

# PRESBYTERIAN REUNION:

A MEMORIAL VOLUME.

1837—1871.

*Ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν· οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἑνὸς  
ἄρτου μετέχομεν.— 1 CORINTHIANS x. 17.*

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# PRESBYTERIAN REUNION.

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## CHAPTER FIRST.

### HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE CHURCH (OLD SCHOOL BRANCH).

BY THE REV. SAMUEL MILLER, D.D.

What proposed. — World's annals. — Grounds of division. — Reconstruction. — Relative numbers. — Controversy and Revival. — Lawsuit. — Advantages of the Old School. — Congregationalism. — Theological history. — Church-boards. — Rights of ruling Elders. — Westminster Assembly and Free Church of Scotland. — Slavery. — Theological Seminaries. — Martyr Missionaries. — Revival. — New School South. — Southern opinions. — Rebellion. — Assembly of 1861. — Old School South. — Further testimonies. — Incident in 1861. — Defence of the Assembly's measures. — Declaration and Testimony. — Action thereupon and defence of that action. — Result. — Invitations to Southern Churches. — Review of war-measures. — Miscellaneous events and acts. — Proposed changes in the Standards. — Literary activity. — Prosperity. — Church-boards. — Board of Foreign Missions. — Reunion: its history and ground.

ALMOST a third of a century has elapsed since the Old School and the New School, opposing parties in the Presbyterian Church of these United States, separated, after long controversy, and became distinct communions. At length, happily if the hopes and prayers of many should be fulfilled, they have been restored to organic unity. A concise history of the Old School Church, during the period of separation, it is proposed to give in the first few pages of this volume. It will be well for the reunited body, if its later party names, like the earlier ones, Old Side and New Side, should speedily die away from the current, especially from the emotional, language of Presbyterians; though they must forever survive in history, and the historical use

of them cannot, with reason, be deemed invidious. Of course, in what is written, at this early day, from a point of view in either school, the warm glow of interest and of a reasonable partiality will be looked for, rather than the clearer but colder light of unbiassed indifference.

This period of about thirty-two years has been a very momentous one in the annals both of the church at large and of the world. It has been marked by extraordinary progress in the arts and sciences: by wonderful improvements in domestic, agricultural, and manufacturing machinery; by brilliant discoveries in the depths of old ocean, in the stellar universe, and in the all-pervading laws of the physical forces; by the practical introduction of intercontinental steam navigation and of the magnetic telegraph, linking closely together points the farthest asunder round the almost girdled globe. Its record of human enterprise tells of adventurous expeditions, on one side far toward the North Pole, on the other into the tropical mysteries of interior Africa; of the ocean cable, of the Suez canal, and of the Pacific railroad; of the close earth, in regions wide apart, greedily disembowelled, and yielding up unheard-of treasures. These years have witnessed political changes, many of them of the greatest importance. The United States have gained by conquest, justly or unjustly, from Mexico, a large extension of the national domain. A war of almost unparalleled magnitude has saved our union, emancipated and enfranchised four millions of slaves. The Emperor of the French, attempting to interfere with our American system, has been disconcerted by a frown, and in wis-

dom dearly purchased has abandoned the adventure. In Europe, France has tried a republic, but fallen back under the imperial Napoleonic dynasty; Russia has been humbled at Sebastopol, but has greatly advanced in civilization and power, and emancipated millions of serfs; the larger part of Italy has recovered itself from arbitrary rule, and the temporal despotism of the Pope is tottering — perhaps to its fall; Prussia has suddenly, by warlike achievement, become one of the great powers, and has well-nigh realized the pregnant idea of German unity; Austria has been wonderfully modernized; and Spain, having exiled her royal house, stands hesitating between a republic and a constitutional monarchy. In benighted Africa, Liberia has become an independent state, with free Christian institutions modelled exactly after our own. In slumberous Asia, the dense millions of China and Japan have been awakened to intercourse with the busy, outside world; and over those of India, Great Britain, through much blood and suffering, has reasserted her power, which God seems to overrule to such poor idolaters and worshippers of the false Prophet for good. To the Church of Christ this period has been made specially interesting by the decline of rationalism in Germany, but its spread in Great Britain and the United States; by the decay of Romanism in Papal, but its revival in Protestant, countries, and by striking indications that its superstition, iniquity, and blasphemy are almost full, seen in the mingled craft and madness with which the machinery of conferences and councils has been restored, modern civilization and evangelical religion denounced and attacked, and the monstrous dogmas of

the immaculate conception of Mary and the infallibility of the Pope unblushingly promulgated; by the discovery of the more complete of the two oldest known manuscripts of the Greek New Testament; by the exodus of the Free Church of Scotland; by a spirit of union and communion freshly and extensively awakened among Christians; by wide openings of the Papal and Pagan world to the gospel, its more abundant success, and the wonderful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, by which, in many lands, it has been made indeed the power of God unto salvation.

For obvious reasons, the division of seventeen years between the Old Side and the New Side of the last century was of shorter duration than that just now healed. The amount of transient feeling excited was, perhaps, in the two cases, nearly equal — feeling enough to rend the church in twain. But much the more important have been the differences, as to doctrine and church order alike, which have protracted the separation of the Old and New Schools. And without a general idea of these differences, we should hardly be able to understand the long continuance of the division; the history meanwhile of either school; the negotiations which have resulted in reunion; its final terms; or the prospects of the reunited church.

Affinities and a fraternal confidence which unhappily time has not increased, between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, had led to an admixture of Congregationalism in Presbyterian judicatories. The Old School insisted that this admixture, as unconstitutional, should cease. The New School contended for its toleration and extension. The Old School preferred

strictly ecclesiastical agencies for conducting the missionary and other general evangelistic work of the church, urging, particularly, the establishment of a Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. The New School desired, in union with Congregationalists, to confide this work to voluntary associations, the foreign part of it to the American Board of Commissioners. Both professed to be Calvinistic and to "receive and adopt the Confession of Faith . . . as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures;" but they differed seriously in judgment as to what was essential to that system, and, therefore, what departures from the formulary were consistent with such a profession. The Old School contended that certain errors utterly inconsistent with it were prevalent in the church; for the purification of which they endeavored to visit with discipline several prominent ministers charged with these errors. The New School argued that some of the views alleged to be erroneous were reconcilable with the Calvinistic system; denied that the others were really entertained by the parties accused, or were seriously prevalent; and resisted the discipline proposed. This difference as to doctrine the Old School uniformly considered and treated as by far the most serious difference between the parties.

The Old School majority in the General Assembly of 1837 having disowned four synods, as so far Congregationalized that they could not be any longer acknowledged as Presbyterian bodies, the New School commissioners to the Assembly of 1838, refused to recognize an organization of this judicatory which excluded representatives from the disowned constituency,

and formed another, and, as they claimed, the only true Assembly. This was but the commencement of the division. A process of separation and reconstruction, necessary to some extent in both schools, at once began, which was not completed throughout the two for several years. Most of the component parts of the former church took up their positions definitely and finally, at once, on this side or that; but some small portions remained for a while undecided; while a few made a decision at first to which they did not ultimately adhere. The whole process, though not carried through without much heat and friction, produced less of either than might have been anticipated. Appeals to the civil courts for the settlement of church disputes were not of very frequent occurrence. Here, a synod, presbytery, or congregation, without division or serious difference of opinion, declared for the Old School or the New; there, such a declaration was submitted to by some persons under protest. Minorities in many cases seceded from majorities, and frequently claimed the true succession, yet in general without open strife. Ecclesiastical records were usually retained by the bodies whose adherents happened to have them in hand. Legal right, real or imagined, often assumed at first an attitude of defiance, yet in the end yielded to the spirit of Christian forbearance. As usual in such circumstances, adherence to one side or the other was not always determined by a full, or even predominant, approval of the views or measures by that side adopted.

The Old School have always claimed to have made full provision, in 1837 and 1838, for the proper read



justment of the ecclesiastical relations of all sound churches, ministers, and judicatories involved in the disowning acts; and, by several measures adopted in the latter year and the next, they provided further for the minorities left in synods, presbyteries, and congregations, in the church at large, by the withdrawal of the New School. Before any suit at law had been commenced, they recommended, in regard to property questions, "great liberality and generosity" on the part of all their adherents. And after the main suit had resulted in their favor, they more than intimated their readiness to stand by the terms, as to temporal interests, which had been proposed and both parties had approved in their negotiations for an amicable division.

The exact relative strength of the two, when they separated, cannot be easily determined. By the statistical tables of 1837, the whole number of ministers in the yet united church was twenty-one hundred and forty, of congregations twenty-eight hundred and sixty-five. Several years elapsed before all these ministers and congregations determined definitely their respective positions, and the numbers of the two sides could be clearly ascertained. Moreover, the New School, in 1840, commenced the experiment of a triennial Assembly, their supreme judicatory not meeting again till 1843. At the latter date, they reported twelve hundred and sixty-three ministers, and fourteen hundred and ninety-six congregations; the Old School, fourteen hundred and thirty-four of the one, two thousand and ninety-two of the other. By comparing these numbers, and allowing for the natural increase of both

bodies in six years, we shall perhaps come nearer to their relative strength at the separation than we can in any other way.

It is an interesting fact, that the years of most earnest controversy, pending the division, were years of special religious prosperity in the Presbyterian Church. From 1829 to 1838, inclusive, the statistical reports exhibited an unusual number of additions upon profession, though the reports of 1836, 7, and 8 were less favorable than those preceding. And after the division, there was in this respect no appreciable falling off, in the Old School communion, from the exhibit of the years last mentioned.

The New School, to test their claim to the true succession, and their title to the funds and institutions of the Presbyterian Church, commenced a suit in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, the state by which the Trustees of the General Assembly had been incorporated. Three other suits by commissioners from within the bounds of the disowned synods, who had been denied seats in the Assembly, were also instituted, to test in a different way the principles of the case. The one first mentioned, however, was the only one brought to trial, the decision therein being regarded as finally settling, so far at least as the courts of Pennsylvania were concerned, the whole controversy. This trial, involving as it did great interests, drawing together a number of the most distinguished men of the Presbyterian Church, and being conducted by eminent counsel on both sides, excited profound attention, and was watched throughout its progress by many anxious minds all over the United States. Early in

March, 1839, it commenced before Judge Rogers and a jury at *nisi prius*. Most of the time during its continuance, the court-room was crowded by eager spectators and auditors. One after another called upon to testify, a number of them venerable clergymen, put aside "the Book," with Puritan conscientiousness, and swore with the uplifted hand, a form of oath particularly solemn and impressive. In the crowd the question was frequently asked, "What is the difference between the Old School and the New?" Perhaps a tipstaff would assume for the nonce the gravity of a theologian, and attempt to satisfy the inquirer. "The Old School hold that whatever is to be will be," he said, but broke down in trying to reverse the proposition plausibly. Under the judge's charge, sustaining the New School in every important point, the jury gave a verdict in their favor. From outside the bar, in the densely packed courtroom, rang forth a warm burst of applause, which the judge instantly and sternly suppressed.

A motion for a new trial was afterwards presented and argued, and on the eighth of May an anxious throng were again assembled to hear the decision. Chief-Justice Gibson delivered the opinion of the court, Judge Rogers only dissenting. The judgment at *nisi prius* was entirely reversed, a new trial granted, and the whole case really settled in favor of the Old School. In silence the crowd dispersed. Three years and some months later, the New School quietly discontinued the suit.

This triumph at law, and consequent retention of the general property of the church, have not uncommonly

been regarded as a signal advantage to the Old School, and a chief cause of their subsequent prosperity. They were beyond doubt gainers, in character and influence, by being declared thus judicially the true Presbyterian Church. But the funds secured were a mere trifle comparatively, not amounting to half a million of dollars, and not equalling the aggregate of missionary and other charitable contributions of the whole church for two years alone prior to the division. Moreover, they were the funds, mainly, of the Old School theological seminaries; and three seminaries, with their endowments, out of seven, the New School retained; as likewise, in all but a few cases, the property of their individual congregations. They had in fact agreed, in the Assembly of 1837, that an equitable division of the only general funds, to any part of which they could lay just claim, would give them less than fifteen thousand dollars.

But advantages more important the Old School really enjoyed. The separation was not their act, and no effort to rend the body asunder gave them an impulse in any divergent course. They went on in the even way of the standards, to which, in fact, they were accused only of adhering with too much strictness. Their orthodoxy has been scarce questioned, however they may have been charged with putting undue restraints upon liberty. With them, much the greater part of the period of separation has been one of steady progress in the old Presbyterian orbit, with only the slightest perturbations. Though not quite all approving of the acts of 1837, they have been united, in an unusual degree, in doctrine, spirit, ecclesiastical policy, earnest effort to

spread the Gospel under strict Presbyterian forms, and in the whole work of the church.

It was an advantage, too, that the Old School felt themselves particularly bound to demonstrate by special activity and zeal, that what they had so earnestly contended for was in truth for the furtherance and prosperity of Christ's kingdom. To save their own credit, much more for the glory of God, they must prove that Congregational order was no help to Presbyterianism; that church boards were better than voluntary associations; that old Calvinism was the form of doctrine most effective in producing genuine revivals and saving men.

The measures adopted by the General Assembly to purge the church of Congregationalism were soon completely successful. The greater number of those judicatories in which it prevailed to any serious extent went off, sooner or later, with the New School; but in one way or another the last vestige of it disappeared, before long, from the Old School body.

The theological history of this division of the church for the whole thirty-two years of its separate existence may be presented in a very few words. It was left by the separation in a state of almost unprecedented doctrinal homogeneity. One may well doubt, whether any other Christian communion of equal size has ever excelled it, as to unity in the reception of an evangelical creed of such extent as the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. Differences of opinion, even among its ministers, have, of course, existed; but these differences have been comparatively trifling, or of very little prominence or prevalence. If in any quarter se-

rious error has been adopted, for the most part it must have been kept secret, or have been known to but a few. No agitating discipline on this ground has been exercised, or, to the knowledge of the church at large, needed. "Princeton Theology," as it has often been called, has, beyond question, been almost universally prevalent among the Old School. If opposing systems must take a modern nomenclature, there may be no harm in making Princeton and New Haven respectively the synonyms of the Old and the New Divinity; but it should be remembered that the text-books of Princeton have constantly been the simple Westminster symbols, and such long and generally approved systematic presentations of the Reformed Theology as the "*Institutio Theologiæ Elencticæ*" of Franciscus Turretin. Old School men have been slow to admit the idea of any possible improvement in the generally received system of gospel truth. Recognizing fully the recent progress made in Biblical criticism and exegesis; the fact, too, that from time to time fuller and more exact statements of Christian doctrine may be, as they have been, elaborated; and by no means maintaining that any uninspired man has been wholly free from error; they have, nevertheless, rejected with singular unanimity the assumption, that any part of the substance of the gospel has lain hidden in holy Scripture until modern times; or that the church of Christ has new discoveries to make as to the system of truth in Jesus. Of a well-known Presbyterian quarterly publication, one identified with it from the beginning has lately said, "It has been the honest endeavor of its conductors to exhibit and defend the doctrines of our standards, under the

abiding conviction that they are the doctrines of the word of God. They have advanced no new theories, and have never aimed at originality. Whether it be a ground of reproach or of approbation, it is believed to be true, that an original idea in theology is not to be found on "its "pages . . . from the beginning until now." And this praise or blame may be said to have belonged to the Old School Church in general as distinctively as to the publication from which it has been quoted.

A deep conviction of the church's duty to carry on, through strictly ecclesiastical agencies, the work of Foreign Missions, had led the Synod of Pittsburg, as early as 1831, to organize itself for this purpose as The Western Foreign Missionary Society. The New School had refused to consummate the desires and plans of the Old, by taking this enterprise under the care of the whole church; but the Assembly of 1837 accepted the trust, establishing in New York City The Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, to which the Synod of Pittsburg immediately made a surrender. This result greatly cheered those who had so long labored for it, and they felt their solemn responsibility to prove that zeal for Christ's cause, not mere party spirit, had animated their endeavors. The first meeting of the new board was held in Baltimore in the following October; and it commenced its operations with alacrity, and with most encouraging prospects, which have not proved delusive.

According to the plan of church agencies now fully established, a Board of Publication was appointed by the Assembly of 1838, to which was transferred the property and business of the Presbyterian Tract and

Sabbath-School Book Society, organized by the Synod of Philadelphia a few years before. The Assembly of 1839, the fiftieth year having now been completed since this supreme judicatory had first convened, recommended the second Sabbath of December for a semi-centenary celebration, a day of jubilee thanksgiving for past mercies; and the offering at that time, by all the members of the church, of gifts for the endowment of the new board. The fund raised reached the sum of forty thousand dollars. This sum, with about twenty-eight thousand dollars donated for building purposes a few years later, has been the nucleus of all that board's permanent property.

Before the division, two boards had been organized: The Board of Missions, now of Domestic Missions, for the home work, in 1816; and in 1819, The Board of Education, to aid candidates for the ministry; both located in Philadelphia. These had been fostered by the Old School, while, as a party, the New School had preferred The American Home Missionary Society, and The American Education Society, voluntary associations in which Congregationalists participated.

The Board of Missions had, in 1844, the business of church extension, or church erection, added to its other operations. This was carried on by a special committee, which, ten years afterward, for greater effect, was enlarged. But in 1855, an independent Committee of Church Extension was established at St. Louis, the name of which was changed, in 1860, to that of the Board of Church Building, then the Board of Church Extension.

In 1845, after several years' agitation of the subject,



the Assembly directed the Board of Missions to appoint an Executive Committee at Louisville, furnished with a secretary and other officers, co-ordinate with the Executive Committee at Philadelphia, and to have the care of the western and south-western fields. In 1859, a South-western Advisory Committee, with a district secretary at New Orleans, was ordered, and the next year a similar Committee of the Pacific Coast at San Francisco; but in 1862, all this additional machinery was discontinued, as cumbersome, expensive, and unprofitable, and the management placed upon its previous simpler footing.

The sphere of the Board of Education was enlarged, in 1846 and the two years following, so as to include the assistance and care of Presbyterian colleges, academies, and primary schools, a part of its work which has grown constantly, though not rapidly.

Two other departments of Christian liberality and effort have been committed to similar agencies. For more than a century and a half the Presbyterian Church has systematically raised funds for the relief of disabled ministers and their families. But, in 1849, the General Assembly ordered collections for this purpose to be disbursed by the Board of Publication, a business transferred in 1852 to its own trustees; and in 1861 a secretary was appointed to devote his time mainly to this enterprise, which has since more prosperously advanced. In 1864, the condition of the Freedmen at the South demanding immediate attention, two committees, one in Philadelphia, the other in Indianapolis, were appointed to take charge of educational and general evangelistic work among this

class; and the next year, in place of the two, a single Committee on Freedmen was established and located at Pittsburg.

In 1840, the Assembly determined that an efficient system of agencies, by which the churches should be visited from year to year, was, in the existing condition of Christian feeling and knowledge on the subject of benevolent operation, absolutely indispensable. But gradually that system has passed away, yet the liberality of the churches has greatly increased. This result has been attained in part through a standing committee on Systematic Benevolence, appointed first by the Assembly of 1854, and reporting every year. Although many congregations yet fail of making regular contributions to every scheme of the church, the plan of striving to cultivate in ecclesiastical judicatories and individual Christians a sense of their responsibility, and leaving the matter with them, has proved in such a degree effectual, that any system of special agencies for the collection of ordinary benevolent contributions would now find little remaining favor.

In 1842, the Assembly gave a unanimous decision that ruling elders should not lay on hands in the ordination of ministers; yet afterward the matter was laid over, in mere courtesy, for the action of the next Assembly, in which was also agitated the question, whether there could be a quorum of presbytery or synod, without the presence of any ruling elder. A controversy on these subjects, carried on for several years in ecclesiastical judicatories and in periodical and other publications, excited no little interest. The office of ruling elder has been regarded almost unanimously, in

the Presbyterian Church, as of divine appointment, but with a considerable latitude of opinion as to its exact Scriptural warrant, and its relations to the office of the preaching elder. On these points at least four distinct theories have been propounded. (1.) One is, that the term *elder* in the New Testament, as applied to Christian ecclesiastics, is used only to designate ministers of the word and sacraments, who are also, as universally admitted, rulers in the most general sense, including all ecclesiastical functions. The scriptural words then designating those now called ruling elders are such as *rulers* and *governments*. The other theories all agree in the supposition, that the same New Testament term includes both the ruling and the preaching elders of our day, but from this common starting point diverge widely. (2.) One of the three supposes two *orders* of elders; that is, two kinds distinguished by *ordinations* essentially different. The two remaining theories alike represent all elders as of exactly the same order or ordination; but (3) one of them supposes all to be fundamentally rulers, and the office of preaching to be a mere superadded function or gift; while (4) the other makes all fundamentally ministers of the word, the fact that some do not much addict themselves to this ministry being due, in part to a wrongful ordination of incompetent persons, in part to an allowable diversity of service. The latter two theories seem to have been confined pretty much to this country. Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge, Dr. Thornwell, and others who maintained either of them, naturally enough contended that ruling and preaching elders alike should unite in presbyterial ordinations. They argued, moreover, that

as ordination was an act of presbytery, participation in every part of it was the right of every member of presbytery. It was rather inconsistent with either of these theories to maintain, that without the presence of one or more ruling elders no church court could be properly constituted; but Dr. Breckinridge and other advocates of the latter doctrine based it chiefly upon certain expressions in the form of government. The ready reply was that these expressions had received an authoritative interpretation to the contrary by immemorial and nearly uniform and unquestioned practice. Against any innovation upon that practice very large majorities decided in both 1843 and 1844; and this quieted the agitation of the subject.

Of a later date, in the Old School Church, and of much less notoriety, has been the question, whether ruling elders may be elected to serve for a limited time — one year or a term of years. The Assembly of 1835 had condemned such an election; but recent tacticians having devised plans for turning the flank of both the supreme judicatory and the form of government at this point, they met with a more decisive check in the Assembly of 1869.

The year 1843 was the two hundredth since the first meeting of the ever-memorable Westminster Assembly of Divines, and it was made itself memorable by the thrilling exodus of the Free Church of Scotland. The Old School Assembly of the previous year had appointed a committee to mature a plan for a bi-centennial commemoration, in which other Presbyterian bodies also might be interested. Now it was resolved to recommend a more general indoctrination of both

young and old in the Westminster standards, and instruction by pastors, on the first of July, the anniversary of the assembling of the divines, or at some other convenient time, in the history of the church's struggles and sufferings for the maintenance of gospel faith and order. A resolution of sympathy with that portion of the Church of Scotland which was contending and bearing reproach for the truth's sake, was also adopted. A few weeks afterward, intelligence came of the secession from that church of four hundred and seventy ministers, with about six hundred congregations, two thousand ruling elders, and at least one million of worshippers. "Since the Act of Uniformity," it was well said, "there had been no such public and general sacrifice of interest to principle, and it could not fail to secure the approbation and admiration of the Christian world." The seceding ministers relinquished yearly stipends amounting, in the aggregate, to about half a million of dollars, and the people their places of worship—the church homes, where their fathers before them, for many generations, had called upon the name of the Lord and waited for his word. The next year, the Rev. Messrs. George Lewis and William Chalmers appeared in the Assembly as representatives from the Free Church, of which they gave most interesting and soul-stirring accounts; and resolutions of the warmest welcome and sympathy were passed. Contributions also, to aid the Free Church, were recommended. Other delegates, among whom were Dr. Cunningham and Dr. Burns, subsequently, by their public addresses, extended this glow of sympathy all over the land. It may here be added,

that out of the bi-centenary commemoration of the Westminster Assembly, at Edinburgh, in July, 1843, grew the Evangelical Alliance formed in August, 1846.

The subject of slavery had for many years, in some degree, agitated the church; but the General Assembly had taken thereupon no decided action between 1818 and 1845. In the latter year, by a vote of one hundred and sixty-eight to thirteen, an important minute was adopted, which itself became, at once, a matter of more or less dispute. Extreme abolitionists and extreme pro-slavery men alike, the former with chagrin, the latter with exultation, maintained that it virtually annulled the action of 1818; which, though unanimously approved then by the southern as well as the northern commissioners, had condemned slavery as "a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature," and declared it to be "the duty of all Christians . . . to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors . . . as speedily as possible, to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom." But by the church at large the deliverance of 1845 has been constantly understood to deny only certain unjustifiable inferences from that of 1818, particularly that slave-holders ought to be excluded from membership in the visible church of Christ. The doctrine of the Old School, from first to last, consistently was, that slavery was a great evil, which, as soon as it might be safely, ought to be abolished; that slave-holding, however, was not always or necessarily a sin; but that masters ought faithfully to give to their servants "that which was just and equal," seeking diligently their improvement

and preparation for freedom. The doctrine, advanced chiefly in later times, and which found some advocates in the Presbyterian Church at the South, that slavery, like the family relation, was a divine institution, was never at all countenanced by the church at large; but was virtually and decisively condemned, over and over again, in several well considered and unanimously or almost unanimously approved deliverances. In 1846, the Assembly's previous action was declared consistent throughout, and all that was needed; a declaration which in substance was reiterated in 1849.

But ultra men from the North or South were not the only ones that troubled the church about this matter. It was pressed upon the Assembly with strong determination, and occasionally, in the view of many, with severe, if not unchristian expression, in its foreign correspondence. The Irish General Assembly, in particular, took upon itself the office of rebuke, which led, in 1854, to a suspension of intercourse with that body, a letter from which it was resolved not to answer.

During the whole protracted controversy on this subject, the General Assembly continued to enjoin, from time to time, upon the southern churches, increased attention to the moral and religious improvement of the slaves; and particularly from 1845 to 1861, we find in its narratives of the state of religion frequent accounts of diligent efforts and good success in this great work. The importance of those efforts, as a providential preparative for emancipation, can scarcely be overestimated. The Boards of Domestic Missions and Education were heartily interested and engaged in them; the former, while that distinguished Georgian, the Rev. Dr.

C. C. Jones, was its secretary, to an unusual degree and with the happiest effect. No man better than he understood the demands of evangelical work among the slave population of the South; for he had spent his ministerial life in it, and published several important volumes as the fruit of his long experience. Speaking of the improvement of this class, the Assembly convened at Nashville, Tennessee, in 1855, said in its narrative, "In few, if any of our Southern States, are laws enforced forbidding that slaves be taught to read. Usually, as far as among any other class, Sabbath schools are sustained for their instruction. . . . And we believe ourselves to be speaking the language of sober truth, when we say there are in our southern churches thousands of slave-owners, whose desire and effort is to prepare those whom an inscrutable providence has cast upon their care, for a state of liberty and self-control they cannot yet enjoy; and whose fervent prayer is, that God would hasten the day of safe and salutary freedom to men of every clime."

It is a significant fact, that the emancipation of the slaves by military and civil authority in 1863 and afterward, with the general rejoicing over this great event at the North, and the fervor of thanksgiving which it excited, did not render it necessary for the Old School Church to rescind or modify one of its deliverances upon the subject of slavery. It is believed that those deliverances express its mind at the present time as truly as they ever did. And when the Assembly of 1864 was called, in God's providence, to frame a minute expressive of its sentiments, in view of the emancipation decreed by our national government, all



the grand abiding principles of that minute were quoted carefully from its own previous utterances. Yet the paper fully satisfied the public mind, even at a moment of the greatest excitement and clamor. Happily this whole subject seems to have been put, in God's goodness, beyond the possibility of further disturbing the church's peace.

Sometimes it has been intimated, that pro-slavery tendencies on the part of the Old School were among the most influential causes of the division of 1838. No allegation could be more entirely opposed to historical truth. A careful reading of all the official documents of that time, when, too, crimination and recrimination were loosely prevalent, will not disclose the slightest hint of such a charge from any quarter. Nay, the Assembly of 1835, in which there was a decided Old School majority, appointed a committee to report upon slavery; but the Assembly of 1836, in which the New School had altogether their own way, postponed the whole subject indefinitely by a vote of one hundred and fifty-four to eighty-seven.

When, in 1812, the first theological seminary of the Presbyterian Church was established at Princeton, there was a very general sentiment in favor of concentrating the resources of the whole church in a single thoroughly equipped institution. Even then, however, the advocates of this plan encountered a few warm opposers; and these, with the increase of Presbyterianism, and its spread over a constantly widening territory, grew so numerous and powerful as to change altogether the policy of the church in this respect. In favor of the multiplication of seminaries have been urged, the

cost to students, in time and money, of travelling to distant parts of the land; the advantage of interesting the denomination more generally in theological education and the increase of the ministry; the undue influence which might be exerted by theological professors, if the training of the church's candidates were committed to but a few, and the evil — a special benefit as it was once considered — of casting all in one mould; the fact that an education at the North or East unfitted persons sometimes, to labor in the South or West, particularly in slave states; and the danger that young men going far away from home to pursue their studies would never return, or that, at least, churches in the neighborhood of the divinity school would attract and retain the ablest of them. The new policy of multiplying such schools had so far prevailed prior to the division in 1838, that about half a score of them were already more or less actively competing for the patronage of the Presbyterian Church. Of these, the Seminary at Princeton and the Western Seminary at Allegheny were under the immediate care of the General Assembly; Union Seminary in Virginia, that at South Hanover, afterward at New Albany, and that at Columbia, South Carolina, under immediate synodical supervision; and Auburn Seminary, Lane Seminary at Cincinnati, and Union Seminary in New York City, New School institutions, under the control of Synod, or of their respective corporations.

In 1853, the subject of another seminary for the West was brought before the Assembly by numerous overtures and proposals. All parties seemed, at first, to be agreed, that the new institution should command the whole patronage of the Old School body west of





**A COMMUNION GATHERING IN THE OLDEN TIME.**

the appropriate limits of that at Allegheny. As to its location there was great diversity of opinion. Of six places named, three only, however, came into active competition, — New Albany, Saint Louis, and Danville. Danville was at length fixed upon by a decided majority; but its selection was regarded as an abandonment of the idea of a single institution for the West: it was at once quite apparent that the North-west could not be satisfied with a seminary so far south. Besides, personal energy, influence, and zeal, rather than the true relations and wants of different sections, seemed to have given the triumph to Danville. The school at New Albany, therefore, which was to have been merged in the new one, was continued under synodical management, and any intention to interfere with it was disclaimed by the next Assembly. In 1856, the Synods having it in charge resolved upon its removal to Chicago; and a want of harmony among its friends, with the munificent offer of Mr. C. H. McCormick to endow it with one hundred thousand dollars, provided it should be permanently located at Chicago and put under the control of the General Assembly, determined them to apply to the latter to take it in charge. A considerable endowment was also promised, if the institution should be fixed at Indianapolis; but the advocates of Chicago prevailed by a very large majority. Here the Presbyterian Seminary of the North-west, as it was named, has since had its location. With the churches of the South, when they seceded, the institutions in Virginia and South Carolina of course remained. Four theological seminaries, therefore, all under the control of the General Assembly, the Old School bring into the

reunited church. That at Princeton celebrated in 1862, with appropriate observances, its fiftieth anniversary.

The few years immediately preceding the Southern Rebellion were years of special activity and prosperity, though not without apprehensions, difficulties, and trials, in the Old School Church. In June, 1857, eight beloved missionaries of the Presbyterian Board in Northern India, — Messrs. Freeman, Campbell, Johnson, and McMullin, and their wives, with two little children, Willy and Fanny Campbell,—fell by the cruel hands of the notorious Nana Sahib and the Sepoy mutineers. Money was freely offered for their release and that of other captives by a rich gentleman among the latter. “It is blood we want, not money,” was the reply. For Christian blood, indeed, the poor heathen were thirsting. With the faith of true martyrs, these devoted men and women yielded up their lives. The intelligence of the complicated horrors of that rebellion thrilled deeply and powerfully the hearts of God’s people in this and other lands. Here, upon its reception, days of special prayer were widely observed, and supplication for India seemed to be the spontaneous utterance of the whole church. In God’s good providence and faithful remembrance of his covenant, the mutiny was arrested, and a wider door of usefulness than ever before was opened in that benighted land; while in this country, especially during the fall and winter, most of the evangelical churches, the Old School Church among the rest, were graciously and signally revived and increased. The Fulton-street daily prayer-meeting in New York, the forerunner and model of many of a similar kind,

was established. The glad tidings flew across the ocean, and a remarkable "Year of Grace" was vouchsafed to the churches of Great Britain and Ireland. But, before these had felt the Spirit's breath, our surviving missionaries in Northern India had been aroused by the good news from America; and after much prayer and a blessed refreshing, they had recommended the devotion, in every land, of a week in January, 1860, to united supplication for a lost world. The Evangelical Alliance heartily endorsed the suggestion, and hence the "Week of Prayer" since so generally observed. Thus again became the blood of the martyrs the seed of the church.

The gracious revivals mentioned, which but little prevailed south of what are now known as the Border States, were a merciful preparation for the dread life-struggle which followed. And already, in both church and state, the mutterings of the fearful storm were heard. The southern commissioners to the New School General Assembly of 1857, offended by its anti-slavery action, called a convention, the result of which was the subsequent organization of the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Such men as Dr. F. A. Ross and Dr. A. H. H. Boyd were opposed to a proffer of union with the Old School, against which various reasons were urged; among these, the "excising acts" unrepented of; the examination of applicants to presbytery; very serious doctrinal differences as to original sin, the atonement, and other points; the denial of each one's right to interpret the Confession of Faith for himself; and, above all, blind persistence in the "toleration theory" as to

slave-holders, in spite of the discovery by certain southern illuminati that slavery was a permanent divine ordinance. The proffer, nevertheless, was at length unanimously made, upon certain "indispensable terms," which, however, the Old School Assembly of 1858 decided, did "not afford a basis of conference" promising the advancement of the Presbyterian Church or of the Redeemer's kingdom. In 1863, the Synod was invited by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States to a negotiation, which resulted, the next year, in a union between the two bodies, under the name of the latter.

Extreme southern opinions were now overbearingly urged upon the Old School. In the Assemblies of 1859 and 1860, Dr. Thornwell, a man of lovely character but inexorable in debate, maintained, in the interest, of course, of slavery, that the church is so purely spiritual, so completely restricted to the simple business of saving men, so absolutely limited to what the Bible in express words commanded or permitted, that all ecclesiastical action in regard to Bible Societies, Temperance, Colonization, Slavery, or the Slave-trade, and all church boards is unlawful. This new and startling doctrine, contrary to the whole current of Presbyterian usage and tradition, was, of course, not accepted by the Assembly, although, at first, some feared the eloquent Southron would prevail.

In April, 1861, the storm of civil war, which had been for months, in visible blackness, hanging over the country, burst upon it with the thunder of the bombardment of Fort Sumter. On the sixteenth of May, the General Assembly met in the city of Philadelphia.



It met, of course, in the midst of unparalleled excitement, and when public opinion, if not evident duty, required from every man and every organized body of men, an open declaration of principles as to the terrible conflict already commenced, and soon widely and fearfully to rage. Only some thirteen commissioners appeared from the seceding states, seven of whom were from within the bounds of the Synod of Mississippi. A very large part of the time of the Assembly was taken up in the warm and able discussion of several papers offered upon the state of the country. It was evident that a majority, in the beginning, would have been glad to avoid the subject altogether; but now that it was forced upon them, would not silence, or a refusal to express loyal sentiments, be misconstrued? In the end, a decision was made simply between two papers in substance not unlike, but in form a declaration, one of them by the Assembly, the other by the *members* of the Assembly; a difference which many regarded as distinguishing between an authoritative act and a mere opinion of certain individuals. The venerable Dr. Spring had offered the former, as in substance it was at length adopted by a vote of one hundred and fifty-six to sixty-six, the minority protesting. It recommended a day of prayer, professed loyalty to the Federal Government, and declared it a duty to support that government and preserve the Union. Several inferior judicatories at the North, pronounced this deliverance inconsistent with the constitution, and with the word of God. Some who viewed it thus, did not object, however, to similar declarations made by subsequent Assemblies after the southern churches had

withdrawn. Their idea was, that a judicatory representing Christians in states that had seceded had no right to decide for them the political questions, whether secession was lawful, and whether allegiance was due primarily to the individual state or to the United States. But it was asked, Does not a judicatory representing only Christians in states that have not seceded, decide virtually the same questions, in pledging themselves to assist in a war to prevent secession, a war utterly unjust if secession be lawful, and the people of the South be suffering persecution for righteousness' sake?

In the fall of 1861, met the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States. This secession drew off, first and last, about seven hundred ministers and twelve hundred churches. It is not probable that it was precipitated by the action in Philadelphia, although that action was made in part to bear the blame. How could Christians remain united in the church, while fiercely fighting against one another along the whole dividing line of their respective territories?

Every subsequent Assembly during the war added something to the church's testimony on the subject of all-absorbing interest, the state of the country. Once and again regret was manifested that it was further pressed; many thought that enough had been said and done to establish a character for loyalty, and to satisfy even the popular demand for an outspoken declaration of principles; but each new body of commissioners found, in ever-fresh zeal for the country, and current soul-stirring events, abundant reason for new deliver-

ances. Especially when enthusiastic men had introduced the subject, it was sufficient to plead that hesitation would imply indifference, a refusal sympathy with the South; and discussion having once commenced, feelings were soon aroused which carried the body away captive in the chains of patriotic emotion.

The deliverances of the Assembly on this subject after 1861, so far as they added any material idea to the testimony of that year, condemned most unequivocally the rebellion for the perpetuation of negro bondage, as a monstrous iniquity, to be earnestly resisted and "force crushed by force;" yet called upon the loyal people of the country to humble themselves before God, confessing both national and individual sins, that the divine anger might be turned away; and declared that the time had come, when every vestige of slavery should be swept from the land, and when every Christian should address himself earnestly to the accomplishment of that work. Then, the war having abruptly terminated, thanks were returned, the whole Assembly in the vote rising to its feet, for the conduct and issue of the struggle, and the emancipation of four millions of slaves; Abraham Lincoln was eulogized, his sad death deplored, and a blessing invoked upon his successor in the chief magistracy; the Board of Domestic Missions, which has always exercised a full discretion as to the character of its missionaries, was directed to aid no disloyal minister, nor any one not in cordial sympathy with the Assembly in its "testimony on doctrine, loyalty, and freedom;" churches and judicatories were forbidden to receive from the South

applicants who had voluntarily participated in the rebellion, or held that slavery was a divine ordinance, or that, in the words of the Southern Assembly, it was "the peculiar mission of the Southern Church to conserve" it, without repentance of their sin and error; and they were directed to suspend, pending discipline, or erase from the roll after two years' absence, ministers who were fugitives or exiles on account of disloyalty, or had gone south and aided in the rebellion. Further, the southern church secession was declared schismatical, and the intention of the Church North not to abandon the southern field asserted. At the same time, kindness and a conciliatory spirit were recommended toward the erring, especially the younger, more impulsive, and less guilty of them; and the constant tempering of justice with mercy.

A little incident of the year 1863, may illustrate the excitement of feeling in which every church judicatory during the war convened. A motion was made to raise the national flag over the church edifice occupied by the Assembly at Peoria. A large minority were for laying this motion on the table, but it was referred in due dilatory form to a committee. While the latter were deliberating, however, "the fire burned" in some hearts, and the trustees of the church were urged to hoist the flag without waiting for the issue of parliamentary process. Might not the stars and stripes unfolded to the eye quicken deliberation upon them? The trustees, with a slight stretch of authority, though hardly a stretch of reverence for the embodied wisdom of the church, yielded to this suggestion; and the Assembly afterward gravely decided, that as the thing

had been done, their further attention to it was unnecessary.

A statement of the grounds upon which these various acts of the supreme judicatory, most of them more or less earnestly contested, were by their advocates sustained, will exhibit sufficiently the argument on both sides. Kindness, it was said, to the erring, might be serious unkindness to the church and nation; there were higher interests at stake than the retention of the southern churches; and loyal Christians at the North would not be satisfied without the fullest declaration of loyalty, and the plainest dealing with the rebellion as an atrocious iniquity. The duty to condemn sin was urged, especially sin so monstrous and destructive. Repentance neither the state nor political parties demanded, but the church never restored offenders without it, and was to be governed by a simple regard to right far more than to policy. No terms of communion unknown to Presbyterianism had been established, no new offences created. Were not the ten commandments part of the church standards; and had not the Assembly always exercised the right of laying down conditions for the reception of outside ministers, in the position of which those at the South had really put themselves, and of enjoining examinations which supposed a liberty to reject applicants, and which every church court was confessedly entitled to make? All moral and religious questions, no matter on what other questions of a secular kind they depended for settlement, the church could rightfully decide. Must a convicted smuggler, sent to the state-prison, remain in good ecclesiastical standing, because his guilt de-

pended wholly upon the interpretation of positive civil laws? Must a murderer continue an unimpeached church-member, because his conviction required, in the church as in the state, the settlement of such a mere scientific and professional question as that of medical malpractice? In cases of this kind, the church could not merely follow state decisions, which might be glaringly unrighteous. By such decisions Christians had often been persecuted; by such a decision Christ himself was crucified. It was admitted that erroneous political opinions, generally prevalent and imbibed in early years, were a great palliation of political offences, and made lenient discipline specially desirable in the present case.

The action of the Assembly upon the state of the country and of the church gave great offence to some persons, particularly in the border states. The Presbytery of Louisville issued a "Declaration and Testimony," to which they solicited the signature of all their brethren who agreed with them. The whole number of signers, first and last, was something like one hundred and twenty; say forty-two ministers and seventy-eight elders. This paper testified against various errors in acts of the Assembly growing out of the war, errors which, of course, were attributed to political views and feelings. Two things at least secured its very general condemnation. Its language was grossly unbecoming. It charged the Assembly, for example, with unjust and scandalous self-contradiction, malignity, and even falsehood. Moreover, it raised avowedly the standard of revolt, inaugurating in the church what had just been attempted in the state. This ecclesias-

tical rebellion took the place, in the Assembly of 1866, at St. Louis, of the civil rebellion which had produced such protracted agitation, as a source of excitement and vehement debate.

Dr. Robert J. Breckinridge had endeavored to exclude the signers of the Declaration and Testimony from the Synod of Kentucky, and had appealed to the Assembly against their admission. This case, however, was passed by, and the commissioners from the Presbytery of Louisville were summarily, without allowance of argument, excluded from the house until their case could be adjudged. Afterward, when it was brought forward, they were invited to defend themselves, but declined. At length, the Assembly, but not without the warmest, most excited discussion, adopted, by a vote of one hundred and ninety-six to thirty-seven, a paper offered by Dr. P. D. Gurley, in substance condemning the Declaration and Testimony as slanderous, schismatical, and rebellious; summoning its adopters and signers to the bar of the next Assembly; forbidding them to sit, meanwhile, in any church court above the session; and declaring every such court admitting any of them to be *ipso facto* dissolved, its power passing into the hands of those adhering to the order of the Assembly.

In support of this action, it was urged that the Assembly was a body, not of limited powers given to it by its constitution, but of powers unlimited—all the power of the Presbyterian Church, excepting what the constitution expressly took away; that every deliberative body had an absolute discretion in regard to the qualifications of its members, and the preservation, as

against those members, of its own dignity and the dignity of its constituency; that the effectual rebuke of violence and prevention of rebellion demanded, in this case, sharp work; and that the offence of the Louisville Presbytery and its commissioners, as the original and most flagrant one, required special treatment.

In view of the importance and exigency of the crisis, a preliminary convention had been called, after the manner of the troublous times preceding the division of the church in 1838, to meet at St. Louis. It was quite numerously attended, and sent in a memorial to the Assembly, which was treated with respect, but as proposing nothing desirable after the deliverances already made. The issue proved that the call of the convention had been unnecessary, as indeed, beforehand, it had been generally regarded.

As the result of all this, the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri, with the presbyteries belonging to them, were divided, and the Assembly of 1867 adjudged those portions of the several judicatories which had obeyed the orders of 1866 to have the true succession; but conciliatory measures, though without the relinquishment of principle, were adopted, remitting the cases of the signers of the Declaration and Testimony to the lower courts, and providing for the return of all who might be willing to promise obedience in the Lord, and disclaim intentional disrespect, and for dropping the names of the rest. In 1868, the Assembly refused to modify this action, but gave permission to the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri to do, in the whole matter, anything consistent with the honor and authority of the supreme judicatory, for the sake of peace and order. The Dec-



laration and Testimony men, however, are now, in general, with the southern secession, or by themselves.

As early as 1866, the Assembly had declared that it deplored greatly the separation of the southern churches, and earnestly desired a reunion on the basis of the standards, and on terms consistent with truth and righteousness. In 1867, generous contributions for the relief of destitution at the South were recommended. The next year, the Southern Presbyterian Church was recognized as independent, with the expression of an earnest hope, that, although its separation could not be justified, it might return to its former relations; and in 1869, Christian salutations were addressed to it, with the assurance of a strong desire for a general reunion among Presbyterians throughout the land.

Our sketch, thus far, of ecclesiastical events during and since the war, makes several things which deserve consideration sufficiently evident. In the Assembly as well as out of it, ministers and ruling elders acted often under great excitement, which it would be extreme folly to say was not unfavorable to wise action. But how great had been the provocation! How impossible it was, the war still raging, for men whose sons, brothers, or other near relatives were at the moment exposed to death upon the field, if their lives had not been already offered up, to view the rebellion calmly, or express themselves upon it with moderation, or punctilious propriety. One reason why prudently moderate men sometimes failed to get the ear of the church was, that rank sympathizers with the South hailed them as allies, and threw upon them suspicion. Now, when the danger has passed away, we can imagine the

event to have proved that others were hasty, rash, un- necessarily alarmed and severe. The acts of men in great peril are to be judged of, however, by that peril as imminent, rather than by a subsequent providential escape; and, indeed, who can say that the Union would have been preserved, without the resolute, it may be the stern, violent patriotism of northern Christians? Nor is a general disposition now, the emergency having ceased, to relax the rigor of previous enactments, any evidence that they were originally unjustifiable. We approached, even at the North, very near to that condition actually experienced by large portions of the South, in which constitutions and laws crumble away, and natural right and Christian principle remain the only social bonds. Well may we be thankful that the review demands so little regret; that the great principles of the Gospel and of Presbyterianism were so well sustained; that so little, if any, essential injustice was done; that narrow limits to beneficial and patriotic church action were not allowed to be set. Had we realized the proverb, *Inter arma silent leges*, it had hardly been a wonder; but the gracious Head of the Church saved us from that calamity: to him be the praise! It is not probable, either, that a more conciliatory course in the northern Assembly would have even retarded the southern church secession; which was deliberately designed to aid the rebellion and carry out its foregone conclusions, as clearly as our acts were designed to strengthen the national government. Besides, it may well be doubted whether the coherence, during the war at least, of the northern and southern portions of the church was desirable. Men cannot, alter-

nately, go out and fight against each other to the death, and come in together to the Lord's table, at once consistent foes and consistent friends. No church could preserve its oneness the land over, through such a civil war as ours, unless the Church of Rome, with its bond of union in another and distant country.

Leaving now a topic which might well have occupied a much larger space, it may be desirable, running over the whole period of this history, to condense into a few paragraphs, in the order of time rather than of logical connection, some brief allusions to events, particularly acts of the General Assembly, to which little room comparatively can be given. The troubles of 1837 and 1838 interrupted fraternal intercourse with various evangelical bodies at home and abroad, with which, however, a friendly correspondence was speedily re-established. Soon after the division, measures were not unsuccessfully adopted to revive and invigorate the office of deacon. Various arrangements and changes have been made to secure to the boards the advantage of periodical publications, to disseminate intelligence of their work through the churches. The latest accounts shew a circulation of sixteen thousand copies of the monthly *Record*; nearly one hundred thousand of the *Sabbath School Visitor* of the first, with thirty-four thousand additional copies of that of the fifteenth, of the month; and three thousand five hundred of the pamphlet, with almost fifty-two thousand of the newspaper, edition, both monthly, of the *Foreign Missionary*; besides many thousands of the several yearly reports and of various occasional issues. From about 1849, the project of a weekly religious paper, like the

*Methodist Advocate*, was pressed upon the Assembly for several years successively, but without effect. Yet the church has always acknowledged the unspeakable importance of religious papers, many of which have been established by private enterprise. The value of its periodical publications to the Old School, before the division, none can estimate. But then they were weighty with doctrinal discussion, and bristling with the arms of sturdy polemics. One of our most honored ministers recently said, in an address to theological students, "I cannot help thinking we shall need, in the next ten years, a little more controversial preaching:" he might wisely, perhaps, have added, "and a little more doctrinal and controversial newspaper writing."

It is probable that Millenarianism has become more prevalent among the Old School than it was in 1838, though lately it seems to have suffered a decline. The Assembly has more than once strongly recommended preaching without manuscript and expository preaching. It has discouraged ordination *sine titulo*. Twice the presbyteries have virtually declined to make provision for a voluntary demission of the ministry. Twice the Assembly has refused to submit to them a proposition to allow marriage with a deceased wife's sister, and other marriages falling within the same general prohibition; and it has sustained discipline for such a connection, with the explanation, however, that, though the union was sinful, it was not invalid; and with the result that church judicatories, as to discipline in this case, do each one what is right in its own eyes. Total abstinence from intoxicating drinks has

been strongly recommended, though not enjoined; unless we may regard the equivocal language of the Assembly's acts of 1865 and 1869 as amounting to an injunction, which a majority of the church, it is probable, would hardly sustain. Romish baptisms, after long hesitations, have been by a nearly unanimous vote declared void. The subject of union, more or less intimate, with evangelical, and especially Presbyterian, bodies in the United States, other than the New School, has repeatedly been brought before the Assembly, and has always awakened a favorable interest, as in the cases of the Presbyterian National Union Convention of 1867, and the National Council of Evangelical Churches proposed, in 1869, by the General Synod of the Reformed Church. The ordinations of all Protestant communions have been pronounced valid, with the express proviso, however, that ministers received from other bodies must possess the qualifications required by the Presbyterian standards. The dismissal of church-members to the world has been condemned. In 1853, the Assembly addressed a memorial to Congress requesting the adoption of measures for securing the rights of conscience to our citizens abroad. The American Bible Society and the American Colonization Society have been warmly commended, although the alterations made by the former, in the received English version and its accessories, were in effect condemned, though not until the society had itself seen its mistake and withdrawn its revised editions. In 1858, the centennial anniversary of the reunion of the Old and New Sides was celebrated. The Assembly has refused to authorize the preparation of a church-commen-

tary on the Bible. The subject of unemployed ministers and vacant congregations has been repeatedly discussed, but without any effective action. Mr. Joseph M. Wilson, the indefatigable advocate of church-manses, has succeeded in engaging for his project the favorable attention of the church.

There have been several attempts, during the same period, to make important changes in the Form of Government, Book of Discipline and Directory for Worship. Offices for the administration of baptism and for the public admission of church-members have been proposed, but have not found favor. An able committee, appointed in 1864, elaborated a plan for trying judicial cases in synod and in the General Assembly by a commission of appeals in each, composed of four ministers and four elders, elected, two every year, for four years. This plan, however, was rejected by the presbyteries, although it has been an almost universal conviction, that some radical change ought to be effected for the dispatch of judicial business in our larger church courts. The entire recasting of the Book of Discipline has, moreover, been before the General Assembly and the church, some of the ablest, most influential men having been engaged in the work, ever since the year 1857, until the anticipation of reunion suggested the wisdom of leaving the business to be consummated by the reunited body. There have been, besides, slight and wholly ineffectual efforts, in some quarters, to induce the church to return to the use of a liturgy.

The interval of separation has been one of very marked literary activity in the Old School body. Some

thirty original volumes, from this source, of comment upon various portions of Holy Scripture have appeared; and a very large number of important works, biographical, historical, dogmatical, practical, and miscellaneous. Probably no other denomination in the United States has produced, within the same period, so many theological books of standard value.

Before the southern churches seceded in 1861, that is, in twenty-three years from the separation, the Old School branch had much more than doubled the number of its communicants, ministers, and congregations. And now, after that secession and the loss also of the Declaration and Testimony party, it re-enters, with forces not very far from double, into organic union with the New School. To the Assembly of 1869, additions of more than fifteen thousand communicants upon examination were reported, and contributions for congregational and benevolent purposes of between four and a half and five millions of dollars. Excepting the troublous times of the rebellion, the whole period under review has been one of peace, steady enlargement, and uninterrupted prosperity. No small share of this prosperity has been due to the happy operation of the boards and similar agencies of the church. The superior advantages of these, as compared with voluntary union associations, for building up, not only Presbyterianism, but also the kingdom of Christ, few of either school now question. For a time, after the separation, many church-members and some congregations of the Old School preferred to make voluntary societies the channels of their benevolence. Their Christian freedom in this matter was not disputed; their preference was not condemned. A

spirit of forbearance and love prevented difficulty, and by degrees has won nearly all to a hearty support of the church's own agencies.

The question, how many boards there should be, has sometimes been agitated. It has been well-nigh universally agreed, that the work of foreign missions, that of domestic missions, that of education, and that of publication, should be committed each to a separate agency; but many have thought that the Boards of Domestic Missions and Education might, between them, take the whole work now confided to that of Church Extension, to the Committee on Freedmen, and, in the matter of disabled ministers and their families, to the Trustees of the General Assembly. The location of different boards has, from time to time, been warmly discussed; but for the most part the very sensible idea has prevailed, that the northern and eastern portions of the church, as able to contribute more largely by far than the southern and western portions, should not be discouraged from devising liberal things, by having the application of their charities taken too much out of their own hands. The operations of all the boards, at times, and particularly, in several instances, those of the Boards of Domestic Missions, Education, and Publication, have been subjected to searching inquiry, with the result, occasionally, of modification and improvement, but always of demonstrating the general ability and fidelity with which their affairs have been managed, and of recommending them to increased confidence in the church. Said a speaker, several years ago, on this point, "The boards breathe more freely after the Assembly adjourns" — more freely, the ordeal passed, and the sub-



jects of it "found unto praise and honor," yet not left without a wholesome sense of responsibility. Besides, uneasy spirits must have an outlet. Fretting over the imperfections which the best efforts of our fallen humanity, and our most effective institutions, cannot always escape, they are ready at any time for radical transformation or revolution, forgetting that incessant change may itself be one of the most ruinous of evils, and that no plan can even seem perfect, unless because untried. The church, so far as her boards have been concerned, has paid little regard to visionary perfectionists, and has steadily maintained these agencies, as the right hand of her power.

Among them all, none has held a warmer place in her affections than the Board of Foreign Missions. Its receipts for a year, as reported in 1869, had exceeded three hundred and thirty-eight thousand dollars. As to the increase of means, its prosperity, for an equal length of time, has far transcended that of the American Board, so honorably distinguished for its success. And wherever the two have labored in the same field, side by side, or in fields that can justly be compared, the results prove the Presbyterian Board to be, saying the least, not one whit behind the other in the evidences of God's blessing. The number of its church-members, on foreign missionary ground, has doubled in about five years; and average pastors at home are often compelled to mourn that they have been less successful, in our Christian land, than average foreign missionaries in the dark places of the earth.

To close this brief historical sketch, there remains but to present a simple outline, from an Old School

point of view, of the protracted negotiations that have resulted in the consolidation of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church. And here, the reader's attention will be directed to points for the most part outside of the ground occupied by the full account of the reunion, from other pens, in subsequent chapters. The Old School Assembly, in 1846, courteously declined an invitation to unite with that of the New School in celebrating the Lord's Supper, doubtless mainly on the ground, that though the great lawsuit before mentioned had been discontinued some three and a half years, former differences and conflicts were yet very fresh in thought and feeling; and each body yet expressly claimed to be the Presbyterian Church; each, too, regarding the other as making herein a sinful claim. With the language of mutual recrimination upon their lips, ought they to sit down together at the Lord's Table? In 1850, the Assembly refused to take any action upon the subject of reunion. When the rebellion commenced, however, causes similar to those which speedily brought the two branches together at the South, began to operate powerfully at the North. The common agitating excitements, alarms, perils, and sufferings of a struggle for the nation's life, drew Old and New School men into closer and more frequent communion, and the rather because of their near relationship and family resemblance. Yet, in 1862, the Old School Assembly still declined to talk of reunion, though it unanimously agreed to open a correspondence by delegates. No doubt this correspondence was a great advance toward organic unity. Nothing, however, more definite was accomplished, although the

subject was brought every year to the notice of both Assemblies, until, in 1866, the first joint committee was appointed to confer upon "the desirableness and practicability of reunion." The earliest plan proposed by this committee was by no means satisfactory to the Old School. Various objections were made to it, but the "doctrinal basis" was the grand difficulty. Besides, the major part yet doubted the fact of that reasonable agreement in doctrine, without which the two branches could not wisely unite.

Now, there met in Philadelphia, the Presbyterian National Union Convention of November, 1867, and gave a very perceptible impulse to the whole movement. The hope which it excited of the consolidation of five or more Presbyterian bodies; the impression that it gave of a general feeling, soon to be irresistible, in favor of reunion; and the warmth of enthusiasm which it kindled, were very influential to turn opponents into friends of the measure. The convention was thought by many to have produced an improved "doctrinal basis," which was therefore incorporated into the joint committee's plan. Still, as before, the Old School Church was not satisfied. Yet a few months later, upon a new basis, the reunion was decreed by such an overwhelming vote of the presbyteries, that the feeble minority could but bow in humble submission to the evident will of the church.

To explain all this, some, on both sides, have supposed a relaxation of doctrinal strictness in the Old School body, of which, however, there has not been the slightest evidence. What single act of the Assembly, what disposition manifested by any considerable num-

ber of the presbyteries, has indicated such a thing! The very reverse is too apparent to be questioned. In express words, the Assembly has reaffirmed all its old testimonies against error. And, on the very ground of apprehended doctrinal disagreement, and of dissatisfaction with the doctrinal basis, the church hesitated, up to the last moment, to sanction the reunion.

But the plan of 1869 was regarded by the presbyteries generally as presenting the safest basis possible in point of doctrine — the basis of “the standards pure and simple.” It was the basis with which those who loved the standards most were evidently the best pleased. In fact, past negotiations had proved it to be the only basis offering the least promise of safety. And, again, from every quarter had come to the Old School body multiplied assurances, in most influential forms, that the New School, not as to every individual, but as a church, had become, and were becoming, more orthodox than formerly; nay, were now as strictly conformed to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms as the Old School themselves. Such assurances were given in the joint committee to its Old School members. The unimpeachable orthodoxy of the present theological professors in the New School seminaries was avouched with the strongest confidence. As a specimen of the declarations made on this general subject, take the following from the able pen of Dr. Henry B. Smith, professor in the Union Theological Seminary of New York. He says it is notorious, “that the New School is thoroughly organized as a Presbyterian body, having renounced the vain attempt to combine incongruous elements in its system of church order, and no

longer favoring even the vestiges of the plan of union for any future churches; that it is not strenuous as to the support of voluntary societies; that it is separated in all church action from Congregationalism; that many of its more extreme men have willingly gone into other church connections; that certain objectionable forms of doctrine and of practice are no more taught in its pulpits and seminaries; that it, in short, has become a homogeneous body, on the basis of the standards of the Presbyterian Church; and that, especially in case of reunion, all these tendencies will be accelerated and carried to their completion."

Now, this declaration and a thousand others, to the same general effect, the Old School Church, after long doubt, indeed, yet at length, confidently received and believed. It consented to reunion, — in the end gladly and warmly consented, — because authoritatively assured that the New School Church was as orthodox as the Old. May its confidence never be shaken: then, for this reunion, glory shall be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, forever!