

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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ARTICLE I.

THE METAPHYSICAL POSTULATE OF HERBERT SPENCER'S FIRST PRINCIPLES.

First Principles of a New System of Philosophy. By HERBERT SPENCER. Second Edition. Appleton & Co. 1871.

Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform," etc By Sir WILLIAM HAMILTON, Bart. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers. 1853.

The Limits of Religious Thought: Examined in Eight Lectures Delivered before the University of Oxford, in the Year MDCCCLVIII., on the Bampton Foundation. By HENRY LONGUEVILLE MANSEL, B. D., Reader in Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy at Magdalen College; Tutor and Late Fellow of St. John's College. First American, from the third London, Edition. With the NOTES translated. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1859.

The corner-stone of Positivism in all its forms is the doctrine, now so fashionable in scientific circles, of the unknowable; and the derivative doctrine as to ultimate causes, whether final or efficient. Since this is so, it is worthy of remark that the founder of French Positivism, M. Comte, has taken this doctrine of the unknowable for granted. There is not a scintilla of proof for it in the *Cours de Philosophie Positive*. We are not aware that either M.

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come. He has, indeed, erected a monument to the memory of the illustrious dead more durable than brass or stone—one which the weather of centuries will not disintegrate, nor the tooth of time corrode. He has already won the plaudits of his brethren, and the cordial, Well done! of all whose approbation he would esteem. We have understood that a second edition of the book is called for. It is to be hoped that the author may see his way clear to issue it. It will afford the opportunity of eliminating errors of typography, and a few others affecting the sense, which through inadvertence crept into the present edition and mar its perfection. These external blemishes ought to be removed from a work which is internally a master-piece.

ARTICLE VI.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT SAVANNAH.

There were present at the Savannah Assembly only one hundred and twenty-one commissioners, against one hundred and thirty-three at the St. Louis Assembly. Not counting Hangchow and Sao Paulo, we have fifty-five Presbyteries, entitled each to two, and seven entitled each to four, so that the whole possible number of commissioners is one hundred and thirty-eight. Last year all were present except three ruling elders. This year some three ministers and a dozen ruling elders were absent. But the body was large enough for all useful purposes. The Lord grant that our Church may prosper and increase; but let us make arrangements in season to prevent our highest ecclesiastical court from ever becoming an overgrown assemblage. One hundred and fifty men, carefully selected, can better serve the Church as a supreme judicatory than any crowd of three hundred which can be brought together.

There was some complaint of a difficulty in hearing, owing to a muffled echo in the house; but we experienced no particular

difficulty of this sort, albeit not blessed with very good ears. But it may be added that there were no adequate arrangements for reporting the proceedings. The consequence is, that the Church must be content with a meagre and very frequently an erroneous representation of what was said. Here, as well as anywhere else, it may be mentioned that this Assembly appointed a new officer, with a view to remedying this crying evil. At the Augusta Assembly, it was urged that the body stood as much in need of an official reporter as of clerks; but we failed in our effort then to get one appointed. Now, at this fifteenth of our General Assemblies, it was renewed with success. What a high value we would all set on full and accurate reports of all the proceedings of these fifteen Assemblies, if arrangements had only been made to furnish them! The plan now adopted is for the Assembly to appoint a reporter, thus giving permanence, dignity, and value to the office, and then, this reporter and the two clerks are made a committee to make all proper arrangements for publishing the reports. It is supposed that the expense can easily be paid, partly by the newspapers which will desire to have access to the reports, and partly by subscriptions of individuals desirous to get a daily account of proceedings. The reporter is allowed to appoint two assistants, and the clerks to fix his and their salaries, the whole expense to the Assembly in no case to exceed two hundred dollars. The Rev. George L. Wolfe was appointed the reporter; and the clerks were empowered to fill any vacancy.

The number of new men was considerable, and it may have been feared that the Assembly would prove to be inferior, in point of ability. Such apprehensions vanished early in the sessions. The younger brethren won golden opinions for themselves by their modesty and discretion, joined to their power in debate. It appears to us that not many of our Assemblies have contained more material of good quality. None that we ever knew was more patient and good-tempered. Unfailing courtesy was observed from first to last. The discussions were earnest, and on subjects which roused the feelings of men; but not one word was spoken giving personal offence to any. Dr. William Brown, who ought to know, says, "taken all together, this is the

most important Assembly which has met since 1861, and we think its business, on the whole, was wisely disposed of." He adds that the seasons of worship held by the Assembly were very delightful, and that the way a good old tune or a good new one, heartily sung by such a body, puts into the shade the trills and demi-semi-quavers of our ambitious choirs, was remarkably illustrated in the late meetings at Savannah.

THE MODERATOR'S SERMON.

Though not doing justice to his well-known eloquence and power, this was an able and effective discourse of just one hour's length, from John iv. 38: "Other men labored and ye are entered into their labors." Dr. Hoge is every inch a preacher, and reading a written discourse is not preaching such as he can dispense. Yet the beauty and the force of what he read secured for it the unflagging attention of his large audience.

ELECTION OF NEW MODERATOR.

Since the adjournment of the Assembly, it has been intimated in more than one quarter, that this turned on the successful candidate's being more ready than his brethren to join hands with the Northern Church, just as Dr. Van Dyke was made Moderator at Brooklyn, in testimony that the barriers to fraternal correspondence were giving way. Both statements, we believe, belong to the one order of *gush*. Certain we are that the former statement is entirely incorrect. Dr. Smoot was nominated and modestly declined in favor of older servants of the Church. Dr. Stuart Robinson then named two such, whom he held up as having earned the honor by their services; but one of these had always declined the Moderator's chair, because of partial deafness, and so he moved that the other, Dr. B. M. Smith, be elected by acclamation. Dr. Adger then said the sooner our Assembly abandoned all idea of electing men to do them kindness or show them honor, the better, and that the true principle is to elect for the work to be done. The Assembly ought to choose the man who will best serve it in the chair. He would be flattered by election, but was of opinion that a man whose hearing is imperfect ought not to be chosen. Nor yet should one of the

oldest men be made Moderator, but the man who can best do the work of presiding, even though he were the youngest in the house. And he hoped that Dr. Robinson's motion would prevail, and Dr. Smith be elected by acclamation. Then Dr. Brank was nominated as well fitted for the position. Dr. Adger's nomination was still insisted on, probably by some who, like himself, are a little *hard of hearing*; but after one balloting and one standing vote, which gave Dr. Smith the majority, his election was declared by vote to be unanimous. Probably it never entered into the mind of one member of the body to inquire whether one or another of those named was for or against fraternal relations.

The principle here enunciated by Dr. Adger, it must be confessed, is the true one. Of course nobody would deny that it is well enough to acknowledge eminent usefulness, and that it is highly proper to pay respect to a great truth in any man who may have successfully vindicated it; but unquestionably the main point in electing a Moderator for the Assemblies, as also in electing commissioners to the Assembly, is to get *a certain work well done*. The past will be rewarded in the future, but let the present look to it that it gets its work well done. This idea of *not honors but work* has a very wide sweep. Not only does it cut off that false notion in some Presbyteries, that the members are to go to the Assembly in rotation, but it cuts off as well in the Assembly the abomination of "log-rollings" for office, and all "the special requests" by the friends and admirers of some great Doctor to have some particular honor done to him. If our Assemblies were more in dead earnest about their work, there would be less thought and said about the honors.

The new Moderator presided with dignity, vigilance, and ability, and, as all will testify, with complete fairness and impartiality.

The Rev. J. E. DuBose was elected the Temporary Clerk.

REPORT ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The Executive Committee reported that this is the first year since our Church fairly entered upon Foreign Missions that no new missionaries have been sent abroad. Never was the call more urgent for more laborers; never our young people more

willing to consecrate themselves to this work. One young minister under appointment eighteen months, holds a call from one of our best churches, waiting to see what commands shall issue from this Assembly. Not only have no new missionaries been sent, but none can be sent for some time to come, without large augmentation of the receipts at the treasury.

We began the year just ended with a debt of \$15,000. It came upon us thus: During the two years which ended April 1, 1875, twenty-two missionary laborers and about half that number of native helpers, were added to our force. This large increase was not made hastily, but considerately. And it did not appear to the Assembly, or to the Committee, in May, 1874, that the needful increase of \$12,000 was too much to be expected from the churches. But our hopes were not realised.

The contributions of the year just closed, however, have been \$19,038.98 in excess of the year previous. Had there been a like amount raised that year, we should have had no debt. We have also applied the pruning knife abroad, reducing schools, diminishing colporteurs, and in some cases diminishing the salaries of missionaries. We report, therefore, the debt reduced to \$9,848.67. The number of contributing churches is 1,121, an increase of 224, which makes nearly two-thirds of the whole. The number of Ladies' Associations is increased by 50, and now amounts to 108, and they have contributed \$3,362.52 more than last year. The contributing Sabbath-schools are 270, and their gifts amount to \$6,605.51—an increase of \$549.02.

We have 75 laborers in the field, and 16 principal stations, with many more out-stations, 12 schools of various grades and 500 pupils in them, many of whom will become, it is hoped, efficient helpers. As now projected, to say nothing about enlargement, the work cannot be effectively carried on and the debt paid, without an income of \$75,000 as against \$61,273.27, contributed this year. The churches must this year raise \$75,000, or some portion of our foreign work be abandoned. And which portion shall it be? Shall the Greek, the Chinese, the South American, the Mexican, or the Western Indian missions, be the first to be thrust from the bosom of our Church?

ACTION TAKEN ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Dr. Adger reported on behalf of the Standing Committee, "that the facts presented by the Executive Committee in their report, were well fitted to disturb our Church's equanimity. The work as at present projected could not be carried forward effectively, and the debt be paid, without an increase of contributions of some \$14,000 over the last year's amount, and yet the last year's givings to Foreign Missions by our Church, were \$19,000 in advance of the year previous. One thing was plain, namely, that the Assembly is required to look very carefully into whatever measures are proposed by its Executive and also its Standing Committee on Foreign Missions. If we moved forward too rapidly in 1874 and in 1875, the responsibility of the grand and noble error lies at the door of the Church's highest court. It cannot devolve on its Committees the task of saying how much money may be expected during two years to come, from its Presbyteries and their churches, and accordingly on what scale the Executive Committee must graduate the expenses of our share of the dissemination of the gospel abroad. The Assembly therefore must carefully consider and decide what is to be said on the one hand to the Committee at Baltimore and to the missionaries abroad and to the people to whom they have been sent, touching the extent and degree of our willingness to support this work; and what should be said, on the other hand, to ourselves and our fellow-ministers and our fellow-members of Christ connected with our Presbyteries and Sessions, as to the duty we owe to our Lord, relative to the spread of his kingdom abroad. Our Church is now on trial before its sister Churches and the world, and before its adorable Head, touching the question whether we shall sustain what we have undertaken, or abandon it in dishonor. In the meanwhile it is ground for rejoicing that we have the seal of our Master's approval on every department of the work abroad, and that we are straitened nowhere except in about one-third of our churches, who give nothing for foreign missions, and in a portion of our ministers and elders who do not strive as they might to rouse these churches to some share in this work.

"In view of all these things, your Standing Committee recom-

mend that the Assembly do now take up, as the one great matter regarding our foreign work, these questions: Shall we endeavor this year to stand where we now stand? or, shall we go backwards by retrenchment of our operations? or, relying on our brethren who are the pastors of the flock, both teaching and ruling elders, to appeal earnestly to the people, with full instructions given them on the subject, and relying also on the grace which our Master only can afford by his Holy Spirit, shall the Executive Committee be authorised and instructed to send out those sons and daughters of the Church who are waiting to enter the field, and in other needful respects to undertake such moderate enlargement as may seem to them imperatively necessary?"

In presenting this report, he remarked that we had evidently reached a crisis. We have a debt resting on this work, of \$10,000. And if we do not raise, this year, \$14,000 more than the last, the question will be, which of our missions to cut off. But can this Assembly consent to take any step backwards, or even to stand where we are, and not move forward at all? Life must involve growth, and to cease growing is the beginning of decay. He confessed to great embarrassment of mind. The times are hard, and may become harder. To increase our debt is to be rash. Yet we could raise \$75,000; yes, and could swell it to \$85,000, if all our ministers and elders will but instruct and encourage our people. Moderator, what shall we say? Will this Assembly speak to our Israel to go forward, or must we say, stand still, or turn and flee?

Dr. John L. Wilson, the Secretary, said it is impossible to carry on the work of Foreign Missions without the liability to debt. Contributions are irregular, and the progress of the work itself is irregular. We must follow the indications of God's providence and God's Spirit. We cannot set a limit beyond which we will not go. The estimates of the missions last January, for the current year, were reduced by the Committee from \$60,000 to \$50,000, and it was one of the most painful duties of his life to take part in this reduction. But the letters from the missionaries afterwards were still more painful. Nor is it possible to stand still until the financial distress is over. There is no

such thing as standing still. He spoke then of the experience of the Free Church of Scotland, which in similar circumstances decided that it would not go backwards but forwards, and did go forward, with God's manifest blessing. To go back would be to bring disgrace upon our Church.

A venerable ruling elder, T. Q. Cassels of Georgia, rose and asked if it was proposed to turn the wheels of salvation backward. Let His cause go backwards, who has redeemed us to himself!

Dr. Hoge thanked Mr. Cassels for his figure, and said those chariot wheels of salvation were not made to go backwards, nor yet to stand still. One reason why the Church is not doing more for missions, is the infidelity that has crept into her bosom on the whole subject. We have to combat the heresy that some of the races are too low for the gospel to raise them up. Dr. Hoge's was one of the most effective missionary addresses ever heard by us, but we are unable to report it. And he was followed in another most effective speech by Dr. Robinson, which we are also quite unable to report. Dr. Robinson moved to recommit with instructions. Subsequently, the following report was presented by Dr. Adger, and adopted:

The Assembly having recommitted this report with instructions, the Standing Committee now return it, and recommend for adoption (along with the same) the following resolutions, to wit:

1. That this General Assembly, after full consideration of the question brought before it in the above report of the Standing Committee as to the alternatives between which we have to choose, of endeavoring to maintain merely our present hold of the missionary work, or of retrenchment on the one hand, or prudent and cautious yet firm and steady progress on the other, are convinced that to stand still or go backwards a single step are alike impossible if we would save the work from ruin and our Church from dishonor, and that there is nothing else we can say to our Executive Committee, except that in reliance on the grace of our Master and the faithful zeal of our ministers and elders and people, young as well as old, female as well as male, we do bid the Committee go forward, wisely, prudently, courageously, hopefully, trustfully in the glorious work committed to its hands.

2. That notwithstanding the debt of \$10,000, which still remains to be paid on foreign missionary work, it has the manifest seal of our Lord's most gracious approbation, and that our Church, though coming

very far short of its full duty, is evidently on the upward march on this matter; that this Assembly commends the increasing liberality of our churches, our ladies and our Sunday-schools, and that it earnestly exhorts all to aim at raising at the very least \$75,000 for this sacred cause during the current year.

REPORT ON SUSTENTATION, ETC.

The Executive Committee reported that it is matter of congratulation that in a year of unwonted stringency, our people have been able to maintain these agencies of the Church in vigor, and to add something to their strength and usefulness. There is an increase in contributing churches of 219 to Sustentation, 187 to Evangelistic work, and 222 to the Invalid Fund. For *Sustentation*, the total receipts this year have been \$22,664.68, against \$21,186.65 last year. For the *Evangelistic Fund*, the receipts have been \$852.82 more than last year. For the *Colored Evangelistic Fund*, the receipts, though small, were enough to meet all demands upon it. For the *Invalid Fund*, the receipts have been \$1,700.25 more than last year. For the *Relief Fund*, the investments now reach \$18,000 in good bonds, and from this fund \$2,880 have been paid this year to the families of five deceased ministers.

During the year past, fifty-one Presbyteries have been aided from the Sustentation Fund, for the support of one hundred and eighty-five ministers, to the amount of \$19,117.81, and for nineteen church-buildings, to the amount of \$25,520. Much more was called for by the Presbyteries, but this was all the Committee could appropriate without running into debt.

Fifty-one "evangelists" have been employed, in whole or in part, by thirty-six Presbyteries; the results are represented as, on the whole, satisfactory. The chief difficulty grows out of the paucity of ministers whose qualifications and circumstances unite in fitting them for the work.

Fifteen Presbyteries report something done for the evangelization of the colored people. The Presbyteries of Augusta, Savannah, Central Mississippi, Charleston, and Roanoke, have been assisted from the fund. The Presbytery of Memphis has sustained its own efforts, without aid from this fund.

From the Invalid Fund, appropriations have been made to thirty-six Presbyteries for twenty-six aged and infirm ministers and sixty families of deceased ministers ; in every case to the full amount asked for. The fund has been just sufficient to meet the demands on it, leaving in the treasury only \$67.40.

On the Relief Fund there were eighty-seven names on the 1st April ; of these, seventy have paid their premiums, and seventeen have failed to do so, some of them for two years. A full and searching investigation has been given to this scheme by the aid of Mr. C. F. McCay, one of the Committee, who has had large experience as an eminent insurance actuary. It is believed to be sound, and capable of doing all that it promises. But the scheme has two defects : one that no provision exists for any minister over fifty to obtain its benefits, the other that the premiums being of the same rate for all under fifty, those much younger have no inducement to enter it. The Assembly was therefore asked to adopt the following paper, with a view to the benefits of the scheme being more generally enjoyed. Five families of ministers had the past year received the benefit of this scheme : one received \$360, and another \$720, these sums being four times the amounts they paid in ; two other families have received two annuities of \$400 each, and another an annuity of \$200.

I. The rights and privileges in the Relief Fund, as heretofore administered, shall be, and hereby are, guaranteed to all who are on its lists, and these shall be preserved to them intact.

II. The relief scheme, as heretofore administered, shall be and is hereby repealed, (except for those who are already beneficiaries under it,) and the following scheme substituted therefor, to wit :

(1.) Any congregation, or union of congregations, whose pastor at the time may be in sound health, which will pay \$30 annually to the Relief Fund, will establish a claim at his death to an annuity of \$200 for six consecutive years. If \$60 per annum is paid to the fund, the claim for annuity will be for \$400 for a like term of years. If \$100 per annum is paid, the annuity will be \$600 for a similar term.

It is understood that the benefit thus secured shall accrue only to the family or other heirs of *the regularly installed pastor* of the contributing church.

(2.) Any minister in sound health, at the age of forty-five years, may be entered on the fund by the payment of \$30, \$60, or \$100, as the case

may be, by himself, his congregation, or other person. Any minister who is less than forty-five years of age may enter the fund by the payment of an annual amount less than \$30, \$60, or \$100, by two per cent. of said sums for each year that he is younger than forty-five years; and any minister older than forty-five years up to seventy years, may have the same privilege by the annual payment of an amount larger than \$30, \$60, or \$100, by an addition to said amount, of eight per cent. per annum for every year of said excess of age.

The only limitation in the case, either of churches or individuals, beyond the above conditions, is, that no claim on the fund will be established to the full amounts above mentioned, until the fourth annual payment has been made. Previous to that period, the family or heirs will be entitled to four times as much as has been paid in to the public fund. And, further, failure to make regular annual payments shall work the forfeiture of interest in the fund, except that at the death of any pastor or other minister whose claim is thus forfeited, an amount equal to all that has been contributed to the fund on his account shall be paid.

III. It is further provided that, as heretofore, the Relief Scheme shall continue to be worked for the sole benefit of those who are subscribers to it; and if hereafter it shall be found able to pay a larger amount to the families of its deceased subscribers than is herein pledged, such an amount shall be sacredly conveyed to them under regulations approved by the General Assembly.

IV. The following particulars shall be observed:

(1.) All intrants to this scheme shall be dated as of January 1st of the current year.

(2.) Annual payments must be made promptly on or before January 1st of each year, so that the liabilities of the fund may be met at that time and investments may be made. Failure to make payment beyond the month of January shall forfeit the rights in the fund of the party thus failing, unless for good reasons, and without injury to the fund, the Executive Committee shall restore its privileges on the payment in full of arrearages, with interest thereon at the rate of six per cent. per annum.

(3.) The annuities due the families of deceased ministers are to be paid beginning with the 1st of January next succeeding the death of said ministers.

(4.) All further detail in the management of this fund is intrusted to the Executive Committee of Sustentation.

V. The investment and reinvestment of funds in permanent stocks shall be under the care of the Executive Committee, who shall report annually to the General Assembly their accounts, with a statement of the funds in hand, whether invested or not, and all other matters pertaining to the fund. The permanent investments of the fund shall be

held as heretofore by the Trustees of the General Assembly, who shall be responsible to the General Assembly for their safe custody.

ACTION TAKEN ON SUSTENTATION, ETC.

Judge Ould, chairman of the Standing Committee, reported four resolutions. The first commends the diligence of the Committee; the second enjoins the Presbyteries to foster this cause; the third approves the new plan for the Relief Fund; the fourth reappoints the Committee.

Dr. McIlwaine, the Secretary, congratulated the Assembly that the Committee were not in debt; yet he wished that the work of the Church could have been fully done. The Committee had been obliged to resort to a system of repression. The Assembly should understand that the funds are inadequate—\$18,000 more were needed, and could have been judiciously used last year. If we had \$40,000 for Sustentation, we could send joy all through the Church. Between seven and eight hundred of our churches contribute nothing. General and hearty efforts would accomplish wonders.

The Evangelistic and Invalid Funds are increasing. For colored evangelizing, thirteen Presbyteries report something doing; forty-four, however, implicitly state that they are doing nothing—a sad statement.*

Judge Ould called attention to the large number of non-contributing churches. Each should give something, if only five cents.

Dr. Burgett thought Presbyteries should require excuses from such churches.

The report was adopted.

REPORT ON PUBLICATION.

The Executive Committee reported that during the earlier months of the year their business was greatly depressed. In November it began to revive; and from the 1st January till now, it was never more prosperous. The total available receipts were \$42,704.26; disbursements for merchandise, *Children's Friend*,

*Leaving out Hangchow and Sao Paulo, we have sixty-two Presbyteries. Five of these we understand pass this matter by in silence.
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Earnest Worker, etc., \$22,020.53 ; grants, \$5,014.28 ; commissions of agents, \$460.45 ; reduction of debt, \$3,416.38 ; salaries, \$7,726.65 ; general expenses, \$3,227.65 ; balance, \$838.02.

The assets of the Committee amount to \$61,105.20. Its liabilities amount to about \$20,000, which gives an excess of assets of \$39,705.37.

The business capital is now \$39,576.36.

The value of the Publishing House, which cost \$42,566.12, is certainly equal to this amount, according to the judgment of the most trustworthy real estate agents in the city.

The arrangements for coöperation with the Reformed Church have been consummated in part.

The assets reported are less than they were last year. Disaster overtaking so many branches of business, this Committee could hardly expect to escape reverses, especially as it has peculiar difficulties to encounter, which do not stand in the way of other houses. (1) Its object is not to make money, but furnish books at the cheapest possible rates. For example: if we had put on our Hymn-Book a revenue price, as the Methodists did, that book alone would have given us the \$20,000 capital we now need so much. (2) Our sales being chiefly to churches, Sabbath-schools, and ministers, we have to make a discount of 20 per cent. on most of our sales. (3) Our business property is some \$39,500 ; but some \$24,500 of this sum is in stereotype plates and fixtures, so that our working capital is only about \$15,000. But our business extends from New York to Western Missouri, and from Richmond to the Rio Grande ; and we can never have less than \$10,000 due on a business so scattered. (4) A publishing house cannot stand still ; it must go forwards or backwards. (5) Other houses publish popular books suited to the tastes of people. We can only publish what is of permanent value and illustrates the gospel of Christ. Our books, therefore, never can have what is called "a run." (6) The field of operations given this Committee is our own Church, and that is a body of very limited proportions.

The Committee has done its best. Men of more experience might have done better ; but the Committee has done what it

could. It has not received that material support from the Church which it was led to expect. It has been as an eagle ready to soar, and has found itself pinioned. But under the circumstances, instead of giving way to disappointment, it confesses its gratification that so much has been accomplished. But if this work is worth doing at all, it is worth doing after a new fashion. Two things are essential—a building to work in, and capital to work with. The Committee closes with the recommendation that immediate steps be taken to pay the debt on the house, and that one or more agents be appointed to visit the churches and raise the money needed for this purpose.

THE SECRETARY'S PRINTING PRESSES.

A special statement was submitted by the Secretary. In 1867, he found it necessary to purchase a press of his own, that the Committee might be able to do that part of the work which had to be done in Richmond, on moderate terms. This was sanctioned by the Committee and the Assembly, and all that was anticipated had been realised in the results. But it never was expected to be a permanent arrangement, and the Secretary had never heard a whisper of objection to the arrangement till the meeting of the last Assembly. Hearing then of this dissatisfaction, he sold out in good faith; and since January 1st has had no interest of this sort.

ACTION TAKEN ON PUBLICATION.

Dr. Burgett, chairman of Standing Committee, reported twelve resolutions, all in commendation of the diligent and faithful work of the Committee. The first one declares that there is no need for special examination into the affairs of the Committee. The seventh recommends that the Rev. A. J. Withersoon be appointed a special agent to collect funds for the Publishing House.

Touching the first resolution, the Rev. J. E. DuBose said he had had doubts whether the Committee had worked to the best advantage, but he was fully satisfied by Dr. Baird's report. The credit of the Committee must not be ruined on mere rumors. A great work had been done on a very small capital.

Rev. Jno. S. Park said the overture from the Synod of Mem-

phis, calling for investigation, was put through at the fag end of the session, when many of the members were absent.

Rev. J. B. Carne said the overture was adopted under the lead of one who brought a long statement of the business affairs of the Committee. No other person claimed to know anything about it. If we would support our Committee as earnestly as we find fault, we could do great things.

Ruling elder Moore called for a vote of censure on the Synod. They should only have acted on specific grounds.

Rev. J. A. Sloan washed the hands of Chickasaw Presbytery from the overture of the Synod.

Judge Estes favored the resolution, but opposed the censure of Synod. He was satisfied there was needed no investigation; but the Synod, as a constituent of this body, had the right to ask for investigation at any time.

Dr. Robinson was delighted with the candor of the members of the Synod of Memphis. Something should be done to stop this clamor. He was a constituent part of the State, as being a citizen, but had no right to demand investigation of officials without specific charges to make. His indignation was moved. Our Publication cause has neither money nor the credit which comes from capital. It rests on the financial genius of one man, and he has built it up by unremitting labors, and you want to *investigate* him. Sir, it is cruel. Dr. R. was ready for a general vote of censure upon fault-finders. To the financial genius of two men this Church has been greatly indebted in the line of publication, and yet they have both continually been picked at. And here on this Committee are put your best men—whose time is gold, and who serve gratuitously; and you want them investigated! It was time for this picking at our best men by sore-heads to be stopped.

Rev. Dr. T. D. Wardlaw said for some time there has been dissatisfaction and discontent, and investigation was asked, not in hostility, but to remove discontent. Suspicion is working evil. You may censure as you please, if you will remove the suspicion by investigating. Those who urge it are men worthy of all esteem and confidence.

Ruling elder Professor Waddell said the Standing Committee could find no ground for investigation, though vague dissatisfaction everywhere. But there is nothing with which somebody does not find fault.

The whole report was adopted—the first resolution by a large majority. Dr. Robinson declared when that topic came up that the purchase of the Publishing House was, in his judgment, wise and judicious.

REPORT ON EDUCATION.

The Executive Committee reported ninety-five beneficiaries, fifty-four of them in the seminaries. Twelve or fourteen of the ninety-five had been compelled to withdraw from their studies, partly for want of health, and partly of funds.

The year's work closed 30th April, with a deficiency of \$4,473 due on appropriations. Since 1st May it has been reduced to about \$3,000.

There have been eighty-eight more contributing churches the past year than the year previous, but in a majority of cases the contributions have been less; and the number of large individual contributions has also diminished.

The entire amount of funds is \$15,131.97.

The Secretary has supplied one of the organised churches in Memphis, devoting to this church only such time as was not occupied with the duties of his office. A difference of opinion prevailing as to the propriety of this arrangement, the Secretary agreed to surrender \$1,000 of his salary, beginning from the 1st of January last, and the question of this double service is submitted to the Assembly for action.

The legacy of the Lusk estate has been paid over to us by the Northern General Assembly. The amount for Education is not less than \$3,000. It was suggested that this legacy be used to pay off pledges to students.

Another legacy of \$1,000 was reported as paid since the close of the ecclesiastical year.

Much opposition to the Assembly's plan exists in influential quarters, and there is an increasing tendency to independent Presbyterian action.

The report enumerates sundry modifications which have been proposed in our Education plans : one to confine all benefactions to theological students ; another to substitute loans for appropriations ; another to remit the whole work to the Presbyteries.

SUPPLEMENTARY LETTERS.

Several of these are appended to the report, showing a difference of opinion in the Committee as to the double duties of the Secretary. Eight out of eleven members believe the two engagements to be incompatible, and urge the entire devotion of the Secretary's strength and time to the interests of Education. They express entire confidence and affection for him personally. What they desire is that he go and instruct congregations, Presbyteries, and Synods, on the whole subject. He is fully adequate, they say, to this task.

ACTION TAKEN ON EDUCATION.

Dr. Brank, chairman of the Standing Committee, reported eight resolutions, and a supplementary one approving the Secretary's supplying the church at Memphis. The resolutions were adopted without debate. One of them directed the use of the Lusk legacy in payment of the Committee's debt.

The Secretary expressed his great encouragement by the action of the Assembly. He hoped the able special report of Dr. Stratton would be read by the churches. The expenses of the Education Committee do not reach \$2,000. You pay the Secretary only \$1,500 ; and if that seems to you too much, he will serve you for less. He appealed to the Presbyteries who had overtured against the Committee to give it a fair trial. He had strong hopes that the future course of this Committee would be upward and onward.

Upon this whole subject the reviewer has but one remark to offer, and that is, to question the wisdom of using the Lusk legacy in the manner agreed on.

BENEFICIARY EDUCATION.

On this subject the last Assembly appointed a committee, (but we can find in the Minutes for 1875 no reference to the matter,) of which Dr. J. B. Stratton was the chairman, to report to the

Assembly at Savannah. His report was read on the second day, and was considered to be as clear and able as it was full. It favored the continuance of the present scheme. We are not able to state what precise action was adopted respecting it.

COLORED THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

Drs. Stillman and Steadman, and ruling elder Estes, were appointed by the last Assembly to report a plan for the organisation, management, and support of such an institution. Their report was read and referred to the Standing Committee on Education. Its report favored the establishment of such an institute in a modest way, limiting the training to the English branches and instruction in Church History and Government and Systematic Theology. It recommended the appointment of Dr. Stillman, with an assistant to be chosen by him, for instructors, and places the school at Tuscaloosa. The financial responsibility was lodged with Dr. Stillman, under the general direction of the Committee of Education; and the paper as amended, was adopted.

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION.

The Moderator, as chairman of a Committee to consider changes in our system of ministerial education, reported elaborately and fully. It was ordered that so much of this report as related to proposed modifications, be printed in the Minutes and referred to the next Assembly.

SECULAR OR POLITICAL UTTERANCES.

Drs. Brown, Hoge, and Read, were appointed last year to revise the records of all our Assemblies, and make diligent search for declarations incidentally made that were unsuitable for an ecclesiastical Assembly to utter. The object of the appointment, as stated in the original motion, was that "no vestige of anything inconsistent with the clearly defined position of our General Assemblies may be left to impair the testimony of our Church upon this vital point," of the non-political and non-secular character of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The report presented by Dr. Brown was very full. It commenced with various very explicit declarations made by our Assemblies, that the Church has nothing to do with political affairs.

Then it passed, secondly, to notice every utterance alleged to be inconsistent with these principles thus set forth. The principle is not that Christians owe no duty to the State, but that the Church shall not decide political questions. The Church may not decide which Cæsar is your master; but if he is your master, it can enjoin that you pay tribute to him. The government, as to the Church, can only be *de facto*; as to the citizen, it may be both *de facto* and *de jure*. The Assemblies of our Church never decided the question of allegiance for those living under another *de facto* government, and made that decision a test of membership and a ground of discipline. But the expressions, "we," "our cause," "our army," which were sometimes inadvertently used, should be disapproved. The Narrative of 1864, hastily adopted on the eve of adjournment, and under the excitement of the news of terrible battles which had just occurred, contained two expressions requiring notice: one about domestic servitude being of divine appointment, like civil government and like marriage; the other about our Church's mission to conserve slavery. Touching the former, it was maintained that the clear meaning was not that slavery was of divine appointment as universally obligatory, but under peculiar circumstances. Touching the latter, that in the "New School Minutes" of 1865, we read that it is "the mission of the Church to conserve the State;" and in the same sense the term was applicable to slavery, viz., the sense of *improving* and *making the best of it*. On the whole, (1) it is matter of gratitude that so little can be found to be animadverted on; (2) that the most of what lies open to criticism, arose manifestly from inadvertence; (3) that the unfavorable interpretations put on them are opposed to the plain declarations made of her principles by our Church.

The report then declares, in the name of the Assembly of 1876, its reaffirmation of the explicit and formal statements made in 1861 in our "Address to all the Churches;" and then, inasmuch as some incidental expressions, uttered in times of great public excitement, are found upon our records, and have been pointed out, which seem to be ambiguous or inconsistent with the statements aforesaid, this Assembly does hereby disavow

such wherever found, and does not recognise them as forming any part of the well-considered authoritative teachings or testimony of our Church.

The Assembly then expressed its sense of the fidelity and ability with which the Committee had done its work; and without formally adopting in all its details the whole extended report, gave to it as a whole its hearty approval, and ordered it to be printed in the Appendix to the Minutes, subject to such revision and abbreviation as to the Committee may appear suitable, that shall not be inconsistent with the tenor of the document.

ECCLESIASTICAL STATUS OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES.

The Committee appointed by the last Assembly to report on this subject, consisted of Drs. Adger, J. L. Wilson, and Peck. The chairman read their report, and then printed copies of it were placed in the hands of the members. In 1874 the Assembly, there being present at Columbus a missionary from China, assumed to organise a Presbytery in that country out of five missionaries and one Chinese elder, and called it the Presbytery of Hangchow, and then admitted the missionary by courtesy to a seat on the floor, as representing that Presbytery. The missionaries overtured the Assembly of 1875 to dissolve this Presbytery and restore them to their former relations. Upon this the Assembly referred the subject to the aforesaid Committee, to consider and report.

The report states three grounds on which the Committee hold that the Assembly has no constitutional power to organise a Presbytery, and arrive at the conclusion that if the Assembly could not set up a Presbytery of Hangchow, there exists no such Presbytery for it to dissolve. There is added a fourth consideration, viz., that Presbyterian churches ought not to seek to propagate their separate organisations all over the world, but suffer all Chinese Presbyterians, for example, to constitute one church.

To the objection that according to this view the Assembly can do little in spreading the divine system of Presbytery abroad, it is answered that that system recognises evangelists, extraordinary officers with extraordinary powers, sent abroad outside the settled church-state, where church-courts rule. These organise churches

which are all free-born, having the right of self-government through rulers of their own election. So that the Assembly, under our Constitution, cannot set up a Presbytery over them.

Then is encountered the question. What are the powers of the true and proper evangelist, and what his relations to the courts of the Church? The Committee's answer is—a minister of the word, commissioned by the Presbytery to go into frontier and foreign parts with powers he could not be allowed to wield in the settled church-state; church courts belong to that regular and established state of the Church, but the solitary evangelist must precede the elderships. He must go found and plant, go organise churches, each with its plurality of elders to govern it, and then his extraordinary one-man power of rule must go again outside, must remove to regions still further beyond.

The Committee then set forth the relation of this evangelist to the Presbytery, on the one hand, who have given him his powers both of teaching and of organising churches, and doing other acts of ruling, such as in the ordinary church state are never to be committed to one man's hand. It is the Presbytery alone to whom he is responsible, in the first instance, like the minister at home, for his use and administration of the twofold power it has committed to him. On the other hand, however, he has a responsibility to the Assembly and to its Executive Committee, which is fully set forth and defined in the Report.

The conclusion is, that for the Assembly to set up a Presbytery by its own act, in any foreign land, is an act unconstitutional, unscriptural, and void.

The report then proceeds to discuss at length another question submitted to the Committee, viz., Should missionaries abroad become associated with natives in the composition of Presbyteries? and it answers this question also in the negative, and presents three reasons for this answer.

ACTION ON THIS REPORT.

It was at first docketed. Coming up at a late period for discussion, Dr. Adger suggested that unless the members had found time to read and consider the printed report, it might be better not to attempt its consideration by this Assembly.

Dr. Mallard offered a paper approving the report, and declaring that the Assembly has no authority to organise Presbyteries on foreign soil. It was adopted.

The next day Dr. Robinson moved that the Treasurer of the Assembly pay for the printing of this report.

Mr. Primrose raised objection to the doctrine that the evangelist cannot be clothed with his proper extraordinary functions within the bounds of the settled church state.

Dr. Adger moved to reconsider the vote last night approving the report, that it might be referred to the next Assembly for full consideration. It was carried, and there ensued a confused discussion, which Dr. Smoot arrested by this resolution, which was passed, and the report was then referred to the next Assembly :

“Resolved, That the General Assembly has no express constitutional power to establish or dissolve Presbyteries, and accordingly that the brethren of whom the Assembly of 1874 proposed to constitute the Presbytery of Hangechow, are now and have continuously been de jure members of the same Presbyteries to which they belonged at the time such action was taken.”

NEXT PLACE OF MEETING.

By a very close vote between New Orleans and Knoxville, the former was chosen.

THE COMMISSIONERS' FUND.

A report was adopted, abandoning the *per capita* plan, and going back again to the old plan of assessments.

DISMISSING MINISTERS TO OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES.

A report from the Judicial Committee was made of a reply to an overture from the Presbytery of Atlanta. We cannot recall, nor do we find it plainly set forth in any report of the proceedings, how this matter got into the hands of the Judicial Committee. It certainly was not a case of *appeal*, and it does not seem to have been one of *complaint*; and if it was one of *reference* by the Presbytery itself, then clearly it ought to have gone, as being ordinary in its nature, to the Synod of Georgia. It seems to us that it must have been simply an overture for a deliverance from the Assembly, and then the Committee on Bills

and Overtures should have had charge of it. But passing this by, the Presbytery of Atlanta dismisses one of its ministers to the Methodist Church, and exceptions are taken to it. The Committee which reported an answer for the Assembly, said it is sufficient in such cases to give a certificate of good standing, and not a dismissal.

Mr. Davies, for the Committee, said, to dismiss is to release from ordination vows, both as to doctrine and polity. To give a certificate involves less responsibility—it only vouches for good standing.

Ruling elder R. A. Collins read a minority report, declaring that the Presbytery should have dismissed the minister to some particular Conference.

Rev. J. A. Sloan insisted on the same view, and quoted from the Form of Government and the Digest, to prove that the Presbytery, Association, Classis, or other religious body to which dismissed, must be specified.

Dr. Robinson said, all this referred simply to bodies with which we are in correspondence; and he read from the Digest three decisions of 1828, 1830, and 1854, warranting the simple striking off from our roll the names of ministers who have joined other bodies.

Dr. White wanted the proof that “other ecclesiastical bodies” means corresponding bodies.

Rev. Mr. Cartledge said the core of the question had not been touched, for in fact the minister dismissed had told the Presbytery that he is an Arminian; and in the face of that statement had received a certificate of good standing when he should have been deposed for heresy! And he moved to refer the question back to the Judicial Committee; but his motion did not prevail, and the report of the Committee was adopted.

It appears to us very clear that, taking the case as it stood before Mr. Cartledge’s statement, the simple certificate, and not the dismissal, is the proper paper to be given; and that for the case as he presented it, the Revised Discipline provides the proper course in its chapter on *Cases Without Process*, thus: “When any person comes forward and makes known his offence to the

court, a full statement of the facts shall be recorded and judgment rendered without process." Chap. XII., § 1.

THE DISMISSED RULING ELDER WHO RETURNS LETTER OF DISMISSAL.

Holston Presbytery asked whether a ruling elder dismissed to join another church, who returns his letter unused, and so becomes a member again, does by that act also return to his office of ruling elder? The Committee on Bills and Overtures recommended that the answer be that he does. It was adopted.

Rev. Donald Fraser held that such elder was in the same position with the pastor dismissed to another Presbytery, whose pastoral office is dissolved before he can be dismissed. Returning his letter would not *ipso facto* restore that relation.

Dr. Robinson said the letter of dismissal is just a piece of machinery; if not used, it does not avail.

Dr. Adger said there is no parallel in this case with that of the pastor who is loosed from his pastoral relation and then dismissed to another Presbytery. This elder was never formally released from his pastoral office in that congregation.

Mr. Fraser held that the application for dismissal is a resignation; and if the Session grant the dismissal, they accept the resignation.

It appears to us that this question was rightly settled. The ruling elder is a true and proper pastor and bishop, called by the church to his office, and ordained and installed in it by the parochial presbytery or Session. Whenever a teaching elder (who is not to be an evangelist) is called, ordained, and installed, it is in each case to the pastoral office, for our book knows no other ministerial ordination than that of pastors or else evangelists. Now, this called, ordained, and installed pastor cannot lay down his pastorship without the act of the Presbytery, *after hearing from the people*. The logic of our system requires the same in the case of the other class of pastors. No ruling elder can properly or legitimately, on our principles, be released from his charge unless first *the people be heard from on the question*. It is not in the power of a Session to accept the resignation of an

elder and loose him from his installation vows, without first hearing from the other party to the contract. If it be said that no such course is ever taken, and that the eldership is by consent and by usage left to stand or fall with the membership, then, of course, it must follow that the eldership in the case before us is restored with the membership.

PERMANENT STANDING COMMITTEES.

Mecklenburg Presbytery having asked the Assembly to provide that its Committee on Bills and Overtures and its Judicial Committee be made permanent standing committees, to whom matters shall be submitted before they go to the Assembly, and who shall publish their decisions for discussion in the newspapers before submitting them to the Assembly; the answer recommended to be given was unfavorable, on the ground that the Assembly is a supreme court of Christ to deliberate, and, under the guidance of the Spirit, to decide matters, and not merely to express the public opinion of the Church. Adopted.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.

The same Presbytery inquired whether it is competent to a church session to call a congregational meeting for other objects than those mentioned in the book, and to a congregation in its meeting to choose its presiding officer. The Committee on Bills and Overtures recommended the following answer, which was adopted: "As the purpose of congregational meetings in all cases must be presumed to relate more or less directly to the spiritual interests of the congregation, it seems to follow that it is competent to the Session to call congregational meetings for any proper purpose. In case the subject to be considered at the congregational meeting be such as to prevent the pastor, out of motives of delicacy, from presiding, it is competent to the meeting to choose its own presiding officer."

THE REVISED FORM AND DISCIPLINE.

Ruling elder Joyes offered a resolution that the Committee on Bills and Overtures report to this Assembly whether it is not expedient that the subject of the new book be again referred to the Presbyteries. Adopted.

An overture also came up from the Presbytery of Abingdon in reference to sending the new Discipline again to the Presbyteries.

Overtures also came up from the Presbyteries of Abingdon and Greenbrier, praying the Assembly to send down to the Presbyteries an overture proposing to strike out Sections 3, 4 and 5 of Chapter X. in the Form of Government, so that every church may send a ruling elder to the Presbytery and Synod, whether there be several churches grouped into one pastoral charge or not.

Also there came up from the Presbytery of East Hanover an overture praying the Assembly to propose to the Presbyteries so to amend the Constitution as to legalize the divesting a minister of his office in certain cases without censure.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures, in view of the increasing number of overtures praying for changes in the Constitution, such as those from the Presbyteries of Abingdon, Greenbrier, and East Hanover, recommend that instead of sending down these overtures for partial changes, the Assembly send down to the Presbyteries, for their action, the Revised Form of Government and Book of Discipline before submitted and approved (though not adopted) by a majority of the Presbyteries, as was reported to the General Assembly of 1870 at Louisville. Adopted.

Ruling elders Judge Ould and Mr. Grattan and Rev. S. D. Stuart spoke in favor.

Rev. G. H. Cartledge preferred the new book as it is to the present one, but he wanted to see it improved. He favored the appointment of a committee to revise it.

Rev. J. E. DuBose thought the Presbyteries just as likely to adopt this new book as any other.

Rev. W. W. Brimm hoped the matter would not be agitated again in the Presbyteries. There are things in the Form of Government that could be improved, but he hoped it would be done by amendments.

DR. GIRARDEAU'S INAUGURATION.

This took place on Tuesday night, 23d May. The Moderator presided and administered the oath of office. Dr. Robinson delivered a brief charge to the new Professor, and referred in the

course of it to the unexampled pressure with which the call had been forced on him by the Church. The inaugural was marked by all the incumbent's eloquence and learning. As it appears in this number of our work, nothing further need be said except to refer our readers to it.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

Dr. Smoot read a report on this subject, but we are not able to state what action was taken.

EVANGELISTIC LABOR AND SABBATH-SCHOOLS.

On the former of these two topics the Rev. Robert Price made a report, and on the latter the Rev. Dr. Ewing did the same; but we are unable to give any adequate account of either.

PAN-PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE.

This subject came up on Friday, the second day, by Dr. Robinson's presenting two reports—one, that of the Committee appointed by the last Assembly to correspond with similar committees of other Presbyterian bodies, and, if they deemed it wise and practicable, to appoint a delegate or delegates to the proposed conference; the other his own report, as having attended the preliminary conference last July in London. The former was docketed and made the order of the day for Saturday, at 10 o'clock a. m. The latter stated that our delegate had received from the representatives of nearly twenty Presbyterian churches every mark of affection and Christian regard, and that he had spoken as freely there as if in our own Assembly. It also stated that our own Committee had submitted to the conference a draft of a constitution for it, differing from two others submitted chiefly in these respects: *First*, they wished all proceedings of the council to be officially submitted to the different Assemblies for their consideration, but what was adopted simply provided for communicating to these supreme courts forming the alliance the minutes of the council, without any obligation at all laid on them to take any action respecting them; and, *secondly*, they wished the council to consist of not more than one hundred delegates, but it was decided that three hundred were required to give due dignity and moral influence to the proceedings.

The debate which was then commenced, and which ran through five days, was in certain respects rather a remarkable one. Not to speak of its notable good temper from beginning to end, unbroken by a single ripple of unpleasant feeling, it may be allowed us to state that at first perhaps there was a majority for the action proposed—at least, a majority was *claimed* with great confidence; but daily, as the debate went on, this majority appeared to diminish until the very last speech was made, which, for reasons of a peculiar sort, carried over a good many of the opposition.

It may be mentioned, as another somewhat remarkable feature of this debate, that the rhetoric was all on one side, but the argument all on the other. The alliance was recommended to our Church by Stuart Robinson, than whom no man in our whole communion has more power of persuasion with that Irish tongue of his, and also by that preëminently fascinating speaker, Dr. Hoge. These two distinguished orators of the ministry were backed by two worthy compeers amongst the eldership, the urbane and accomplished and winning Judge Estes, and that fiery and forcible Virginian, Judge Ould, known so well and so favorably all over the South for his services in the war. Seldom has any ecclesiastical body been more effectively addressed than was the Savannah Assembly when this gentleman took the floor and poured out a stream of earnest advocacy of this movement, fitted in many respects to sweep away all opposition. But it did not sweep it away. And why not? The speakers on the other side laid no claims to popular eloquence. They were all of them plain, honest, earnest men, setting forth in unpretending simplicity their objections to the alliance, drawn chiefly from the Constitution of our Church and that of the proposed confederation itself, and from the expense to be involved. These objections were not met and could not be met. It was felt day by day more and more that logic in this instance was more than a match for eloquence. The Assembly more and more clearly perceived as the debate went on that there was no reply to the arguments of the opposition.

It may be added to all this, as another rather remarkable thing, that the opposition should have yielded to the advocates of the

alliance the tremendous "parliamentary advantage," in Dr. Robinson's phrase, of the *last speech*—and that to be a speech from Moses D. Hoge! What else but their calm confidence in the force of truth against the innate weakness of all that was urged in favor of this movement could have reconciled them to surrendering so quietly this immense advantage? He had no just right to it as Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, because it was only an accidental circumstance that any report came in from them on this subject, and they had given it no adequate consideration; and, moreover, their report was a single sentence, baldly expressing approbation, with no elaborate statement of grounds or reasons which required defence. The truth is, that Dr. Robinson submitted resolutions from his Committee *accepting as satisfactory the constitution agreed on by the conference*, and Dr. Hoge added nothing to this, but really took from it when he said in his report as Chairman that the confederation itself was *not contrary* to our Church Constitution. The matter in debate, then, was the report of the committee appointed last year, and not the hastily adopted recommendation of this Assembly's Committee on Bills and Overtures. The opposition understood, therefore, very well how little claim the other side possessed to this "last speech," which was sure to be so damaging to themselves; and Dr. Hoge himself abjured any such claim and accepted it as pure courtesy. And he used it courteously, and also wisely and effectively, as it was expected he would do; all which makes the debate somewhat remarkable in this aspect of it.

Then there was this feature of the discussion, which made it rather a curious one. The proposition which was really acted on was kept back by the friends of the alliance until they had got it allowed that the "last speech" was to be from their side, and *that by their most accomplished advocate*; while another proposition, that never was voted on at all, was argued and urged all through the debate, only to be abandoned by them in the end! Here was the Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, for whom it was claimed that he had a right to the concluding words (though he abjured the claim himself), holding

back till the last speech was made, to which there was to be no reply, the very thing which was really asked for at the Assembly's hands! Now, of course this was not *in order*, and was a very *unparliamentary advantage*; but the finished orator who obtained it was so yielding himself, he was so conciliatory, he approached us with so much winning gentleness, especially he gave up so much and asked for so little of what had been urged all along, he was so perfectly "of neither side," and he so heartily disapproved himself of the constitution of the alliance and of the claim sometimes made that it was an œcumenical council or a step to it—in fact, he so modified the proposition before us as he went along, without formally enunciating any amendments to it, that it came to be somewhat difficult for us to tell, under the jugglery and magnetism of his eloquent appeals, whether he wanted us to get over on his side or proposed to come over and stand on ours. All this was certainly a little remarkable, and it shows where lay the true strength of the Assembly and how real was the victory of the seeming minority. Not seldom, as we all know, does the minority in fact carry the day and win all the substantial gains of the contest. This is as well understood by observing and reflecting men as it is that Calvin was right when he said that opinions ought to be *weighed* (if that were possible), and not *counted*. The truth, we all know, is always really much more apt to be maintained by the few than by the many. And yet it is not often, and that makes this case a little remarkable, that a minority succeeds so nearly in bringing over the majority quite to their own ground.

One more remark of this sort. Should the other side object to anything in these statements, they will nevertheless, we suppose, be ready to agree that the debate was rather remarkable in this, that both sides were, on the whole, well satisfied with the results attained. They got their Pan. We got the Pan changed into a very different sort of a vessel from what they proposed—in fact, it is not any sort of vessel for cooking up things which our Church is required to eat, but it is merely a conference, with no powers of action whatever.

And now, in order that the reader may distinctly perceive what was proposed at first for the Assembly's adoption and how essentially it was modified, we shall place here the resolutions of Dr. Robinson's Committee, as at first offered by him, and the resolution of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, as offered by Dr. Hoge; and then the same as they were at the very close of the debate amended by their authors, and also the explanatory minute which was brought in by them the next day, with the exception of a single vote unanimously adopted. We shall also place here the paper of the opposition, which was offered by the Rev. Joseph Bardwell.

The parts which were amended, and as they were amended, are indicated by italics.

DR. ROBINSON'S RESOLUTIONS.

1. *Resolved*, That this Assembly hereby expresses its approval, in general, of the proceedings of the Conference held at London in July last, composed of the representatives of a large portion—some 15,000 congregations—of the Presbyterian Churches of the world.

2. That this Assembly *accepts as satisfactory the constitution agreed upon by that Conference*, providing for an *Ecumenical* Presbyterian Council every three years.

3. That this Assembly will appoint delegates to represent the Presbyterian Church in the United States in the General Council to be holden in Edinburgh in 1877.

DR. HOGE'S RESOLUTION AS AT FIRST.

"That the proposed Confederation is not contrary to the constitution of our Church, and it is advisable to appoint delegates."

THE AMENDED RESOLUTIONS AS THEY PASSED.

1. *Resolved*, That this Assembly hereby expresses its approval, in general, of the proceedings of the Conference held at London in July last, composed of the representatives of a large portion—some 15,000 congregations—of the Presbyterian Churches of the world.

2. *Resolved*, The Assembly *approves of the general tenor of the constitution of the Alliance*, providing for a *general* Presbyterian Council, to be held every three years.

3. *Resolved*, That this Assembly will appoint delegates to represent the Presbyterian Church in the United States in the General Council, to be held in Edinburgh in 1877, *provided that this appointment of delegates shall not be understood as pledging any funds of the Church to defraying the expenses of the delegates to the Council.*

4. *Resolved, That the delegates so appointed shall select from their own number members to prepare any papers, concerning the condition and position of our Church, to be spread upon the records of the Council; and in case the delegates be unable to attend the Council, they are hereby authorised to represent our Church in such official letter as they may agree upon.*

THE EXPLANATORY MINUTE.

Resolved, That in appointing delegates to the General Presbyterian Alliance, it is with the distinct declaration that it is not to be regarded as another and a higher court, but as an assemblage of committees appointed by the several Churches which they represent, for the purpose of joint conference and joint report, and for such action only as belongs to an association of delegates thus constituted.

THE PAPER OF THE OPPOSITION.

1. *Resolved, That the Assembly recognises with satisfaction the efficiency and ability with which our representative in the preliminary conference discharged his trust in the report of such measures as seemed best fitted to advance the interest of the cause of Christ.*

2. After mature deliberation, this Assembly, while cordially rejoicing in every sincere attempt to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, deem it unadvisable to adopt the constitution proposed and appoint delegates to the "Alliance of Reformed Churches," to meet in Edinburgh in 1877. This consideration is fortified by the fact that the proposal to engage in this movement has already awakened a strong and widespread dissatisfaction throughout our Church, as has appeared in the utterances of the press and the action taken by several of our lower courts.

3. God, by his providence, has not called our Church into a position of isolation from the Christian world; but as at the organisation of our Assembly in 1861, so now "we desire to cultivate peace and charity with all our fellow Christians throughout the world. We invite to ecclesiastical communion all who maintain our principles of faith and order"; "and especially do we signify to all bodies struggling to maintain the true principles of the same time-honored Confession, our desire to establish the most intimate relations with them, which may be found mutually edifying, and for the glory of God."

On Saturday morning, Dr. Robinson, in beginning his argument, referred to Dr. Hoge's statement that his committee were unanimous in the answer they had recommended, and held that to be an indication of the sentiments of the Assembly, so that he "would take it for granted that the majority were on his side." Not having engaged, out of regard to his official position, in any controversial discussions of the subject of the coun-

cil, he hoped the more time would be allowed him now. It was true he had protested against a certain paper in the SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW—not to controvert its positions, but because it bore on the question of “fraternal relations,” disturbing our settlement of that matter by the Baltimore Conference. But he had avoided going into any discussion of its main topic. And he was now entering not upon a forensic contest, which is contrary to the nature and functions of a supreme council of the Church, and so was not looking for any divided vote, but was expecting a unanimous agreement. This he felt sure of if he could only bring before the body the matter as it lay before his own mind.

He was surprised at the mistakes and misapprehensions which had arisen. First of all, there was no conflict between the action at Columbus in 1874 and that at St. Louis in 1875. The former, and rightly, objected to the credentials of the parties proposing to treat of this question, because then it was an affair only of individuals. Hence what was said at Columbus about the “coördination of courts.” But at St. Louis six Presbyterian bodies in the United States and Canada and six in Great Britain had acted, and so the proposition came to this Assembly in 1875, from official representatives of some twelve Presbyterian supreme courts. Queens only, it had been said, it could treat with; here were twelve of them, each equal in dignity to itself.

Again, he had supposed Southern Presbyterians to be agreed that the whole Church is one body, and were ready to manifest, as far as possible, the visible unity of the Church. The Calvinistic theology holds for its central standpoint God’s eternal purpose to redeem a body, and not myriads of individual sinners. This was the idea of Thornwell, who said that any Church is self-condemned which does not wish to realise the visible unity of the whole Church of God, and who held that the unity is to be realised in representative assemblies, and that so the Church has an indefinite expansibility, so that the whole Church on earth might be embodied in one grand parliament. Dr. Palmer also recognised this doctrine, and had objected to the alliance, because it did not go far enough. He wants not an advisory

council, but an authoritative court: the reply to which is that we cannot have such an Œcumenical court without preceding conferences. But the most of those who have spoken or written on the subject seem to have no sympathy with Thornwell's idea of the unity of the Church, or Palmer's notion of the Œcumenical court. It has been denounced as "one of the essential elements of Popery," which is the first time he had ever met with such an opinion from a *jure divino* Presbyterian. For he had never before met with the idea that the unity of the Church of Rome *per se*, and apart from Rome's false theory of the bond of Church unity, is a heretical opinion. The fathers of the Reformation, so far from regarding the unity of the Church as a heresy, longed to unite the Protestant Churches into one body, and mourned over the bigotry and partisan fanaticism which prevented it. Calvin longed to "bring the separated Churches into one." The Second Book of Discipline—one of the grandest pieces of constitutional law in the world—said "assemblies are of four sorts," and that the fourth represents "the universal Kirk of Christ." It is evident that these Presbyterian fathers three hundred years ago had conceived of the whole Church as one, in accordance with their Calvinistic theology.

I confess, sir, to some alarm at finding any Presbyterian of high intelligence maintaining that "the only unity designed by Christ among the several branches of his people on this earth is the *spiritual* unity." While I have never had any sympathy with the clatter about "Christian union," founded upon an entire misconstruction of our Saviour's prayer for his people, yet I have as little sympathy with the ecclesiasticism which insists that the geographical or social barriers of Jew, Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, must separate the people of God who hold the same standards of gospel faith and order.

This brings us to the question of the constitutionality of an Œcumenical parliament. Is it not a suspicious circumstance that out of the twenty Presbyterian bodies united in this alliance, this difficulty has occurred in no one but ours? That word *un-constitutional* has two meanings—it may mean *contra-constitutional*, or it may mean *non-constitutional*. Nobody has attempted

to show that to confer with other Presbyterian Churches is contra-constitutional. On the contrary, our Confession teaches that the visible Church consists of all *those throughout the world* that profess the true religion, and that the communion of saints, as God offereth opportunity, is to be extended to all those in every place who call on the name of the Lord Jesus.

But the plea of "unconstitutional" in this case rests mainly on the idea of *non-constitutional*. Of course, the fathers could not foresee how "God would give opportunity" in this generation by so wonderfully annihilating distance, and so breaking down the barriers between nations, as to render an Œcumenical Council possible. But if the alliance is unconstitutional because there is no specific provision for it in the Constitution, then is not your whole scheme of Foreign Missions likewise non-constitutional? So with your Theological Seminaries. But while I admit that, in order to have an Œcumenical General Assembly, it would be necessary to make changes in our Constitution, yet there is now already in our book ample powers given our General Assembly to cover such a triennial conference of delegates as is proposed. The Assembly has the power of *correspondence with foreign Churches*. It may confer once, and it may confer as often as the interests of the Church require. Nobody has questioned our right to hold the Baltimore Conference with the Northern Church, or with delegates from the Reformed (Dutch) Church. Where will you draw the line between conferring with one Church or with many—between conferring at Baltimore or in London? It is asked, "Is this Pan Presbyterian Alliance a Church?" I answer, No, but it is *Churches!*—a gathering not of unofficial men, but office-bearers, the representatives of *Churches*. Nor is it a "voluntary society," but an alliance of Churches as such to confer about the common interests.

Here Dr. Robinson said he encountered perhaps the main objection to the alliance, viz., that it would bring us into relations with the Northern Church, with which we had refused to correspond, and with other Churches which had not stood true to the Confession. He held this to be an old and a common blunder, which he illustrated by a humorous account of his attending in

1854, as a delegate from the Old School Presbyterian Church of that day, the General Association of Massachusetts, where he had encountered Dr. Edward Beecher. He held that ecclesiastical correspondence involves no endorsement whatever of the peculiar views of the Church we correspond with.

It is objected that such a measure should be referred to the Presbyteries. But the Presbyteries have nothing to do with it. The Constitution puts the whole matter of correspondence with foreign Churches into the hands of the Assembly, and the Presbyteries have no business with it. The General Assembly is no mere creature of the Presbyteries to register their decrees. It is as truly a court of Jesus Christ, with the promise of Christ's presence in it, as a Presbytery. And the Presbytery has no more right to interfere with the Assembly's business than the Assembly has to license or ordain a minister.

Dr. Robinson proceeded to hold up to ridicule the wisdom of three or four Presbyteries which had taken action on this subject. "As to the action," he said, "of one of our Kentucky Presbyteries (Transylvania), which has formally sent up its grave advice on the subject, I judge the members of the house will not be able to get much light as to which way they ought to determine the question from this paper, so remarkably judicial in its form. The corn is very gravely and carefully put into the bag—pretty good corn at that—but, as if for the purpose of protecting the corn, the stone (or rather the *gravel*) is as gravely put into the other end. Some of our brethren have become so habituated to riding astride—evenly between the genuine and the counterfeit packages—that they seem to think it unseemly to carry their grist to the ecclesiastical mill, except riding astride, taking their position just evenly between right and wrong."

The whole conception of asking the advice of Presbyteries he held to be incipient Congregationalism. It would be time enough to consult them twenty years hence, when we shall be ready not only for a triennial conference, but a full-fledged Œcumenical General Assembly of all the Presbyterian Churches of the world.

It is objected that, by opening this question, we endanger the peace of our Church. Well, sir, who is responsible for opening

this question? None of us. The providence of God brings it before us through the call upon us of nine-tenths of the Presbyterians of the world. But he was free to say he had more patience with almost any other defect in the character of Presbyterian men than this miserable demagoguery that raises the cry of "the peace of the Church!" "the peace of the Church!" whenever some great question of order or Church action is to be discussed. It is a miserable partisan cant from a class that claim all the piety and all the knowledge of vital godliness. He went on to refer to articles in a late paper which depreciated the value of discussion, and exalted, instead of it, "devotion" and "vital godliness," as proofs of a growing tendency to clamor down the discussion of great questions.

Coming to the objection from the expense, he said that would not be more than from \$150 or \$200 a delegate. And then every second meeting will be on this side of the Atlantic.

The advantages of the Alliance would be, first, to restore to the consciousness of the Church the fact that the Church's unity lies at the foundation of the Presbyterian polity.

Secondly. It will tend to remove from Presbyterianism the reproach of its divisions.

Thirdly. It will give to feeble Presbyterian bodies on the continent of Europe, struggling under persecution, the moral support of stronger bodies.

Fourthly. It will enable the various Presbyterian bodies of the world to distribute missionary work in heathen, Papal and Mohammedan countries.

Fifthly. It will enable us all to understand better precisely what our differences are, which must lead to greater unity.

Sixthly. It will enable our own Church to get out of its isolation.

But the disadvantages of our refusing to go into this Alliance will be, first, it puts us formally out of connexion with the whole Presbyterian world, and fixes attention upon our singular position.

Secondly. It will confirm the idea that our position of separation proceeds from spite and bad humor.

Thirdly. It will excite restlessness and dissatisfaction among a large class of our people who yearn for a wider Presbyterian communion, and so it will awaken a tendency towards organic union with the North and the disintegration of our body.

We have condensed as faithfully as possible the remarks of Dr. Robinson from his own manuscript of his speech furnished by him for the papers. The speech as he delivered it was fully two hours long, but it did not conform as written to what he uttered, for he both added and omitted as he went along. The replies made to him, therefore, do not always suit this report of what he said. He was listened to by a large congregation with the closest attention.

Dr. Adger obtained the floor, and said that, while he would not, like his friend, lay claim to a majority for his side, he yet hoped to show him at least a very large minority opposed to his views. The continuation of the debate was made the order for the evening session, at 8 o'clock. His speech occupied over one hour. He said that his old friend, Dr. Robinson, was incapable of tricks, yet it was hardly fair in him to make capital out of the accidental unanimity of the Committee of Bills and Overtures. He had said there was no opposition, for we were all agreed, and yet he had gone on to confess his astonishment at the opposition aroused, and that amongst the very class of men he most respected—the *jure divino* Presbyterians. He had claimed that the Assembly of 1874 was not against him, but for him, because insisting on our coördination with Church courts only, and not voluntary associations; so that that Assembly, in his view, was all right on that point. But that Assembly had said this Alliance was no Church court; so that while he says the Assembly of 1874 was all right, it makes him out all wrong. They said we can deal only with Churches; he tells you this Alliance is "merely conferential" where "votes were of no importance," a mere "advisory body." (which has too much of the Congregational twang either for him or for us,) an association "you may go into or go out of whenever you please."

Then my brother says this is a step towards the true and proper Œcumenical Council, and will grow into it. Am I to

tell him how necessary it is for your first step to be a right step, and how hard it is to go back and correct a wrong beginning? He claims that we have the same right to go into this Alliance as into the Baltimore Conference. Let me ask, What would our Church have said to the Baltimore Conference had it made an Alliance for us with a constitution and all? He says that if your Constitution has nothing warranting the Alliance, so it has nothing which warrants Foreign Missions. But Foreign Missions are in the Bible, and is not the Bible a part and the very foundation part of a *jure divino* Presbyterian Constitution? Let him show us that any such body as the Alliance is in those scriptures which (nobody better knows than my brother) do reveal the system of our Church courts. He admits there is "Rationalism in those bodies," but says neighbors may have social intercourse without being responsible for one another's ideas. Is it mere "neighboring" to go and take part officially with Rationalists in regulating all the great matters which this Alliance entertains? He says it is "none of the business" of our Presbyteries, but of the Assembly alone, to determine this question, and he ridiculed the deliverance of one of the Presbyteries which have overtured us about it. But did not this whole matter begin in the Presbyteries and come here by overtures from them? And will a strict constructionist, like my brother, deny that wherever our book undertakes to prescribe the powers of the Assembly, that it limits them on those matters? Would he allow our Assembly to take *original* jurisdiction over a minister? And when the book says the Assembly may *correspond*, would he admit that it can *unite* us with other bodies? The Constitution defines clearly what the Assembly may and may not do on sundry points, and then how does it close up on the powers of the Assembly? Why, by prescribing in the famous Section VI., that before any new constitutional rules may be made the Presbyteries must be consulted. Now, which is the greater stretch of this Assembly's power, to make a new rule, or to carry us bodily into a new Church?

Then we were told of the claims on our sympathy and protection of the feeble and oppressed Presbyterians of the continent,

and how they had said in the Alliance that they looked to it as to protectors and "big brothers." Moderator, I ask if our poor Church looks like anybody's "big brother?" Go over to South Carolina and ask the Presbyterians there if they do not themselves need a "big brother." Well, we have got one above, and we depend on Him only.

Now, my brother found it difficult to tell us whether the Alliance is a Church or a mere advisory body. He says it is a Queen—yes, twelve Queens all in one, and entitled to some of the consideration due to a proper Œcumenical Council. He holds up to us a beautiful, nay, a dazzling picture of its glory. It is important for us to ascertain if all the advantages he promises are likely to be realised. The only way of judging that I know of is to look not at the spoken representations of an earnest speaker, but to examine the written constitution of the Alliance. And now with this before us, can we hold the Alliance to be such a Church court as we can agree to come under? I find that it has a great *name*—"The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World Holding the Presbyterian System." Whether we go into it or not, it is the *Alliance of the Reformed throughout the world*; and if this is its just title, then we are self-excluded as not of the Reformed, and as not holding the Presbyterian system unless we consent to accept a share of this glory. Again, I find that it has conditions of admission; meets stately; has a President and other officers; adopts a certain method of apportioning the votes to be cast at its meetings; undertakes great and numerous works and duties; has a binding constitution that can never be changed, except at its triennial meetings and by a two-thirds vote; and while it declares that it will not interfere with the internal affairs or external relations of its constituent Churches—though laying its hands upon the most vital interests of Christianity in the world—yet sends its annual minutes of proceedings to the supreme courts of all the Churches it has agreed to receive into its membership.

Now, surely this is considerable of a *body*, of an organism, whether it is or is not anything of a Church or anything of the true and proper Œcumenical Council. And now let us look at

what are the objects and the powers it assumes. My brother undertook to distinguish between these words, in order to remove Dr. J. Leighton Wilson's objection that it claims the right to "distribute mission work," and "combine Church energies" for the evangelisation of the world. He said that would be found put down as one of the objects, but not one of the powers of the Alliance. But what is the use or value of objects without powers to attain them, or of powers without objects on which to exercise them? No, Moderator, that distinction will not answer. And it must be acknowledged that the Alliance lays claim to the most important and vital of all the interests of the Church of Christ as the objects on which it is to exercise its powers. It will distribute mission work, and it will combine Church energies—mark the force of those tremendous expressions. Yes, and it will "entertain all subjects directly connected with the training of ministers, the use of the press, and the religious instruction of the young." These are certainly very serious and delicate subjects it presumes to handle, and its claim of powers might satisfy the loftiest ambition.

And now I wish to ask my brother, how does it happen, if this Alliance be a Church, that it can be so easy to get out of it as he says? I never heard before of a Church separation from which so unceremoniously would be a right thing and no schism.

Again I would ask, how, if a Church or a Church court, it can be the mere advisory body, the purely conferential meeting, he alleges that it is?

Again, if it be a Church court, and that one of such lofty powers, where are the full provisions needful in its constitution to guide it, and check it, and restrain it, which our Constitution provides for our highest court? Does this Assembly need to have such checks and restraints, and does this Alliance need none?

These are some of the difficulties in my brother's way, when he would say the Alliance is a *Church*, and that it is constitutional to correspond with it, and even to join it.

But when he says it is only an advisory body, into which we can freely go, and out of it freely come, then I ask him if it be not a Church court, why does it *act on moral and religious*

questions? Does not my brother continue still to hold with all *jure divino* Presbyterians that in moral and religious matters we want absolutely no association whatsoever except the Church of Christ in her courts?

Again I ask, if not a Church court, but only a conference, if my brother and his associates in the Alliance went there only to confer, why did they make an alliance and a constitution for it well nigh unchangeable?

And again I ask, if it was only a step taken towards the true and proper Œcumenical Council, why did it not say one word in its constitution about such a council?

Such being the indefinite and uncertain nature of this Alliance, are we prepared to go into it against the widespread dissatisfaction which the action of the late Assembly has awakened? We hear of it from Virginia, from Kentucky, from Mississippi, from Louisiana, from North Carolina, and from South Carolina—through the press in various forms of utterance, and from different Presbyteries and at least one Synod. And now are we prepared against all this manifested opposition, and with a much divided vote in this Assembly, and without clear constitutional authority, are we prepared to carry our Church into this Alliance, the objects and powers of which are so vital and so vast, and the character of it so indefinite and so uncertain?

Having thus followed my brother through his long and very interesting and eloquent speech, pointing out what appeared to me to contain that which was open to criticism, I desire now to proceed and suggest to my brethren of this Assembly a few other considerations bearing on the question before us.

Moderator, the spirit of our age is latitudinarian, and this tendency is increasing. Not what is *orthodox* is honored now, but what is *liberal*. Once *heresy* was held to be evil; now the only bad thing is *bigotry*. There is loud outcry against sectarianism, while our times swing round to the utmost laxity of religious opinion.

Let me give you two or three specimens:

1. It has been gravely proposed and seriously urged in Northern religious papers, Presbyterian and Congregationalist, that

these bodies are so nearly one that it becomes their duty to be united.

2. The Presbyterian Assembly of the North, at Brooklyn, is now discussing whether they shall not take back the testimony of 1845, at Cincinnati, under Dr. Thornwell, against the validity of Romish baptism.

3. A Presbyterian Church corner-stone was laid recently in Boston, and ministers of various Christian denominations were invited to take part in the proceedings and did so. Amongst others came a Universalist brother, the Rev. Dr. Miner, and he welcomed the new church into the fellowship of his people. He said: "They have a way of thinking over there at their corner, which does them good; just as you have a way of thinking here at your corner, which does you good; but it is all one work;" and so at the close he dismisses the assembly—this Universalist brother—with his apostolical benediction.

Such is the spirit of this age. All who call themselves Christians, whether they hold to Christian doctrine or not, must come together and be one. This is what the age demands, and we must not scrutinise closely any of the schemes proposed in this liberal and lax time respecting Christian union. But if we should venture to exercise this right or perform this duty, we must expect to be called bigot and Pharisee

But is not Christian union a good thing? Certainly. And is not the close and strict union of all true Presbyterians both good and desirable? Most assuredly. And Dr. McCosh, the President of the Alliance, was not, by many, the first who expressed this desirableness. Calvin and Melville and Henderson and Gillespie and R. J. Breckinridge—yes, and our own Stuart Robinson and Ben Palmer—all expressed the earnest wish and desire for the union of all Presbyterians in the whole world, and the latest of them long before this Alliance was thought of. Here is what Breckinridge said in 1840: "There is no glory now within the reach of some great, heaven-inspired man equal to that of uniting together the different Presbyterian bodies of the earth." But what was it which all these, our trusted leaders, desired? Sir, it was the true and proper Œcumenical Council.

This is what Calvin and the Second Book of Discipline of the Scotch and Gillespie and all the others wanted, and what my brother tells you that he wants. But that would be a very different thing from this Alliance. My brother quoted Dr. Thornwell as saying that a Church is self-condemned which does not expect itself to spread over the whole earth; but Dr. Thornwell does not say that he wants our divinely revealed system of Church government to be spread over the world in the shape of an advisory body, into which and out of which you may come and go at your pleasure.

Now, the true and proper Œcumenical Council was and is, and probably will continue to be, an impossibility. Differences of race, language, nationality, and also distance and expense, must needs keep us separate, and in a sense isolated, while yet really one. All these are legitimate grounds of separation, and they do not destroy true union. The chronic state of Europe is war, and we have passed through war, too, and how, when there are contending Cæsars, can Christian people, rendering to Cæsar his things, be formally united in visible, actual confederation? My brother says that steam makes Churches now able to be one in formal bonds. I say you must first abolish war. Has not our own Assembly decided, and rightly, that a difference of race is a just and legitimate and necessary ground for separate Church organisation? We are, therefore, and we must perhaps continue to the end, to be isolated in one sense from our brethren of other lands and races. Gillespie, whom my brother has studied, and whom he venerates, says (for I conferred with him just before I came here) that the true visible union on which the communion of all the Churches is based is not of companying, of acquaintance, of actual formal union, but of doctrine and order. He says the dwellers of one country may have the former, but the latter only is what must and does bind together all who are of one faith, and that the true unity of the visible Church is only in the Spirit and in faith.

And so, Moderator, the Alliance meets all the difficulties, but provides not the advantages of a true and proper, but alas! impossible Œcumenical union. And so we who do not go into the

Alliance are no more isolated than those who enter. What can the meeting of a few deputies, having no proper representative authority, effect towards a true union of the Presbyterian Churches of the world? This Assembly is the bond of union for all our Churches, because it has authority representative, and its action is the action of us all. But here is an Alliance that disclaims authority, and is either a mere loose confederation for religious conference and devotion, or else a dreadful usurper of powers not justly belonging to it.

But, Moderator, though we should not go into the Alliance, our hearts are all right towards all our brethren. We love our brethren. Our hearts beat responsive to theirs. And we feel hurt and wounded by allegations to the contrary. If we have a testimony to bear that compels us to stand apart from some of them, or if we have conscientious difficulties that hinder our entering the Alliance, we ought not to be called bad names. And we beg our brethren who are for union with those outside to remember that something is due to us who are already of their body.

We are not enemies of the Alliance, and we wish it well in all that is good, but we do not feel prepared to be dragged into it against our judgment if we can legitimately help it. And I say that if it should turn out that the majority here do really favor the movement, they ought to be willing at least to refer it to the Presbyteries by an overture. to be reported on to the next Assembly.

There is one other point on which I have a word to say. We are not lovers of what is or what looks *sensational*. And the Alliance looks like one of the many sensational movements invented by brethren of a higher latitude than ours. Is this a hard saying? Then listen while I read from the *New York Evangelist*, when it was agreed by the Alliance to hold its next meeting at Edinburgh on the second Tuesday of July, 1876. That happened to be the 4th of July, and it was the Centennial Fourth, so that the Northern Presbyterians had to decide between Philadelphia and the Centennial or Edinburgh and the Alliance. The *Evangelist* took ground, therefore, that "our

Presbyterian ministers, at least *those of them who care to make any record for the future,*" would not be willing to go to the Alliance, and it ought to be postponed, and must be postponed. "Why," said the *Evangelist*, "when they have carefully prepared, and on the first Sabbath of July delivered each in his place, the historical sermon enjoined upon them as a filial and patriotic duty by the General Assembly, their minds will be too full of the inspiration of these and other services and scenes appropriate to the high noon of our National Centennial to give attention to any proceedings at Edinburgh." Unhappy Alliance! You belong to the family of sensational things, and in the presence of a greater sensation you must hide your diminished head. The Northern Presbyterian preacher merges his Church in his country, and his Presbyterianism in his patriotism. Edinburgh and the Alliance must be put off a whole year till Philadelphia and the Centennial have had their full swing.

But listen to another illustration: The Alliance, in its published minutes, gives us a letter from the Rev. D. Bruce, clerk of the Assembly of the New Zealand Presbyterian Church. His suggestions have the sanction of the Alliance, for they have put them into their minutes. One of these is, "That the propriety be considered of setting apart men of acknowledged literary talent for the purpose of directing their whole time to the producing of standard and yet telling works on religious subjects," etc.

Another is: That it be considered whether there could not be established a Pan-Presbyterian periodical, etc., etc.

Another is: That it be considered what measures might be taken for conferring merited degrees of honor on clergymen of the Presbyterian Church generally, and especially on the colonies, where the claims of clergymen have been all but totally overlooked by the old seats of learning, etc.

Moderator and brethren, is this the kind of thing it becomes us to rush into, with a loud outcry against it heard all over our Church?

Dr. Smoot spoke about forty-five minutes. He said the matter was not a permanent thing, binding the Assembly indefinitely, but would be for reconsideration every three years. If

we cannot be unanimous, the minority can nobly testify to the unity of the Church by submitting to the will of the majority. He held to the ground of the Louisville Assembly of 1870 in relation to fraternal relations with the Northern Church, though acquiescing in the Baltimore action. But Dr. Niccolls's speech at Cleveland shows there is no true fraternity in them towards us; yet if we enter this Alliance, we shall put a stop to many of the reproaches cast upon us.

What is this Alliance? It is neither a voluntary association, nor a Church court, but an extraordinary combination of commissions. It is not the first, for laymen are not admitted into it; nor is it the second, for it disclaims all power over the bodies entering it. Have we a right to take part in it? In 1873 we declined to send delegates to the Evangelical Alliance, because a voluntary association merely; but the next day we formed a real Presbyterian alliance with the Synod of Missouri and the Dutch Church.

He referred to Dr. Adger's argument from the constitution of the Alliance. Every deliberative body must have rules. Is it lawful? Is it expedient? We are anchored right on the bar. If the tide goes out and leaves us, our ship must be broken in pieces. We must go forward and spread our sails, or backwards into the bay.

On Monday, the Rev. J. S. Park replied to what had been said of latitudinarianism, and urged the argument against our isolation. We are engaged in a life and death struggle with organised Popery, and we cannot afford to fight alone. We must organise, too.

Rev. J. Rice Bowman favored the movement.

Dr. White said he had long been convinced that the theory of this Pan-Presbyterian Council is a false theory, and he was now more convinced of it than ever. The plea for it is the unification organically of the great Presbyterian family. But that can never be realised, and the Scriptures do not authorise us to expect it. The idea of all Churches being united in one organism never can be realised, except under a universal Bishop. If the Presbyterian polity is to prevail all over the world, this kind of

visible union can never be realised. It is a false theory that we ever can be actually bound together in one organisation. The Scripture does not recognise it. But if this basis of the Alliance is false, everything built on it must be vain. And then the scheme is unconstitutional. We have a constitution; it consists of grants. The powers distributed amongst the four courts of the Church are clearly designated; and we have no power to make a higher court.

What is this Alliance? It has been called a commission. It is doubtful whether the Assembly has authority to appoint commissions. It looks like a court. It will have great popular influence. Its resolves will soon become laws. The Associations and Consociations of Congregationalism have acquired the authority of Synods. Let us guard the constitution of our Church from danger. We have had a dangerous correspondence before, and it rent our Church asunder. The secret of the harmony of the London Conference was their suppression of all but the minimum of truth. If this is to be a Pan-Presbyterian Council, then all Presbyterians must come in who desire it, and so those also must be admitted who deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and men of all shades of heterodoxy. The most bald and piebald sacramentarianism is not found alone in the Church of Rome, but also where Presbyterian forms prevail. I speak what my eyes have seen and my ears have heard, and if my statement is called in question, I will substantiate it. There are men in Reformed Churches who deny the atonement, and who hold to the inherent efficacy of sacraments. It is safer for us to stay at home.

Ruling elder General A. J. Hansell said if we go in at all, we should go in with the privilege of withdrawing at any time. Dr. Robinson said we could withdraw at any time, but I do not see this in the constitution. I wish to protect the rear. The scheme certainly is non-constitutional. History is fraught with the danger of alliances, especially to the weaker parties. While the Council is called Pan-Presbyterian, I hope it will not prove a pandemonium.

Dr. Robinson here rose and expressed the wish to have the

following paper allowed to form a part of his original report. This of course was not exactly in order, and no motion was made on the subject:

“In accepting the constitution proposed by the London Council, and in sending representatives to this General Council, it is with the distinct understanding that this Council is not another court of Presbyterianism; and, further, that should it appear at any time hereafter that the interests of the Church represented by this Assembly require such action, it may, without violation of any covenant or any discourtesy to their brethren, withdraw from the Alliance.”

Rev. W. W. Brimm would not discuss the constitutional question, but the advantages and disadvantages. What does the Southern Church want with such an advisory body? Are we not doing all we can? Will a vehicle draw easier because you put more wheels to it? It takes all our strength to move the machinery we have now. But this is a day of big shows.

It is said we can draw out when we please. No more than a crew can forsake their grand ship, tossed by tempest and confronted by breakers. Why, we should be disgraced.

And whence comes the desire for this thing? Either from the felt need of new honors and prominent positions, or from the wish to realise here the unity which is in heaven—from a mistaken interpretation of Christ's prayer. It was not the visible unity of his Church he prayed for. Had it been, such unity must have been realised long ago.

But it is said we are on the bar, with anchor cast, and must go out to sea or back into the bay. No, sir, with our glorious doctrines, our well tested government, are we not already sailing on the broad seas?

The objection from the expense has not been met. Our Church has as many financial burdens as it can bear, and cannot afford the money for this grand Presbyterian tea party in Edinburgh. He spoke very touchingly of the destitutions in Texas. If there ever was a time for economy in our Southern Church, it is the present. Our Foreign Missions work is crippled, and may have to be partly suspended. Let us spend our money on the institutions of our Church and not for big shows.

On Tuesday, Judge Estes discussed the constitutional bearings of the question. The Assembly fixes the terms of correspondence with foreign bodies. What does *correspondence* mean? Are we to understand by this word simply the interchanging of delegates? Let us look elsewhere for the meaning of this term, as used in our Book. The General Assembly, it is elsewhere said, is "the bond of . . . correspondence between . . . the churches;" so that "correspondence" means more than the interchange of courtesies, and it gives us treaty-making power, and warrants our entering into this alliance.

Nor is there anything in the Constitution of the Alliance to imperil our interests. The only thing it can *decide* is the admission or exclusion of churches; other matters it can only *entertain* and *consider*.

We have been vilified. If we refuse to enter the Alliance, we shall be worse misunderstood than ever.

Dr. Mallard said a boy holding a little piece of glass in his hand can send a ray of sunlight into a dark room. He was opposed to this Alliance out and out. *First*, on account of the expense. At the lowest calculation, it will take \$300 to send each delegate, and twenty-eight will cost the Church \$8,400. *Secondly*, he opposed it as unconstitutional. If it is not an ecclesiastical body, what can ecclesiastical courts, as such, have to do with it? *Thirdly*, he opposed it as dangerous. It claims the power to promote great causes by joint action. Its constitution gives it alarming scope. Moral power is the most dangerous of all power.

Rev. J. V. Logan said, if we adopt this proposal, we revolutionise our conservatism, and overturn the whole policy of our Church. Are the advantages equal to the disquiet and anxiety it occasions? Can we safely adopt a scheme which has no clear outline defining it? What does it matter whether the right to govern be or be not formally claimed, so that it be eventually used, and even now, in effect, exercised?

This proposal falls in with the tendency of the times to do the work of the Church by conventions and other unchurchly agencies. We do not favor the isolation of our Church, and have

no objection to correspondence, but we want no entanglements. The strength of Dr. Robinson's argument lies wholly in his appeal to this sentiment of unity—I call it a sentiment, for no reasonable man can hope to realise unity this side heaven. Let us strive for unity as we strive for holiness; but don't let us build a tower of Babel.

Rev. J. Rice Bowman said a meeting of the Assembly costs \$1,000 per day. If it sits five hours a day, the cost per hour is \$200. So that the man who speaks an hour on this subject, has spent enough almost to carry him to the Council and back.

Ruling elder Gen. Hill wanted to know what this thing is. Various names and various definitions have been given it: Pan-Presbyterian Alliance, Œcumenical Council, Twelve Queens, Edinburgh Tea Party, and a neighbor of his suggests "Compound Standing Committee of Conference *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis.*" A good name for it might be drawn from the worthy county of Buncombe, North Carolina. We have been invited to this christening, and the parents have not a name for the baby, nor have they defined its sex. Dr. Robinson makes it a big thing, and then a little thing. We don't know whether it is a fire-cracker or a Columbiad. Perhaps it is a Centennial fire-cracker, or it may be a Columbiad loaded with blank cartridges. In either case, it will make a great noise. And who is to bear the expenses? We shall have some one moving that brother Jones go, because he is rich; brother Scruggs, because he has a rich church; and brother —, because he has a rich uncle. Is that Presbyterian?

The Assembly adjourned with Gen. Hill in possession of the floor.

On Wednesday the subject was resumed, and Gen Hill not being present, the Rev. D. O. Davies took the floor and said he wished to dwell on two aspects of the case—the nature of the Council, and our status in respect to it. As to the former, he maintained that it is simply a Committee of Conference. As to the latter, he said the question had been unfairly put, Shall we enter? The true question is, Shall we remain in? We are as

much in as any Church is ; no further in and no less. The opposers of this measure are proposing to go out.

Dr. Adger interrupted the speaker to ask if the last Assembly did not appoint a committee to consider and confer, and said we could not be in until we have adopted the Constitution which has been reported to us.

Mr. Davies said if there is any body to which there are any parties, *we sustain* the same relations that any others do to that body. And we cannot withdraw from it without bringing on ourselves evils which God has not called us to endure.

Gen. Hill resumed remarks, and said he had written some notes, but could not read his own writing. Yet he made a number of points effectively.

Rev. Mr. Branch said we are invited to decide about an anonymous institution. Dr. McCosh had said it is not an ecclesiastical body, but an evangelistic body. The idea of the *ecclesia* is cast out. Nobody knows what it is. If not an ecclesiastical body, what right have we to recognise it ?

Ruling elder Judge Ould argued that to the Assembly alone are committed the external relations of the Church. He was a strict constructionist in State affairs, but a loose constructionist in reference to the Church. The more power and the more action to be possessed and to be exercised by this Alliance, the better it would suit him. The Southern Church must make herself heard ; and there can be no grander opportunity than this gives. Whether right or wrong, the watchword of the day is consolidation. When the united Presbyterian churches shall speak, they will secure the ear of the world. He wanted our Church to come to the front, and to speak with the enemy at the gate. When the powers of despotism see the mighty religious power represented by this Alliance, they will move cautiously.

Dr. White said lawyers were not in general safe interpreters of ecclesiastical constitutions. Our Book is definite. We can no more transgress the Church's ecclesiology than her theology. The right to superintend given to the Assembly in our Constitution, refers to the work of the churches under its care, and is specific.

On Thursday, Rev. Joseph Bardwell commenced his speech by

expressing his thanks to the Committee on the Alliance, whose report we are discussing. They had well done their duty, but they have become vanishing factors, and we are not considering their fidelity, but their report. As to the report of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, that is only incidental. The real question is the adoption of the constitution proposed. Such a constitution is not necessary for any mere conference, and it is evident from this constitution that the Alliance is a new court and a high court, which the Assembly can have no hand in organising, because it possesses no such power. Our Presbyteries are the primary sources of power, and only they can change our constitution so as to have an œcumenical council set up, such as this Alliance must be considered. We are asked to adopt this constitution, and the request is preposterous. He then replied to Judge Estes on correspondence and to Judge Ould on superintendence. There are two kinds of correspondence, and they must not be confounded, for they are intrinsically different. It is not by the power of correspondence that such an alliance as this is to be founded; that could only be done by some power of organisation which the Assembly has not. For if the Assembly has any power to erect a court above and beyond itself, where is it so declared in the Constitution? Nor yet has the Assembly any treaty-making power which can be deduced either from the word "correspondence" or from the other word "superintendence." The Assembly has no superintendence given to it in the Constitution, except over the internal affairs of our own body. He then read a paper as part of his argument, which he proposed to offer for the Assembly's adoption at the close of the discussion.

Rev. L. McKinnon, a member of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, said the report before the Assembly was no longer the *unanimous* report. Our first duty is to be united among ourselves, but we are almost equally divided on this subject. Old friendships at home are better than new alliances abroad. He dreaded the idea of consolidation broached by Judge Ould. And he judged the expense of the Alliance more likely to be \$20,000 than \$9,000.

Ruling elder Kennedy spoke at some length in favor of the alliance.

It was moved and carried that Dr. Hoge be heard and then the vote be taken.

Ruling elder Patrick Joyes called for the reading of the constitution of the Alliance, and the Stated Clerk read it.

Dr. Hoge proposed to speak in the most quiet and temperate manner, in the hope that he might conciliate some and harmonise the views of all. And as not by right but through courtesy he was allowed to make the last speech, he wished to say that if any brother desired to make any comment on what he might say or to put any questions to him, "it never interrupted him to be interrupted." He proceeded to give to the opponents of the Alliance full credit for the purest motives, and expressed his respect for that wise conservatism which recoiled from entangling alliances with irresponsible bodies, and still more for that jealous regard for the orthodoxy and purity of our Church which would protect both from injury. And if he believed that either was now imperilled, he would be the first to withdraw from any sympathy with the proposed movement.

Before entering on the main topic, he would consider three preliminary points. The *first* was the effect our decision was likely to have on the harmony of our own Church. Now, when God's providence calls his people to "a new departure," the primary consideration is *right* and not *peace*. If *peace* were the great interest, then none would ever be justified in taking part in the great conflict between truth and error which is forever in progress in the world. If *peace* were the only watchword, then no great charter of rights would ever have been wrung from the hand of tyranny, and none of the battles of freedom would have been fought, and no religious reformation achieved, rescuing the Church from priestly domination. The cry for *peace* must never arrest true progress. And if he had the faintest belief that this movement would tend to disintegrate our Church, he would say, Drop the subject now and forevermore.

But there are two extremes. Some say the adoption of these resolutions will rend our Church asunder; but others rush to the

other extreme, and say that, if not adopted, many of our people will have their attachments to our Church weakened, and will wish to go where there are less restrictions. Thus there are two sides to this question of the effect on our own harmony of the action to be taken here. For himself, he belonged to neither. Should this measure fail, he would acquiesce in the will of the Assembly, and, returning to his pastorate saddened and somewhat depressed, he would devote himself to the Church's service as faithfully as ever. He would always regret, however, that his brethren had slighted a scheme which he was convinced would in its fruition prove of inestimable benefit to the Presbyterian Church.

The *second* point was the alleged tendency to consolidation. He would assert, and assert it emphatically, that the tendency of the age in the career of churches was not to consolidation. The tendency is to operate as a unit in schemes of benevolence, but for each church to maintain its own corporate life.

The *third* point is the expense—a grave difficulty which he had no wish to treat lightly. It never was intended that the expense should come out of any fund of the Church; nor would he consent for one dollar to be taken for this purpose from any of the enterprises of Christian benevolence. But we have one hundred pastors whose churches would cheerfully provide the means of their going. Moreover, four or five men, or two or three, or even one—say Dr. Palmer, of New Orleans—would fully represent the Church. Again, it is not annual but triennial, and half the times it will meet on our own shores. Nor was it ever expected that twenty-eight delegates would attend any one meeting. But, to put an end to all doubt on this point, he would insert in the resolutions proposed for our adoption the provision that the expense was not to come out of any funds of the Church.

And now, coming to the great question of constitutionality, he was glad it had been so fully discussed. He respected the scruples of his brethren, and would show how many of their difficulties might be relieved. If the Assembly will grant our request and permit the proposed representation, then it might throw around its delegates such guards as might be deemed requisite.

It might map out their line of action, and, if the council should infringe on their rights, they could report it on their return, and the Assembly never send another delegation; so that it would not be necessary to carry across sea that "pontoon bridge" which his gallant friend, General Hansell, had suggested as a proper part of our equipment.

Dr. Adger inquired whether the advocates of the scheme would meet their opponents on the ground of declaring the Alliance simply a conference.

Dr. Hoge signified that he would be satisfied, but declined to give a categorical answer, saying that he would meet the question as he went on. Then he proceeded to declare that the close analysis of the constitution is in a great measure unnecessary. He had never favored our adoption of the constitution of the Alliance at all, nor as a new constitutional rule of ours, and hence he was opposed to sending it down to the Presbyteries.

Dr. Adger—But we are required to adopt the constitution of the Alliance as preliminary to being represented in it.

Dr. Hoge—How are we required to adopt it?

Dr. Adger—By the resolution appended to the report of our delegate we are called upon expressly to say that "this Assembly accepts as satisfactory the constitution agreed upon by that Conference."

Dr. Hoge—Yes, that is the language of the resolution, and you have put the proper interpretation on it; but we do not propose for you to adopt that resolution, but to substitute in its place the following: "The Assembly approves of the general tenor of the constitution of the Alliance providing for a general Presbyterian council to be held every three years." This is all you are to say. You are not called on to take up the constitution and endorse or accept its several clauses, but only to approve the spirit and general objects of it.

Dr. Adger—But will Dr. Robinson be satisfied with that?

Dr. Robinson—Yes, I accept it as a subsequent interpretation of the Assembly's views.

Dr. Hoge—Yes, we are agreed upon this interpretation; and, moreover, we do not admit that the Alliance is an œcumenical

council, or even a stepping-stone to one. It is simply a collection of committees from different churches, bound together by a set of simple and necessary rules for their own government; and this is really what the constitution, about which so much has been said, was designed for. Now, in this view of the matter—and here we can all agree—there will surely be no doubt of the constitutional right of the Assembly to send its committee to meet with like committees of other Reformed churches.

As to the question, *Cui bono?* Dr. Hoge said there are many obvious advantages. Amongst these, a large increase of knowledge is possible and desirable with regard to the strength, character, modes of working, and prospects of the different members of the Presbyterian family scattered throughout the world. Notwithstanding the number of well informed men in this Assembly, there are probably not five members of it who could rise up at this moment and tell us even the names of the different Presbyterian Churches in the world.

As to the part of the country where it is supposed this scheme originated, he thought intelligent, right-minded, and right-hearted men ought to estimate the character of any plan or institution on its own merits. It is not manly or Christian to be controlled in matters of duty by prejudice or passion.

Much had been said of the exercise of arbitrary power on the part of this council. Moderator, would our Church be the only sufferer by such a usurpation? Have the other churches of the world no rights to guard, no principles to protect, no purity, no orthodoxy, no independence to preserve?

Dr. Hoge proceeded to name some of these churches, when General Hill interrupted him to inquire if Dr. Hoge considered the French Protestant Church, three-fourths of which are said to deny the divinity of Christ, a sound church. Dr. Hoge replied that this was not true of that branch of the French Church which was represented in the Alliance. General Hill then asked: Do you consider the Northern Presbyterian Church orthodox? Dr. Hoge replied: "I do in the sense in which that term is applied to other churches represented in the Alliance; and leaving out the question of organic union, I consider the Northern Church ortho-

dox to the extent that I am willing to enter into fraternal relations with that Church, whenever a basis is adopted proposing terms which are just on their part and honorable to ourselves."

This declaration was greeted with a sudden, hearty burst of applause, which was suppressed by the Moderator, who stated that it was expressly against the rules of the Assembly to indulge in any such demonstration. And we would take this occasion to remark that evidence is here once more presented of what has been the honest sentiment of our Church ever since the Baltimore Conference. Our Church there took the ground that terms "just on the part of the North and honorable to ourselves" are all that we would insist on as prerequisite to fraternal relations with them, and we have since then asked for nothing else. But let all parties observe the language—"just on their part and honorable to ourselves:" or, to express the same idea in other words, "honorable to both parties."

Here the Rev. Mr. Cousar asked Dr. Hoge: Would a majority of the Alliance accept your theory of the council?

Dr. Hoge—That subject has already been fully considered. We cannot go back and discuss that question again.

Rev. Mr. Cousar—I do not want to go back.

Dr. Hoge—Then suppose you join us and go forward.

Here the Rev. Mr. Saye asked a question inaudible to the reporter.

Dr. Hoge answered: Moderator, I wish I knew everything. Then I could solve all doubts about the orthodoxy of continental creeds and confessions and the like.

Reverting to what Dr. Hoge had said a little before as to other churches having rights to guard and principles to protect as well as ours, so that we need not be afraid of what the Alliance may hereafter be led to do, Dr. Adger inquired: Can we devolve our responsibility on other bodies, instead of sacredly guarding ourselves the trust committed to us?

Dr. Hoge—Of course we cannot transfer our responsibility to any other body; but have we not a guaranty in the character of the great churches represented in the Alliance that they will not betray the interests which are as dear to themselves as to us?

He then appealed to his brethren to allow our Church to take her place in the family gathering of the Presbyterian Churches of the world. We desire organic union with no other church, but we do wish to belong to the great Presbyterian brotherhood.

Rev. Mr. Bardwell—Would the Alliance accept this interpretation of the constitution and receive our delegates on these terms?

Dr. Hoge replied, that but for his belief that our committee would be admitted, he would not have advocated the views he had presented, as it would have been a waste of time to form a plan which would exclude us from representation.

The reading of Mr. Bardwell's paper was now called for, and the vote taken on it as a substitute for the Committee's paper. It was rejected by seventy-eight against thirty-eight. The Committee's resolutions as modified by Dr. Hoge, though really not in order, because in fact a new paper proposing a new plan, were nevertheless allowed to be put before the Assembly, and were adopted by a vote of seventy-eight to thirty-nine.

On Friday Dr. Hoge offered his explanatory minute, and then Dr. Adger rose and said that he had no hesitation in expressing his gratification with the concessions proposed by the majority in this minute. And he would add, that had the Alliance been held up at the beginning in this aspect of a mere conference of committees, we never would have opposed it, and four or five days of debate might have been saved. He would say also, for himself and those acting with him, that we cannot be excelled by the majority in affectionate interest in all the Presbyterian bodies of the whole earth and a desire to be found conferring with them, so far as practicable, respecting the common advantage.

Dr. Mallard and the Rev. Mr. Carne concurred with Dr. Adger. The minute was then adopted with only a single negative vote. Dr. Robinson wished the concurrence might be set forth in some special form. Dr. Adger replied that he thought it was sufficiently set forth in the vote.

In concluding our review of this subject, let us here set down briefly the points of the discussion:

1. Dr. Robinson declared that at Columbus the objection was simply to *credentials*. The parties proposing to treat were indi-

viduals, and the Assembly insisted on the coördination of courts and demanded equals to treat with. But twelve churches propose now to treat, and the difficulties of 1874 were thus removed in 1875, and do not now exist.

The reply was, after all, the Alliance is only an "advisory body." It is not "committees of churches" we are to meet, but we must enter an organism, a *real body*, and yet only an *advisory one*, and not a church court. So that the objection of 1874 still stands, which, properly stated, was this: that Presbyterians cannot act in church affairs except in the line of coördinate courts.

2. It was urged that we are bound to realise the unity of the visible church as "God giveth opportunity," and that the œcumenical council, the "grand Presbyterian parliament of the world," can be now realised, and that the Alliance is a step towards this consummation.

It was answered, with reasons given, that no such parliament is or ever can be possible in the present dispensation; and that the Scriptures do not hold out to us any such idea of church unity as this; and that this Alliance can be no step towards such a parliament.

3. It was urged that the Assembly, as the only body to "correspond" with foreign bodies, has the right to join us to this Alliance without consulting the Presbyteries, who really "have no business with it."

It was answered that to adopt the constitution of this Alliance as binding us is to make a new constitutional rule for our Church, which the Assembly is forbidden to do without first obtaining consent from the Presbyteries; and, further, that the right to "correspond" is not the right to organise a new court, which the Alliance must be held to be; for why should a mere conference be an alliance or have need of a constitution?

4. It was insisted the expense was overrated. Dr. Robinson said that the trip from New York to Edinburgh would not be over \$200 each.

It was answered that, taking the lowest estimate, it was wrong to undertake the expense of such a movement in the needy con-

dition of our church enterprises and the general poverty of our people.

And let us now briefly notice how all these objections are affected by the modifications proposed and adopted. To make the Alliance a mere conference, without any power to act, and that a conference with committees from other churches, must, *in the first place*, remove the objection that we cannot act officially with Rationalists, &c., in church work. Here comes in the argument that we may do good, if we cannot get good from this movement.

Secondly, it must meet the objection that we cannot deal as a church with individuals or with irresponsible societies, and that we cannot act as a church except in the line of the coördination of courts.

Thirdly, this denial that the Alliance is in any sense the germ of a true and proper œcumenical court, having supreme jurisdiction over all the churches of the earth, keeps us back from an inconvenient and hurtful confounding of the attributes of the visible with those of the invisible church, and so removes another and very serious objection to the Alliance as at first proposed to us.

Fourthly, it accords in a way and to a degree which it is to be hoped will prove harmless, with the spirit of the age which cries aloud for unification. To this demand we answer that we are ready to come together for conference, but not to be bound in close bonds of union. Doctrinal fidelity is of supremest importance in these lax times, and we will not sacrifice it to formal union, which is of infinitely less consequence.

Fifthly, these essential modifications of the proposition have preserved the unity of our Church. It had been a sad thing for the Assembly to have been dissolved with two parties in its bosom, perhaps evenly divided. Whether either side are completely satisfied or not with the final decision, both have reason to rejoice in it as affording a way of escape from the rending of our Church. That calamity threatens to overtake the Northern overgrown Church; and he is a blind man who does not see that we are very liable to the same danger ourselves, and possibly in the

near future. . . But it will not come, we now confidently trust, as a result of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance. That question is settled both amicably and safely, and to God be the praise.

One inconsistency, we confess, attaches to the settlement as made. Our Church, we have said, goes in merely to confer, and that by a mere committee; and yet to effect such a simple and temporary object we have to enter a corporation formally organised and expected to have permanent existence. Dr. Robinson called it an "alliance to confer," which expression fairly involves and sets forth all this inconsistency.

FRATERNAL RELATIONS WITH THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY.

This subject came up by overture from the Presbytery of St. Louis, desiring the Assembly to give them relief from the embarrassments of their position. Being on the border, they encounter the charge that our Church is unreasonable in its demands on the Northern Assembly. For their relief, the Committee on Bills and Overtures offered a declaration that no deliverance of ours was to be construed as impugning the Christian character of the Northern Church. After it was prepared, (as we understood Dr. Robinson publicly to declare,) Dr. Ganse, now of the Northern Church, lately of the Reformed (Dutch), comes to Savannah unofficially, as he declared, though it appears that it was otherwise represented in the Northern Assembly. Some of the members of our body, it seems, met him in informal conference, where it would appear there was more or less discussion of the paper prepared as our answer to the St. Louis Presbytery, and where, as it turns out, Dr. Ganse had said something about his getting the Northern Assembly to pass any acknowledgments reciprocally which our Assembly might make. At this conference, Dr. Smith received the telegram from the Northern Assembly, and it is read to all present, but it is agreed that it ought to be withheld until the body should have acted on the St. Louis paper. This was Friday, and that evening this reply to St. Louis comes up, but there are suspicions aroused that something is behind, and the paper cannot pass. Adjournment takes place before it is settled. The Moderator throws out the suggestion of meeting with closed doors in the morning. But next morning objection is

made to this, and the Moderator explains that he only intended to suggest an interlocutory meeting. Such a meeting is held; that is, the Assembly resolves itself into a committee of the whole, Judge Ould in the chair. The reply to the St. Louis Presbytery is amended by Dr. Mallard, so as to declare that we are standing on the ground of the Baltimore Conference, and by the writer so as to declare that, though not impugning their Christian character, we had condemned some of their deliverances. The committee rose and reported, and the paper was then passed. Then the Moderator produced his Brooklyn telegram. The Committee on Bills and Overtures, enlarged by several new members, is sent out to prepare a reply. It finds the Northern telegram utterly unsatisfactory, because it refuses all reference to the past. Probably not one man in the whole body would have consented to our treating with them on the basis of that telegram, proffering to us fraternal relations on terms of perfect equality and reciprocity. We were not on terms of equality with them, for we had never vilified their character in any official deliverance. Moreover, there could be no reciprocity of confidence without a "few plain words" from them, expressing their disapproval now of the hard names they applied to us, when much excited, before this, though in a different way. Those "few plain words" demanded by us in the Baltimore Conference they had now again refused to utter. The Committee were not long in preparing our reply, which was, that we were ready for correspondence with them on any terms honorable to both parties; that we were standing yet on the ground we took at Baltimore, and that we had never impugned their character, though condemning some of their deliverances.

When this answer was reported, there was not much discussion of it. Judge Estes seemed to object to our *volunteering* any statement that no deliverance of ours was to be construed as impugning the character of the Northern Assembly. The writer declared that the more spontaneous such a statement the better; that we ought to be and were ready anywhere and always to declare ourselves in the wrong whenever we had been so, and *that* not with any view to drawing out corresponding concessions

from the other side, but out of our own self-respect, and that we might say and do the thing that is right. So the answer was sent on to Brooklyn. Our Assembly met again in the evening at 8, in order to finish up the business that remained and be dissolved. It was supposed that possibly some answer might come from the Northern Assembly requiring consideration. None coming, when our business was all finished, we were dissolved at 10 o'clock, our usual hour of adjournment.

It may seem strange to outsiders that our Assembly did not hold over until Monday, in order to complete these negotiations. But all intelligent persons inside of our communion will easily understand that the body had no such thought as that any practical negotiations were really going on. The Northern Assembly sent to us their usual request for fraternal relations, with their accustomed refusal of what was due from them and to us, and what was honorable to both parties. We returned our usual answer, accompanied with a declaration that we had never impugned their Christian character. We had very slight expectation that anything could come out of all this, and, not being excited a particle with the centennial fever, we quietly went through with our work and were dissolved.

The newspapers have fully declared what took place on the other hand at Brooklyn, and we have neither space nor disposition to recount it. Dr. Talmage has our thanks for the kind and brotherly words he wished to have his Assembly utter. The writer freely joined with Dr. Hoge and others in a telegram to Dr. Talmage, stating to him that had his Assembly passed his resolutions, we should have been ready for the correspondence; nor was it his notion to take exception to any part of those resolutions, but he yielded to the judgment of others on this point. No doubt there were many others in that Assembly besides Dr. Talmage who had the same truly brotherly feelings towards the Southern Church and the same manly readiness to express just regret for the injury done to us which were uttered by him. It is not for us to say whether there were any or how many of different character. But this we cannot help declaring: That they were flagrantly misled as to what our Assembly intended to sig-

nify. And our first feeling, already publicly expressed, was that of indignation at what appeared a transparent and insolent trick. We have come, on maturer deliberation, to perceive that what happened may have been not *trick*, but only *blunder*, and to acknowledge that certainly there was some blundering on the side of our Assembly. It was a sad blunder on our part to consent to any communications by official telegrams. It may have also been a blunder to consent to answer them and our St. Louis Presbytery in part by portions of one and the same paper.

And now what? Are we in any degree hampered by the blunders, if any, or by the tricks, if any, which have been witnessed? Is our position in any degree altered by the mistake into which the Northern Assembly was led? They said they wanted correspondence on terms of perfect equality and reciprocity. We answered that we wanted only what was honorable to both parties. The next step, of course, was for them to say what terms they had to offer. They took no such step, but simply denying that they ever impugned our character, they declare, with boisterous applause, that the case is settled.

Now, if our construction of their action is the right one, then, of course, the case is not settled, nor is it made any better, but worse.

The *New York Observer*, whose chief editor led the way in this action, would persuade itself and the Northern Church that the correspondence is established. The *New York Evangelist*, on the other hand, says truly, "the Southern Assembly has not committed itself to any course of action. It adjourned before our final action was taken. It appointed no delegates to our Assembly. The whole of its direct reply to us is in the words that it is 'ready to enter into fraternal relations with us on any terms honorable to both parties.' This of course has often been said by both parties. . . . All this is very well, as far as it goes. . . . But it does not bind either party to any action. . . . We cannot see that much has as yet been gained. All will depend upon the question whether the Southern advocates for fraternity will be able to bring their Church to meet ours upon perfectly equal and common ground, without renewing the questions and

controversies of the past." This shows that some at least in the Northern Church understand very well these two things: *first*, that our Savannah Assembly has not taken any new ground, or committed itself to any new action; and *secondly*, that the Brooklyn Assembly did not mean to construe away what has been complained of by us in the past.

And yet some amongst ourselves would fain believe that the Northern Assembly has taken a long step in advance of, and in fact in flagrant contradiction of, its past deliverances on this subject. Rejecting the interpretation of its words as a *denial* that it ever impugned our character, and understanding it to mean that it *repudiates* all that was ever said by their Assembly or the historic bodies that preceded it, unfavorable to our character, they point out how the Brooklyn Assembly has done what some of its predecessors have so loudly declared never could be done—that is, it has actually gone back to condemn everything that was ever said by either the Old or the New School Assembly, in disparagement of the Southern Church! Which is the right construction of the Brooklyn action? Did they *deny* having slandered us? Or did they *repudiate* their slanders of us? Of course Dr. Prime, the chairman of their Committee of Correspondence, knows. Let us ask him to tell us what they mean. Well, the deliverance he is to expound was written by his pen and offered to his Assembly on Monday, the 29th May; and on Thursday, June 1st, we read in his editorial columns this remark respecting the telegram sent to our Assembly on the preceding Friday, May 26th: "It was the first distinct and emphatic utterance made by the Northern Assembly that it was done forever with negotiations and concessions and explanations." This is Dr. Prime's language after they have adopted the deliverance which some of our brethren suppose is to be understood as *repudiating* all their offensive terms in the past. Now, if, on the 29th May, Dr. Prime had led his Assembly to *construe and explain away* all their past denunciations of us, could he have gloried on the 1st day of June that on the preceding Friday, May 26th, it had distinctly and emphatically declared that it was done forever with *concessions and explanations*?

And how did Judge Strong, who moved the adoption of that deliverance, which some of us would charitably understand as taking such a long step in advance—how did Judge Strong understand that deliverance? Why, he said, in all the frankness of that hour of supposed triumph over the poor South: “Those of us who have approved the declarations of the Assemblies during the excitement of the war, and those who are unwilling to retract anything we expressed at that time, I feel, can all meet on this common platform without taking back anything we have said, or renouncing our own convictions of right.”

Alas! when will our simple-hearted Southern brethren learn to understand that the men we are dealing with never make such blunders as this interpretation of their late action would represent them to have committed!

Now everybody knows that the matter of interchanging delegates with the Northern Assembly, and so carrying on what is called by the high-sounding title of “Fraternal Correspondence,” is really in itself considered a very small affair. And what makes it a question of serious importance, is simply this, that no sooner shall we have entered into these *brotherly* relations with the Northern Church, than they will begin their efforts to bring us into organic union with them. He has no eyes who cannot see that they will never rest till their Church becomes “National.” Dr. Musgrave, their leader, expressed their feelings on this point at Brooklyn. Correspondence established, union will be the next objective point. And not one argument is used now for the former but will come into the plea for the latter, and come in legitimately and with power. We shall be harassed for ten years, and if needful, for twenty years, with this question. And this question, with its endless, wearisome, exhausting agitations, will wear out our Church. We shall have neither time nor strength left for any other business. Nay, more; that question will divide us. And our loving brethren will all the more, perhaps, press upon us, in that prospect, this union with themselves. Let us be wise in time. Let us be warned by the turn taken on us at Brooklyn. That Assembly never intended to stultify itself by construing away all

its historic predecessors and itself have said. Its leaders were for *taking us in*, but never designed to repudiate anything their Church had said of ours. We cannot trust some of those leaders. Our safety is in declining further negotiations with them. We are small and weak, and we are destined to be divided and destroyed if we do not take the alarm. Let us cling fast to one another, and patiently bear the trials which afflict our border churches, and which also, in various forms, are meted out to all our people alike. Let us stand in our lot and quit ourselves like men. We have a great work to do, and a high testimony to maintain. And the Lord our God is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.