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THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XVI.—NO. 1.

JULY, MDCCCLXIII.

ARTICLE I.

SLAVERY, AND THE DUTIES GROWING OUT OF THE RELATION.

[At the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, in December, 1861, a committee, consisting of the Rev. Drs. James A. Lyon, C. C. Jones, and T. Pryor, was appointed "to prepare a pastoral letter on the subject of the religious instruction of the colored people, to be submitted to the next General Assembly." For satisfactory reasons, the committee did not report to the next General Assembly; but the Rev. Dr. Lyon submitted this Address to the General Assembly of 1863, which recently held its sessions in Columbia, S. C. It was referred to a committee, which recommended the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That this address be recommitted to the Rev. Drs. Lyon, J. Leighton Wilson, and Palmer, Mr. G. J. S. Walker, Mr. D. A. Davis, and Judge J. N. Whitner, to consider the subject-matter of the same, and report to the next General Assembly; and that in the meantime they are authorized to publish the address of Dr. Lyon in any way they may think best; and further, that the report they may propose to submit to the next General Assembly be printed in advance of the meeting, for the use of the members."

The resolution was adopted; and in accordance with the desire of this committee, the address is now published in the Southern Presbyterian Review, that the important matters involved in it may be maturely considered before the meeting of the next General Assembly.—Eds. S. P. R.]

VOL. XVI., NO. I.—1

The whole substance of what we desire, may be expressed in the following or equivalent terms, to be added to the section providing for liberty of conscience :

Nevertheless we, the people of these Confederate States, distinctly acknowledge our responsibility to God, and the supremacy of His Son, Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords; and hereby ordain that no law shall be passed by the Congress of these Confederate States inconsistent with the will of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

ARTICLE V.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF COLUMBIA.

The third General Assembly of our Church in the Confederate States of America was very justly said by its able and dignified Moderator, Dr. Lyon, as he was about to declare its dissolution, to have "despatched a large amount of business with exceeding harmony." The body began its work with thirty-nine ministers and twenty-one elders present, and it comprised a very good representation of the talents and character of our Church. Its eminent success in the despatch of well-done work, we suppose should be ascribed in part to the ability and zeal of its officers, but also largely to the fact that, until near the close of its sessions, it met but once a day. The committees thus had abundant opportunity to prepare their reports with care. Elaborated in private by the few, the many found it easy to agree upon their adoption.

Speaking of the adoption of the reports, we would take occasion to say how heartily we concur with those who criticise the ecclesiastical rule that all reports must first be

accepted before they can be adopted. We never could see the use of this preparatory step. Was there ever presented, or could there ever be presented in our Church courts, such a report as is not fit to be accepted? We have often seen the Assembly refuse to adopt, but never, to our knowledge, did it have occasion to reject a report as unsuitable to be received from one of its committees. We call this an ecclesiastical rule, because, so far as we know, it is not followed in other parliamentary bodies. Surely we do not need, amongst Presbyterian ministers and elders, any such special protection for the dignity of the body.

The narrow compass to which we are compelled to restrict our remarks on the Assembly, requires us to pass over entirely some of its proceedings that are of great interest. We shall comment on a few of its acts as briefly as possible. Under the former head we place the opening sermon of Dr. Kirkpatrick; the subject of the charter; the revision of the hymn book; the visits of the delegates from the Associate Reformed Church and the Independent Presbyterian Church; the pastoral letter on the religious instruction of the negroes; the transfer of the Columbia Theological Seminary; the overture of Mr. Coit, respecting Christian baptism; the overture of East Hanover Presbytery, respecting a union of Old and New School Presbyterians in the Confederate States; and the temporary consolidation of the four executive committees.

EDUCATION OF INDIGENT CANDIDATES.

The overture from Lexington Presbytery, proposing the reconstruction of the Assembly's scheme regarding the education of theological students, has not, so far as we know, been spread before the public eye, nor did we hear it read. The committee on bills and overtures reported favorably upon it; and the committee asked for by the Presbytery to review the whole subject, with the hope of discovering some better way of carrying forward this work,

was appointed. Their names are as follows: J. R. Wilson, J. N. Waddel, George Howe, and John Miller, ministers; J. T. L. Preston, ruling elder. From the reports and the debate on this subject, we gather that two points were prominent before the mind of the Assembly. One, the question of what has been called a class ministry; and the other, the question whether the General Assembly or the presbyteries can the better manage the dispensing of needful aid to indigent youth who feel called to preach the Gospel. Upon this latter point our own minds are perfectly settled. The Constitution gives to the presbytery the power of examining and licensing candidates for the ministry, and of ordaining, installing, removing, and judging ministers; and to them would, therefore, seem most naturally to belong the whole care of these young men. The General Assembly's powers regard those matters which are not local or individual, but concern directly the whole Church. The aim of our constitution manifestly is to give in charge to presbyteries only those affairs which sessions can not so well oversee, to synods only those which presbyteries can not so well oversee, and to the General Assembly only those which synods can not so well oversee. Now, it may be best for the Assembly to control theological education, considered in its general aspects, as in the direction of the seminaries; but the individual candidate, it seems clear, ought to hold all his relations to the presbyteries or sessions.

Upon the other question we shall not express such decided opinions. It is clear that our future supply of ministers depends upon the training of pious young men for the Gospel ministry. Where parents can afford the expense of this education, they ought to consider, and, so far as we have observed, they do in general consider it their privilege to be at this charge. But where a pious youth is indigent, who feels that he is called, and gives evidence that he is called to preach the Word, the Church ought to provide,

and may well provide for his wants, while he is preparing to serve her in the ministry. She is not bound to do this on principles of justice, for, of course, there can be no reward before there be service. But she is bound to do it on the principle of charity, and she may well do it on the principle of its being to her manifest advantage to educate this future minister. Yet there are, doubtless, some practical evils incidental to the Church's management of this work of charity. Some mercenary parents, who have the means of educating their sons, may, through covetousness, cast their offspring upon the bounty of others. Some unworthy young men may occasionally be the recipients of the Church's aid. Some poor youth, from a mere selfish wish to better his worldly condition, may once in a while grasp at the offer of a liberal education at the public expense. Some improper dispositions may be nurtured in the minds of some of our candidates, from the fact that they are taken up and supported by the Church before they are able to render her any return of service. Perhaps, in some cases, it would be better for the individual to have to earn his own bread while he is receiving his education, and to get into the ministry only through his own independent efforts. But our experience and observation lead us to the belief that all these are but exceptional cases. And we do not expect that the able committee appointed to review the whole subject will find it possible to make any essential changes for the better in the present arrangements. It is an ancient institute of God's Church to provide silver and changes of garments, and a place to dwell in that shall not be too strait, and also to set on the great pot and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets.

We can well imagine, however, that whatever incidental evils do occasionally manifest themselves, must be both more numerous and more aggravated where it is the highest court of the Church that undertakes to manage

such individual matters, than where they are left to the disposal of sessions or presbyteries.

SUPERANNUATED MINISTERS.

An overture from the Presbytery of Mississippi requested the Assembly to provide a fund for such ministers, to be placed in the hands of the committee of Domestic Missions. Prof. Lane, of Hopewell Presbytery, also overtured the Assembly for the same object, including with it the widows and families of deceased ministers, the funds to be in charge of the trustees of the Assembly.

This second overture evinces an earnest and most commendable zeal on the part of its author for the relief and comfort of God's aged and worn out servants and their destitute families. His plan of operation is well considered, and thoroughly matured in all its parts. The committee on bills and overtures seemed to think, however, that there are some preliminary questions which ought to be settled by the Assembly before it could enter upon any plan of operations in this matter. One of these was, whether an invested fund is preferable to annual collections; and another, whether the Assembly or the respective synods should undertake the work. They recommended the reference of the whole subject, in all its bearings, to a committee, who shall report to the next Assembly, and that said committee should consist of C. W. Lane and D. Wills, ministers, and E. A. Nisbet, Washington Poe, and W. L. Mitchell, ruling elders. Their recommendation was adopted.

There can be no doubt that this is a subject which demands consideration. It is attracting attention in more than one synod, and in different forms is forcing itself on the attention of the Church. And yet it is equally evident that no plan of action hitherto proposed meets with the hearty approbation of our ministers themselves, or of our people. There is a serious doubt whether it is a matter

that calls for any permanent endowment. This kind of provision is tolerated in some cases, but not cordially approved in any case, by many of the most earnest and sagacious amongst us. If the instances which call for the proposed relief are numerous enough to demand a provision from the whole Church, then the permanent fund desired might have to be a very enormous one to furnish the requisite amount of interest. A few thousand dollars a year would not suffice—we must invest by millions. Moreover, it is to be questioned whether this is a matter which the Lord expects us to provide for in this way. He did command the twelve to feed the five thousand in the desert place, but then He designed to manifest His own boundless riches and resources in the miraculous use of their five barley loaves and two small fishes, which otherwise had been totally inadequate. Is not this a case in which all we could gather would, without His miraculous blessing, be as those few loaves and small fishes; and in which the only adequate capital is that capital of Christian sympathy and love, ever living and ever active, by divine grace, in the bosom of God's people.

We must all have often noticed what a bungling thing legislative charity is apt to be. Whether it is Church or State which is, in its organized capacity, called to relieve human distress, it will very probably be inadequate relief, sometimes unjustly, sometimes unwisely, and sometimes unfeelingly administered. Of course we do not say that charity, which is a very complex term, is only for individuals or the deacons of the Church to administer. We do not say that there is no form of charity to which the judicatories of the Church in their organized capacity can be called. Even the General Assembly, as such, must undertake foreign missions, for example, which is just one of the highest forms of charity. But we say that we are not prepared to vote for a system of public charity to disabled ministers and to their destitute families, to be estab-

lished by our General Assembly. We are not prepared to vote for such a scheme to be undertaken by any of our Church courts, but most especially not by the General Assembly. It is no part of their powers or duties, as laid down by the constitution; nor are they, in the nature of things, a suitable body to undertake such individual concerns where no general law could be made to apply to all cases, and each individual case must be separately decided.

We consider the method of action proposed to be of doubtful influence upon the charity of the Church. Funded investments, many insist, are unfavorable to charity. But whether this be so or not, it does appear to us that a great Church fund, designed to sustain the large classes in question, and counting its revenues by hundreds of thousands of dollars, would be apt to work no advantage to the Church's poor but faithful servants. Is there no danger that some congregations might draw encouragement, from the very success of such an undertaking, to continue starving their minister all through his term of service, with the idea that when he shall get old, or if he shall leave a helpless family, here is an inexhaustible fund upon which he or they may be cast without any reproach falling thereby upon themselves?

But it will be said that it is not charity to support a superannuated minister, nor yet the destitute family of a deceased minister. We reply, it is so represented generally by its advocates; for they appeal to sympathy and to pity, and it is pictures of distress by which they would move the Church to action. But truly it is, indeed, no case of charity, and ought not to be made such by bringing it before the whole Church. It is the demand of justice which ought to be urged in favor of a minister, or the family of a minister, who has worn himself out in the service of the Church upon a very inadequate support. But who ought to pay the debt? Is it the whole Church, or the particular church or churches that have received the

unpaid labor? If you ask the needed relief from those who did not directly receive the service, it can only be upon the principle of charity.

We hold that the most potent remedy for the evil in question would be for the Church to act justly by her ministers, and give them an adequate support. The presbytery has this remedy largely in its hand. It is made its duty, by the constitution, to examine every call, and judge of the stipend promised. If the stipend be inadequate, it is a sin for the presbytery to take steps towards the installation, because they make themselves a party to the wrong that is doing. Let the Church first comply with justice, and adequately support her ministers, and then all the occasional cases for real charity that might still arise amongst their families, it would be very easy to have relieved upon the sacred principle of charity. If it be urged that many of our churches can not give an adequate support to their ministers, the answer is easy: Let the Presbytery's or the General Assembly's committee of Domestic Missions be applied to for help. It would be the very life of these committees to have such applications multiplied.

REVISION OF FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND BOOK OF DISCIPLINE.

In reference to this matter, we have only to state that the committee on nominations, inadvertently, of course, left out the name of Judge Shepherd, who had been made a member of the revision committee by the first Assembly. Correctly given, therefore, this committee is as follows: J. B. Adger, R. L. Dabney, B. M. Smith, E. T. Baird, T. E. Peck, and B. M. Palmer, ministers; W. P. Webb, T. C. Perrin, W. L. Mitchell, J. G. Shepherd, and W. P. Finley, ruling elders.

COMMISSIONERS TO THE ARMY.

One of the most important results of the Assembly's deliberations was their arrangements for the better supply

of the army with the word of life. Certainly, nothing that came before the body elicited more interest than this matter. And we trust that the Master is about to crown our plans and efforts with His peculiar blessing. The committee of missions are vigorously exerting themselves, with the aid of the commissioners, to procure as many chaplains and temporary missionaries as possible for the service of our noble soldiers, both in the east and in the west. The Lord also is graciously pouring out His Holy Spirit in peculiar measure upon various divisions of the army. Here, indeed, is a bright omen for the future. This Confederate people are not to be destroyed. Our young men are not to return home, when the war is over, corrupted in morals, to be a curse to their own communities. God is dealing with our soldiers and with our country in great love and mercy. Let us take encouragement to supply to the utmost of our ability their spiritual wants.

In the use of that individual freedom which this journal accords to every one of its contributors, without exception, we consider it proper, having undertaken this review of the Assembly, that, with great deference to the Assembly and their able committee who recommended the arrangements above referred to, we should say that we consider the language which they have used respecting the commissioners to the army somewhat open to criticism. In the first place, the expression adopted, "that we proceed to establish the office of commissioner," is unfortunate, for it might be understood to signify that the Assembly has actually set up a new office-bearer in the house of God, which we are sure no man in the Assembly designed doing. Again, it is to be regretted that the word "employ" was used, as it might be interpreted in the sense of the commissioners' having some authority over the ministers who go to the army; whereas we are confident that was not the design of the Assembly, as, indeed, the term which precedes, and also those which follow that word, show this was not the idea

of the committee who presented the report. They say the commissioner is to "welcome and employ other ministers on temporary visits to the army, and to give them opportunities of usefulness." This whole sentence, taken together, signifies, to our mind, very clearly, that the commissioner is simply to help the visiting brother to get at his work of preaching to the soldiers as quickly as possible, seeing that his visit is but temporary. Yet the term "employ," taken by itself, is capable of being, and actually has been, interpreted in the offensive way above indicated. Again, it would have been well, perhaps, to have made it still clearer than it is, under number two of the commissioner's powers, that he has no independent authority whatever with regard to placing chaplains in the army, but is merely designed to be the organ of communication between the individual minister and the colonel of the regiment.

We should hesitate much more to make these criticisms, but for the fact that the executive committee of Domestic Missions, as they are represented in their late circular, seem to have understood the Assembly in the sense which we personally consider so objectionable. They say that missionary laborers in the camps and in the hospitals "may obtain appointments to this work by making application to the executive committee or to the commissioners in the field, accompanying their applications in all cases by the recommendation of their presbyteries, or, where that is impracticable, by the recommendation of one or two well-known members of the presbytery. Individuals may be commissioned to labor for the summer months only, either as army missionaries or in hospital labors, if it is not possible for them to engage for a longer period."

This language is an official commentary by the executive committee upon the Assembly's action. According to this commentary, a minister that seeks to labor in a hospital or

camp is to receive his appointment either from the committee or from the commissioner, indifferently. Does not this imply that the full powers of the executive committee in the case belong to the commissioner? Nor is it given to him only in the case of a presbytery's recommending the minister, for he may appoint without any presbytery's voice at all. Nor is it only where a very brief term of labor is concerned, but also where the time of service is indefinite.

We understand that the appointments of the commissioner are always to be reported to the committee for confirmation, and that they issue to the minister his commission. But the appointment is, in the first instance, made by the commissioner alone. He exercises this power of his single will, and the committee must confirm, or else annul, an appointment already made for them. It is, in fact, a veritable appointment which this officer makes, and nothing is left to the committee but to issue the written evidence of it. The point of objection, of course, is not that bad appointments will be made, but that any appointments at all are authorized to be made by one man. The power of appointment is delegated by the Assembly to the executive committee, and they have no right to transfer the delegation to any other parties, and especially not to any single individual.

We are all familiar with the idea of commissions, which differ from a committee, in being empowered not only to inquire, but also to execute, subject to the revision of the court appointing them. They are, as Stewart of Purdivan expresses it, "a mere delegation of executive, not determining power." They are not the court itself, acting in the person of some of its members, for that would make it the same as the quorum, neither yet is it the court *ad interim*, as has sometimes been said, for then a regular, that is, technical, appeal would lie against the decision of a presbytery's or a synod's commission, the

same as against that of the court itself, which no one ever imagined. But the commission is just a committee with extraordinary powers; not simply inquiring, like ordinary committees, but acting in the name of the Church. The Waldenses have a commission which carries into effect the decisions of their Synod during the intervals of its meetings. The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland, since 1690, have generally named commissions before their own dissolution, to act in particular matters remitted to them, and to attend to the general interests of the Church, subject to review by the next Assembly. Our own early American Presbyterian Church was much in the habit of using commissions, though gradually they passed considerably into disuse. The old Boards, however, were all of them, and our own executive committees are all of them, just commissions, with powers limited severally to a specific object.

Now it is to be observed, in respect to these commissions, that they have always consisted of a number of ministers and elders—the quorum of the Scotch commission of Assembly being twenty-one. The same principle necessarily holds, though with less force, of course, in respect to the ordinary committee. They are the creatures of courts which are expressly ordained to exercise all their powers jointly. The very object of such courts is, that one man may not rule alone in God's house. It is the ordinance of Christ, by His apostles, that the Church be regulated through bodies of rulers, and not through single rulers. And so our Confession of Faith declares, that “the Church is to be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies;” in other words, by the sessions, the presbyteries, (including the synods,) and the General Assembly. Such being the nature of all Church power of rule, it is seemly that the ordinary committee resemble in this particular the court that appoints it. The Church of God, from the beginning, has suffered untold misery and

evil from prelacy, and our Church may well be jealous of the same. It is seemly that she never should pass that power of will which, in its very nature and design, is joint power, into the hand of one man. We say it is Presbyterian doctrine and practice not to appoint committees of one. Stewart of Purdivan expressly says: "But the commission consisteth of both ministers and elders, without which no ecclesiastical judicatory or committee thereof can be lawful;" and he says, also, that a single minister acting by himself, as the delegate of a presbytery, "wants the stamp of ecclesiastical authority." (See Book I., Title XV., § 29.)

Accordingly, Presbyterians every where recognize two keys of the kingdom of heaven—the key of doctrine, and the key of discipline—the one in the hand of the teaching elder, and the other in the hands of a body of ruling elders. Accordingly, also, Presbyterians hold to two kinds, and but two kinds, of Church power; the power of teaching, which is several, and the power of ruling, which is joint. Under Presbyterian church government, one man teaches; but, under that government, one man never rules. It is prelacy whenever one man undertakes to do, or is allowed or appointed to do, any act of ruling the Church by himself.

Now, what kind of power is that which, according to the committee, is to be exercised by the commissioner to the army? Part of his work is to preach, which is perfectly legitimate—it is several power, and pertains to him as a minister of the Word. But partly his duty and his power is to rule these, and to do it singly. He is, according to his sole discretion, to locate one brother in this camp, and another in that hospital. What is this but governing and ruling in the Church by one man? He has the appointing power of a whole commission in his single hand. He is to be the superior of his brethren, and this is not presbyterian, but prelatic. It is impossible that our Assembly should deliberately and designedly give any such power as this to

one man. They did not do it. The committee misinterpret the Assembly. One circumstance proves this unanswerably—they said not one word to the commissioner about his making any report to them. Their committees and commissions all report, because it is ruling power that is committed to them; and the court must revise what they do, because the power lies in the court. But all they designed this commissioner to do was to go and preach himself, and assist other preachers to find fields of labor, either for short or long periods; and accordingly they said nothing about any report, for none was expected.

There is but one plea on which the committee can defend their interpretation of the office, and that is, that the army is a field for the labors of the evangelist, properly so called. But we deny that this is the fact. The army is in our own country, and, as it were, in the very bosom of the Church. The commissioner will find other ministerial brethren all over the army, and churches all around him, wherever he goes. There was no call, therefore, for the evangelist proper, who goes forth beyond the limits of the settled church-state; and, being an extraordinary officer, established of the Lord on purpose to found churches where they are not, of course carries with him, and in his single hand, the full powers of the presbytery. And that in the view of the Assembly there was no call for the evangelists in the army, appears in their refusal to substitute, on Dr. Wilson's motion, the name evangelist for the one chosen.

The "superintendent," and the "visitor or commissioner," of the Scotch Kirk, at its first setting up, from 1560 to 1580, it may be said, perhaps, is very much the same as the commissioner appointed now by our Assembly. It would be an unlucky comparison for any one to make. That office of superintendent, or commissioner, has been the cause of many reproachful charges of a modified pre-lacy against the First Book of Discipline. No one would now go beyond the Second Book of Discipline for prece-

dents, back to the incompletely developed Presbyterianism of the period of the First Book, which Stewart of Purdivan calls the "Infantile state of this Reformed Church." Although Hetherington so indignantly affirms that "the superintendents had no one thing in common with prelates," we can not but hold, from the description of the office in the First Book, that it did confer a partial episcopacy upon all who filled it. But we have no zeal to prove that this long-extinct office savored of prelacy; there has been, it must be confessed, and it is declared by Hetherington himself, a great plenty of that abomination at many periods of Scotch Church history. We are quite willing to let McCrie's testimony go unchallenged when he says: "In the examination of those whom they admitted to the ministry, they were bound to associate with them the ministers of the neighboring parishes. They could not exercise any spiritual jurisdiction without the consent of the provincial synods, over which they had no negative voice." But here is an office, alleged to be established by the Assembly, in which one brother is empowered to employ other equal brethren under him, and without any voice of an ecclesiastical judicatory or any commission of ministers and elders thereof directing or controlling his doings; is to determine, at his sole discretion, the places where his equal brethren may or may not labor, and so is to rule both them and the Church through them, singly and alone, which is to make him a diocesan bishop. We should, indeed, be sorry to believe that our General Assembly, after demolishing so completely the whole system of Boards, chiefly on the ground that they were a dangerous infringement of the powers of a free Church, should have deliberately or designedly violated, in this fashion, our constitution, and departed from the fundamental principles of our divine polity.*

* Both in 1644 and 1697 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland were under the same necessity laid recently on ours, to arrange for send-

TESTIMONY RESPECTING THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

On this subject Col. Preston presented resolutions which were adopted unanimously. They expressed the conviction that God is now asserting amongst us His supremacy as "Governor of the nations," and that no nation can prosper that sets aside "the statutes of Jehovah." And upon the ground that some of our statesmen, impressed with these views, are seriously meditating the repeal of the Sabbath mail laws, they testified against the national sin of Sabbath violations, imploring Congress to put away from our young nation this cause of divine anger. They referred strongly to the Sabbath, as being "the solemn court-day of our sovereign King," whose blessing, "as Lord of the Sabbath, the nation's voice was pleading for." In connexion with these resolutions, Col. Preston read a letter from the late lamented Gen. Jackson, the last lines, probably, which that Christian hero ever wrote, in which he refers to Messrs. Chilton and Curry, members of Congress from Alabama, as favoring the repeal of the Sabbath mail laws, and mentions that Mr. Curry, a stranger to himself previously, had just written him a letter on the subject, in which he had expressed the conviction that divine laws could be violated with impunity neither by governments nor individuals. Gen. Jackson expressed the opinion that the present was an "auspicious moment for such action, as the people are looking to God for assistance."

NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF CHRIST'S SUPREMACY.

The passage of Col. Preston's resolutions was used by Col. Walker as a suitable opportunity to ask leave for the

ing a constant supply of ministers from time to time to the army, relieving each set at proper times by fresh appointees. They had also to furnish regular chaplains to be settled in the regiments. This latter work they arranged to have done either by the presbyteries or their own commission. The former business was put into the hands of their commission.

reading of a document presented by Dr. Thornwell to the Assembly at Augusta, upon which he offered three resolutions, adopting the memorial as the deliverance of this Assembly, requesting other Churches to unite with us in its great object, and appointing a committee to present it to the Confederate Congress. Subsequently he amended the third resolution, so as to provide that the committee should publish the memorial, and correspond with other ecclesiastical bodies relative to it, and to act with them in bringing it before Congress.

Prof. Peck moved to make this subject the special order of the day, for to-morrow, at eleven o'clock. No man was dearer to him than the author of the memorial, but he should be compelled to vote against its adoption.

Prof. Lane moved to refer to a committee, to report upon it to the next Assembly.

Dr. Kirkpatrick opposed this motion, for we had never been in a more favorable condition for such action as was proposed in the memorial. The mind of our whole people was become Christian. The secular papers were speaking of Jackson as the exponent of the South's confidence in God. We have at last a President who will acknowledge our position in relation to God. At the last Assembly a memorial in regard to the proper observance of the Sabbath in the army was adopted, though many thought it would do no good. It had been sent to the President, and not a month elapsed before orders were issued enjoining the very things we had desired, and often in the express words of the memorial. The evangelical churches represent seven-eighths of the people of this land, and if they will unite together the change can be effected.

The motion prevailed, and when the subject came up the next day, Mr. Atkinson said it had always seemed to him one of the strangest things that a nation as truly Christian as any upon the face of the earth, should not be professedly Christian. Nor is it enough that we should recognize the

God of paganism, but we must recognize the God of the Bible. No man is a Christian who does not believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as revealed in the Scriptures. Of course, however, no union between Church and State is admissible. The people of Virginia, who have suffered from such a union, for this reason feel an extreme aversion to any thing looking that way. But in avoiding one error, we should beware of its opposite. He was astonished at the extreme timidity of this body, the representative of a Church which has been accustomed to unfurl the standard of truth in the face of every foe.

Mr. Miller said he thought it "wise not to oppose this measure as certainly mistaken, but only as *doubtful*, because, though our instincts are now strongly against it, yet it is fresh and novel, and further reflection might lead to a change of mind; and because, also, this more moderate course will take with us more of the Assembly.

"The measure is doubtful, first, in its principle; secondly, in the paper it proposes to make use of, viz., this memorial; and, thirdly, as a measure to be passed by this particular Assembly.

"I. The act itself of inscribing a sentence recognizing the Christian religion upon the Constitution of the Confederate States, is doubtful in its principle, because:

"1st. It is not clear in its *pertinency*. The Constitution is a directory for building and working a government. Government is a police, a mere sword-bearer. It is not to dig canals, or enrich manufacturers, or erect churches. At least, if it is, the mass doubt it. The Constitution of South Carolina, where the influence of the honored framer of this memorial has been felt for years, has no recognition of Christianity. Whatever of this sort may fairly regulate the working of constitutions, may properly be taken for granted. Constitutions generally do not set out with the obligations of truth or respect for the people, or the sacredness of international rights. Our Book of Discipline

has no formal recognition of Christianity that I remember, nor has the Constitution for Columbia Seminary, that we adopted yesterday. There is no necessary disrespect, therefore, in leaving it out.

“2d. It is not clear in its *significance*. Does it mean that the majority of our people are Christians? That is a historical fact, not a constitutional principle. It may be true to-day and false to-morrow. Does it mean the government must enforce Christianity? The very memorial that is proposed denies that. Does it mean that the government must not disturb religion? The Constitution provides for that already. And when gentlemen say that the act we have just passed about Sunday mails involves all that this memorial would, they forget that running Sunday mails violates conscience, and we are already protected against that by the Constitution of the Confederate States.

“3d. The act proposed is not clear in its *usefulness*. It is too easy a thing to be of much value as a service to God. The vilest Christian nations that ever lived have done the most of it. The Jews, at the period of their worst corruption, made broad their phylacteries, and wrote texts of Scripture upon their foreheads and upon the posts of their doors. And at this point a great ethical fact comes in, true of all Christendom, that communities are not ruined by a bad government so much as by a bad Church. It was so in Boston. It was so in Paris. It was so in early times on the eastern borders of our Southern States. A corrupt parish system led to the infidelity of Jefferson, and men of that school. Governments do not go to pieces, or even abandon Christianity, at their own instance, but upon the decay of the Church: and therefore the importance of invigorating Christianity, and carrying it to our armies and our frontiers, rather than of inscribing it upon the Constitution of the Government.

“H. This paper is doubtful. It is too long, and too much in detail, too rich in the profusion of genius, to express the

opinion of any large body of men. A plainer mind would have produced one that we could all more nearly have united in. There are minor sentences to differ about. It says, 'All just government is the ordinance of God.' I believe that all government is the ordinance of God; and that that government in respect to which Paul taught this doctrine was the government of Nero, the vilest in any land. It says, 'Government is a moral person;' and then, on the basis of this highly figurative expression, builds an argument. All moral persons have conscience. Government, therefore, must have a conscience. Conscience must have a law. And that law, in the case of governments, may as well be the Christian religion. Is that a good metaphysical argument, one that we will trust ourselves to in what ought to be like the papers of Louis Napoleon, a terse and clear utterance?

"And then, in respect to this divine law for government, does that interfere, as this paper declares, (practically, and as respects their liberty, *quoad* the government, to judge for themselves,) with the supremacy of the people?

"The paper declares the 'godless republic of the North,' to be a fresh instance of how nations perish that neglect to recognize Christianity. But does the framer forget that we were of that republic but a few months ago? Is South Carolina under the same condemnation as the North, and far on towards ruin, because, as a sovereign republic, she has no such recognition?

"The great beauty of this paper, as its advocates point it out, viz., that it unties an ancient difficulty, by showing that a State may have a religion, though it may not have a church, is, we are bold to say, the unsoundest part of its reasonings. In these respects our religion *is* a church. It is a very narrow church. In all the creed-imposing features of a church, it is one of the most aggressive character. All that most intellectual and influential body of men who deny the divinity of Christ, and all those who serve the

pope, and who exclude the Bible, it directly excommunicates. It would be more oppressive than some establishments of Church and State, because they occurred, as in catholic Britain, for example, among a unanimous people; but we, in our day, would have to impose our creed, as trinitarian and protestant, upon many forms of dissent. Is it fair? If the majority grew prelati, and believed the apostolic succession to be as necessary to salvation as the divinity of Christ, would it be fair to put that into the Constitution? Does the proposed appeal to Congress comport with what is already in the Constitution, or with the preamble of our form of Government, which labors so with the idea of perfect liberty of conscience."

The remainder of Mr. Miller's speech we necessarily exclude, and the more readily, as it related to the minor question, whether this Assembly was prepared to adopt.

Prof. Peck said, "It appears to me—

"1. That there is an impropriety in the Assembly's making use of the paper before them, a paper which had been presented to a preceding Assembly by its lamented author, and by him withdrawn; that, for all we know, his views might have undergone some change, and he might not now approve, if he were living, the use we are making of it. But even if this were not so, it is unbecoming in a body like this to present to the Confederate Congress a paper which is not the offspring of its own mind, and therefore not capable of being fully expounded and defended.

"2. That, in considering this question upon its merits, we should lay aside all prejudice arising from the association of certain views with the name of Jefferson, notoriously an infidel; for the principles embodied in his famous bill for establishing religious liberty were earnestly contended for, years before, by the Presbytery of Hanover, and urged by petition, memorial, and remonstrance, upon the legislature of Virginia.

“3. That the principles of this paper were, for the most part, eminently sound, and stated with the luminousness for which the lamented author was so remarkable; especially, that the statements in regard to the precise relations of the word of God to the State and Church, respectively, were all that he could desire; that for the Church, the word of God was a positive law, and the Church’s power strictly ‘ministerial and declarative,’ both in the sphere of faith and of manners; while for the State, the Scripture only operated in a negative way, as a check upon reason and the light of nature, which were the positive rule by which the civil magistrate was to be guided; that to propose, therefore, as this memorial proposes, to insert a clause in the civil constitution by which the supremacy of the Son of God should be acknowledged, made the memorial contradict itself, since it asked the civil power to accept the Bible as a positive guide, and, *pro tanto*, to usurp the functions of the Church. All that the paper could ask, consistently with its own statements concerning the relation of the Bible to the State, was that Congress would do nothing inconsistent with the revealed fact of the supremacy of Christ. This is what the Assembly has just done, in its overture touching the observance of the Sabbath.

“4. Further, that the argument used on this floor for this addition to the Constitution, to wit, that we do not recognize the true God unless we recognize the Son, if it proves any thing, proves that we should recognize the Holy Ghost also.

“5. That one effect of such a change would be to exclude all honest unbelievers from our civil councils. No man can say ‘Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.’ (1 Cor. 12: 1.) This would land us in the doctrine of the fifth monarchy fanatics. If it should be said that upon the same ground all acknowledgment of God would be excluded from the Constitution, since no man can truly acknowledge God without the Holy Ghost, he would

answer that there is a revelation of God through the very condition of man's moral nature, and that this recognition is sufficient for the purposes of civil government; and we are bound to make this recognition, because the civil government is an ordinance of God, the Creator and moral Governor for the whole human race. But to make a distinctive doctrine of revelation a part of our fundamental law, would operate like all other religious tests—it would fill the land with hypocrites.

“6. Lastly, to do what this memorial proposes, is to make the civil magistrate a judge in matters of faith, and thereby to bring us back to the ages of superstition and cruelty, when the burning of the bodies of saints was an ‘act of faith.’ Give the magistrate this power, and no man can tell how it will be exercised. Insert one article of a Confession of Faith in the fundamental law, and you may have, in the course of time, a Confession as large as that of the Westminster Assembly, and by no means as sound.”

This last head of remark, Prof. Peck has said to us was in his mind when he spoke, but he did not bring it out precisely as here written down.

We have been at pains to procure from their respective authors these brief notes of their speeches in opposition to the paper, from a wish to gratify and instruct the Church, and also because we love free discussion. The paper of Dr. Thornwell, subsequently withdrawn by those who introduced it, is recorded elsewhere in this number of our journal; and we propose now to submit to our readers a few observations on this important subject.

We do not design to maintain that the Assembly ought to have adopted this paper; for, however successfully it might have been vindicated from all the objections brought against it, (including those two mutually opposite ones, that it had too much and that it had too little logic in it,) still we confess to a sympathy with the idea of Dr. Lyon, that it does not become the Assembly to petition Congress

upon any subject.* It is every way more suitable for the Church to utter simply its testimony, and then let the citizen or citizens present all needful memorials. Moreover, it is now too late to appeal to Congress for any changes of the Constitution. No change in that instrument can be effected, except the concurrent voice of three States first demand a convention of all the States for the purpose of amending it. What might have been accomplished with comparative ease when first proposed by Dr. Thornwell, will now be found well-nigh impossible. Yet truth is mighty, and her triumphs are all the greater in proportion to their difficulty.

In the first place, we insist that the State has a life and being and responsibility of its own. To a certain extent it is a moral person. The proof is ample.

1. The nations, in proportion as they are or have been free, do claim, or have claimed this attribute as belonging to them. Their constitutions, whether written or unwritten, assert it for them. The sovereignty they challenge is an attribute of life, and belongs only to a person. Hence the fierceness of every free nation's defence of its liberties. The life of not even an individual will be surrendered by him tamely, and the life of a State can not be forcibly taken away, if ever, except after a terrible struggle. Even Poland ever and anon still shows signs of life. Our own States of this Confederacy refused to give up the life that is in them, and become merged into one great consolidation, and hence the tremendous contest that is now waging. It speaks in tones of thunder that these States have, in a certain clear and distinct sense, a personal being which they never will surrender.

2. The nations not only make this claim for themselves, but generally acknowledge it when made by others. This is the outrage which we maintain that England and France

* Religion and Politics—S. P. R., Vol. XV., page 596.

have committed against these Confederate States. In 1776, the States of the late Union declared themselves free, sovereign, and independent States, and set up a confederacy in which this attribute of each State was carefully reserved. In 1778, France entered into a treaty with them, acknowledging these attributes. In 1783, Great Britain did the same. Nothing has since occurred to destroy their freedom, sovereignty, or independence. But France and England now decline to acknowledge these attributes in us, but still ascribe them to the States that make war upon us. This is the outrage committed by them. The keen sense of it felt in all our bosoms, is the proof that we know these States to have a life and being of their own, entitling them to separate and independent standing and action.

3. The actions that nations perform show that they are moral persons. It is the State that makes the constitution and the laws, that coins money, that prohibits or commands, that punishes or defends, that makes war or peace. It is the people as such, the people in their collective capacity, through representatives, that do these things, and not the separate individuals of the people. These are the actions of the nation, and in these acts no distinction of individual can be made. And these acts of the nation have a moral character, by which they can be judged, just as the acts of individuals have. And the wisdom and justice, or the sin and folly of these acts affect good and bad amongst the people, those who agree to them and those who object to them, in many cases equally and alike. It is the nation that is acting, and the individual is swallowed up in the whole body.

4. Accordingly, there is such a thing as national character, different in different nations. The terms English, French, Spanish, suggest different qualities. There was such a thing as American character. There is such a thing

as Yankee character, and such a thing as the character of our own Confederate people.

5. God regards the nations, whether they are free or subject to a monarch, as having a life and responsibility of their own. The powers that be are His creatures, moral persons that He hath ordained. It would be perfectly vain for any one to try and eliminate from the Bible this idea of national responsibility as separate from that of individuals. It runs through the whole texture of the book. It sets before us a King of kings and a Lord of lords, who makes them and all other civil magistrates His ministers of justice for the time being. It addresses the kingdoms continually as persons, and it threatens and it promises them as such. It also records the punishments and rewards which, as such, they received. God is the Lord of the nation as well as of the family and of the Church. One might as well deny the life and being of the Church as of the State. It can no more be questioned that the Almighty is the judge of the nation than of the individual. Nor can it be denied that His judgments upon the nations, as such, are usually visited upon them during that mortal career which exhibits them in their organic unity.

It may be objected to this argument, that it can be carried out in such a way as to prove every kind of corporation to be a moral person, and to have a life and responsibility peculiar to them. If any one choose so to do, we make him heartily welcome, and bid him good success in the endeavor. We have no fear that corporations of any sort will ever become unduly alive to their moral responsibility.

In the second place, we maintain that, the State being under moral obligations, should acknowledge the fact to herself and to all men. If God be her King indeed, it is impossible that she should not be bound publicly and officially to recognize Him in that character. Mr. Miller maintained that it was not *pertinent* for the State to acknowledge her King in her constitution. If there be any more

suitable place or form for the acknowledgment, let him grant that she ought to make it there and so. But it is withholding from the Almighty what is due to Him, when the State, which is His creature, does not somehow officially acknowledge Him and pay Him homage. We complain that England and France are unjust to us, because they refuse to recognize us as sovereign. This is just what we do to God; and the impulse of every believer's heart is, to inquire whether there may not be some connexion between the two refusals of recognition.

Amongst all the exercises of moral responsibility, the highest is to pay homage to God; and we insist, therefore, that, whatever else the State, as a moral person, may neglect to do, she must not fail to recognize her God.

But it is objected that this will unite Church and State. By no means. Let us not, in our well-founded and just zeal against any such union, more hurtful always to the former than it can be to the latter, run to the other extreme, and deny to the State her moral character and responsibility to God. The three societies which God has ordained, the Family, the Church, the State, are each supreme in its own sphere, and quite independent of one another; but they are coördinate, and God is their common head, and each is bound to worship and pay Him homage.

Mr. Miller considers it a fallacy to say that the State may have a religion without establishing a church. And his answer to it is that our religion is a church, and a very narrow and aggressive church at that. Very true. Does the paper propose that the Constitution recognize *our* religion? The fallacy is with himself, and it lies in his not distinguishing between what must be the religion of the individual citizen, as embodied for him in his particular church, or form of Christianity, and that solemn official recognition of the King of kings which is due to Him from the people in their collective capacity.

It is objected, again, that it would not be fair to Jews, Unitarians, and others, to have the State acknowledge Christ. We answer, it is a question of conscience, for the Christian people of this country, whether their Government, in the guilt and punishment of whose sins they must bear their share, shall refuse due homage to Him who ordained it as His creature. It is impossible to make it other than a question of conscience for Christian people, because, acknowledging the State to be endowed by the Creator with moral responsibility, they can not deny its duty to recognize Him who gave it being. It is conscience, then, against conscience, and the majority must rule.

The hinge on which the whole question turns is, we conceive, the moral personality of States. If they do possess that attribute, they may not innocently refuse to recognize the King of kings. On the other hand, if they are not bound to recognize Him, it must be because they have no life and being and responsibility of their own, apart from the individuals who compose them. One of these two positions must be true, and the other false, for they are opposites. Nor can the two views be combined together. If the State is not a moral person, and has no conscience, and no God, but deals only between man and man, in the relations of this life, as a mere police, then, of course, it is right for her not to acknowledge Christianity at all. But then, she must not bow to the power of Christianity in the least, nor aim to confine her laws to such as comport with Christianity. Then it was wrong to have the very name of God introduced at all into our Confederate Constitution, for there may be some atheists amongst us; and whether there be or not, the State has no relations at all to God, and it is not pertinent to refer to Him in any way whatsoever. Then, too, no oath must be exacted in any court of justice, or of any man elected to public office, for why regulate by law such appeals to God, when the State, whose business it is to make laws, can not know any thing about God? Then,

also, there must be no punishment of blasphemy, or adultery, or polygamy; for without the Scriptures it had not been known that these are criminal; and then, moreover, capital punishment could not stand upon its true basis, as a positive enactment of Him who created man's life, and accordingly it must be abolished in deference to the numerous objections brought against it from anti-Christian quarters. Thus we must have either a godless or a Christian republic.

Upon this principle of the State's responsibility to God were based the resolutions of Col. Preston, respecting Sabbath mails, which the Assembly unanimously adopted. Jehovah, the supreme Governor, asserting now His supremacy over the nation; the Sabbath, the solemn court-day of our sovereign King; Sabbath violation, a sin of the nation; the nation's voice pleading with Congress for the blessing of the Lord of the Sabbath; these are the expressions employed in those resolutions. The immortal Jackson quotes members of Congress, expressing the conviction that neither nations nor individuals can sin against God with impunity, and that hero says: "Now is the time to persuade the State to acknowledge in this way her fealty to God, for now she is feeling her need of His help." All this was unsuitable, if the State has no life of her own, and is not a moral person. It is true, there is another form of objection to Sunday mails, viz., that the Christian postmaster's conscience is thereby violated. That is bad enough, but it affects only the few who are postmasters. The great objection to Sunday mail laws is, that by them our country and our Government are made to violate God's law. Our representatives, by those laws, bring sin upon us, and put the Bible against our young Government. Now, if this be a violation of the conscience of every considerate Christian amongst us, so it ought to be that his country is made to refuse the recognition of the King of kings. The same Scriptures which command the Sabbath

to be kept holy, also command that all nations, as well as individuals, should acknowledge the authority of Jesus.

The weightiest objection to the paper, it will probably appear to most persons, is that one which Prof. Peck made under his third head of remarks. The thinking of that gentleman, it is well known, is clear and vigorous and profound. With great respect, we suggest to him whether, after all, the inconsistency with itself which he finds in the memorial does not depend upon a misconception of his own. Had he whom we both loved so well but survived to this day, no one knows better than Prof. Peck with what masterly power he could, perhaps, have replied to this and to every other objection brought against the memorial; for he never investigated any great question slightly, and never publicly committed himself to views that he had not fully matured. For ourselves, we are persuaded that it was only the occasion which he lacked at Augusta to have commended the sublime doctrine of his paper to the judgment of all his brethren, and the heart of the whole Church.

Let us see, now, in what Prof. Peck agrees with the memorial, and in what he differs from it. Its statements in regard to the precise relations of the word of God to the State and Church, respectively, were all that he could desire—for the Church it is a positive, and for the State a negative law. But to propose what the memorial proposes is inconsistent with itself, for it asks the State to accept the Bible as a positive guide; which would be to put itself into the position of the Church, and a usurpation of her functions. All that the paper can properly ask of the State is, to do nothing inconsistent with the revealed fact of Christ's supremacy. Thus Prof. Peck finds the logic of the paper at fault, and points out a fatal defect in its course of argument. But let us revert to the statements of Dr. Thornwell, which Prof. Peck says that he cordially approves: "The formula according to which the State accepts the Scriptures is, that nothing shall be done which they forbid;

that according to which the Church accepts them is, nothing shall be done but what they enjoin." The point here is, that the State can not infringe upon the conscience of any man, so long as it does not put itself into the Church's position, and undertake to carry out all the positive injunctions of the Word. Every man's rights of conscience are safe, so long as the State leaves him to believe what he may, and to worship God as he thinks right, only refraining herself from doing any thing which the Word forbids. But is it not plain that, if the State accept the Scriptures at all, even in this negative way, (as both Prof. Peck and Dr. Thornwell agree that she ought to do,) she does *ipso facto* make an acknowledgment of Christianity as her religion. Prof. Peck says: The State may have a religion, nay, must have a religion, and that religion Christianity, but its office must be simply to check the ruler whenever reason and the light of nature are a positive guide. This is all that Dr. Thornwell maintains. But does not this imply that the ruler first recognizes and acknowledges the authority of the Author of Christianity? Prof. Peck agrees with the memorial, that the Government may *actually* accept the Scriptures, but he says that for it to do so *in words* would be monstrous. Rulers, he says, have no right to do any thing forbidden in the Bible, *for the reason* that it is Christ's word, who is King of kings; but for them to put into words the ground of their conduct, and confess that Christ is their King, would be impious usurpation of the Church's functions. He would not object to asking Congress not to do any thing inconsistent with the revealed fact of Christ's supremacy, but he shrinks from the idea of the Christian people of this Confederacy saying, in their organic law: "Nevertheless we, the people of these Confederate States, distinctly acknowledge our responsibility to God, and the supremacy of His Son, Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords, and hereby ordain that no law shall be passed by the

Congress of these Confederate States inconsistent with the will of God as recorded in the Holy Scriptures.”

There is, we must insist, therefore, no ground for impugning the logic of the memorial. It does not contradict itself. To declare that the Word is a negative rule for States, is not inconsistent with insisting that they should acknowledge it as such a rule. Nor would the State which acknowledges Christianity as her religion, and the Author of Christianity as her King, thereby put herself into the Church's position, and undertake to do all the things which the Word enjoins. Before Christianity can become either a negative rule for the State or a positive rule for the Church, it must be acknowledged by each in that relation. This is all the memorial desires from our rulers on behalf of our country. We only seek to have our newborn Government, the creature of His peculiar providential power and goodness, acknowledge officially that it is His minister, to do nothing which His word forbids. And we desire that the Government may do this for itself, and not for the individual citizen; discharging simply its own duty in the premises, as a moral person, responsible to God, and not undertaking at all to guide any man in the discharge of his own individual duty to Jehovah.

We conclude by reiterating the grand and solemn statements of the memorial. God's revealed will is the true supreme, and should be so acknowledged. If that be not recognized by the State, it can acknowledge no sense of moral obligation and no feeling of the eternal principles of right, for these are nothing except as they stand related to the will of the one living and true God. If the acknowledgment of His will as supreme law be not the very foundation-stone of a constitution, it is bereft of all vital power or binding force. If there be no God distinctly acknowledged by the people, they will then be a God to themselves. The will of the majority must then become

the supreme law, and any constitution prove itself a dead letter. God is now showing what this denial of His claims by a people highly favored and blessed can work amongst them. Oh! may it be given to the remnant of these States, whom He is saving from the terrible gulf, to know their God, and to acknowledge their King.