," and pointed out the way in which it might easily be made "to assume a splendor and attractiveness which would make all mere forms seem like worthless straw;" but he marred the effect of it by the charge, that forms of prayer tend to an unspiritual Christianity, and that this was an effort to introduce prelacy, in the way of destroying the freedom of worship amongst us, requiring men who have two sound limbs to use crutches; and that it was also an insidious step to draw us away from our primitive simplicity. And Dr. Plumer began with the statement, which was news to us, that our brethren of the Protestant Episcopal Church got their forms in the beginning from Presbyterians; and then went on to tell his stories of the hoy

John, who, the more his master called him loudly and angrily, the more he would not answer; of Jonah reading prayers by candle-light in the fish's belly; and of the Kentucky backwoodsman, who approved of the liturgy, because it gave the people a chance to *jaw back!!*

It never was the Presbyterian doctrine that forms of prayer are unlawful in public worship. This, every standard writer of our order will be found to declare. Even John Owen, the Puritan, who wrote so powerfully and convincingly against the Church's right to impose forms, is very clear in admitting that they may be lawfully used. The points which Owen urges with greatest power are: I., that in and by the additions made unto the first received forms, the superstitious and corrupt doctrines of the apostacy were insinuated into the worship of the Church; and that it had been utterly impossible that an idolatrous worship should have been introduced, had not the opinion of the necessity of devised forms of prayer been first universally received; for had all Churches continued in the liberty wherein they were placed and left by the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, this monster of the mass, devouring souls and drinking blood, had never been conceived and brought forth, at least not nourished into that terrible form and power it acquired; and II., that the provision made by the Lord for the discharge of the whole work of the ministry, in the administration of ordinances for the edification of his Church, is his bestowing gifts on men rightly called to the ministry, enabling them unto that work, which gifts they are to exercise therein; and that the providing by the Church of certain fixed forms of prayer to be precisely read and pronounced, is inconsistent with this provision which Christ has made. But Owen never thought of maintaining, that forms of prayer are absolutely sinful, that is, unlawful in themselves, or that it would be inconsistent with liberty to have a few forms for optional use. Indeed Bannerman quotes as follows from Edwards, who wrote the *Antapologia*, (London, 1644,) and was "an eminent and learned Presbyterian theologian": "And I challenge you, in all your reading, to name one divine of note, and orthodox, that ever held set forms of prayer prescribed *unlawful*,

excepting only Independents." For, how could Presbyterians deny that forms are lawful, since our Saviour gave us a form of prayer? And how could they deny the lawfulness of forms in prayer, when they constantly make use of forms in praise, and when confessedly the old and familiar psalm or hymn which has been sung a thousand times over, is just for that very reason preferred to the new and unfamiliar, which time and oft-repeated use, and sacred and tender associations of thought and feeling, have never consecrated? There is, therefore, in our nature a foundation for the use of forms of devotion. Every minister employs more or less of certain forms of prayer in the pulpit, just as every believer does in the closet. It is not correct therefore to say, that forms of prayer necessarily lead to unspirituality of mind, any more than it is to say, that the non-use of forms necessarily leads to what our Directory calls "mean, irregular, extravagant effusions" which "disgrace that important service." It cannot be denied that the constant use of the Book of Common Prayer has led to the driest formalism, and even the grossest superstition in many of the English parishes; nor, on the other hand, that the wildest fanaticism rejoices in its freedom of prayer by the Spirit, and without a book. Truth lies here as elsewhere in the middle. There is nothing objectionable, in themselves considered, in the chanting of the *Te Deum*, in responses by the people, or in the congregation's repeating aloud the Lord's prayer—but they are *not our way*, nor were they the way of our fathers, nor yet of the apostles. And inasmuch as the tendency of our times is ritualistic, we must therefore the more watchfully maintain our own simplicity. The Episcopal Churches are in many cases leading people Romewards, with their worship turned into a mere musical entertainment, and other denominations are following in this downward course, and therefore we must all the more steadfastly stand in our lot. Corruption of worship is one chief sin of this period. Our own Church is not free from it in different forms, and there will have to be a great controversy in her bosom yet upon this subject. We hold that there are three things which have divine right, viz., the doctrine, the government, and the worship of the Church of

Christ, unto which nothing is to be added, nor from them any thing taken away by man. Mr. Preston's proposition is just a sign of the times. We wish the Assembly had dealt with it less summarily and furnished a full and scriptural deliverance on the subject.

SUSTENTATION.

The report was presented on the second day. With a single exception, all the Presbyteries (not including Kentucky) are now heartily united in the scheme. The work at first had three departments, viz., aid to feeble churches, assistance in the work of missions, and repairs of church buildings. For these three objects but one collection was made each year, and it never was adequate. In 1868, was inaugurated the Invalid fund for superannuated ministers and the families of deceased ones, for which a separate collection was ordered. Then, in 1871, a collection was ordered for missions, but the time for it should have been September, and not April, which would give one general collection for every alternate month of the year. The Committee have charge also of the Relief fund, which makes five departments and four funds in their hands. The Northern Church has five separate committees, and five sets of Executive officers to do the same work.

There is some progress reported towards bringing up the salary of every laboring minister to \$800 as the *minimum*. The Committee have been able to do little in aiding church erection. The Invalid fund has aided eighty-eight families. The Relief fund scheme has been put into operation. Two Committees of Investment for it were asked for, one to be placed at Baltimore and one at Augusta.

After presenting this report, Dr. Jno. Leighton Wilson said, four years ago the Assembly at Baltimore declined to make any changes in the management of Sustentation and Foreign Missions, which had been joined together. But the time had now come when some change was absolutely necessary. He had travelled last winter more than eight thousand miles in the interest of Foreign Missions, and of course his office was necessa-

rily vacated for a considerable period. As Dr. Woodrow would decline reappointment as Treasurer, it appeared to Dr. Wilson that there should be appointed a coördinate Secretary, who should act also as Treasurer, or else the Assembly should separate the two Committees, and have for each a Secretary, who should also, for economy, act as Treasurer. The Committee had no suggestion to offer, but would cheerfully acquiesce in any measure the Assembly might adopt.

This question was referred by the Assembly jointly to its two Committees on Sustentation and Foreign Missions, for them to consider together. Upon the report of the Committee subsequently made, the Assembly resolved to change the collection for evangelistic missions to September, to authorise the Executive Committee to appoint the two Investing Committees for the Relief fund, and declined, for the present, to separate the Committees of Sustentation and Foreign Missions. This last question was debated by Messrs. Smylie, Flinn, Evans, Blanton, and J. D. Anderson.

CO-ORDINATE SECRETARY.

Rev. Dr. C. A. Stillman, of Ala., and Rev. Richard McIlwaine, of Virginia, were nominated, and the latter was elected by a large majority. Dr. Stillman's brethren from Alabama were exceedingly earnest in opposing his election, on the ground that he could not be spared from the work in their Synod.

DR. WOODROW'S RESIGNATION.

The Committee to whom this matter was referred, reported through Dr. Armstrong the acceptance of the same, with expressions of the Church's sense of the great value of his services, and her earnest desires for his complete restoration to health.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The whole missionary force consists of thirty-six laborers—fourteen of these are ordained ministers, of whom four are natives of the lands in which they preach. The contributions

for the year amounted to more than forty-seven thousand dollars—an advance upon the previous year of more than seventy per cent.

The Assembly resolved, that it was necessary the Church should aim to raise this year for this cause not less than sixty thousand dollars.

PUBLICATION.

The contributions of the year to this cause have been over eight thousand dollars, and the Endowment fund now amounts to thirty-five thousand. A variety of recommendations to the Committee were passed by the Assembly. The attention of all the Presbyteries, which have not contributed their quota to the Endowment fund, is called again to that matter by the Assembly.

There was a long and able and most interesting debate on the question of the removal of the Committee of Publication to Nashville, from which city had come an offer of forty thousand dollars for the endowment of the Committee, if placed there. But we quite despair of being able to condense the speeches made by the Rev. Messrs. McNeilly and Price for, and of Dr. Baird against, removal. They are too full of items which may not be omitted. Mr. McNeilly very clearly presented Nashville in all its adaptedness to be a great publishing centre, disavowing all sectional feelings or any fear of centralisation in the Church. Dr. Baird proclaimed himself a southwestern man; but there was a great question of principle to be settled. Our Church cannot go into any mere secular business to make money, but is only to use money as an instrument for sending the gospel abroad. Dr. Thornwell, in the Assembly at Augusta, had stated the great principles which underlie this subject, and marked out where the duty of the Church began and where it ended. Accordingly the Committee does all its work by contract. And centrality has therefore nothing to do with the question. New York is the best place for distribution on this Continent; but in the bounds of our own Church there is none better than Richmond. At this point Dr. Baird presented many interesting details. The result of the debate was, that the Assembly continues the

Committee at Richmond, but voted special thanks to the citizens of Nashville for their generous offers.

EDUCATION.

The receipts for the year were nearly twenty thousand dollars, and 130 students had been assisted. Officers' salaries were charged altogether to the Publication cause, because it was believed it could best surmount its difficulties. The Assembly approved of this arrangement. Mr. Tadlock, chairman of the Standing Committee, urged the necessity of aiding young men who seek the ministry. They are usually poor, and either they must be aided, or we must lower the standard of preparation. But this is no time to lower our standard, when there is so much scientific infidelity demanding the best possible education for the defenders of the truth. Another popular error, is to undervalue the contributions of the poor to this cause. The opportunity of giving should be offered to all, and then there would be no lack.

PLACE OF NEXT ASSEMBLY.

Invitations were received from New Orleans, Little Rock, Savannah, and Jackson, Tenn. Little Rock was chosen.

DAY OF HUMILIATION.

In response to an overture from the Synod of South Carolina, the third Thursday of November was appointed to be a day of special thanksgiving to God for his mercies to us as a Church, and of humiliation and earnest supplication for an outpouring of his Spirit on all our pastors and congregations.

BAPTISM BY IMMERSION.

Certain members of the Presbytery of Lexington, requested from the Assembly an answer to the question, whether it is proper for ministers in our Church to administer baptism by immersion? The Assembly replied, that for a Presbyterian minister to baptize by immersion, is such a departure from the ways approved in our Standards as should be discouraged.

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STATED SUPPLIES.

To an overture from the Presbytery of South Alabama, touching this relation, and urging the formation of the pastoral relation wherever practicable, Dr. Plumer reported from the Committee of Bills and Overtures this answer, that the Presbyteries are all using commendable diligence in this matter, and that the plan of stated supplies is in many cases the only thing to save a church from extinction.

Rev. Mr. Boggs questioned whether many Presbyteries are using commendable diligence. Of our 860 ministers, but 345 are pastors, so that 515 are stated supplies or otherwise engaged. Under this system the Presbyteries are losing their control over ministers and churches.

Rev. Mr. Matthews said no action of ours can reach the evil. If the Presbyteries will not allow the feeble churches to be supplied, our Presbyterianism must be circumscribed to the three hundred and odd pastors.

Mr. Boggs—Weak churches must be grouped together under a pastor or evangelist, in conformity with the Book. If the Book is right we should try to live by it. If it is wrong we should change it.

Rev. Mr. Price said this system is working great evil. Some States make divorce easy, and people are quick to marry in those States, because the contract can easily be dissolved. There is some squinting in this direction among our churches.

Ruling elder McGregor said another evil is, that whilst the Assembly enjoins the grouping of feeble churches, the stated supply takes two or three of the best of them, and the rest have to shift for themselves. Another is, the stated supply will live at a distance and do no pastoral labor, and so it ends generally in the church dying out.

Dr. Hendrick said our duty is as plain as it can be made. Take any Presbytery you please and you will find that the stated supplies are missionaries. When a missionary supplies a number of feeble churches once a month, he is put down as a stated supply. We must follow providence. If Presbyterianism is the true system it must be flexible.

Dr. Plumer—The Southern Church, after the war, had one hundred ministers less than she had before. She has been losing an average of ten ministers every year, until last year. So that we had a year ago one hundred and fifty ministers less than in 1861. God, who makes ministers, stirred up the people to pray, and last year we gained seventeen. This year the gain may be more. The most efficient laborer, perhaps, in my Presbytery, is stated supply to two churches, and evangelist to four or five more. It is God who has put us into these straits; let us do the best we can; and the best we can do, is to strengthen the hands of these faithful and hard-working men.

Rev. Mr. Price thought these pathetic appeals out of place, where a brother sticks to his farm year after year, and a church is content to give him a pittance for half his time, and expects him to live by secular employment. These brethren and churches need to be touched with the finger of ecclesiastical power. He had seen a little discipline result in great benefit to such brethren and such churches.

Dr. S. R. Wilson said the subject is many-sided and beset with difficulties. He agreed with Dr. Hendrick in the general view he had presented. But much of the difficulty arises out of the facility with which Presbyteries dissolve the pastoral relation. His venerated father had been stated supply for twenty-seven years to the same church, and he had himself felt a hesitation whether he would not prefer to be one, lest should he ever be compelled, particularly from pecuniary considerations, to ask for a dissolution, he should have the Presbytery simply say to him, and his church consenting, "As you agree to be divorced, be divorced." The Committee's report was adopted.

TWO YEARS' SERVICE BY LICENTIATES.

The Presbytery of Nashville asked the Assembly to take the necessary steps, to have it made our rule that no licentiate, in ordinary cases, be settled, until he shall have spent two years in itinerant missionary labor. Dr. Plumer, from the Committee of Bills and Overtures, recommended the rejection of the proposal for reasons given. Rev. Mr. McNeilly presented a minority

report, recommending that the rule be sent down to the Presbyteries for their action. He urged the necessity of it from the difficulty there was of obtaining the needful supply of missionary labor. Our young men get settled as pastors as soon as they are licensed. The Presbytery of Nashville urges that such a rule will furnish a regular supply of the kind of labor needed; will afford to our young men, after a long course of study, the physical training they need; will give them freedom and power in extemporaneous speech; also a knowledge of men and things; will give the churches remote from seminaries a better chance, and put the young men more completely under the direction of their Presbyteries; and, finally, will restore the mode in which our Church was extended in the days of our fathers.

Dr. Plumer said this measure could not help the Presbytery of Nashville, because each of our Presbyteries is in need of more laborers than it has or can get. It will help nobody, but greatly embarrass some.

Rev. Mr. McNeilly rejoined, urging in detail the reasons given by his Presbytery.

Dr. Adger favored the minority report, because it would allow the Presbyteries to determine the matter. His own mind was not prepared for the adoption of the rule, but he was strongly in favor of bringing the candidates under the control of their Presbyteries, instead of allowing their settlement to be determined as it often is.

Rev. Mr. Flinn desired light on two points. Is the design of the rule to prevent early marriages of ministers? And is it the design to compel young men to labor two years for whatever the churches may choose to give them? If so, what right have we to impose either necessity upon our candidates?

Dr. Grasty said the rule would be met with exceptions, and exceptions only, from the beginning. Secondly, it will shut us out from employing first-class men just out of the Seminary in special fields for which they are qualified. Thirdly, the rule will trammel where the people ought to have freedom. Fourthly, the missionary labor wanted cannot be supplied by young men without experience.

Dr. Plumer said there was another objection. This proposal will keep our churches agitated twelve months about this fundamental principle. It is a great injury to any Church to be continually agitated about principles which have been settled from the days of our fathers. Another objection: One of the greatest curses of a revolutionary state in the Commonwealth or in the Church is, that a multitude of dead-letter resolves are passed. By passing this rule, we shall have our Constitution altered and a dead letter in our fundamental law. The rule is not practicable. The report of the majority was adopted.

REVISION OF THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

On the third day (Saturday) Dr. Adger presented a report from the Committee of Revision, which was made the order of the day for Tuesday, at one o'clock, but was afterwards postponed until the sixth day, Wednesday. The report was as follows:

The General Assembly at Louisville having referred to the original Committee on Revision all the proposed amendments by the Presbyteries sent up to that body, to be examined and incorporated in the New Book according to the mind of the majority in the Church as therein indicated, which in its amended form should be reported back to the Assembly; that Committee have discharged the duty imposed on them to the best of their ability and would submit the following statement.

Of the fifty-five Presbyteries on the roll of the Assembly in 1870, returns were received from forty-nine. Upon a deliberate and careful examination of these papers we find that *seven* Presbyteries expressed decided disapprobation of the Revised Book, viz.: Fayetteville, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montgomery, North Mississippi, Tombeckbee, and Transylvania.

Two Presbyteries expressed general disapproval with approbation of some portions of the Revision. These are Muhlenburg and Atlanta. The former considered the time unpropitious and rejected the Book as a whole, but expressly commends two portions of it. The latter declined to adopt as a whole, but expressed approbation of nineteen important items.

Eleven Presbyteries declared their inability at that time from one cause or another to give an intelligent, harmonious or decided vote, and therefore postponed the matter. These were Bethel,

Brazos, Central Mississippi, Central Texas, Harmony, Macon, North Alabama, Orange, Paducah, South Alabama, and West Lexington. *Three* of these eleven, viz.: Bethel, Harmony, and Orange, were very strong in their expressions of desire to have the revision continued and the book divided into portions, so that the Presbyteries might have full opportunity to examine it before any decision.

The remaining *twenty-nine*, viz.: Abingdon, Arkansas, Augusta, Charleston, Central Ohio, Cherokee, Concord, East Hanover, Eastern Texas, Florida, Greenbrier, Holston, Indian, Knoxville, Lexington, Mecklenburg, Memphis, Nashville, New Orleans, Ouachita, Red River, Roanoke, Savannah, South Carolina, Tuskaloosa, Western District, West Hanover, Wilmington, and Winchester, may be classed together as all favoring the New Book, either as it stands or as it might be made by further emendation. Twelve of these Presbyteries, viz.: Abingdon, Arkansas, Augusta, Charleston, East Hanover, Greenbrier, Lexington, New Orleans, Roanoke, Savannah, Tuskaloosa, and West Hanover, devoted very great attention to the consideration of the Revision, and sent up full and most valuable suggestions for its improvement. Others of the number were less full and minute in their examination, or rather, perhaps they found less to object to and amend. Several of these twenty-nine are very strong in their testimony to the excellence of the revised Book, while others say nothing in its favor, but only labor to make it better; but most of them evince a deep sense of the necessity of proceeding with deliberation, and allowing ample time for the Presbyteries to criticise and amend with a view to securing in the end, if possible, a harmonious conclusion on the part of the whole Church.

Touching the emendations proposed by these Presbyteries, it affords your Committee lively satisfaction to report that not one of them evinced any captiousness, but all evidently were intended to promote the acceptableness of the Revision; and that, as we suppose, nine out of ten of all the changes proposed—perhaps we might say nineteen out of twenty—were such as would commend themselves to the immediate and unquestioning adoption of every Presbyterian. The Committee cannot say that they have incorporated in the New Book every change suggested, because they were not instructed by the Assembly to accommodate the Book to every suggestion which any one or two or three Presbyteries might make—but to follow, as well as they could, “the mind of the majority in the Church as therein indicated.”

The result of the corrections of these Presbyteries has been of course to make the Book very much the better. They cer-

tainly have operated greatly to make it more than it ever was before the product, not of any one man or of any ten men, but, in a very just sense, of the whole Church. If we were called on to say how many of our ministers and elders have from the beginning contributed to bring the Book to its present shape and condition, we would have to count them, as we believe, by hundreds.

The Committee would, in accordance with the wish expressed by a number of Presbyteries, report now to the Assembly for its action only the Rules of Discipline. It is believed that that portion of the Book has been so long before the Church, and so much discussed, that the mind of the whole body is somewhat definitely settled concerning it—at least, that it is not more than the next fall and spring Presbyteries will be able to dispose of.

Your Committee propose to retain the Form of Government in their hands, until they can with due care affix to it the necessary proof texts. In the meantime the Presbyteries and the ministers and elders of our Church should have the privilege, we conceive, of suggesting any further emendations which may occur to them.

For the Committee of Revision,

JOHN B. ADGER, Chairman.

Dr. Armstrong offered the following resolution:

Resolved, That in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee of Revision, the Book of Discipline, as reported by them, be sent down to the Presbyteries to be by them either adopted as it stands, or to be further criticised, and their criticisms sent up to the next Assembly, as they may elect.

He explained that the proposition was, for every Presbytery to adopt or criticise further as it might elect. His Presbytery (East Hanover) was one of those which had carefully examined the Book sentence by sentence, and sent the result to the Assembly. As now reported by the Committee, it seemed to be greatly modified for the better. And it is now, not the work of one mind, but of the Church, which was one thing that commended the Book to him. Dr. Armstrong proceeded to specify some of the improvements of the New Book upon the old. One was, that the new defines distinctly the relation of baptized children to the Church to be such as that they are not liable to discipline in the technical sense. In the Old Book this matter is

not determined. Another was, that excommunication is defined in the New Book correctly and scripturally. It is not the business of the Church to curse. Another rule of the New Book to be much commended, relates to the course to be pursued with a communicating member who confesses to the church session an unregenerate heart. Under the Old Book, we are compelled to excommunicate, and he had known it done. Another is, the rule respecting church members or officers who neglect to transfer their church relations upon removal. The rule is cautious and guarded. Now these are a few, and only a few, of the points in which the New Book incorporates what has become the settled conviction or practice of the Church. And thus it has made improvements in the best way of improving Constitutions, that is the way of incorporating what has come to be the settled judgment of the body. And Dr. Armstrong was willing on these grounds to send the Book down to the Presbyteries for adoption or for further emendations.

Dr. S. R. Wilson had a paper which he desired to offer. He did it of course with great diffidence, yet under a strong sense of duty. He offered it as a substitute for the motion to send down. It was as follows:

The General Assembly having heard and considered the report of the Committee of Revision, upon a review of the whole subject which has now for so long a time agitated the mind of the Church and occupied the attention of successive Assemblies, do adopt the following as their final minute in the premises, viz.:

1. They approve of the care and diligence with which the Committee have prosecuted their labors, and to each and all the members of said Committee would express the thanks of the Church for the assiduity and fidelity with which they have discharged the duty laid upon them.

2. The Assembly expresses no opinion in regard to the *Rules of Discipline* as now submitted by the Committee, either as to the general principles or the details contained therein.

3. In full view of the facts bearing upon this matter of the Revision of the Constitution of the Church, the Assembly deem it inexpedient to send down to the Presbyteries the *Rules of Discipline* reported by the Committee, or further to continue the agitation of this subject in the Church.

4. It is therefore, resolved, That the Revision of the Form of Government and Book of Discipline be indefinitely postponed, and that the Committee of Revision be, and they are hereby, discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

He would only say, in introducing this paper, that the Assembly, he trusted, would guard themselves against a misapprehension likely to arise from the phraseology employed more than once by the last speaker. Our Book is not the *Old Book*, it is *the Book*. There is no other Book, and he thought it as new and as living as it has been ever since it was formed, and as capable of meeting all the necessities of our Church.

Dr. Plumer was truly gratified by the introduction of this paper. He accorded with it all, and very fully with the thanks to the Committee, and if any body would suggest anything stronger, more courteous and presbyterial toward that Committee, he would vote for it.

The second remark he had to make was, that this whole subject of Revision brought before the Church the last ten years, was in his judgment inopportune. It was unfortunate. If ever a Church was called to look about her and see what she ought to do, it is the Southern Church; but instead of doing what she ought to do—instead of making our meetings of Presbytery glorious revival meetings, they are made meetings for the discussion of points which will probably never convert a soul. His father had a neighbor who never made a good crop, but at any time could give five or six reasons why he did not. His practice was, when grass was gaining on the corn, to go and make new draw-bars, or a new gate, or new rails, but not to get out the grass. Our business is far different, he thought, from Constitution-making—it is to keep the Church from extinction!

Again, one of the most difficult things in the world is to make good fundamental laws. And we are not prepared for this general ripping up of our whole system. We do not know what is to follow. We have a good deal of legislation on the subject of testamentary bequests. He told a story of a man who had a number of daughters, and two of them had married against his wishes. He wished to mark them with his disapprobation, and

made a will devising to Annie and Mary, or Sally and Becky, as it may have been, five hundred dollars each, but not disposing of the rest of his estate. The executor paid these legacies, and the question with him then was what to do with the rest of the estate. The will said they should have "so much and no more." The court instructed him that the heirs at law were the legitimate children of the deceased; and so Anne and Sally got their five hundred dollars each, and then an equal share with the other children! [Laughter.] He was glad they did. He was always glad when malignant wills were defeated. Here was a fundamental law on testamentary bequests; but that man never dreamed it would have this bearing. And we cannot tell. He hoped we would not tear up things from the foundation.

He wished to say, that of all the papers he had ever read, except the Dictionary, he never saw one abounding so much in definitions. Some definitions are harder to understand than the original word—as Johnson's definition of net-work. It was as exact a definition as ever was given; but he would like to know what good it had ever done. So it was with some of these definitions. Why, Moderator! did you know that, in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, there is not a single definition?—not one! Some might say Faith is defined, and some Sin, and some Pure Religion, but those were descriptions and not definitions. Now he was not prepared to turn in and make an ecclesiastical dictionary and put that in the forefront of the battle. Definitions are the most entangling things in the world. If you let me define everything I wish to define and as I wish, I have got you—I don't care what your arguments are.

Another objection he had was, that the Discipline is taken up before the Form of Government—the cart before the horse.

This was not all. Our Book the people know. They are familiar with it. It is plain, clear, settled. But you go to sea to find some ecclesiastical stand where you may rest more safely and you will have a tempestuous voyage. Mr. Jefferson sent a minister to France who could not speak French. Being told that the First Consul would probably ask him, when he was presented, what kind of a passage he had, he got ready an answer

for that question. So when Napoleon came along and asked him, How is Mr. Jefferson? Says he, "Very stormy!" [Laughter.] I think we shall have a stormy time if we go into this business.

This was not all. If you adopt this Discipline, there will not be an ecclesiastical lawyer left. No man will be able to tell what is the law, except the Committee who devised the New Book; and he was told there are wonderful divisions amongst them. Now, though he was an ignorant man, he knew what was the Constitution of the Church to-day. But if you adopt that Book, he should never attempt to understand the Constitution. He could not do it. He was too old.

This was not all. This revision was begun before the North and South separated. But the North had dropped it entirely.

This was not all. The Church had grown under the Book we have. It must be a grand old Constitution which has raised the Church with such rapidity.

Nor was this all. I forewarn you that you will split this Southern Church asunder. That is an awful result, but it is a certain result. I tell you there are hundreds of people who will not stand it. I do not speak this in the language of threat. I never threaten any body. I am merely telling you what I know.

I do not choose to go into particulars, for if the paper of Dr. Wilson does not pass we shall have another chance to discuss this thing upon its merits.

The brother who moved to send down, took four points which he said were improvements. It would be marvellous if a book of twenty-one octavo pages had not four good things in it, especially when the Committee had the old Discipline to quote from.

Should Dr. Wilson's paper be accepted, (he thought it would, but he never counted noses,) there the whole matter ceases and this agitation is at an end. If it is not adopted, we must take up the Book on its merits and shall have a prolonged discussion.

He thanked the house for their attention; and though he was "full of matter," he would be like the old man who fell in love

with and married a nice young lady. He had but two teeth, not opposite each other, and yet he was very fond of crisp dry toast. She indulged him; and as they were at tea, he sat nibbling a long time without making much progress. At length she asked him to excuse her, and went to give out breakfast. Returning, she found him still nibbling at his dry toast. Said she: "My dear, are you not done?" "No," said he, "I am not done, but I'll quit." [Laughter.]

Dr. Adger was very glad the discussion was to be on just such a paper as his brother from Louisville had presented—direct, manly and bold, as is every thing from that quarter of the Church. He would give a brief history of the Revision. It began in 1837 when the Assembly met in Lexington, Kentucky. A great authority had just pronounced, that, to consider the Discipline before the Form of Government, was to put the cart before the horse; but that Assembly, with some wise men on its floor, did not think so. They began by referring the Discipline to Drs. Thornwell, Breckinridge, Hodge, McGill, and others. They reported to the Assembly in 1859 substantially what is laid on your table to-day. It was drafted by Dr. Thornwell. I will give a statement by him of the changes made, and you can judge how true it is that they are fundamental and revolutionary.

The first head is, "*The Lopping of Redundancies*,"—that is, those parts of the Book which he called its *preaching*.

The second is, "*Omissions Supplied*." The first specification is, the more exact definition of offences and their more complete distribution. Dr. Thornwell held to definition—Dr. Plumer says he does not believe in them. I think them good in their place—better than some other commodities with which we have been frequently entertained in this Assembly. Another omission supplied is, the statement of the principle of ecclesiastical inquest, implied, but not formally stated in the present Book. Another is, a provision for getting at a party who conceals himself. Another is, to require that an issue be joined. Another is, the definition of "appearance"—that it may be *in writing*. Another is, to define what is to be done with a party confessing; another,

the case of an offence committed in court; another, the case of a suspended minister's charge, whether it is imperative that Presbytery shall declare it vacant. This finishes the "omissions supplied."

The third head is, "*Extension of Privileges.*" One is, that parties may testify; another, that one on trial before a session may have counsel and aid in conducting his case from any member of that congregation; and the third is, that gross irregularities may come before a superior court by memorial as well as rumors.

Moderator, I ask the Assembly to consider, as I proceed, whether it is just to say, that we are upturning fundamental principles.

The fourth head is, "*Removal of Anomalies and Incongruities.*" The first specification is, in the definition of an offence, as only what is sinful; a second, that the Westminster Standards are to be employed in defining offences; a third is, that the inferior courts are not to be made parties in cases of appeal; and the fourth is, the determining in a perfectly distinct way who are the "original parties," and so making an end of that vexed question.

Fifthly, "*three other provisions*" come in. The first provides for an unconverted church member, who has committed no disciplinable offence, to withdraw voluntarily; the second exempts the baptized children from all judicial prosecutions; the third defines more clearly the difference between the competency and the credibility of witnesses.

Dr. Thornwell said, the only serious defect in this New Book was, that it did not confine the right of appeal to the injured party who had submitted to trial; and that the only thing he considered doubtful in it was, the admission of the lower courts to their seats in cases of appeal, and he suggested another way in which that matter might be arranged.

And, now, what changes have the present Committee of our Church superinduced upon the report as Dr. Thornwell presented it in 1859? In the first place, borrowing a suggestion from his defence of his Book, we have given a wide sense and a narrow

sense to the term "discipline." Secondly, following out the same idea, we introduce a chapter on the ways in which the Discipline of the Church is to be applied to the baptized children. Thirdly, we have a chapter on the different kinds of censure, stating them with some fulness of definition—that abominable thing which Dr. Plumer hates; then another chapter on the infliction of censures, and another on their removal. These are not new things, being found chiefly in the Directory for worship. It appeared to us that that was not the place for matters of discipline. Next, we give original jurisdiction exclusively to the lowest courts—to the session exclusively over a church member, to the Presbytery exclusively over a minister, so that our brethren can never be *ipso facto* by the Assembly. Next, we leave out all reference to *common fame*, and make the accuser to be always the Church, and the indictment always in her name. Next, we arrange for testimony to be taken by commission, or by a sister court—this is surely not very revolutionary. Next, it is made the duty of a court knowing of an offence by a church member coming into its bounds, to notify the court which has jurisdiction. Next, if during a trial questions arise betwixt parties thereto, the discussion, it is provided, must be first between them, and then they shall withdraw for the court to decide. There is surely no great harm in that—Dr. Plumer might stomach that. Another provision defines, if he will allow me to say so, how a session is to take up a case. Then there is a definite provision for "The Record." Lastly, we confine appeal, as Dr. Thornwell wished, always to the party aggrieved.

And now I resume the history. In 1859, the report was re-committed. In 1860, at Rochester, some names were added to the Committee, and they were told to take up the Form of Government also. Then came the division of the Church. In 1861, at Augusta, our Church appointed a new Committee, and committed to them the Form, Discipline, and Directory. In 1862, the Northern Church adopted seven chapters of the Book, but subsequently dropped the whole matter. In 1863, our Assembly, after Dr. Thornwell's death, reorganised its Committee. In

1864, the Assembly received our report, and ordered copies of the Book to be printed for examination. In 1865, we reported why we had not been able to print—those were our dark days. In 1866, the Assembly at Memphis examined and adopted the Form and the Discipline almost unanimously, and sent them down to the Presbyteries. In 1867, the Presbyteries making various and contradictory objections, and the Church being unprepared to act either negatively or affirmatively, the Assembly at Nashville laid the matter by “for future reference and use.” In 1868, nothing was done. In 1869, upon an overture from a large number of ministers and elders, the subject was taken up again; and upon a report from a committee appointed to examine the answers of the Presbyteries to the Nashville Assembly, the Assembly at Mobile resolved to send down the Book for the Presbyteries to point out what they liked, and what they disliked in the new Book. In 1870, the answers came up to the Assembly at Louisville, which that Assembly committed to the original Committee, instructing us to report on them, as we have done this day to you.

Now I submit, that a business which has been under consideration by so many Assemblies and Presbyteries during fifteen years, is not to be ridiculed or denounced as revolutionary, or useless, or foolish. Your Presbyteries, and not your Committee, have made the Book what it is. I submit that this work is not inopportune as Dr. Plumer asserts. The General Assembly have from the start always said, it is opportune. Dr. Plumer thinks we are “making bars,” when we ought to be “getting out the grass.” God be praised, sir! the reports of our committees, and the narratives sent up, do not justify the statement that our plantation has been suffered to go to grass, whilst we have been making bars.

Dr. Plumer says we have been changing our fundamental laws. I submit whether he is borne out in that statement by the history of the changes made.

He does not like definitions, but is great on stories. He told us about Becky and Sally, and the old man nibbling away at his dry toast. I for one could willingly have dispensed with these

stories, and submitted to a few definitions. He is a theological professor: and does he stand up before this Assembly to decry definitions? If it were true that the Scriptures have not a definition, has he forgotten that the Shorter Catechism is full of them?

He declares that he will quit studying our Constitution if you adopt this Book—that would not be so great a loss as if he were a man who holds to definitions. But I think his love of study will prevail, and we shall have him helping us to understand and apply the principles of the new Book.

He forewarns us that we will split the Church. The history I have given of the action of your Presbyteries does not confirm the prediction. We have not heard of the beginning of any split made by the discussions thus far.

I will make only one more point touching this “agitation” as it has been called, which you are invoked to put an end to. Dr. Plumer said the other day, that revolutionary times were always times when dead-letter laws were made. I have always supposed they were times when principles are discussed. So far as this report considers principles, it suits our times then. The time of the Reformation was a stormy time; they inquired into principles then, and did not make dead-letter laws. The latter days of the Reformation, from 1560 and onwards, were earnest times; and then they made the Belgic, Gallic, and Scotch Confessions, and the Heidelberg Catechism. The Westminster Standards were made in stormy times. Our present Constitution, as well as that of the United States Government, were made in 1788—somewhat stormy times, like the present. We are just walking in the tracks of our fathers. I maintain that we have introduced no new principles. The storm has been shaking our building at the top, and we have been quietly examining our foundations. Our sails have been fluttering on the breeze, and we have been looking to see how it was with the hull—whether any leak was springing. We have been engaged in no revolutionary business, but one for the promotion of the life of the Church.

Dr. Wilson said it struck him as a strange idea, that in a

stormy time we should look at the state of the hull. But if the figure be applicable, it is not what this Committee are proposing, unless the applications of the law be the foundation, and the Constitution itself at the top. Another observation: The brother said we are not dealing with fundamental principles, and yet he closes with the statement, that revolutionary times are times for examining the foundations! How do these statements consist?

Let me follow, said he, the last speaker in his history. He told us of the eminent divines on the original committee, and dwelt on the name of Dr. Thornwell, whom, sir! we all love—whom I love as much as any man living—one of the greatest luminaries that has graced the Presbyterian Church during this century. I do not wonder the Committee should bring forward his name to support this work. Sir, it needs it. But the brother tells us in the conclusion that, after all, it is not the work of Dr. Thornwell. Then, of what use was the history, and of what force the name of that eminent man as an argument for sending down this Book? It is nothing, sir; it is nothing.

But let us see how many are the alterations in the Book that Dr. Thornwell proposed to the Church. Here Dr. Wilson made sundry specifications, upon which he briefly dwelt, and concluded by saying, that in Dr. Thornwell's book there were at least sixteen radical changes in the Book of Discipline, and even more than this number in the Book as presented now by the Committee. But, sir! did the Church adopt that Book? It rejected it, with all the weight of the great names on that committee. All the historical statement therefore goes against the brother. Not to detain you—this simple fact has been brought out, which I was not aware of before, that at the Nashville Assembly the subject was laid on the table, or passed by. Dr. Adger here explained, that he said "laid aside for future reference and use." Dr. Wilson resumed: In the language and under the action of an ecclesiastical body, that usually means politely to lay a thing to sleep—just as my own Presbytery once, out of consideration for one of the most distinguished men in the Church, intensely favorable to this Book, passed a paper deferring the whole matter

to the future. So I understood, and so I think the Church understood the mind of the Nashville Assembly. We will just in the same way stop its further progress in this.

And who re-opened the question? Was it the Presbyteries? No, but the Assembly. The great mass of our people, eldership and ministers, would be glad to have the whole matter laid to rest. But, in 1870, the reports came up, and more confusion than is presented in the simple statistical statement of the different views of the Presbyteries I cannot conceive of. This is one reason why I have asked the Assembly to stay farther agitation. It was not my desire to do this, for I would rather personally have done with it and go home and let the Church go on, if they choose, to make the Book. But the confusion, the want of consent is one reason why I believed it my duty to offer the resolution.

The chairman of the Committee gave as a specimen of their improvements, that original jurisdiction is committed to the courts to which the parties belong, so that we cannot be *ipso factoed*. Sir, I defy any man legally to *ipso facto* me or you under our Book. I have fought that battle. It is just as clear in that Book as language can make it; and I object to the amendment, because it implies that it is doubtful. I have a little feeling of honor that I was not fighting for something doubtful.

As to parties testifying, I do not know that that was ever against the law. Under the Book a party could be made to swear, if necessary.

Taking the whole thing together, there are one or two amendments not essential, but of use perhaps as finger boards to help those not able to see clearly how the rule draws. Some people must have everything told to them. One objection I have to this Book is, that it tries to tell everything, and so confuses very many things.

Another principle is about the discipline of baptized children. I do not believe the Church has ever had any difficulty practically on this subject.

One other case shows that fundamental principles are in-

volved—the case of a man professing faith under a mistake. There are very distressing cases of this sort. But it is a fundamental principle of our Church repeatedly affirmed, that no man may ever leave by voluntary withdrawal. There is no real practical difficulty in the matter. The Lord said the tares cannot all be taken out of the wheat. We must just wait on such persons. The Methodist Church could very well practice on this rule; but we are not Methodists.

Having touched on all that is important in the chairman's remarks, I will now run over the resolutions I have proposed.

The first resolution commends the Committee. We want to thank them for fidelity, diligence, and assiduity. I do not wish to take their Book, but I say they have done their work as well as it ever can be done by this generation.

The second expresses no opinion of the merits of the Book. How could we do so intelligently, unless we were to examine it fully? It may be said that sending the Book down does not commit ourselves to it any way. But, guard that point as you may, to send it down will be accepted and claimed as a *quasi* endorsement of it by the Assembly. And you cannot get rid of it.

But by Dr. Armstrong's resolution you send it down, not for adoption, but, note the point! for them to make their marks and remarks on it and send it back. Lo! sir, at the end of fifteen years, we are only submitting the Rules of Discipline for criticism!

But how can the Presbyteries judge of the Discipline without the Form of Government? And how many more years are we to be agitated about the Form? The agitation of questions considered as settled ones in any household, will end in the rupture of that household. You will unsettle the mind of the Church. And you may keep agitating a body of men, until they will adopt your proposal in order to get rid of it, as is said ladies sometimes marry. How was slavery abolished? It was under this one motto—which seems to me to be unintentionally the motto of this Committee—"Agitate! agitate! agitate!"

This agitation ought not to be continued, because this new

Book is not needed. No human production is perfect—but our Book is like the old Constitution of these United States—*there will never be a better*. If you take it out of my hands, and give me this new Book, *I have no home*. It is ample to prosecute the work of the Lord. It is ample for the exercise of discipline. It is ample to keep out error. Had it been observed in its integrity, the “Plan of Union” would never have been formed; and the “excinding acts” would never have been passed. There never has been a case of clear, heretical opinion in the Presbyterian Church which, where this Book has been observed, has not been gotten out of the Church. Where it has not, the provisions and principles of the Book have been traversed, as in the case of Albert Barnes, where the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia was formed contrary to the Constitution. In regard to my own expulsion from the Church I loved, that whole proceeding is to-day confessed by prominent men in the body who did it, to have been a lawless trampling on the Constitution. I say the Book is ample. Under this banner the battles of the truth have been fought by Junkin, by Baxter, and by my own venerated father, and I cannot find it in my heart to say it is insufficient for the battles of the truth still. It was under this banner that a few of us—I may say it without boasting—undertook to fight the battle of our Southern brethren, and for the restoration of our Church at the close of the war.

What is wanted, is, not another Book, but the study and the application of the Book we have. And further still, the strict construction of it.

Dr. Wilson concluded with an earnest expression of his wish that the agitation might cease. In view of the vast field, and the great difficulties before us, the present he thought is no time to be making constitutions, but, if wrong, he should bow to the wisdom of his brethren.

The discussion, suspended at this point, was resumed at night by Dr. Armstrong. He noticed first the argument from “agitation.” Abolitionist agitation had produced the late terrible war. But two thousand years ago Paul and Silas preached at Thessalonica, and were cried out against as agitators. Good

and evil both come from agitation. What is agitation? It is life—it may be a beneficial or a hurtful life. Agitation amongst us, therefore, of itself, only shows that we are a living Church. And the question must be as to the nature and the objects of the agitation.

Now, one simple way to judge of the agitation arising from the new Book, is to look at the men who are carrying it on. Such men as Drs. Thornwell, Breckinridge, and Hodge, began it. Such men as Drs. Baird, Dabney, Smith, Peck, Palmer, and Adger, are carrying it on. Are they wild, fanatical men? Dr. Armstrong here expressed in strong terms his respect and esteem for these brethren.

Another way of judging is, to look at the results of the agitation. Look at the Book proposed. I was corrected for calling the present Book *old*. I take it back—that Book is *not old*. Revision of the Constitution is a work carried on in the Presbyterian Church from the beginning. The *First Book of Discipline* was by John Knox. He was scarcely in his grave before they started this very sort of agitation, and, in Andrew Melville's day, adopted the *Second Book of Discipline*. There was another Revision by the Westminster Assembly. And another in Witherspoon's day in our own country. And you were asked this morning, What, will you meddle with the work of Witherspoon? Why Witherspoon's work was revised long ago. It was adopted before the close of the last century, but our present Book in 1821. It is only some fifty years old. So it is not "the *old Book*"! There are four or five old books which lie back of this. And now what do we propose to do? Just what our fathers did time and again. And what is the argument against it? Why, that *we are agitators*—an argument which might have been resorted to for popular effect with as great propriety at any of these former revisions.

Dr. Armstrong argued, that 1821 was an era when the Presbyterian Church was in union with the Congregational, and the Presbyterianism which prevailed, was of more questionable type than it had ever been since the days of Knox. Yet we are told that we must not touch this Book!

He went on to state that one reason why the Assembly at Nashville had laid the Book aside "for future reference and use" was, that we were at that time negotiating for union with the Synod of Kentucky, and desired that they should have a say as to what the new Book ought to be.

He discussed the *ipso facto* question, and insisted that the Northern Church, under the present Book, holds the Synod of Kentucky *ipso factoed*; and whereas Dr. Wilson said they only claimed the right to do it under necessity, just as the Constitution of the United States may be set aside in times of war, our desire is that our Book shall *shut out* this *ipso facto*, so that it shall never be claimed to be even a war right.

The case of the communicant, satisfied that he has not faith, and desiring therefore not to be numbered amongst church members, is fairly met by the new Book. The session may transfer his name to the roll of non-communicating members of the Church, but is not to excommunicate him. Dr. Wilson says there is no necessity for this provision, and tells us how he manages such a case. He allows a member of his Church to remain a member, though he never comes to the communion table, which the Assembly, under our Book of 1821, has over and over again said is a disciplinable offence! Now if we had the new Book, the course which Dr. Wilson is now pursuing illegally, would be made legal.

Dr. Armstrong took up the question, whether the adoption of the new Discipline would render necessary any change in the Form of Government. He had considered the question carefully himself, but had also consulted one of our wisest ministers, one who had carefully examined the new Book. Were he to mention the name, this would be admitted by all. He had given it as his judgment, that the new Discipline would work just as well with the Form of Government as the present Book does.

He then discussed the consistency of thanking the Committee for their work, with its indefinite postponement.

His concluding point was, that the Presbyteries had spent much time on this Revision, and expected the Book to be returned to them. Such was the action of his Presbytery, and

that, if he was not mistaken, unanimously. Such in substance was the case with twenty-nine of our Presbyteries, while eleven more had pleaded their need of more time for its examination. And, now, will the Assembly take the responsibility of saying the work shall not go on?

Dr. Handy said the whole matter was in a nut-shell. If we can ascertain what the Presbyteries desire that is the thing to be done. Dr. Adger's history shows what the Presbyteries wish, and Dr. Armstrong's argument corroborates it, and we ourselves know very much what is the feeling of the Presbyteries. They desire this work continued. They do not wish the labor of fifteen years thrown aside. He trusted we should bring the matter to a close by "the question."

Mr. Flinn had two grave and really insuperable objections to the Book, touching the status of the baptized child, and the member desiring to withdraw. He argued these questions at length, and concluded his speech with an earnest expression of his sense of the usefulness of the discussions exerted in our Church by the new Book. "It had been a school of instruction for our ministers and our elders."

Dr. Doremus held that it was not for the Assembly to determine whether the Revised Book is any improvement or not. He should vote that the work of the Committee during so many years be sent down to the Presbyteries. We should stultify ourselves if we did not take this course. A majority of the Presbyteries have more or less approved of the Book. The Presbytery of New Orleans spent many days and nights upon it.

Dr. Plumer urged that to send down the Book was to endorse it. He also insisted that the present form of the Revision is not Dr. Thornwell's work. Still further, the proposition to adopt the new Discipline is revolutionary, for we had been told that it had actually invaded the Directory and taken out some chapters. The moment you adopt this Discipline, you must go to work and change the Directory, and then the Form of Government, and so we shall have a split in the Church!

His next remark was about commending the Committee, or

showing them disrespect. We might resolve to thank them without adopting their report.

He had been told by two or three members of this Assembly, that a decided majority of the Presbyteries were against the Book, but expressed the wish to have it farther considered out of courtesy; and they were in a hurry to adjourn.

Dr. Plumer went on to say, (but he gave no authority nor proof in support of the statement,) that the new Book would require to be adopted by a vote of two-thirds of the Presbyteries, which he was glad to be sure was not to be had for it.

The brother said that, at Nashville, we deferred action that the Synod of Kentucky might help us to make the new Book. Why not wait a little now on the Synod of Missouri?

Dr. Adger would present only a few points. He represented the Committee, and owed them his utmost exertions to prevent their labors being lost.

First, he would say it is not true that they are divided very much amongst themselves. They have their honest differences; but they are unanimous in their report.

A word as to the thanks. It is a great thing of course to be thanked by the Assembly, but the value of the thanks depends very much on the speech procuring them, and the position taken by the mover. Now the brother who moved these thanks told us this morning in his speech what polite things, in the language and under the action of ecclesiastical bodies, mean. And, then, what is the value of thanks, when the Committee are represented as agitators? I deny that we have been agitators—we have quietly, humbly, and to the best of our ability, done what the Church told us to do. The brother had no right to say we have been “agitating, agitating, agitating,” and I hope the Assembly, if for no other reason than this, will vote down that resolution.

And now I add, that the Committee wish for no vote of thanks—we have only done our best to serve you. But what we do wish is, that the Assembly shall do its duty to the Presbyteries, and not throw away their work. I do not believe you are

going to throw it away. The Book has several times been in greater straits than it has been in to-day, and the Assembly has always come to its support, and I think will do so this time.

It was said by Dr. Wilson, and repeated this evening by Dr. Plumer, that this is not Dr. Thornwell's work in any proper sense. Now I assert, and I know what I assert, and I defy intelligent contradiction, that this is Dr. Thornwell's Book, altered only in some minor particulars. The two senses we give to the term *Discipline*, is his own suggestion, and the chapter on the discipline of non-communicating members grew out of that. The changes which we ourselves had originated, I indicated this morning. One was to take some things out of the Directory, where they do not belong, and put them into the Discipline, which is logically their place. But some men have no use for logic.

Again, therefore, I put the weight of Dr. Thornwell's name, and those of others of the original Committee, against the weight of the two brethren who oppose this Book as inopportune and injurious; and let the Assembly decide. If eloquence and earnest speaking is to have weight, let the eloquent dead, who reported substantially this Book and earnestly defended it, have weight.

It is said, by the brother from Louisville, that we have not time to examine the Book as it ought to be examined. But it is not before us for the first time, and is no new thing. What is the conclusion the brother draws from the argument that we have not time? It is to lay the Book on the shelf! Ours is to send it to the Presbyteries and let them take time to examine it. Can you not trust the Presbyteries? Is Dr. Plumer afraid to let it go back to his Presbytery, that he is so zealous against it? His Presbytery is one of those which expressly said they wish it sent down in smaller portions for more thorough examination, and yet he is here urging that you do not send it down.

It was urged this morning, that fifteen years' labor has resulted only in asking to send the Book down for examination. It is no disparagement to this Book that we have worked upon it fifteen years. Let it take twice fifteen, if necessary.

Then we utterly deny the statement by the brother from Louisville, as to the agitation that has been going on in our Church. He has not been long amongst us, and he lives on the border, and is not a very good authority as to what has been taking place in the body of the Church.

It was said by him that my statistical statements indicate utter confusion amongst the Presbyteries. Well, seven disapprove it; two vote general disapprobation, but approve portions of it; eleven give no decided answer, but three of these say expressly, send it back; and twenty-nine examine it with care, some endorsing it strongly, and all desiring it made perfect. Is there any such great confusion here?

But Dr. Plumer tells you, on the authority of some body or other, that they did it out of courtesy to the Committee. I prefer the written reports of the Presbyteries themselves to this sort of sheet-deliverances by unknown parties.

In conclusion, I ask if the Assembly will take it on them chiefly on the dictum of one man to put a stop to this work of your Presbyteries. Who is this man? What claim has this brother from Louisville to come and just blow upon all that has been done by your Presbyteries, and we must give up the labors of fifteen years at his say so?

Mr. Matthews here rose to order—the motives of the brother, or his standing in the body, must not be assailed.

Dr. Adger—Moderator, I have not referred to motives.

The Moderator—I did not understand you to refer to motives.

Dr. Wilson—I hope the brother will be allowed to say anything he chooses in regard to the member from Louisville—anything which he thinks will support his Book.

Mr. Matthews explained, that it was what he anticipated was about to be said, rather than what was actually spoken, that moved his call to order.

Dr. Adger—I repeat, that I have said nothing about the motives of the brother from Louisville. It need not be anticipated that I will say anything about that brother which is not respectful, for I hold him in the highest respect. I do not need to have liberty given me to say what I please about him, for I

am not going to say a word that is not honorable. I do not deny the right of the brother from Louisville to say whatever he pleases that is to the point. But I only ask what claim has he or any man to expect, by his simple dictum, simply upon an argument from him however good, however pertinent, however eloquent, to have all which our Presbyteries and Assemblies have done thrown aside?

Dr. Wilson rose to reply in the midst of cries of "question" and some excitement in the Assembly. He spoke at some length and with some warmth.

Dr. Adger was allowed, in the midst of loud cries for the question, to say just two sentences, promising that they should not be offensive. The first was, that he disowned several things ascribed to him by the brother from Louisville; and the second, that he had no wish to reply, but was quite ready for the question. Dr. Wilson's paper was decided in the negative by a vote of 38 to 52; and Dr. Armstrong's was adopted by 50 to 38 votes. And so the Assembly adjourned at a quarter past midnight. Dr. Adger obtained leave the next day to say, that he disclaimed publicly any intention whatever to speak disrespectfully or unkindly of Dr. Wilson. He had been altogether misunderstood. The idea he wished to convey was the very opposite of disparaging to the brother from Louisville. If he was so unfortunate as to make a different impression he was sorry for it. And he was happy to say publicly that he honored Dr. Wilson for his services and sufferings in the cause of the truth, admired his abilities, and loved him as a Christian man and minister. Dr. Wilson made a corresponding reply, and so the matter ended pleasantly, and the Assembly was evidently much gratified.

We have to remark upon this question of the Revision, that the Book has once more secured the moral weight of the Assembly in its favor, and that against the very earnest opposition of two of the most influential ministers of our Church. As they themselves said it would, so does the Assembly's vote to send it down again to the Presbyteries signify much. They strongly urged that, for this very reason, it be not sent down again; but

the Assembly, in full view of their warnings, did send it down again. Thus has that body now, once more, as upon every previous occasion, showed itself favorable to the Revision.

Yet we do by no means desire to have this new Book pressed upon the Church. If there be any danger of its adoption dividing us, we should say it were far better it had never been commenced. The harmony of the body is worth far more to us than any improvements proposed in the Revision. For the new Book is in no fundamental particular different from the old—it only claims to be a clearer and more logical statement, a better development of the same identical principles of Presbyterianism. It only lops off some redundancies, supplies some omissions, and removes some incongruities and anomalies. As Dr. Wilson therefore did not wish the present Book called *old*; so we hold that the Revision constitutes no *new* Book in any strict sense of the term.

We have a right however to the same consideration from our brethren opposed to the Revision, which we have now declared ourselves ready to accord to them. If the new Book does constitute a better statement of the principles of Presbyterian Church Government, we are entitled to have it substantiated for the present Book. None of these productions are superhuman, none perfect; all are capable, and from the nature of the case must ever be capable of *improvement*. It cannot be gainsaid that in and by our Church progress has been made, in the sound development of the principles of our polity, since the Book of 1821 was adopted. We have a right to ask that this progress be seen and felt in our Standards.

It may be that the Revision will never be adopted. *Let the Church do her pleasure.* Be this the motto of every one, and let us bear with one another patiently. What the Church will do we can't be sure beforehand. Of one thing however we have not a doubt, and that is, of the benefit which must continue to flow to all our ministers, elders, deacons, and members, from earnest, fraternal discussion of the principles of our divine system of Church polity.

OTHER TOPICS.

There were several other matters of interest before the Assembly, as the Examination Rule, Systematic benevolence, the Narrative, Theological Seminaries, Statistical Tables, Commissioners' Expenses, Evangelistic Labor, Sabbath-schools, which it would be pleasant and profitable to review; but our space is exhausted, and we close with thanks to the Head for another agreeable and useful assembling together of the representatives of our Church.

ARTICLE II.

LOGIC, AND THE LAWS OF THOUGHT.

1. *An Outline of the Necessary Laws of Thought: A Treatise on Pure and Applied Logic.* By WILLIAM THOMSON, D. D., Provost of the Queen's College, Oxford. Fourth Edition. Sheldon & Co., New York.
2. *A Treatise on Logic; or, The Laws of Pure Thought," etc., etc.* By FRANCIS BOWEN, Alford Professor of Moral Philosophy in Harvard College.
3. *The Laws of Discursive Thought: Being a Text Book of Formal Logic.* By JAMES MCCOSH, LL. D., President New Jersey College, Princeton. Formerly Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, Queen's College, Belfast.

Once on a time in the Revolutionary war, between the United Colonies and Great Britain, an American captain, it is said, begged his company just to fire *once* before running away from the enemy. So we pray of the good reader, whose eye lights for a moment on the above ponderous headings—only peruse a page or two of what we have to say, and if you find it dull, retreat to some more Arcadian nook in literature. Most persons regard a work on Logic, very much as a lad of ten summers did a volume of Henry's Life of Calvin. "Isn't that a dreary