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J. A. Alexander

- ART. I.—1. *The English Bible.* A sermon by the Rev. John W. Nevin, of the Western Theological Seminary. Published in the Presbyterian Preacher for Jan. 1836.
2. *The History, Character, and Importance of the received English version of the Bible.* A sermon by the Rev. William Adams, New York. Published in the National Preacher for Oct. 1835.

IT is now three centuries since Miles Coverdale completed his great plan of translating and publishing the entire Bible in the English language. The sermons before us are in commemoration of this interesting event. They are sensible, well written discourses, on an important topic, and richly merit the pains that have been taken to give them an extensive circulation. From the celebration of the first English version, the authors have taken occasion to direct the attention of the public to the history and merits of the one now in use. Though very unlike in their style, they are equally admirers of this noble monument of the learning and piety of our fathers, and have done a valuable service to the cause of truth by presenting in such a forcible manner its claims to the confidence of the community. The ripe scholarship evinced by one of these sermons, the earnestness of the other, and the good sense and piety of both, will cause them, we

place of worship and social influence by the pretensions of *caste*; the tendency of the spirit of the ties to insubordination and violence; the dissemination of agrarian doctrine; the designs of atheists and of anarchists to explode the authority of the Bible—these are some of the sources of disorder and ruin that threaten the secure enjoyment of all that is dear to an American Christian. The evils cannot be reached from the pulpit. With the laity rests most of the responsibility of meeting the danger in its inception and scattering the materials of the projected ruin. They can reach the springs that move the mass. They have the ear of those whom it is necessary to affect.

But the clergy have much to do in inciting and aiding in the work. They can arouse the members of the church to their personal duty and echo the exhortation of the apostle that each should be found in the diligent exercise of his peculiar gift, that the whole body may be energetic and united in its toils and rejoice together in their promised triumph. The church needs, for its own sake, such a rousing of its power. Thousands of its members are inactive because they have none to lead them into useful enterprise. They have energy that lies torpid from year to year for the want of fit excitement and direction to bring it into use. The overseers must make this a great object in the case of their flocks, and not only declaim on the evils of Christian idleness, but show the labourers a field.

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Samuel Miller

ART. V.—*The Practical Church Member: being a Guide to the Principles and Practice of the Congregational Churches of New England.* By John Mitchell, Pastor of the Congregational Church, Fair-Haven, Connecticut. 12mo. pp. 252—New Haven—Nathan Whiting, 1835.

WE are glad to see discussions on the nature and importance of ecclesiastical order becoming more frequent, and engaging more of the attention of intelligent Christians than formerly. Not that we by any means consider the form of Church government as a fundamental matter in religion. Our doctrine is, that he who is the subject of "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ," will be

saved, even though, either through honest mistake or necessity, he never sustained any formal relation to the external Church, nor ever saw the face of a Church officer in his life. In this opinion, if we understand the author of the volume before us, we entirely concur with him. Yet we also agree with him in the opinion, that it is very far from being an unimportant subject; that it is more closely connected than is commonly imagined with the purity and edification of the Church; and that it is worthy of the serious attention of all those who wish to be able to "give a reason of the hope that is in them," and of the standing which they occupy.

Mr. Mitchell is a zealous Congregationalist, and takes great pains to unfold the *rationale*, and support the claims, of this form of Church government. He begins by giving its history; and represents the celebrated John Robinson, of Leyden, as "the founder of the Congregational plan." To this historical statement we are constrained to demur, as not sufficiently full and satisfactory. We think he ought to have gone a little further back, and to have begun with *Robert Brown*, the real father of the system out of which Congregationalism immediately arose.

ROBERT BROWN was an Englishman, of respectable, and indeed honourable family; educated in the University of Cambridge, and a minister in regular orders in the established Church of England. He was a man of lively talents; and, in consequence of the vivacity, and even vehemence of his delivery, he obtained much popular reputation as a preacher. After a while, however, his popularity declining, he became a schoolmaster; and having embraced the principles of the Puritans, he resolved to refine upon them, and to produce something new and more perfect of his own. Accordingly, about the year 1580, he began to inveigh openly against the government and ceremonies of the Church of England, which he denounced as unchristian. In 1581, he settled at Norwich, in England, where the Dutch having a numerous congregation, many of them imbibed his principles. Growing confident of success, he called in the assistance of one Richard Harrison, a country schoolmaster, and planted Churches in different places. But, being arrested by the Bishop of the diocese, he was thrown into prison, and his followers scattered. After his release, he left England, and settled at Middleburgh, in Holland, where, with the leave of the magistrates, he formed a Church on his own plan. Here he resided but a short time. His church members quarrelled

with one another, and with him. He left them in disgust; returned to England; re-entered the established Church, which he had left and denounced with so much violence; and obtained the rectory of a Church in Northamptonshire. In a word, Fuller tells us, that, though he was a man of talents and learning, his temper was imperious and ungovernable: that he was so far from the strictness espoused by his followers, that he was rather a libertine than otherwise; that he had a wife with whom he never lived; and a Church in which he never preached; and that, as all the former scenes of his life were stormy and turbulent, so was his end. During the rest of his life he remained in connection with the Episcopal Church; but was restless, turbulent, poor, often in trouble, and, at length, died miserably in prison, in 1630, in the eighty-first year of his age.\*

Brown taught that the form of Church government ought to be purely democratical; that every distinct worshipping assembly was a body vested with complete power, within itself, to perform every ecclesiastical act; that the Church was to be governed by the whole body of the male communicants; that they had plenary power to admit, try, and excommunicate members; to elect, ordain, and depose their own ministers at pleasure, without being accountable to any other jurisdiction, or having recourse to any aid out of their own body. He taught also that a minister had no ministerial power or authority out of the congregation, which elected or ordained him; and that, if a minister should be chosen the pastor of half a dozen different churches in succession, he must be, in each case, ordained anew. Hence the *Brownists* (as his followers were called) rejected all Synods or Councils, as having any authoritative jurisdiction over a number of churches; and considered every church as entirely free from the supervision or control of every other.

Though the desertion of Brown led to the dissolution of his Church in Holland, yet it by no means destroyed the sect in England. About the year 1592, Sir Walter Raleigh asserted in Parliament, that there were no less than twenty thousand Brownists in Norfolk, Essex, and the parts adjacent to London. At this time, and a few years afterwards, several men of learning and talents joined this body, and became its counsellors and guides. Among these, the

\* See WILSON'S *Dissenting Churches*; Vol. I. p. 14-16. FULLER'S *Church History*, Book 9. p. 168. NEAL'S *History of the Puritans, &c.*

learned Henry Ainsworth and John Robinson were the most conspicuous. Robinson was a truly respectable man; had received a regular education in the University of Cambridge; and was ordained and held a benefice in the established Church of England. In 1602 he left the establishment, united himself with the Brownists, and took charge of one of their congregations in the north of England. In consequence of severe persecution, he left England, and retired, with a part of his flock, to Holland, about the year 1608. He planted his Church first at Amsterdam; but, after a short residence there, removed to Leyden, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Mr. Robinson and his people seem to have been, in the outset, thorough Brownists; that is, not only to have borne the name, but also to have adopted *all* the principles of that sect. But after he had been awhile in Holland, and had conversed with some of the learned men there, with whom he became intimate, particularly with the eminent Dr. *Ames*, author of the well known *Medulla Theologica*, who had gone from England a few years before, and had settled at *Franegar*, he abated somewhat, as to two points, of the rigour of his old opinions; and struck out a plan less extravagant, and more practicable. Brown had unchurched and denounced, as antichristian, all other denominations, and refused utterly to acknowledge as true Churches of Christ, even those of Holland, among whom he had been kindly and hospitably received. Robinson's opinion and practice in regard to this point were somewhat mitigated. For although he always maintained the *lawfulness* and the *necessity* of separating from the Reformed Churches among whom he resided; yet he did not deny that they were true Churches of Christ. He even went so far as to admit such of their members as he thought well of, to occasional communion in his Church; and allowed the members of his own flock to join the Dutch Churches in prayer and hearing the word, though not in the participation of sacraments. This procured him the title of a "*Semi-separatist*." And although he still agreed with Brown in maintaining the right of the communicants of each Church to choose, ordain, and depose their own ministers at pleasure, and rejected, as thoroughly as Brown, all authoritative power of Synods and Councils; yet he seems, towards the latter part of his course, to have differed from him in allowing the *expediency*, and even the *importance* of convening those grave and venerable assemblies, when they

might be specially needed, for reconciling differences among Churches, and giving friendly advice.

Soon after Mr. Robinson took the headship of the Brownists in Holland, he made a publication of his opinions, in a work, in Latin, with the following title—*Apologia pro Exulibus Anglis qui Brownistæ vulgo appellantur*. In this work he advised his followers to lay aside the title of *Brownists*, the disreputable individual from whom it was derived being no longer one of their number; and, having, in the course of his remarks, often used the title of “Independents,” that term became the title by which his denomination was thenceforward distinguished. In 1620, a portion of Mr. Robinson’s Church came to Massachusetts. They came as *Independents*; and for a number of years, if we mistake not, after their arrival in this country, retained all the principles and practices which characterized their sect in Holland. That is, they held and practised ordination by the lay members of the Church. They considered ministers as vested with official power only within the bounds of the Church choosing and ordaining them. And they considered a minister who left one Church and went to another, as having no official character in his new station, until the Church which had sought his translation, not only elected him as their pastor, but also ordained him to the work of the ministry anew. These Independents, also, when they first came to New England, maintained the divine authority of the office of *Ruling Elder*, and considered it as indispensable to have such an officer in all their Churches.

Twenty-eight years after the arrival of the first settlers in Massachusetts, the colonists, finding the importance of some ecclesiastical directory and bond of union, beyond what their original system, or rather want of system, afforded, drew up and adopted, in 1648, the “Cambridge Platform.” This “Platform of Discipline” left every thing very much as before, excepting that it strongly recommended the use of *Synods* and *Councils*, when they should become necessary. Yet it prescribed no law or regulation for the stated meeting of such bodies. It only recommended that they be resorted to when needed or wished for; and that their directions and determinations be received with reverence and submission, “so far as consonant to the word of God,” of which each Church was to be the sovereign judge. Of course, they were to be called only when the Churches, or any particular Church chose to call them; and when they *were* called, their awards were to be respected only just so far as the people

chose to respect them. The whole business of the lawfulness of *lay ordination* was left by this Platform, as before; and no regulation was made respecting the licensing of candidates for the holy ministry.

The Churches of New England went on for sixty years under this "Platform." Towards the end of that time, the ministers of *Connecticut* became dissatisfied with the provisions of that Platform, and convinced that something more definite, and carrying with it more authority and energy, was essential both to the unity and purity of the Church. It was generally conceded, that the state of the Churches was lamentable, with respect to their general order, government and discipline. For want of a more general and energetic government, many Churches ran into confusion; and councils did not prove sufficient to relieve the aggrieved, and restore peace. As there was no precise rule for the calling of councils, council was called against council, and opposite results were given upon the same cases, to the reproach of councils, and the dishonour of religion. Aggrieved Churches and individuals were discouraged; as the existing system of regulation seemed incapable, in difficult cases, of bringing any matter to a final issue. Such meetings of ministers as had taken place, were mere conventions, countenanced by no ecclesiastical constitution; attended only by such as felt inclined to give them countenance; and binding none but those who chose to be bound by them. The neighbouring Churches might ask their advice, or neglect it at pleasure; and after the advice was given, might comply with it, or not, at pleasure. There was no regular method of introducing candidates to the pulpit. When they had finished their collegiate course, if they imagined themselves qualified to preach, and could prevail on some clerical friend to invite them to his pulpit, they began to exercise their gifts, without examination or permission from any ecclesiastical body. Controversies of the most distressing kind arose in several of the most important Churches in Connecticut, which their existing system was found wholly incapable of issuing. In these circumstances, it became apparent to many that, unless some new system of regulation should be adopted, anarchy, and great dishonour to religion must ensue. Such was Congregationalism, as the venerable John Robinson left it.\*

\* See TRUMBULL'S *History of Connecticut*, Vol. I. Chapter 19th, in which statements quite as strong as we have here given, are presented by that learned and zealous Congregationalist. In fact, we have employed much of his language.

In this state of things, the Legislature of Connecticut called a Synod or Council of ministers and messengers of the Churches, to meet at *Saybrook*, in 1708, to deliberate on the ecclesiastical state of the colony, and, if possible, to frame a more efficient and adequate plan of Church government. That Synod drew up and adopted what has been ever since called the "Saybrook Platform." This Platform, besides providing more definitely for the regular ordination of ministers, and the licensure of candidates for the ministry, introduced a new and authoritative judicatory, styled a *Consociation*, made up of ministers and lay delegates, and vested with powers not differing materially from those of the Presbytery in the Presbyterian Church. It is evident, however, that the author of the volume before us is averse to every thing that looks like an approximation to Presbyterianism; and seems very desirous of considering the Consociation as divested of all *judicial* power; although he acknowledges that the most obvious construction of the language of the Platform in regard to this matter is in favour of judicial authority. We are much deceived, however, if this Presbyterian feature in the Saybrook Platform has not been one reason, under God, why Connecticut has been so remarkably free from the contagion of Unitarianism as she has. When that soul-destroying heresy gradually and insidiously crept into Massachusetts, the ecclesiastical bodies in that state had no power to interpose or arrest it. It, therefore, went on "eating as a canker," until nearly a third part of the Churches in the commonwealth become infected with this deplorable poison. In Connecticut, however, peopled, originally by the same class of men, whenever a case appeared in the ministry of alleged friendship to Unitarianism, which has occurred in repeated instances, the Consociation immediately interposed; examined into the case, and, finding the charge well-founded, excluded the delinquent from his pastoral charge, and from their communion; and thus, by the divine blessing, have kept their Churches in a great measure free from that contamination to the present hour. When we ask ourselves, what is the reason of this striking difference between Massachusetts and Connecticut, we can think of no one fact which has probably exerted so great an influence in the protection and confirmation of orthodoxy as that which we have stated.

The opinions of the venerable President Dwight, respecting the Consociational system of Connecticut, are in very



striking contrast with those of his junior brother, the author of this volume. *He* was so far from objecting to the Presbyterian feature of that system, that he earnestly wished it to be *extended* and *confirmed*. His language is as follows:\*

“*There are many cases, in which individuals are dissatisfied, on reasonable grounds, with the judgment of a Church.* It is perfectly obvious, that in a debate between two members of the same Church, the parties may, in many respects, stand on unequal ground. One of them may be ignorant; without family connexions; in humble circumstances; and possessed of little or no personal influence. The other may be a person of distinction; opulent; powerfully connected; of superior understanding; and of great personal influence, not only in the Church, but also in the country at large. As things are in this world, it is impossible, that these persons should possess, in any controversy between them, equal advantages. Beyond all this, the Church itself may be one party, and a poor and powerless member the other. In this case also, it is unnecessary to observe, the individual must labor under every supposable disadvantage, to which a righteous cause can be subjected. To bring the parties in these, or any similar circumstances, as near to a state of equality as human affairs will permit, it seems absolutely necessary, that *every Ecclesiastical Body should have its tribunal of Appeals*; a superior Judicature, established by common consent, and vested with authority to issue finally all those causes, which, before a single Church, are obviously liable to a partial decision.

“Such a tribunal in all the *New England States*, except this, is formed, by what is called, a *Select Council*, that is, a Council mutually chosen by the contending parties. This has long appeared to me a Judicatory most unhappily constituted. The parties choose, of course, such persons, as they suppose most likely to favour themselves. If, therefore, they commit no mistakes in the choice; the Council may be considered as divided in opinion, before it assembles; and as furnishing every reason to believe, that it will not be less divided afterwards. Its proceedings will frequently be marked with strong partialities; and its decisions, if made at all, will not unfrequently be those of a bare majority. Coming from different parts of the country, it will have no common rules of proceeding. After its decisions, its existence ceases.

\* See Dwight's Theology, Vol. IV. Sermon 162.

Its responsibility vanishes with its existence; as does, also, the sense of its authority. As the members frequently come from a distance; it can have no knowledge concerning those numerous particulars, which respect the transactions to be judged of; and the characters, interests, views, and contrivances of those who are immediately concerned. As individuals, these members may, in some instances, have much weight; and in certain circumstances may, by their wisdom and piety, do much good. But all this must arise solely from their personal character. As a Council, as a Judicatory, they can have scarcely any weight at all; for, as they disappear when the trial is ended, they are forgotten in their united character; and, having no permanent existence, are regarded with no habitual respect, and even with no prejudice in their favour. Very often also, as they were chosen on partial principles, they are led of course to partial decisions; and leave behind them very unhappy opinions concerning Ecclesiastical Government at large.

“*In this State*, a much happier mode has been resorted to, for the accomplishment of this object. The Tribunal of Appeal is here a *Consociation*; a standing body, composed of the settled ministers within an associational district, and delegates from the Churches in the same district: a body always existing; of acknowledged authority; of great weight; possessed of all the impartiality, incident to human affairs; feeling its responsibility as a thing of course; a Court of Record, having a regular system of precedents; and, from being frequently called to business of this nature, skilled, to a good degree, in the proper modes of proceeding.

“The greatest defect in this system, as it seems to me, is *the want of a still superior tribunal to receive appeals, in cases where they are obviously necessary*. These it is unnecessary for me to particularize. Every person, extensively acquainted with Ecclesiastical affairs, knows that such cases exist. The only remedy, provided by the system of Discipline established in this State, for those, who feel aggrieved by a Consociational judgment, is to *introduce a neighbouring Consociation as assessors with that, which has given the judgment, at a new hearing of the cause*. The provision of this partial, imperfect, tribunal of appeals, is clear proof, that those, who formed the system, perceived the absolute necessity of some appellate jurisdiction. The Judicatory, which they have furnished of this nature, is, perhaps, the best, which the Churches of the State would at that, or any

succeeding period, have consented to establish. Yet it is easy to see, that, were they disposed, they might easily institute one, which would be incomparably better.

“The only instance found in the Scriptures of an appeal, actually made for the decision of an Ecclesiastical debate, is that recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, and mentioned for another purpose in a former discourse. A number of the *Jews*, in the Church at *Antioch*, insisted, that the Gentile converts should be circumcised, and be obliged to keep the law of Moses. *Paul* and *Barnabas* strenuously controverted this point with them. As no harmonious termination of the debate could be had at *Antioch*; an appeal was made to the Apostles and Elders, at *Jerusalem*. But, as I observed in the discourse mentioned, *it was heard, and determined, by the Apostles, Elders and Brethren*. As this Judicatory was formed under the direction of the Apostles themselves; it must be admitted as a precedent for succeeding Churches; and teaches us, on the one hand, that an appellate Jurisdiction is both lawful and necessary in the Church; and, on the other, that it is to be composed of both ministers and brethren, necessarily acting, at the present time, by delegation.”

We are told by the editors of a contemporary journal,\* that sentiments such as these, were, not many years ago, very common, especially among the younger clergy of Connecticut. But they assure us, that it is not so now. We knew this before; and we regretted to know it. But we are not aware that it can be helped. Of one thing, however, we are perfectly persuaded; and that is, that the growing repugnance to Presbyterianism which exists in many minds in Connecticut, is entirely the result of a want of acquaintance with its real spirit and provisions. We do not mean want of acquaintance with our *books*; but with the practical *character* and *working* of our system *on the spot*. Had not this been the case, the journalists in question would not have intimated to us that they were sometimes almost ready to say, of this system of Church Government, that it is “a yoke upon the necks of the disciples which neither their fathers nor they are able to bear.” The fact is, when properly understood, instead of being regarded as “a yoke of bondage,” it will undoubtedly, when wisely and faithfully administered, be regarded as the only form of church polity which is

\* *Christian Spectator*, of New Haven, Vol. VII. p. 570.

equally and at once friendly to the rights both of the clergy and of the people; and which furnishes the most perfect safeguard against anarchy on the one hand, and tyranny on the other. Without Presbyterianism, or something similar to it, we know not how a number of difficulties which are apt every where to arise in churches, can ever be quietly and speedily settled. When difficulties arise between a Church, and an aggrieved or oppressed member; between a minister and his congregation; or between two or more neighbouring congregations belonging to the same communion; we know of no efficient or adequate tribunal which pure congregationalism affords for meeting and disposing of them. Let the history of many painful conflicts in churches in Massachusetts, from the famous case of *Worcester*, with all its complicated perplexities, down to the present day, at once exemplify and confirm our meaning. The Consociation of Connecticut, however its *judicial* character may be eschewed, or even despised, we cannot doubt, has been instrumental in saving her churches from many a similar conflict. And if the time should ever come when the *juridical* feature in the consociational system shall be abandoned by the Churches of Connecticut, we hazard nothing in predicting, that it will be an unfortunate decision both for their purity and peace.

Presbyterianism, it is true, boasts of no magical power to annihilate the imperfections of men. Restless, intriguing, artful, wicked men may give trouble in all stations, and may perplex the administration of the wisest and most wholesome government in the world. Have we not seen, even in those States which are blest with the wisest and happiest system of laws, and of judicial administration, any where to be found; have we not seen artful, selfish men perplex judges, embarrass judicial proceedings, entrap parties, and spin out contests to a most distressing length; and that under the presiding wisdom of the ablest judicial officers? Would it be wise to say, in such a case, that the judiciary is in fault, and ought to be discarded? No; if the laws were all dictated by heavenly wisdom, and the judges were all inspired men, we should still have disgraceful lawsuits; distressing conflicts of infuriated parties; protracted litigations; and, after all, complaints of partiality and injustice. Under the eyes of inspired apostles, there were ecclesiastical disorders, strifes, and protracted difficulties; in the synod of Jerusalem (Acts xv.) there was "much disputing;" and no man will ever see the churches of any denomination, on this side of

the Millennium, entirely free, for many months together, of mournful evidence, that they are made up of frail, imperfect human beings.

A large portion of the contents of this volume we heartily approve. Most of what is said in relation to the character and duties of Church members we consider as excellent; equally applicable, and equally wise in all religious denominations. Concerning all this, we have, of course, nothing to say, but in the way of praise. Another portion of the work is intended to plead the cause of *Congregationalism*, as a distinctive system, and especially in opposition to Presbyterianism. In regard to this portion, we have only to remark, that, as we cannot fall in with it, so we do not intend to enter the field of argument against it. We do not wish to diminish our author's partiality for the congregational form of government. Let him enjoy it with the fondest affection, and see it transmitted, unimpaired, to his children's children! We would not lift a hand to interrupt his comfort.

But there is a short passage or two, toward the close of the volume, which we confess, we read with some pain, and which we consider as laying the author open to remarks of a very unfavourable kind. The following quotations from the twelfth chapter, beginning at page two hundred and twenty-one, together with the *notes* which accompany them; will prepare the way for a few remarks which we consider the language of our author as demanding.

“Between us and the Presbyterians there has existed a very intimate connection from early times. Near the close of the seventeenth century a formal agreement was entered into by the two denominations in England, with the understanding apparently,—from the title and terms of the compact,\*—that they were thenceforward to regard themselves as one denomination. The union was promptly consented to by the churches in New England; and indeed it almost originated with them, one of their ministers, Dr. Increase Mather of Boston, then in England, being ‘singularly instrumental in effecting that union.’

“This happy union has been farther recognized and cemented by several acts of agreement mutually entered into, some forty years since, by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and the several New England State

\* “Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers, formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational.”

Associations. By these acts the perfect equality and fellowship of the churches and ministers of the two denominations are mutually acknowledged; their ordinations, censures, and other ecclesiastical proceedings are reciprocally regarded as valid and obligatory; and the delegates of each, respectively, are entitled to the same privilege of acting and voting in the ecclesiastical assemblies of the other as their own members.\*

“They are thus essentially one denomination. Though they have different denominational titles, and some diversity of order, they are yet one, not only by formal consent, but

\* “One part of the ‘plan of union’ has respect to the constituting of churches in new settlements. The following are its provisions; which, as they are not generally accessible to our ministers and members, and may be important to many of them, emigrating to the West, are deemed of sufficient importance to form this note.

“1st. It is strictly enjoined on all their missionaries to the new settlements, to endeavour, by all proper means, to promote mutual forbearance and accommodation, between those inhabitants of the new settlements who hold the Presbyterian and those who hold the Congregational form of Church government.

“2nd. If in the new settlements, any Church of the Congregational order shall settle a minister of the Presbyterian order, that Church may, if they choose, still conduct their discipline according to Congregational principles, settling their difficulties among themselves, or by a council mutually agreed upon for that purpose: but if any difficulty shall exist between the minister and the church or any member of it, it shall be referred to the Presbytery to which the minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; if not, to a council consisting of an equal number of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, agreed upon by both parties.

“3d. If a Presbyterian Church shall settle a minister of Congregational principles, that Church may still conduct their discipline according to Presbyterian principles; excepting that if a difficulty arise between him and his Church, or any member of it, the cause shall be tried by the association, to which the said minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; otherwise by a council, one half Congregationalists and the other half Presbyterians, mutually agreed on by the parties.

“4th. If any congregation consist partly of those who hold the Congregational form of discipline, and partly of those who hold the Presbyterian form; we recommend to both parties, that this be no obstruction to their uniting in one Church and settling a minister: and that in this case, the Church choose a standing committee from the communicants of said Church, whose business it shall be, to call to account every member of the Church, who shall conduct himself inconsistently with the laws of Christianity, and to give judgment on such conduct: and if the person condemned by their judgment, be a Presbyterian, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Presbytery; if a Congregationalist, he shall have liberty to appeal to the body of the male communicants of the Church; in the former case the determination of the Presbytery shall be final, unless the Church consent to a further appeal to the Synod, or to the General Assembly; and in the latter case, if the party condemned shall wish for a trial by a mutual council, the cause shall be referred to such council. And provided the said standing committee of any Church, shall depute one of themselves to attend the Presbytery, he may have the same right to sit and act in the Presbytery, as a ruling elder of the Presbyterian Church.”

in faith, spirit and aim. And notwithstanding a disposition to dissolve their union has been manifested latterly by a small and illiberal minority, or, perhaps we should say, by some disquieted individuals, of one of the parties, we trust in God that it shall never be effected. The two branches of the great family are too much alike in character, they have too many noble and holy enterprises upon their common hands, and have too long been blessed in their union, to be soon or easily sundered and estranged from one another. May God preserve both them and his cause from such a calamity!\*"

Mr. Mitchell here refers to *two classes* of articles which have been formed for regulating intercourse between the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. Concerning both he indulges in a style of remark which we verily think he would have forborne, if he had *understood* the subject on which he was writing.

A plan of "union and correspondence" between the General Assembly of our Church, and the General Association of Connecticut, began about forty-six years ago. It originated in proposals adopted by the General Assembly in 1790; and was consummated in 1792, when the first interchange of three delegates from each body, to sit in the other, took place. These delegates, according to the plan first adopted, did not *vote*; but had the privilege of taking part in all deliberations; mutually communicating the views and feelings of each other respectively; and of suggesting such measures as were judged conducive to the great interests of religion in every part of the Church. After this interchange of delegates had continued for two years, it was found so pleasant, and the fraternal confidence of the parties had become so great, that our General Assembly proposed to the General Association, that the delegates on both sides should be allowed to *vote* on all questions which came before the bodies in which they sat respectively. This proposal was accepted; and, for a number of years, the privilege contemplated by it was

"\* Since this volume was prepared for the press, the General Assembly has (at its late session at Pittsburg), *in part* abrogated the above plan of union. But their doings herein are so repugnant to the known sentiments of the great body of the Presbyterians in the United States, that we are persuaded—and indeed we are directly assured by men of extensive influence in that communion—that by another assembly, more correctly exhibiting the sentiments of the Churches, the union will be restored, and more than restored, to its original intimacy. Meantime the act of a waning minority, cannot disturb the substantial harmony that prevails throughout these sister churches."

actually enjoyed and used on both sides; and, in some cases within our recollection, the votes of the Congregational delegates had no small influence in carrying measures proposed in our General Assembly. In the mean while, a similar plan of "union and correspondence" was formed by the General Assembly with the Churches of Vermont, in 1803; of New Hampshire, in 1810; and of Massachusetts, in 1811.\* Not long afterwards articles of corresponsence were adopted by the General Assembly, with the Associate Reformed Church; with the Reformed Dutch Church; and with the German Reformed Church. The three latter, however, though all Presbyterians, in forming *their* articles of corresponsence, declined admitting the privilege of *voting* as one of them, as inconsistent, in their opinion, with constitutional regularity. And hence, for eight or ten years, we had the singular spectacle of all the eastern delegates voting, on all questions, however exclusively interesting to our own Church; while none of the delegates from the Presbyterian bodies were called upon to exercise the same privilege. This anomaly excited attention, and led to those views and suggestions which resulted in the change as to this point which was soon afterwards effected. Mr. Mitchell, indeed, tells us that the privilege of mutually voting in each others public bodies is still exercised, and is one of the evidences of the *unity* of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. He is, however, under an entire mistake. It was abolished a number of years ago. And as the proposal to introduce it came from the General Assembly, so did the request that it might be laid aside. The reasons which prompted the Assembly to propose its relinquishment, were the following.

1. The mutual voting by these delegates which had been long practised, appeared, to many of our wisest and most experienced ministers, on serious consideration, so far as our Church was concerned, to be *unconstitutional*. The form of government under which the General Assembly acts, and by the rules of which it is just as much bound, as any of the lower judicatories—makes express provision for that body maintaining a *correspondence* with sister churches at home and abroad; but not for receiving their members into *authoritative* co-operation with us. It declares, very explicitly, in what manner the General Assembly shall be constituted,

\* At later periods a correspondence has been established with the Consociation of Rhode Island, and the General Conference of Maine.



by the ministers and ruling elders from the several Presbyteries; but opens no door for admitting to a complete membership and vote any other description of persons. It was deliberately deemed, therefore, that our fathers, in forming this plan of correspondence, had gone beyond their constitutional warrant, and that we were, of course, bound to retrace our steps.

2. Another argument for abolishing the voting system, was drawn from the fact before stated, viz. that all the delegates from strictly Presbyterian bodies were excluded, by agreement, from this privilege. It was thought unsuitable that this diversity should any longer exist, and that it was better to place all the delegates from corresponding bodies upon an equal footing.

3. A number of years after the formation of our articles of correspondence with the New England Churches, our own form of government was received, and in regard to some minor points, amended. One of these amendments consisted in *taking away from our own corresponding members*, the right of voting. As the constitution of the Church had stood before, when a member of one of our Presbyteries happened to be present at the session of another Presbytery, he was, as a matter of course, invited to sit as a corresponding member; and as long as he occupied such a seat, it was his privilege not only to take part in the debates, when he thought proper, but also to give as effective a vote as if he were a stated and plenary member of the Presbytery in which he held this temporary seat. On the revision of our constitution, in 1821, it was judged best, for weighty reasons, to declare, that such corresponding members, should, thereafter, be allowed to sit and deliberate, but *not to vote*. In these circumstances, was it unkind or unreasonable to withdraw from the delegates of corresponding sister Churches, a privilege which we had deliberately thought proper to withdraw from the ministers of our own denomination when they sat as corresponding members?

4. But one of the most conclusive reasons which prompted us to wish for the abolition of the voting system, was the great *inequality* of the *power* included in this privilege, as enjoyed by the two parties. On the one hand, it is well known that our General Assembly is a *judicial body*; that its decisions are *authoritative*, and bind the Churches which are represented by its members. On the other hand, it is equally well known, that the general Associations of all the

Congregational Churches of New England, have no judicial authority; that they are only *advisory* bodies; and that, of course, a vote given in them *binds* no one, not even those, strictly speaking, who concur in it. Here, then, is a great difference in the *power* and *effect* of votes. In our General Assembly, if the body should happen to be nearly equally divided, a single delegate, or two, from an Association, if they enjoyed the privilege of voting, might really turn the scale, and give law to the Church on a most important point; or might be instrumental in deciding an interesting case of discipline in a manner contrary to the wishes of a real majority of the Church. But no vote in an Association is clothed with any such power. The utmost potency that *it* can exert is to concur in carrying a question in favour of giving *advice*. It can, in no case, carry with it any judicial authority. Is there not an *inequality* here too great and striking to be disregarded? Is it wonderful that the warm friends of the Presbyterian Church felt as if this inequality, though not *now* invested with any danger, might hereafter become matter of just apprehension? For these reasons, the General Assembly of 1829, respectfully proposed to the several associations of New England, that there should be a mutual relinquishment of the privilege of voting. The General Association of Connecticut assented to the proposed alteration at once. One or two of the others declined adopting it. But it has since been acquiesced in by all; and for the last eight or nine years none of the corresponding delegates sitting in our General Assembly have ever voted.

With regard to the correspondence, thus modified, which has long existed between the New England Associations and our General Assembly, we do not suppose that there is any serious purpose in our Church, certainly no extensive desire, that it should be abandoned or impaired. The last General Assembly, in relation to this matter, adopted the following resolution, by a very *large majority*, if not by a *nearly unanimous vote*. A resolution which we are inclined to think expresses the feelings of nineteen twentieths of the whole Presbyterian Church.

“Resolved, that this General Assembly see no cause either to terminate or modify the plan of correspondence with the Associations of our Congregational brethren in New England. That correspondence has been long established. It is believed to have been productive of mutual benefit. It is now divested of the voting power, which alone could be considered as

infringing the constitution of our Church, by introducing persons clothed with the character of plenary members of the assembly. It stands, at present, substantially on the same footing with the visits of our brethren from the congregational union of England and Wales: and in the present age of enlarged counsel, and of combined effort, for the conversion of the world, ought by no means to be abolished. Besides, the Assembly are persuaded, that amidst the unceasing and growing intercourse, between the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches, it is desirable to have that intercourse regulated by compact; and, of course, that it would be desirable to introduce terms of correspondence, even if they did not already exist."

Surely there is no unkind or unfriendly temper manifested in this resolution; but rather every thing of an opposite character. We really hope that when Mr. Mitchell dispassionately reviews his language, he will consider the tone of some of his remarks as rather ungracious and unseasonable.

With regard to the "plan of union between Presbyterians and Congregationalists, in the new settlements," Mr. Mitchell, we presume, is aware that it is wholly a separate matter from the "correspondence" with the Associations of New England, of which we have been speaking in the preceding pages. The former was established in 1801, *nine years after* the articles of correspondence were adopted, and in operation; and was intended to meet a special difficulty which had, in many instances, occurred, in forming churches out of the heterogeneous mass of population in the new settlements. It had been in operation about thirty-three years, when the proposal for its repeal was brought before the General Assembly. And we verily think that, if Mr. Mitchell had been acquainted with the whole history of the operation of that "Plan of Union;" if he had witnessed, as we have done, intimately, all the uneasiness, the conflicts, and the trouble to which it has given rise, he would have thought it any thing but a plan adapted to promote "union;" and would have been glad to see it discarded as soon as possible. We beg our readers to turn back to a preceding page, in which the articles of this plan are recited at length from Mr. Mitchell's book, and, then, after giving them an impartial perusal, and weighing carefully the following remarks, to say, whether they wonder that the operation of these articles should be found unfavourable to harmony.

1. Our first remark is, that this whole plan was manifestly

intended, from its whole spirit and scope, to be a *temporary arrangement*, to meet an immature and unsettled state of things, and by no means to be adopted as a permanent ecclesiastical system. Could it be considered, therefore, as fair and proper, when a church formed in the "new settlements" had settled down regularly on the simple, Congregational plan; when there was no longer a mixture of the two denominations; when the Congregational form of government was decidedly, if not unanimously preferred;—and when there was no longer that troublesome diversity and conflict of opinion which the plan contemplates, and was intended to remedy;—can it be considered, we say, as fair and proper for such a congregation to avail itself of the provisions of this plan, and to send delegates to sit in our judicatories? Surely the privilege contemplated belongs exclusively to a church made up partly of Presbyterians, and partly of Congregationalists, who cannot agree to unite upon any other than some middle or accommodating plan. Of course, when a church really and entirely Congregational in its government and discipline, avails itself of this "plan" to send a "committee man," even to the Presbytery, it makes a use of this accommodating system which is altogether unjustifiable, and one which, however honestly intended, ought never to be allowed. It is perverting a mutual privilege from its original design, and making it to serve a purpose which its spirit wholly forbids. Why might not *any* Congregational Church, in the state of New York, or elsewhere, that wished, for a particular purpose, to have a seat and a vote in a neighbouring Presbytery, on the same principle, send forward a "committee man," and claim admission?

2. A second remark is, that the obvious intention of the plan, in regard to "committee men," is that they should not be entitled to seats in any judicatory *higher than the Presbytery*. The rule expressly declares, that they shall be allowed to sit in the Presbytery, but not a word is said of any higher judicatory. Yet very soon after the plan was adopted, these "committee men" began to present commissions for seats in the General Assembly, and claimed seats in that judicatory, as a right founded on one of the provisions of the plan. And even when their admission was objected to, and warmly opposed, still it was insisted upon; the objection was overruled; and large numbers of them, at different times, occupied seats, and participated in judicial deci-

sions intended to operate on the whole church. This leads to a

. 3. Third remark, which is, that when "committee men" thus introduced, are permitted to sit and vote in the higher judicatories of the church, and especially in the General Assembly, the practice, it is evident, must have a most *unequal operation*, and can scarcely fail of exciting apprehension in discerning minds. It is well known that the constitution of our church requires every minister and elder, before he is clothed with office, solemnly to adopt the Confession of Faith of our Church, as "containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures;" and also to declare, that he "approves the plan of government of the Presbyterian Church in the United States." Now, if these solemn declarations are required of all who properly belong to *our own body*; when no man among us, however wise, pious or learned, can be admitted to the office of either *teacher* or *ruler*, without making the solemn profession and engagement which an assent to these formularies imports;—can it be either reasonable or equitable, to give the same privilege and power, on easier terms, to those who are not members of our own body at all? Especially when it is considered,

4. That in the higher judicatories of our Church, and particularly in the General Assembly, the most important questions concerning doctrine and order are continually coming up, in the shape of references, appeals, complaints, &c. to be judicially decided for the guidance of our whole body. Every one will see and acknowledge at once, that these decisions ought always to be in conformity with those public standards of doctrine, government and discipline, in accordance with which we have, as a church, agreed to walk together. But is it wise or safe to admit into such a judicial body, entrusted with these high, delicate and momentous duties, men, however pious, who have never subscribed our public standards; nay, more than this, men who, by the very name and character in which they present themselves, as candidates for seats in that body, practically declare, that *they do not approve our form of government, and cannot assent to our Confession of Faith?* Is it just and right to give to such brethren seats in our highest judicatories; and decisive votes in the most delicate cases of discipline in regard to doctrine or order? One or two such votes might turn the scale in modifying the laws, and controlling the vital concerns of a Church, to the constitution of which they have

such insuperable repugnance, that they are constrained in conscience to stand aloof from it, and never, in fact, attempt to approach it, but for the purpose of interposing to take a part in its government. Is this wise? Is it equitable? Ought it to be desired by the brethren themselves? Ought it to be granted them if they did desire it? One would think a fair and honourable mind would revolt equally from seeking or allowing any thing of this kind. Yet cases of this nature have, no doubt, occurred in our General Assembly every year for the last fifteen or twenty years. Gentlemen reputed pious;—who had never adopted our public standards, and could not conscientiously do it;—gentlemen who disliked our form of government, and who could not be regular elders because they could not honestly make the profession, and take the engagements of elders;—have yet sat as judges in deciding great questions for the whole Presbyterian Church; and have sometimes, as bystanders have thought, given votes directly in opposition to our public formularies. Nor is this all. They themselves are not subject to the regulations and judgments which they assist in forming! Like the Scribes and Pharisees of old, they lay burdens on the shoulders of others which they themselves will not touch with one of their fingers. Is it any wonder that such facts should give pain to sound and conscientious Presbyterians? Is it strange that they contemplated such brethren, thus legislating and judging for them, with distrust and apprehension? Truly if they did not so regard them, it would argue a want of intelligence, or a degree of recklessness of the most extraordinary kind. Is this really doing as we would wish others, in like circumstances, to do to us? Nothing has ever surprised us more than to see men professing a sincere attachment to the Presbyterian Church, indifferent to the facts which have been stated, and void of all apprehension in regard to their consequences. In the view of those who have no particular desire to preserve our doctrine and order in their purity, such facts must, of course, appear as trifles, and all contest about them folly:—but in the estimation of those who wish to “keep that which has been committed to them,” and to transmit it pure and entire to their children, it is impossible that such facts should appear otherwise than deeply ominous and threatening.

5. One consideration more has rendered many sound Presbyterians averse to the “plan” in question; which is that the conditions of it with regard to “committee men,”

have not been always faithfully observed, and it is really difficult to know how far they *are* observed. Some of this class have been not only commissioned to the General Assembly, but sent under the name of "Ruling Elders;" *so styled* in their commissions; and under this name and guise have taken their seats. Surely it is, in all cases, due to justice and order that their real character be known. To conceal that character, and to present commissioners under the title of Ruling Elders, who never bore that office, is a deception altogether unjustifiable. Indeed, in one case, at least, that fell under our notice, an individual was commissioned, and took his seat in the General Assembly, under the title of a "Ruling Elder," who was *not even a "committee man,"* but an ordinary private member of the church.

Is it wonderful that the General Assembly, when they saw the "plan" liable to these objections, and thus operating; when they perceived it to be, in many ways, working mischief, and likely to undermine all our distinctive principles of church order; when they found, that, instead of promoting "union," it rather generated heart burnings and strife; and when it became evident that no remonstrance on the subject could obviate these evils; but that they would be likely to continue and grow as long as the system lasted;—when these things were apparent, was it wonderful that the General Assembly came to the deliberate conclusion, that it was advisable to set aside the system altogether; and that the sooner it was abolished, the better both for the purity and peace of both parties. After all, however, so tender was the General Assembly of the feelings and interests of the Churches which had been formed under this plan, that it resolved, that the repeal of the plan should not interfere with the continued existence and operation of such churches; but should only arrest the *progress* of the business, and prevent the formation of *more* on that principle.

As to the offensive language which Mr. Mitchell has allowed himself to employ, concerning the act of the last General Assembly, in proposing to the General Association of Connecticut the repeal of this plan of union for churches in the "new settlements,"—we can easily pardon it, under the confident persuasion that he would not have expressed himself thus, had he understood the subject. We appeal from Mr. Mitchell *in the dark*, to Mr. Mitchell *better informed*. We have never been accused, that we know, of belonging to the class of the *ultra* orthodox; but we think we can ven-

ture to assure this gentleman that when he stigmatizes this act of the last Assembly, as the act of "a waning minority;" and when he gives an implied promise to his readers,—on the credit of "men of extensive influence in our communion,"—that this act of the last Assembly will be rescinded by the next—he labours under a grievous mistake. We are greatly deceived, if the conviction that the last Assembly acted wisely in this matter, is not *waxing*, instead of "waning." Of one thing we are quite certain, that *such language*, coming from such a quarter, and breathing such a spirit—will not be likely to conciliate reflecting Presbyterians to the cause which such language is manifestly intended to promote.

Mr. Mitchell is, evidently, very much attached to the principles of the Congregational system. He thinks them founded in the word of God, and more conducive than any other to promote the interests of pure and undefiled religion. Of this, we make no complaint. Nay, we honour him for his honest decision and zeal in what he esteems a good cause. But what would *he* think of a body of Presbyterians who, though pious and honest, should conscientiously and perseveringly busy themselves in going in to the Congregational Churches, and there building up a system, under the guise of "union" and brotherhood, which he saw was calculated to weaken, and finally to undermine and destroy that ecclesiastical order which he deemed of great importance to the best interest of the churches with which he is connected? We need not wait for an answer. He would deeply disapprove their conduct. Nay, more, he would feel indignant. Nor should we blame the feeling.

We can assure our readers that we are so far from having any disposition to remove or impair the ties by which we are bound to our Congregational brethren of New England, that the very reverse is the fact. It is because we earnestly wish all our intercourse with them to be placed on the most pleasant and edifying footing that the communion of saints can exemplify, that we are grieved when any either of their number or our own, are guilty of uttering language, or manifesting a spirit which we deem unfriendly to union. We have never considered it as matter of complaint when our beloved brethren of New England have manifested a preference to their own system of church order. We hope they will allow us to enjoy the same privilege; and will not consider it as an offence if we are unwilling to concur, and per-



severe, in plans of procedure which are, in our estimation, adapted slowly, but certainly to destroy that system, which some of us, at least, prize as highly as any of *their* number can prize that which *they* have chosen.

It was our happiness, in early life, to be connected, in social and official intercourse, with brethren from New England, whose spirit and conduct it is delightful to remember. Some of them have gone to their reward. Others still live to edify and bless the Church. They did not forget the land or the Church of their nativity; but they became soon attached to the Church of their adoption, and sought its peace and edification with an honour and fidelity of the most exemplary kind. From the moment they joined our ranks, and subscribed our formularies, they identified themselves with our system, and became its cordial supporters. *O si sic omnes!* If our correspondence with the Congregational Churches is to continue (and we can cordially say, *esto perpetua!*) it must be conducted in good faith on both sides. If this principle be at any time, or by either denomination forgotten; if the acts of each party be not mutually respected; if a policy or plans be at any time pursued, on either side, which may give even plausible reason to suspect that purposes of encroachment and ecclesiastical advantage are entertained by either party; the correspondence cannot long be satisfactory; nay, it ought not to be continued for an hour. But, if, on the other hand, the intercourse of the two denominations be habitually marked with the spirit of the gospel; if they studiously "follow the things which make for peace;" if they come together to be promoters of each other's zeal, and "helpers of each other's joy;" if they cordially unite in CONTENDING FOR AND PRESERVING "THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS," and mutually set their faces against ALL PERVERTERS AND CORRUPTERS OF THE TRUTH; and if their counsels be constantly directed to the advancement of that "kingdom which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;" all will be well. Our intercourse will be equally pleasant and profitable; and the powers of Satan will be abashed at every meeting of our joint assemblies. We can remember the time when a spirit like this appeared eminently to characterize and govern our connection. It was so in the days of the venerable Rodgers and Macwhorter, on the one side, and of the venerable and excellent Dwight, Strong, and men like them, on the other. Long, very long, may this blessed spirit preside over all our

intercourse! Henceforth may there be no other strife between us than who shall be most indulgent and respectful to each other's peculiarities; who shall love one another, and our common Master with the most fervent affection; and who shall do most for the conversion of the world to God, and thus "filling it with his glory!"

For ourselves, in fine, we are constrained to say, with emphasis, the longer we live, the deeper is our conviction, that, if the Presbyterian Church desires to have a healthful and solid growth, and to accomplish the greatest amount of good in our own body, and to all around her; her true policy is, not to level the walls which divide her from other denominations; not to seek a rapid enlargement, by gaining numbers at the expense of surrendering her peculiarities as a denomination. Our strength and glory, as a Church, consist in our simple, pure, apostolical doctrine and government, accompanied by the Holy Spirit's awakening and sanctifying power. The moment we give up these, we are like Sampson shorn of his locks. The Philistines will be upon us, and will prevail against us. All history bears witness, that when Presbyterians degenerated into Arminianism, or Pelagianism, and consented to exchange their government and discipline for a more lax system, their glory departed. Their peace was gone. They gained in numbers; but they lost in purity, in harmony, and in strength. The true way for every denomination (and we should say the same if we were conscientious Congregationalists) is faithfully to hold fast and maintain that system of truth and order which it verily believes to be founded in the word of God, without surrender or compromise; to treat all denominations around it with respect and kindness; to indulge in no exclusive claims, or denominational reproaches; to co-operate with others in enterprises of general Christian benevolence, as far as can be done without the sacrifice of a single principle; and to employ its utmost strength in sustaining at home, and spreading as far as possible abroad, that system of doctrine, worship, and discipline, which it believes to be scriptural. This is the true way to peace, to harmony, to brotherly love, and to spiritual strength. No denomination of Christians ever faithfully and prayerfully pursued this course without being blessed of God, and largely prospering. And were the Presbyterian Church, from this hour, sacredly and strictly to adopt this plan in conducting all her affairs; acting faithfully in conformity with her own published principles; seek-

ing no additional alliances; making no compromises, for the sake of gaining either money or men; receiving none, either as ministers or elders, but those who appeared truly and sincerely to love her system as a whole, and decisively to prefer it to all others; were she, henceforth, simply to take this course; turning neither to the right hand nor to the left for the purpose of enlarging her borders; and exerting herself to the utmost, to give her system, in its simplicity and purity, as far as possible, to all nations; her growth would be not, perhaps, quite so rapid; but it would be healthful, homogeneous, and peaceful. Every accession to her numbers, instead of introducing disaffection and division into her camp, would be an increase of real strength. Such a policy, faithfully pursued, would be the precursor of the most happy and prosperous day she has yet seen, and render her a richer blessing than she has ever yet been, to the religious denominations around her, to our country, and to the world.

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*Charles Goodloe*

ART. VI.—*Slavery.* By *William E. Channing.* Boston: James Munroe and Company; 1835. pp. 166.

EVERY one must be sensible that a very great change has, within a few years, been produced in the feelings, if not in the opinions of the public in relation to slavery. It is not long since the acknowledgement was frequent at the south, and universal at the north, that it was a great evil. It was spoken of in the slaveholding states, as a sad inheritance fixed upon them by the cupidity of the mother-country in spite of their repeated remonstrances. The known sentiments of Jefferson were reiterated again and again in every part of his native state; and some of the strongest denunciations of this evil, and some of the most ardent aspirations for deliverance from it ever uttered in the country, were pronounced, but a few years since, in the legislature of Virginia. A proposition to call a convention, with the purpose of so amending the constitution of the state as to admit of the general emancipation of the slaves, is said to have failed in the legislature of Kentucky by a single vote.\* The sen-

\* It is probable that many reasons combined to make a convention desirable to those who voted for it. But to get rid of slavery, was said to be one of the most prominent.