MINUTES, 1840.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met, agreeably to appointment, in the First Presbyterian church in the city of Philadelphia, on the third Thursday of May, 1840, at 11 o'clock A. M., and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. Baxter Dickinson, D. D., Moderator of the last Assembly, from Isaiah, 32 : 15—"Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."

After public worship the Assembly was constituted with prayer.

The Committee of Commissions reported that the following persons present had been duly appointed Commissioners to this General Assembly, viz.:

I. SYNOD OF ALBANY.

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Londonderry.		
Newburyport.		
Champlain,	Charles F. Halsey.	
Troy,	John F. Scovil.	
Albany,	Edward N. Kirk,	Cornelius Dubois.
Columbia.		

II. SYNOD OF UTICA.

St. Lawrence.		
Watertown,	John H. Carle.	
Oswego,	John Gridley.	
Oneida,	Samuel Wells,	Gilbert M. Gifford, Daniel C. Mills.
Otsego,	Aaron P. Allen,	Ezra R. Brewer.

III. SYNOD OF GENEVA.

Geneva,	Ovid Miner, Philip C. Hay, D. D.,	Arad Joy, *2 H. H. Seelye.
Chenango.		
Onondaga,	A. C. Tuttle,	Curtis J. Hurd.
Cayuga,	Baxter Dickinson, D. D., Leonard E. Lathrop.	
Tioga,	Charles White.	
Cortland,	2 Peter Lockwood.	
Bath.	John L. Morgan,	David Abbey.
Delaware,	Fordyce Harrington,	2 Ebenezer Gilbert.
Chemung,	Charles Goodrich.	
Ithaca,	William Wisner.	[4]

* The figures refer to the day of the sessions upon which the members took their seats.

IV. SYNOD OF GENESSEE.

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Genessee,	William H. Beecher,	P. A. Royce.
Ontario.		
Rochester.		
Niagara,	Milton Buttolph.	
Buffalo,	2 Sylvester Cowles.	
Angelica.		

V. SYNOD OF NEW-YORK.

Hudson,	Daniel T. Wood,	Benjamin Dunning.
North River,	William N. Sayre,	James Carman.
New-York, 2d,	Henry A. Rowland,	Dr. Matson Smith.
New-York, 3d,	James W. M'Lane,	G. U. Richards.
	Joel Parker,	
Long Island,	Daniel Beers.	
Brooklyn,	Samuel H. Cox, D. D.,	James Ruthven.

VI. SYNOD OF NEWARK.

Newark,	2 Richard F. Cleaveland.	
Montrose,	Joseph Barlow.	
Rockaway,	Barnabas King.	

VII. SYNOD OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Wilmington,	George Foot,	A. Snow Naudain.
Lewes,	Henry C. Fries,	J. P. R. Gillis.
Philadelphia, 3d,	Eliakim Phelps,	John Lindsey,
	William Sterling,	R. W. Davenport.
Harrisburg,	Wm. R. De Witt, D. D.,	Thomas Urie.
Pittsburgh,	2 D. H. Riddle, D. D.,	2 Benj. A. Fahnestock.
Erie,	Nathaniel West.	

VIII. SYNOD OF WESTERN RESERVE.

Grand River.		
Portage,	Samuel H. Whittlesey.	
Huron,	J. A. Hart,	6 Henry Brown.
Maumee.		
Trumbull,	E. B. Chamberlain,	Augustus Fuller.
Cleveland,	2 H. A. Reed.	
Medina.		

IX. SYNOD OF MICHIGAN.

Detroit.		
Monroe.		
St. Joseph.		
Marshall,		4 George W. Clark.
Washtenaw.		
Kalamazoo.		

[5]

X. SYNOD OF OHIO.

Athens,	Samuel Payne,	William Slocomb.
Lancaster,	Ebenezer Buckingham,	James Young.
Marion,	Henry Shedd.	

XI. SYNOD OF CINCINNATI.

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Cincinnati,	Thornton A. Mills,	Dr. George L. Weed.
Dayton,	William Gray.	
Ripley,	2 James Shaw.	

XII. SYNOD OF INDIANA.

Salem,	Solomon Kittredge.	
Madison,	Henry Little.	
Crawfordsville.		
Indianapolis,	Alvah G. Dunning.	

XIII. SYNOD OF ILLINOIS.

Illinois.		
Sangamon,	3 Lemuel Foster.	
Ottawa.		
Schuyler.		
Palestine.		
Peoria.		
Alton,	Daniel E. Manton.	
Knox,	John J. Miter.	

XIV. SYNOD OF MISSOURI.

Missouri.		
St. Louis.		
St. Charles.		

XV. SYNOD OF VIRGINIA.

Winchester,	William Hill, D. D.,	John White.
Dist. of Columbia,	W. M'Lain.	
Hanover,	James H. C. Leach.	

XVI. SYNOD OF TENNESSEE.

Abingdon.		
Union.		
French Broad.		
Holston,		4 John Blair.
Kingston,	Thomas Brown.	
New River.		
Clinton.		
General Association of Connecticut,		Rev. Edwin Hall, Rev. Noah Coe, Rev. T. L. Shipman. [6]

The Committee further reported, that the Rev. Daniel E. Manton, of the Presbytery of Alton, appeared without a Commission, stating that his Commission had been sent by mail, and had not yet arrived.

His case was, on motion, referred to Messrs. Phelps, Lathrop, and Thornton A. Mills, as a *Committee of Elections.*

After a short conference, the Committee, satisfied of the fact of his having been regularly appointed, made a favorable report, and recommended that he be received. Ordered that his name be entered on the Roll.

Adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Thursday, half-past 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The Minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

The Committee of Commissions reported the following additional Commissioners, who appeared and took their seats:

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Watertown,	John H. Carle.	
Otsego,	Aaron P. Allen,	Ezra R. Brewer.
Geneva,		Arad Joy.
Bath,	John C. Morgan,	David Abbey.
Indianapolis,	Alvah G. Dunning.	
Winchester,		John White.
Genessee,	William H. Beecher,	P. A. Royce.
Trumbull,		Augustus Fuller.
Albany,		Cornelius Dubois.
Hudson,	Daniel T. Wood.	
Niagara,	Milton Buttolph.	
Montrose,	Joseph Barlow.	
Long Island,	Daniel Beers,	
North River,	William N. Sayre,	James Carman.
General Association of Connecticut,		Rev. Edwin Hall,
		Rev. Noah Coe,
		Rev. T. L. Shipman.

The Rev. William Wisner was chosen Moderator, and the Rev. Henry A. Rowland, Temporary Clerk.

On motion of Dr. Hill, it was *Resolved* that the rules for the government of the Assembly be the same as were in force the last year.

The printed Minutes of the last General Assembly were distributed to the members.

Dr. Cox, one of the Delegates to the General Associations of Connecticut and Massachusetts, made a verbal report of his visit to those bodies, and his report was accepted and approved.

On motion of Dr. Dickinson, it was resolved to appoint the usual Standing Committees.

Resolved, That it be the order of the day for Monday morning next, [7] at 11 o'clock, to receive the Narratives of the Presbyteries on the State of Religion; and that the meeting on that occasion be held in the body of the church.

On motion of Dr. Cox, it was *Resolved*, that a Committee of seven members be appointed on the *Polity of the Church;* and that it be referred to this Committee to examine and settle the true Roll of the Presbyteries and Synods connected with the Assembly: and that they receive the reports of the several Presbyteries on amending the constitution of the Church.

Dr. Hill, Dr. Cox, Dr. Hay, and Messrs. Kirk, Leach, Richards, and Naudain, were appointed that Committee.

Dr. Dickinson, Dr. De Witt, and Messrs. Parker, Beecher, White, Ruthven and Joy, were appointed a *Committee of Bills and Overtures;* to meet at 8 o'clock to-morrow morning, and afterwards on their own adjournment.

Dr. Cox and Messrs. Lathrop, Gridley, Beers, King, Dr. Matson Smith, and James Young, were appointed a *Judicial Committee;* to meet this evening on the rising of the Assembly, and afterwards on their own adjournment.

It was recommended to the churches to observe the first Monday of Jan-

uary next, in the usual manner, as a day of prayer for the conversion of the world.

Messrs. Davenport, Urie, and Dr. Weed, were appointed a *Committee on Mileage.* The rule on page 28 of the Digest, in reference to mileage, was read by the Moderator.

Messrs. Kirk, Carle, Phelps, Whittlesey, and Mr. Hall, of the General Association of Connecticut, were appointed a *Committee on the Narrative.*

Messrs. Phelps, Brown, and Buckingham, were appointed a *Committee on Devotional Exercises.*

Messrs. Wells, Minor, Goodrich, Wood, and Carman, were appointed a *Committee on Leave of Absence.*

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Friday Morning, May 22, 9 *o'clock.*

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer. The Roll was called, and the Minutes of the preceding session were read.

The Committee of Commissions reported the following additional members, who appeared and took their seats: From the Presbytery of Delaware, Rev. Fordyce Harrington, and Ebenezer Gilbert, Ruling Elder. From the Presbytery of Courtlandt, Rev. Peter Lockwood. From the Presbytery of Ripley, Rev. James Shaw. From the Presbytery of Geneva, H. H. Seeley, Ruling Elder. From the Presbytery of Newark, Rev. Richard F. Cleaveland. From the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, Rev. D. H. Riddle, D. D., and Benjamin A. Fahnestock, Ruling Elder.

The Presbyteries were called in order for their answers to the Overtures sent down by the last General Assembly, in reference to alterations of the Constitution; and their answers were committed to the Committee on the Polity of the Church. [8]

A letter from the Synod of Ulster to this General Assembly was presented by the Stated Clerk, and after being read in full to the Assembly, was committed to Dr. Cox, Mr. West, and Dr. Hay, to consider and answer.

Dr. Dickinson, from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported Overture No. 1, viz.—A memorial from the Synods of Indiana and Cincinnati, requesting the Assembly to "Make the State line the division line between the two Synods." On motion of the Committee, the request of the memorialists was granted.

The following Committees were appointed to examine the records of the several Synods, viz. on the Records of the Synod of

Albany—Messrs. Gridley, Allen, and Gifford.
Utica—Messrs. Halsey, Scovill, and Dubois.
Geneva—Messrs. Sayre, W. M'Lain, and Benjamin Dunning.
Genessee—Dr. Dickinson, C. White, and Mr. Joy.
New-York—Messrs. Barlow, Foot, and Gillis.
Newark—Messrs. Hart, Chamberlain, and Fuller.
Pennsylvania—Messrs. Rowland, Brown, and John White.
Western Reserve—Messrs. Tuttle, Morgan, and Abbey.
Michigan—Messrs. Payne, Shedd, and Young.
Ohio—Messrs. T. A. Mills, Gray, and Dr. Weed.
Cincinnati—Messrs. Kittredge, Little, and Slocomb.
Indiana—Messrs. Miln, Sterling, and Lindsey.
Illinois—Dr. De Witt, and Messrs. West and Carman.
Missouri—Messrs. Brown, Phelps, and J. White.
Virginia—Messrs. Parker, Buttolph, and Fuller.

Tennessee—Messrs. Leach, Dr. Hay, and Mr. Hurd.

Receiving Statistical Reports from Presbyteries was made the order of the day for to-morrow morning, 9 o'clock.

Ordered, that the collections for the Contingent Fund be paid over to the Stated Clerk; and the collections for the Commissioners' Fund be paid over to the Chairman of the Committee on Mileage.

The subject of nominating and selecting Trustees of the General Assembly, and Directors of the Theological Seminaries, was referred to Messrs. Foot, T. A. Mills, and H. A. Rowland, to consider and report.

The Assembly then adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Friday, P. M., half-past 3 o'clock.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer. The Minutes of the preceding Session were read and approved.

The Rev. H. A. Reed, from the Presbytery of Cleveland, and Rev. Sylvester Cowles, from the Presbytery of Buffalo, presented their Commissions, and were enrolled as members.

Dr. Cox, from the Judicial Committee, reported the "Complaint of William H. Beecher, and others, against a decision of the Synod of Genessee," as in order. The report was accepted, and, on motion, the case was taken up for consideration. [9]

The Moderator read the rule enjoining on the members to recollect and regard their high character as judges of a court of Jesus Christ, and the solemn duty in which they were about to act.

Mr. Buttolph, one of the Synod complained of, requested that counsel might be assigned to aid him in the defence of Synod. The Rev. Mr. Phelps was appointed.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures reported Overture No. 2, viz. Memorials from Presbyteries on the subject of Slavery; and also Overture No. 3, viz. A Communication from the Secretary of the American Colonization Society. The report was accepted, and, on motion, was laid upon the table.

The Committee gave it as their opinion, that after the full discussion of the subject before the last Assembly, and the decision then had, it is inexpedient for this Assembly to take any further action on the subject.

The Rev. Anson Rood, delegate to the General Association of New Hampshire and General Convention of Vermont, made a report of his attendance on those bodies. His report was accepted and approved.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Saturday Morning, May 23, 9 o'clock.

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer. The Roll was called, and the Minutes of the last session were read.

Rev. Lemuel Foster, from the Presbytery of Sangamon, presented his Commission and took his seat as a member.

The Statistical Reports of Presbyteries were called for, received, and committed to the Stated Clerk.

The Report of the Delegates to the Congregational Union of England and Wales was received and read. The report was accepted and approved.

A circular from a Committee of the American Temperance Union was received and read, and then committed to Dr. Riddle, Mr. Kirk, and Mr. Joy, to consider and report.

An invitation was received from the Inspectors of the Eastern Penitentiary to visit that Institution at such times as may be most convenient.

The Committees appointed to examine the Records of the several Synods reported, and on their recommendation, the Records of the Synods of Albany, Geneva, New-York, Newark, Western Reserve, Michigan, Virginia, Cincinnati, Pennsylvania, and Indiana, were approved.

The Records of the Synods of Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri, were not present, and the Committees appointed to examine them, were discharged.

Dr. Cox reported an answer to the letter from the Synod of Ulster, which was read and approved.

The unfinished business of the last evening, viz. the Complaint of William H. Beecher, *vs.* the Synod of Genessee, was resumed.

The parties having agreed on a statement of the points at issue, Mr. Beecher was heard in support of his complaint, and Mr. Phelps in defence of the Synod. [10]

The parties having been fully heard, were considered as withdrawn.

On motion of Dr. Cox, the whole subject was then referred to a Committee of three to digest and report a suitable judgment in the case. Dr. Cox, Dr. Dickinson, and Mr. Lathrop were appointed that Committee.

The Committee on the Polity of the Church made a report in part, and had leave to sit again.

The Report of the Committee of Overtures on Overtures Nos. 2 and 3, which had been laid upon the table, was taken up for consideration, and on motion was made the order of the day for Tuesday next at 9 o'clock.

The last motion was afterwards reconsidered and lost.

The Assembly then adjourned till Monday morning 9 o'clock.

Concluded with prayer.

Monday Morning, May 25, 9 *o'clock.*

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer. The Roll was called, and the Minutes of the last session were read.

Mr. George W. Clark, a Ruling Elder from the Presbytery of Marshall, presented his Commission and took his seat as a Member.

Mr. Phelps, from the Committee on Devotional Exercises, made a report recommending that Wednesday morning next, after 11 o'clock, be set apart for religious services in the following order:

1. Invocation by the Moderator. 2. Singing and Prayer by Dr. De Witt. 3. Address by Mr. Leach. 4. Singing and Prayer by Dr. Riddle. 5. Address by Mr. Coe, of Connecticut. 6. Prayer by Mr. Shipman, of Connecticut. 7. Address by Dr. Cox. 8. Doxology and Benediction by Dr. Hill.

The report was adopted.

A nomination was made of Delegates to Corresponding Bodies.

Overture No. 2 on the subject of Slavery was taken up for consideration.

The Report was read, and is as follows:

"The Committee on Bills and Overtures report Overture No. 2, viz. Communications, to the number of twelve, on Slavery. Some of these papers consist simply of resolutions expressing the views of the respective Presbyteries on the subject of Slavery; and others are in the form of memorials asking the action of the Assembly with a view to the removal of Slavery from the churches; and one of these memorials desires the General Assembly to take no action on the subject."

On this Overture the Committee recommend the adoption of the following Preamble and Resolutions:

"*Whereas* the last Assembly received several memorials on Slavery, which were read, and the matter of them considered at much length; and *whereas*, after the full discussion, the Assembly, with great unanimity, referred the whole subject of the memorials to the lower judicatories, leaving it to them to take such order thereon as in their judgment will be most judicious and adapted to remove the evil;" Therefore,

"*Resolved*, That this Assembly regard the disposal which the last [11] Assembly made of this subject as wise; and that all further action on the subject by the General Assembly is at present inexpedient."

Mr. Lathrop moved that the Report of the Committee be adopted.

The reading of the memorials was called for; and, after some progress, at 11 o'clock the Assembly removed to the body of the church for the purpose of hearing the Narratives on the State of Religion.

After some progress, the Assembly adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Monday, half-past 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer.

The unfinished business of the morning, viz. the hearing of the Narratives on the state of religion, was resumed and finished.

The Assembly then proceeded to ballot for Delegates to Corresponding Bodies, and the ballots were committed to Messrs. M'Lane and King to canvass and report.

Dr. Cox from the Committee appointed to report a suitable Minute to be adopted in the case of the Complaint of William H. Beecher and others, reported the following, which was adopted:

"On the Complaint of Mr. William H. Beecher and others, against the Synod of Genessee, in the case of the Appeal of Dr. Frank from the decision of the Presbytery of Genessee, the General Assembly sustain the Complaint and reverse the judgment of the Synod on the following grounds, viz.

1. That the merits of the case seem to be expressly declined by the Synod as the subject matter of adjudication.

2. That the Synod appear not to have adhered to the alternatives prescribed by the Constitution. (See Book of Discipline, chap. 7, sect. 3, subsection 10.)

3. That the Synod seem to have forgotten the nature and the limits of their appellate, as distinguished from the original jurisdiction in the case; in that they censure at their bar the appellant in a way competent, in any circumstances, only to the session of the church to which the appellant was primarily amenable.

4. That they seem to have forgotten also, in restoring the appellant, that some expression of repentance ought to have been exacted, especially if their reprimand could, from any tribunal, have been deserved.

The Assembly therefore rule, that the Synod of Genessee should review their proceedings in this case; and, regarding alike the rules of the Constitution and the merits of the case, that they proceed to issue the same with equity and wisdom.

In the matter of defining in what calumny consists, as connected with the case, the Assembly feel it not necessary to express any opinion farther than to recommend the principles of our constitutional discipline.

The Committee on Devotional Exercises made a further report, recommending the administration of the Lord's Supper on Wednesday next.

1. Invocation and Distribution of the bread, by Rev. Charles White. [12]
2. Distribution of the cup, by Rev. Mr. Lathrop.
3. Hymn and benediction, by the Moderator.

The above Report was adopted.

The consideration of the Report of the Committee of Bills and Overtures on Overture No. 2, on the subject of Slavery, was resumed. The question being on the adoption of the Report of the Committee, Mr. Leach moved a postponement of Mr. Lathrop's motion, with a view to introduce the following substitute:

"*Whereas* slavery, as it exists in these United States, is a subject over which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has no control or power to legislate; and which was, after a thorough discussion by the last Assembly, referred to, and declared to belong to the inferior judicatories of the Church, whose local and relative business it is to inspect the moral and religious character and conduct of their own members; therefore

Resolved, That all memorials and petitions on the subject be considered as inappropriate to the functions and relations of the General Assembly."

While the subject was under discussion, the Assembly adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Tuesday Morning, May 26, 9 *o'clock.*

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer. The Roll was called, and the Minutes of yesterday were read and approved.

Mr. John Blair, a ruling elder from the Presbytery of Holston, presented his Commission, and took his seat as a member.

The Records of the Synod of Genessee were approved, with the exception of the record relating to the appeal of Dr. Frank. For a view of the nature and extent of this exception the Synod are referred to a decision of this Assembly on a complaint of William H. Beecher and others.

The records of the Synod of Utica were approved, with the following exceptions:

1. That the Synod issued an appeal from the inferior judicatory, when it appeared before them that an appellant had not given notice in writing that he should appeal, with his reasons assigned for appealing, as required by the Book of Discipline, before the rising of the judicatory appealed from, or within ten days thereafter.

2. That the Synod violated the principles of the Constitution in qualifying the members of the inferior judicatory, to ascertain whether an appeal had been given; when the Book of Discipline requires, that the appeal shall be lodged in the hands of the Moderator; and further, that the inferior judicatory shall send authentic copies of all the records, and of all the testimony relating to the matter of appeal, up the Synod, whose duty it is to issue the appeal, when found to be in order and in accordance with the Book of Discipline.

Mr. M'Lane, from the Committee appointed to count the votes, re- [13] ported that the following persons were chosen Delegates to Corresponding Bodies:

To the *General Association of Connecticut*, the Rev. Eliakim Phelps, Rev. N. S. S. Beman, D. D., and Rev. Ebenezer Cheever.

To the *General Association of Massachusetts*, the Rev. Mr. Phelps and Dr. Beman.

To the *Evangelical Consociation of Rhode Island*, the Rev. Ebenezer Cheever.

To the *General Association of New Hampshire and Vermont*, the Rev. Thomas M'Auley, D. D., LL.D., and Rev. Leonard E. Lathrop.

To the *General Conference of Maine*, the Rev. William Patton, D. D.

The unfinished business of the last evening, viz. the consideration of the Report on Overture No. 2, was resumed.

The question being on the postponement of Mr. Lathrop's motion, to adopt the Report of the Committee, with a view to take up Mr. Leach's substitute, the discussion was continued for some time; when, on motion of Dr. Cox, the discussion was interrupted for the purpose of hearing the Report of the Committee on the Polity of the Church.

The Report of the Committee on the Polity of the Church was then heard, accepted, and for the present laid upon the table.

The unfinished business was resumed, and after much discussion, the motion for postponement was put and lost.

An invitation was received from the Managers of the American Sunday-School Union, to attend their anniversary this afternoon at 4 o'clock.

Copies of the last Annual Report of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions were presented, through Mr. Armstrong, their Secretary, for the use of the members of this Body.

Adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Tuesday, half-past 3 *o'clock, P. M.*

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

Dr. De Witt offered the following resolution, That the Report of the Committee on the Polity of the Church be recommitted to the Committee, that they may amend their Report, and so form the boundaries of the Synods, that no Synod shall embrace within its limits churches from both slave-holding and non-slave-holding States. The resolution was laid upon the table for the present.

The Committee of Overtures reported Overture No. 4. A memorial on the subject of Slavery. *Ordered* that it be placed upon the files with other memorials upon the same subject.

Also, Overture No. 5. On the Sabbath. Committed to Messrs. C. White, Gridley and Slocomb, to consider and report.

Mr. Kirk, from the Committee on the Narrative, presented their report, which was read, and for the present laid upon the table.

The Assembly then had recess till after the anniversary of the American Sunday-School Union.

After recess the Assembly resumed the unfinished business of the [14] morning, viz. the Report of the Committee of Overtures on the subject of Slavery.

Dr. Cox moved a postponement of the Report of the Committee to introduce a substitute. The motion for postponement was carried.

The substitute of Dr. Cox was then moved; and after some discussion, the whole subject was, on the motion of Mr. Kirk, indefinitely postponed.

The Assembly then adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Wednesday Morning, May 27, 9 *o'clock.*

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer.

The Roll was called and the Minutes of yesterday were read.

Mr. Henry Brown, a ruling elder from the Presbytery of Huron, appeared and took his seat.

Dr. Cox moved a re-consideration of the vote for indefinite postponement, passed the last evening. The motion was carried.

The further consideration of the subject was then postponed till to-morrow.

Mr. Foot, from the Committee to nominate Trustees of the General Assembly and Directors of the Theological Seminaries, made a report, and on their recommendation it was

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to make any election of Trustees of the Assembly for the present year.

Nominations were made of Directors for the Princeton and Western Theological Seminaries; and the election of Directors was made the order of the day for to-morrow morning.

Mr. White, from the Committee on Overture No. 5, on the subject of the Sabbath, made a report, which was accepted, adopted, and is as follows:

"The General Assembly, believing the due observance of the Sabbath to be a duty of paramount and universal obligation, according to the law of God, as well as important to the prosperity of the church, the progress of religion, and the interests of the community, regard with deep regret and concern the prevalent desecration of that day in our land.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, 1. That Christian efforts being made to prevent the violation of the great law of the Sabbath receive our unqualified approbation.

2. That the promotion of a holy observance of the Sabbath in the churches, be commended to the vigilant attention of all the Synods, Presbyteries and Sessions connected with this General Assembly.

3. That it be solemnly recommended to all the pastors and ministers in connection with the General Assembly, that they preach on the subject of the obligation and excellence of the law of the Lord's day, as universal, perpetual, and indispensable; and that they do this in concert on Sabbath the 27th of June of the present year, and on the Lord's day next previous to the Fourth of July of every year, till the next Assembly." [15]

Dr. Riddle, from the Committee on the circular of the American Temperance Union, made a report, which was accepted and adopted, and is as follows:

"The General Assembly are fully alive to the interesting connection existing between the progress of temperance and the advancement of true religion, as strikingly and instructively developed by the events of recent times. This blessed reformation has been truly like the 'voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord.' They have watched with the liveliest interest the vicissitudes of this revolution in public sentiment, fraught with so many blessings to the social, civil, and spiritual interests of our race; and have at different times distinctly spoken out their sentiments, and added the whole weight of their influence to the onward movement. They have also, with great delight, anticipated the universal spread of temperance principles and practice throughout our own beloved land, and throughout the world. They have deplored the occasional apathy which has pervaded the public mind on this point. They have mourned over the divisions of sentiment among the true friends of the cause as to the best method of promoting its interests; and have marked the renovated hopes of the common enemy arising from these divisions.

"In accordance with the request of the respectable Association whose letter has been laid before us, the Assembly would once more commend this cause to the prayers and earnest efforts of the churches under our care; recommending to ministers to watch carefully the varying aspects of the reformation, and adjust their ministrations and influence wisely and constantly to its exigencies, urging it forward by all the solemn and weighty influences of the Sabbath and the sanctuary, and all the mighty motives which the subject naturally suggests, in connection with the political

interests, the social blessings, and eternal happiness of our fellow-men. Let the pulpit be always found to be the bulwark of true morality, the fountain of healthful principle, and above all of evangelical motives to the performance of the obvious duties of social life.

"The Assembly would also recommend to all the members of the churches under its care, to be found the fast, unflinching and active friends of temperance; abstaining from all forms and fashions which would countenance to any extent the sin of intemperance; avoiding even the appearance of evil; disentangling themselves from all implication with the traffic and manufacture; and especially presenting in their whole lives a standing and unvarying exemplification of the only true principle of temperance, total abstinence from every thing that will intoxicate.

"The Assembly would, with this expression of their views, leave the particular form of action to the wisdom and prudence of the judicatories, ministers and members of the body of which it is the aggregated and representative organ; praying the great Head of the Church that speedily this, and every other form of evil which has afflicted our world, and impeded the progress of the Gospel, may be taken out of the way."

Dr. Hay introduced a resolution in reference to the division of the Synod of Geneva, which was, on motion, referred to the Committee on the Polity of the Church. [16]

Dr. Cox moved the appointment of a Committee ad interim, to act in the intervals between this and the next General Assembly. Referred to the Committee on the Polity of the Church.

The Assembly then repaired to the body of the church, to engage, as before appointed, in devotional exercises.

After which the Assembly adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Wednesday, half-past 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Assembly met in the church, and agreeably to previous appointment, celebrated the Lord's Supper; after which the Assembly returned to the lecture-room and resumed business.

The Assembly, on the motion of Dr. Cox, took up the Report of the Committee on the Polity of the Church; which, after being amended, was adopted, and is as follows:

Whereas it appears, by abundant evidence, to this Assembly, that another body claiming to be the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, at present exists, organized expressly on a 'new basis,' wholly unknown to the Constitution of our Church, and now holding their sessions in Ranstead Court, in this city: And,

Whereas it is also ascertained that a considerable number of the Presbyteries, formerly in connection with us, have, within the space of two years, withdrawn in fact from us, and are now in connection with the other body, to which we refer above: And,

Whereas, in times so extraordinary and so distressing to those who love the unity of the Church, and stand alone on the old basis of the Constitution of the same, rejecting every idea of any new basis; the conduct of our withdrawing brethren having made the exigency in which we are under the necessity of acting without a precedent and without a parallel: Therefore,

Resolved, 1. That having waited a sufficient time, sincerely desiring the return of our withdrawing brethren to the old basis, which we have never deserted; it is now the duty of this Assembly to declare their disunion, by their own act, from us; and to rectify the Roll of the Presbyteries that are the constituents of this Assembly accordingly.

2. That the following sixteen Synods be recognized as constitutionally remaining with us on the old and the true basis of the Presbyterian Church, viz. Albany, Utica, Geneva, Genessee, New-York, Newark, Pennsylvania, Western Reserve, Michigan, Ohio, Cincinnati, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Virginia, and Tennessee.

The Committee also report,

1. That the Overtures sent down to the Presbyteries, by the Assembly of 1839, have been affirmed in the responses, all three of them; there being 59 affirmatives for the first Overture; 57 for the second; and for the third 44.

The whole number of our Presbyteries last year was 85, of which, [17] consequently, the lowest majority is 43; and this number the Committee have therefore assumed as their criterion of the majority, according to the words of the Constitution.—See Form of Government, chapter 12, section 17.

2. That the paragraph appended to the Overtures having been also affirmed by 49 votes, the Committee have digested their results accordingly, and recommend that the Assembly now rule and ordain the following changes in the polity of the Presbyterian Church in these United States, viz.

(1.) That the ratio of Presbyterial representation be reduced to its minimum, altering our Form of Government, (chapter 12, section 2,) so that said section shall be hereafter alone, and in all, and read as follows, viz.—"The General Assembly shall consist of an equal delegation of Bishops and Ruling Elders from the Presbyteries, in the simple proportion of one minister and one elder from each Presbytery. And these Commissioners, so appointed, shall be styled Commissioners to the General Assembly.

(2.) That section 7 of the same chapter be so altered in its first sentence as to read as follows, viz.—"The General Assembly shall meet triennially, or once in three years, and ordinarily on the third Thursday of the month of May, in every third year.

(3.) That section 8 of the same be so practically modified, and every other part and provision of the Constitution with it conformably, that the present changes, as herein above specified, shall be maintained inviolate, and shall go into full force and operation as the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

The Committee further report, that it be recommended to all the lower judicatories of our Church, to consider well of these changes, that they be introduced wisely and established permanently in the whole Church; and particularly,

1. That the Synods, by having henceforth in their own bodies the final appellate jurisdiction in the Church, are placed under increased obligations correctly to interpret the Constitution; wisely to heal divisions, to promote purity, peace and unity; to show forbearance and the meekness of wisdom in all their deliberations and decisions; to watch over their extensive charges with paternal tenderness and love; and to do all things in their new relations as Provincial Assemblies, respectively, in their appropriate spheres, for the edification of the Church of God, the good of our common country, and the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. That the Presbyteries be regulated in numbers, and in reference to the erection of new ones, as much as practicable, by a desirable medium, as neither too small nor too large: that Presbyteries be not unnecessarily divided or multiplied on the one hand, nor allowed to be unwieldy or of disproportionate numbers on the other. And in general we judge, with reference to the late ratio of representation, that other things being equal,

it is undesirable that any Presbytery should contain more than twenty-four ministers.

3. That the pastoral office should be more and more highly appreciated, practically honored, and mainly promoted, in all our judicatories and [18] churches, as the ordinary, the permanent, and the incomparable way of the Lord, in promoting his own cause, and in educating his people for heaven.

The Committee further report and recommend that it be ordained by the General Assembly, in reference to the Synods of New-York and of Newark, that they be united into one Synod to be called "The Synod of New-York and New-Jersey;" and that said Synod meet in the city of New-York, in the Pearl-street Presbyterian church, on the evening of the third Tuesday of October next, at 7 o'clock, and be opened with a sermon, by the Rev. Samuel Fisher, D. D., or, in case of his absence or inability to act, by the Rev. Erskine Mason, D. D.

It was further *Ordered* by the Assembly that the Presbytery of Montrose may have their election, whether they shall belong to the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey or to the Synod of Geneva, or to the Synod of Pennsylvania; provided they decide and signify their decision to the Stated Clerk of the Assembly before the first of October next; and in case of their failure to take the requisite order in the premises, that then they remain in their present connection with the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey.

It was further *Ordered*, that the Presbytery of Delaware be permitted, if such shall be their election, to join the Synod of Albany. Notice to be given, as in the case of the Presbytery of Montrose, by the first of September.

Dr. Cox, Dr. Hay, and Mr. Miner, were appointed a Committee to consider and report on the subject of Psalmody.

Adjourned till 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

Concluded with prayer.

Thursday Morning, May 28, 9 *o'clock.*

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer.

The Roll was called and the Minutes of yesterday were read and approved.

Leave of absence had been given to Messrs. Dickinson, Sayre, Beers, Brewer, Miter, Cowles, Miner, Slocomb, Wood, Royce, De Witt, Hill, and Seelye.

The order of the day, viz. the election of Directors of the Theological Seminaries, was attended to, and the ballots were committed to Messrs. Phelps, Gridley, and Brown, to canvass and report the result.

The subject laid over from yesterday, viz. the consideration of Dr. Cox's resolution on the subject of ecclesiastical action in reference to Slavery, was taken up.

Dr. Cox asked leave to withdraw his motion. Leave was given.

Dr. Hay then offered the following resolution:

"*Whereas* Slavery as it exists in these United States is interwoven with the civil polity of those portions of the Union where it is found; and on this account all ecclesiastical action in relation to it by the General Assembly is rendered extremely difficult and of doubtful utility, therefore, *Resolved*, that it is inexpedient to take any action in relation to the subject."

On motion of Dr. Cox, the resolution was amended as follows—"that [19] any action different from the action of the Assembly of last year be declined by this Assembly."

Mr. Shedd moved to postpone Dr. Hay's resolution, with a view to introduce the following substitute, viz.

"*Resolved*, That this Assembly re-affirms the language of the General Assembly of 1818, respecting the nature and character of Slavery contained in the Digest, pp. 341–2; and does most affectionately and solemnly refer the whole subject to our churches and lower judicatories; leaving it to them to take such order thereon as in their judgment will be most judicious and adapted to remove the evil."

The motion of Mr. Shedd was lost.

Mr. Wells moved the following as a substitute:

Whereas, voluntary Slavery as it exists in the United States, although in itself a violation of the rights of man and of the law of God, is so interwoven with the civil polity of those portions of the Union where it exists as to render ecclesiastical action extremely difficult; therefore, *Resolved*, That this Assembly take no further action on the subject.

Dr. Cox moved an indefinite postponement of the whole subject.

On this question Mr. Gridley called for the Ayes and Noes. The Assembly refused.

The motion for indefinite postponement was put and carried.

The following persons wished to have their names entered on the Minutes of the Assembly, as dissenting from the foregoing vote: Milton Buttolph, G. W. Clarke, Gilbert M. Gifford, Cornelius Dubois, James Shaw, J. J. Miter, John Gridley, Samuel Wells, E. B. Chamberlain, and Henry Shedd.

Mr. Brown, from the Committee to count the ballots, reported that the following persons were elected Directors of the Theological Seminary at Princeton, viz.:

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Nathan S. S. Beman, D. D.,	Silas Condit,
Edward Allen,	
William Timlow,	James C. Bliss,
Henry White,	James Ruthven.
Henry P. Tappan,	
John L. Grant,	
James H. C. Leach,	
Barnabas King.	

And the following were elected Directors of the Western Theological Seminary, viz.:

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Matthew Brown, D. D.,	
William T. Sprole,	
William R. De Witt, D. D.,	Benjamin A. Fahnestock,
S. M. Sparks,	John Herron,
James M. Davis,	John Wright.
D. L. Carroll, D. D.,	
Nathaniel West,	

[20]

On motion of Mr. Parker, *Resolved*, that the Assembly will hear Mr. Thomas Hastings on the subject of "Musical Elocution," at half-past 3 o'clock this afternoon.

Dr. Cox, from the Committee on the Polity of the Church, made a further report, which was accepted and adopted, and is as follows:

"*Resolved*, That the Stated Clerk of the Assembly be instructed to give

the due publicity to the Acts of the Assembly, in reference to the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey, that there may be a proper preparation, and that all concerned may be informed on the subject.

Resolved, further, that there be erected a Committee ad interim, or a Consulting Committee, of five ministers and five ruling elders, with powers to fill their own vacancies; to correspond with foreign and domestic bodies, in behalf of our Church as represented in the General Assembly; to give counsel in reference to any practical questions that may arise in the subsequent three years touching the collective interests of our Church; to fill any vacancies that may occur in the same time in the clerkships of the Assembly; to have, in connection with the Stated and Permanent Clerks, the custody of all the papers, manuscripts, books and records of the Assembly; and to deliberate and decide on any publication that it may seem proper to make, signed by their Chairman or the Stated Clerk of the Assembly, in vindication of the truth, and in support of the true positions and interests of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, with the injunction to preserve minutes of their proceedings, and report the same to the next Assembly, subject to their approbation or disapprobation of their acts. Of this Committee three ministers and two elders, regularly convened, shall be a quorum for the transaction of business; and the three Clerks of the Assembly shall be *ex officio* members of said Committee.

The following persons were appointed, in connection with the Clerks, the *Committee ad interim: Ministers*, Samuel H. Cox, D. D., Philip C. Hay, D. D., William Adams, Albert Barnes, David H. Riddle, D. D.; *Elders*, James Ruthven, Gustavus U. Richards, F. A. Raybold, Dr. Matson Smith, Christopher R. Robert.

Resolved, further, That the subject of publishing our standards, with our Form of Government and Book of Discipline, as now adopted by the Assembly, be referred to the Consulting Committee.

Resolved, That the New-York Theological Seminary be recommended to the confidence and the patronage of all our churches, especially in the districts of the Atlantic cities of our country, as needing and deserving of their prayers and their assistance, as well as their good will and their consideration in these times of its necessity and trials, and its great prosperity too in almost all other than its pecuniary relations.

Messrs. Phelps, White and Lockwood were, on motion, appointed a Committee to take into consideration, the subject of more efficient action in our churches in reference to *benevolent societies*, to report as soon as convenient. [21]

The subject of correspondence on the subject of the Sabbath was, on motion, referred to the Committee ad interim.

Adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Thursday, P. M., half-past 3 o'clock.

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer.

The Minutes of the preceding session were read and approved.

The Assembly spent some time in listening to Mr. Thomas Hastings on the subject of sacred vocal music. After which Mr. J. M'Lane was appointed on the Committee on Psalmody, in place of Mr. Miner, excused.

Mr. Phelps, from the Committee on Benevolent Societies, made a report, which was accepted, adopted, and is as follows:

1. This Assembly would recognize, with devout gratitude to God, the success that has attended the labors of most of our great national societies

during the last year; that notwithstanding the unprecedented commercial embarrassments by which the year has been distinguished, most of these societies have been enabled to prosecute their work, and, with few exceptions, to meet and sustain all their responsibilities.

The Assembly have in these facts an additional proof that some at least of these contributions to this cause, are made from principle, and that Christians are ready, to some extent, to make sacrifices in the cause of Christ.

2. That the Assembly recognise with pain the fact, that while some have done so nobly and so well, yet the number of contributors to the cause, compared with the whole number in our communion, is lamentably small. The largest portion, by far, of our communicants withholding their contributions altogether.

3. That it be recommended to our Synods, Presbyteries, and church sessions, to devise, if possible, some method by which a more general application shall be made to every member of the Church; so that our whole Church may be engaged to take a part in the glorious enterprise of reclaiming the world to Christ.

4. That it be commended to the attention of pastors and stated preachers in our Church, to consider well if more cannot be done by them in the advocacy of benevolent action, and in the collection of funds, than has hitherto been attempted; the Assembly being fully satisfied that no person can be so well qualified to judge what are the best means to be employed in any given case as the pastor of the congregation.

5. That the Assembly recommend to all the congregations connected with this Body, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; the American Bible Society; the American Education Society; the American Home Missionary Society; the American Tract Society, and the American Sunday-School Union, as institutions every way worthy of patronage and support; and as affording safe, convenient, and perhaps the best channels through which their contributions may reach the objects contemplated respectively by these Societies. [22]

6. That this Assembly are fully satisfied that neither of these enterprises is in a condition at present to dispense with the employment of agents, yet they are fully satisfied that a much smaller number would be demanded, and those employed enabled to extend their labors, each to a much larger field, if a portion of the labor in collecting funds could be performed by collectors, male and female, appointed in each congregation for the purpose. They therefore recommend to pastors, sessions, and friends of the cause generally, such organizations in the respective congregations as shall bring the leading enterprises of benevolence before every member of the Church, without the personal application of an agent every year.

7. This Assembly highly approves the measure lately introduced, of connecting religious anniversaries with the meeting of the General Assembly; and recommend that these meetings of the Assembly hereafter, in other respects, assume more than has been the case heretofore, a purely religious character; grave and holy convocations of the Church, for the promotion of the interests of truth, piety and benevolence.

Finally, this Assembly believes fully that the world is to be reclaimed to Christ through the instrumentality of the Church, and that a responsibility of a high and awful import in this particular rests upon the Church now; and that the present aspect of the world affords abundant encouragement to increased efforts, self-denial, and prayer, and good ground for hope, that the time of the final triumph of the Gospel is near at hand. May the good Lord hasten on the work.

The Narrative on the State of Religion was then taken up for consideration, and adopted, and ordered to be published in the Appendix.

The Overture No. 3, on Colonization, was taken up, and the report of the Committee, recommending that no action be taken at present on the subject, was adopted.

The Committee on Mileage reported that the sum of three hundred and seventy-one dollars and thirty-one cents ($371 31) has been received for the Commissioners' Fund. This sum, apportioned in conformity to the rule of the Assembly, gives to each Commissioner who has made application for his proportion of the fund a dividend of two dollars eighty-four cents for one hundred miles, travelled in attendance on this meeting.

The report was adopted, and the Committee were directed to pay the Commissioners accordingly.

Adjourned till to-morrow morning 9 o'clock.

Concluded with prayer.

Friday Morning, May 29.

The Assembly met and was opened with prayer.

The Roll was called, and the Minutes of the preceding session were read and approved.

The Stated Clerk made a report of the state of the Treasury, showing a balance of fifty-four dollars ninety-nine cents in his hands, which was accepted and approved. [23]

The Committee on Leave of Absence reported that Messrs. T. A. Mills, D. C. Mills, Foster, Abbey, Dunning, Joy, Smith, Gifford, Young, Dubois and Buttolph have received leave of absence.

The printing of the Minutes of this Assembly was referred to the discretion of the Consulting Committee.

On motion of Dr. Cox, the following Declaration of Principles was adopted, with one dissenting voice.

"*Whereas* the principles of inviolable constitutional law are at the basis of all that is genuine and all that is excellent in the structure of civilized society; as in the Church of God their importance is paramount, more eminently, in proportion to the grandeur and glory of that incomparable commonwealth; and *whereas* in our country, in our times, and in our Church, it becomes increasingly a matter of appropriate duty, as well as honor, to guard those principles with scrupulous fidelity and incessant vigilance; therefore,

Resolved by this Assembly, That these principles, according to the excellent standards in doctrine and polity of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, be solemnly commended to the review, and the care, and the practical recognition of all the officers, members and judicatories of our Church; as fundamental to all our associate interests, our noblest hopes, and the glory of God throughout the entire boundaries of our Zion: that our exemplary consistency in all things may be every where discernible; that the ægis of constitutional protection, the birth-right of every Presbyterian, may be continually around him, presenting his rights, and maintaining his confidence, as well as indicating his duties; that no man may be impeached, discredited, or disfranchised by private judgment, the spirit of calumny, or any other anti-constitutional process, in our whole connection; that a charitable construction of the motives and the characters of all our fellow-servants as brethren in Christ, so long especially as they remain in our communion, in good standing, as members of his body, or officers of his kingdom, may be every where cultivated, as devoutly obligatory as well as courteous and proper; that no member should be dis-

qualified or divested of his constitutional privileges, in any circumstances, but as the result of a fair and regular process of trial; and that all the community may see and know our grand position as a Church, to be one equally tenable, sincere and impregnable, as well as consistently and constantly maintained; that the constitution is no nullity with us, but a grand and inviolable charter of compact with each other, and with God; which, by his grace and truth in Christ Jesus our Saviour, we are all determined to preserve unsullied, and inviolable, in all our ecclesiastical administration, to his glory and the progress of his own eternal cause among us and throughout our beloved country, the east and the west, the north and the south, with impartiality and cordiality to the end."

The Assembly then went into an interlocutory meeting to hear the report of the "Committee of Twenty," appointed by the last Assembly to superintend the law suit, &c., Dr. Hay in the Chair.

The whole of the morning was spent in interlocutory session.

At one o'clock the Committee rose—the Assembly adjourned to half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

Concluded with prayer. [24]

Friday, half-past 3 o'clock P. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

On motion of Dr. Cox, the whole subject of Psalmody, with the procuring and furnishing an edition of Psalms and Hymns for our general use, in a way involving no pecuniary responsibility to the Assembly, was referred to the Consulting Committee, for their deliberation and action, as they may deem proper and practicable.

The Committee appointed by the Assembly of 1838 to prepare a full Digest of the Acts of the Assembly, reported that they were engaged in the duty assigned them, but were not at present prepared to make a final report. The report was accepted, and the Committee were continued.

The Assembly then went again into the Committee of the whole; and after some time the Committee rose and reported the following resolution:

"*Whereas* it appears from memorials sent up to this Assembly, that several of our Presbyteries have adopted resolutions excluding slaveholders from their pulpits and from their communion; and *whereas* our Constitution requires that no member of the Presbyterian Church shall be thus disfranchised without a regular trial and conviction; and *whereas* this proceeding is a repetition of the exscinding acts of the new basis Assembly, against which we have taken our stand as friends of the Constitution: therefore,

Resolved, That the said Presbyteries be requested to rescind such resolutions."

The foregoing resolution was, with one dissenting voice, adopted.

Mr. West then offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

"*Whereas* this General Assembly have had many and difficult questions to discuss, and some of them of a very exciting nature,

Resolved, That we record our thanks to Almighty God, for conducting us as an Assembly to the close of our sessions in so much peace and harmony, in all the circumstances and difficulties in which we were placed."

Ordered, that the Stated Clerk issue a circular, requesting the Presbyteries to forward to him, as soon as possible, the amounts of their respective assessments for the Contingent Fund.

Ordered, that the Stated Clerk pay the janitor's bill, and the salaries of the Permanent and Stated Clerks.

The report of the Committee of Twelve, presented this morning, was accepted and approved.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Assembly be tendered to the citizens of Philadelphia for their kindness and hospitality to its members; and also to the Trustees of the First Presbyterian church, for the use of their church and lecture-room during the session of this Assembly.

The Assembly having finished its business, *Resolved*, That this General Assembly be dissolved, and that another Assembly, chosen in like manner, be required to meet in the First Presbyterian church in the city of Philadelphia, on the third Thursday of May, 1843.

Accordingly the Moderator dissolved the Assembly with prayer and singing, and the apostolic benediction.

E. W. GILBERT, *Permanent Clerk.*

Philadelphia, May 29, 1840.

NARRATIVE OF THE STATE OF RELIGION

Within the Bounds of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, during the Year last past.

It is an excellent custom of our ecclesiastical bodies, to note annually the changing moral phases of the community in the midst of which we live; to mark from year to year the causes which are acting beneficially or injuriously on the progress of piety; to signalize the triumphs of heaven's King, our Redeemer; to call attention to the woes which may afflict one part of the Church; to give the alarm when error and irregularity are threatening an invasion; to bring before the discouraged the successes which are cheering the hearts of their more favored brethren; and to cast the burdens of the weak upon those whom it has pleased the Lord to strengthen. This is, in fact, the very highest object aimed at by our fathers in the organization of one National Ecclesiastical Assembly; an object most unhappily lost sight of for years in this body, where the heart has been chilled in the wintry frosts of controversy; and where, instead of the heavenly dispositions of charity and meekness, have been cherished the earthly passions of anger and revenge, ambition and malice. But we hope that the Head of the Church has now brought us to better days. We trust that the character of each future Assembly will be such as to make the most pious of our ministers and elders rejoice in the prospect of mingling in its holy festivities. We should here take such a survey of the condition of our beloved country, as to incite a growing interest in its spiritual welfare; and such a view of the state of Zion, as to bring our hearts into holier and closer sympathy with the whole body of Christ.

The reports from the lower bodies have not been as full as is desirable. Out of the eighty-eight Presbyteries connected with this Assembly, not more than half reported the state of religion within their bounds. We trust that hereafter all our brethren will feel more deeply the importance of contributing their share to make our moral statistics complete, and to enable the Assembly to give the exact features of light and shade to the ecclesiastical map of our Church. Our branch of the Church is now bound together by ties of peculiar strength —the ties of cordial and liberal fraternity between men who agree sufficiently to work together without collision. It is of the utmost importance that we

know each other more intimately; that we try to form ourselves into a golden chain of charity, which shall contribute to bind this immense country so strongly together that the various local interests and jealousies tending to sever us may find themselves by it checked and neutralized. Such the Assembly deems to be the design, in part, of the narratives from the Presbyteries, and of this annual summary of those narratives—even to secure a more intimate acquaintance and cordial affection between the East and the West, the North and the South.

The religious history of a people includes as well the providential preparations and concomitants of the work of the Spirit, as that work itself. The dealings of the providence of God towards our country have been so peculiar during the past year as to have attracted the attention of many of the Presbyteries, and to have been deemed worthy by them of a special notice. They have a two-fold aspect of righteous severity and exceeding mercy. We are an enterprising people. The world stood astonished at our extending commerce, our accumulating wealth, our vast system of internal improvement. But on each of these points of national pride and self-confidence God has sternly rebuked us. The spirit of gambling in the form of speculation had become the infection even of the Church. Here again we have been chastised. Our sectarian pride has been rebuked, oh how sternly! Our General Assembly, after having been for years a by-word to the world, and giving occasion to say, "Behold how these Presbyterians hate one another," has at last been rent asunder; and two-fifths of a Church so strong in number, in intelligence, and social influence, so richly endowed with the means of securing a highly cultivated ministry;—two-fifths have left us, and sent through the length and breadth of our spiritual borders the spirit of contention, and denunciation, and division. We speak not here in censure of man; we speak facts only, and view chiefly in them the rod of a righteous Providence. It is afflicting, but the Lord hath done it. Brethren who love each other, brethren who have no reason for separation, are now more widely separated in some instances than if they were members of the most widely separated sects. But He who is wonderful in working hath overruled all this for good in the most surprising and glorious manner. At the close of the last summer, the minds of men seemed to be laboring under unusual depression. The spirit of commercial enterprise had been damped; care, and anxiety, and despair had thrown a gloom over the minds of hundreds. The Church had shared too in this depression, and felt her own sorrows also. Controversies and alienations, reproaches and schisms, had wrought their own legitimate issues; and even revivals seemed to be no longer sought nor desired. The history of extravagances and of their evil consequences, had alienated the hearts of many of God's faithful servants from those means which he has blessed in every age of the Church for the more rapid advancement of his cause. But this hour of darkness, truly, was the harbinger of the bursting beams of the morning. A day has been given to the Church long to be remembered with thanksgiving; a day that will be hallowed in the memory of thousands who have passed from darkness to light, from death to life, from earthly to immortal hopes, from the prospect of everlasting ruin to the bright expectation of eternal life by Jesus Christ. And for this glorious work of mercy these very rebukes and chastisements of Providence were the preparatives. Worldly prosperity, the love of money, proud confidence in ourselves, had hardened the heart of this nation, and hindered the impression of the word and Spirit of grace. These thunder-storms disintegrated the rock, purified the spiritual atmosphere, mellowed and moistened the soil, and prepared it for the "seed of the kingdom." The world was chastened and sub-

dued, the Church was humbled and made penitent. Of this display of mercy we shall speak more particularly after taking a more general survey of one or two other aspects.

The Progress of Moral Principle.

With the general progress of religion in the Church, the standard of morality in the world appears to be rising. If it is declining on any point, it is in regard to the moral obligation of the debtor, after his legal obligation has ceased by anything but the payment of his debts; and perhaps, then, in declension too, in reference to the sacred right of character. But from almost every quarter we are told that the lax principles of infidelity are losing ground; the outward respect to the Sabbath is increasing; the checks to licentiousness are multiplied; and the important principles of the temperance cause are more and more extensively adopted.

The External Prosperity of the Church.

From every quarter the accounts in this respect are cheering. New churches are springing up as offsets from older ones, or under the labors of our faithful evangelists. Feeble churches, especially in our new and frontier settlements, have been greatly strengthened during the past year. The progress of some of them is most cheering; and their determination to secure the permanent guidance of faithful pastors is a promise of their future prosperity. Our older churches have been strengthened in an unwonted degree. From the forty Presbyteries who reported, nearly 8000 members are said to have been received into our churches. If the other forty-eight have been equally blessed, or even to a less degree, we may safely estimate the increase of our churches as having been the number of from 12,000 to 15,000. Large numbers of these are heads of families and young men, many of them destined to occupy positions of great importance in society.

Spiritual Prosperity of the Church.

In a very few places religion is languishing: at the commencement of the year it was so in most of our churches. But the Lord hath visited his people and caused the heart of his chosen to rejoice. In describing the recent and yet advancing revivals of religion, we would mark their extent, the means employed for their commencement and progress, their characteristics, and their consequences. Their territory has been at least one-half the ground occupied by our churches; their results in hopeful conversions at least from 12,000 to 15,000 who remain attached to our congregations, besides perhaps 10,000 more who have joined other religious bodies. Religion has triumphed indeed in high places. Most of our great Atlantic cities have shared in the richest measures of its new blessings. Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York, as well as many of our inland cities, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Cincinnati and New Orleans, have seen the stately steppings of Zion's King. And so manifest has his presence been, that even our political journalists have acknowledged to a remarkable extent that God was doing his own great work of mercy: and of the magnitude of the work we have one striking proof in the fact, that many who intended to deliberate with us in this session, have found it impossible to leave the blessed occupation which has thus accumulated on their hands. Various means have been noticed as owned of God to secure the great results in which so many are rejoicing; several have traced them to the exercises of the first of January, the day of missionary zeal and prayer, as their first instrumental cause. While Christians were

humbling themselves on account of the perishing heathen, and pleading the promises of the covenant in behalf of distant tribes and nations, the Spirit descended in his sovereign mercy upon their lot, and answered them while they were yet speaking. The means employed to advance the work, were those which God has never failed to bless; special fasting and humiliation; special visitations and personal conversations with impenitent friends and neighbors concerning their eternal well-being; special and daily meetings for social prayer; meetings of the inquirers for personal conversation; the mutual exhortations of the church; and the more continuous exhibition of the Gospel in preaching. It has been a very delightful feature of this work, that in general it has been conducted by the pastors alone, aided in a few instances by ministers without a pastoral charge. The prominent features of this dispensation of mercy are worthy of special notice, and must be marked by the future historian of the Church. One is that the interval between these seasons of grace and those before enjoyed, is a diminished interval. The length of our spiritual winters is diminishing. We are moving nearer to the equatorial regions, where the bloomings of a perpetual spring mingle with the richness and fruitfulness of a perpetual autumn. And those who complain of the fitfulness and periodical character of our revivals, must in consistency vent their opposition equally against our returning spring. To them we should say, in the language of Milton, "With as good a plea might the dead palsy boast to a man, It is I that free you from stitches and pains, and the troublesome feeling of cold and heat, of wounds and strokes; if I were gone, all these would molest you. The winter might as well vaunt itself against the spring; I destroy all noisome and rank weeds, I keep down all pestilent vapors. Yes, and you keep down all wholesome herbs and all fresh dews by your violent and hidebound frost; but when the gentle west wind shall open the fruitful bosom of the earth, thus over-girded by your imprisonment, then the flowers put forth and spring, and then the sun shall scatter the mists, and the manuring hand of the tiller shall root up all that burdens the soil, without thanks to your bondage." Objections to the periodical character of revivals are all compliments to the state of barrenness and death which intervenes between these seasons of life and joy. We hail them with devout gratitude, and only lament that our unfaithful hearts can let the good Spirit go. Another feature of these revivals is, that they produce less unprofitable and exhausting excitement. Leaders have been less occupied than formerly in wondering at the revival as an abstract object of admiration, and have been more concerned in the detail of saving souls; less concerned to "number the people" than to warn the perishing. Health and strength have been less exhausted than usual; and the revival, like a healthful stream, has been flowing in its fertilizing movement peacefully by the side of the ordinary occupations of life. The manifested presence of God in the assembly of the saints; his preventing mercies in making the impenitent unusually disposed to religious conversation; the increased spirit of union between the sects; the majestic march of truth which has silenced the gainsayer; the overcoming of prejudice which has brought into our sanctuaries thousands who had never entered them before; all these are distinguishing characteristics of this religious movement which should make the hearts of Christians to rejoice in Him with whom is the residue of the Spirit. And while we note these outward manifestations of the presence of the Lord, the promised Paraklete. we search, too, and not in vain, for the developed graces of the Church. The breathings of this south wind upon the garden of the Lord must cause the spices to exhale their delicious aroma. And have we not seen that unity of the

Spirit, so sweetly chanted by Israel's singer; the dwelling together of the brethren in unity, which is like precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion? Have we not marked, too, the constraining influence of the love of Christ, which was manifested in the Macedonian churches, who out of their poverty contributed their substance on a scale which the Apostle could cite as a pattern to the wealthy Corinthian churches? The Church in this dark season of financial embarrassments has placed her shoulder more fully than ever beneath the burden of the great enterprise of the world's conversion.* We have reason to believe, too, that the Spirit of grace and supplication now rests upon the Church to an unwonted degree; that family prayer, social prayer, and, we may trust, secret prayer have been exercised by our churches to a degree unknown at any former period of their history. There is a growing attachment to the Bible, and a growing interest in its study.

All the institutions and ordinances of the Gospel, in fact, seem to have taken a new place in the affections of the people of God. Among them we notice particularly the stated ministrations of the sanctuary, even in those sections of the land where the Spirit of innovation and love of novelty had introduced a degree of contempt for the regular and judicious ministrations of trained and qualified preachers of the Word. There is, as we have remarked, an increased interest in the exercise of social prayer. Some few Presbyteries report, indeed, the painful neglect of the stated monthly season of prayer for the missionary cause; but in general this noble institution is taking firmer hold of the hearts of our churches; and the greater part of those with us adhere to the good old way of uniformity in mingling their prayers with those of Christendom on the first Monday of the month. Next we notice with thrilling delight the increased attention to the religious instruction of the young. Sunday-schools and Bible-classes are now looked upon by our pastors and churches as among the richest gifts of the Head of the Church. They have been signally owned in this season of mercy as the channels of salvation to hundreds in the early dawning of their immortal existence. The four theological schools at New York, Auburn, Cincinnati and Hudson, in connection with our churches, are in an improving state, notwithstanding their yet unendowed condition amid our pecuniary embarrassments. Yet there is great reason to apprehend that the Church too much undervalues these indispensable instruments of the world's conversion.

In closing this narrative, the General Assembly would present particularly to the consideration of the churches several topics which the narratives from the several Presbyteries suggested:

1. The Head of the Church seems to be calling his people to exercise an increasing confidence in the stated ministrations of the sanctuary. Let there be a more full conviction that the ministry is ordained of God for the conversion of souls and the edification of the Church. Let ministers whose hearts have fainted, and whose hands have hung down in despondency, be encouraged. Let them go to the place of sacred instruction with a fuller confidence in the faithfulness of Christ. Let the churches place less expectation in the man, and more in the Spirit of God. Let the Sabbath be looked to as the day to signalize the glories of the Lord of the Sabbath.

* Many of the largest donations to our Societies have been cut off by pecuniary difficulties; but the steady operation of principle in the body of the Church having taken the place of fitful impulse, has actually kept full the treasuries of many of these institutions.

2. We exhort the churches to aim at stability and steadiness, and to dread the evil of a floating, unattached, irresponsible ministry.

3. We urge the raising of the standard of benevolent action. The wealthy must act more as the stewards of the Lord's treasury. The poor and those in more comfortable circumstances must estimate more highly the importance of the little rills, which, by combining steadily their feeble quota, make up the mass of waters in the mighty rivers.

4. We ask for a reviving of the declining interest in our Western settlements. The old arguments of the vast prospects of that region, are a little dimmed to the eye of sense by reason of temporary checks; but to the eye of reflection, they remain in the future,—vast, overwhelming as they were in the freshness of their novelty. We would secure the attention of our Eastern churches more definitely to the fields, where their brethren are toiling to lay the foundations perhaps of the most glorious spiritual empire the world has ever seen. The accounts from our young churches there have filled our hearts with gladness, and made us long to embrace in the arms of brotherly affection these our kindred in the Lord. We commend them and their institutions to the prayers and pecuniary aid of our older churches.

5. Finally, we recommend seasons of special private and social thanksgivings to God for the spiritual mercies of the ecclesiastical year we have just closed. It was begun in darkness and fear, in fastings, and tears, and supplications. It has closed in triumphs and joys, that have brought heaven and earth to mingle in holy sympathy. Should not such mercies, such answers to our prayers, lead to praises and thanksgivings as special and as fervent as were our humiliations and supplications? Gratitude is an element greatly wanting in the piety of our day. "Let your requests be made known in all things with prayer and *thanksgivings* in the name of Christ."

SUMMARY.

PRESBYTERIES.	Ministers.	Churches.	Added on Examination.	Added on Certificate.	Total Communicants.	STATED CLERKS.
1. Londonderry	25	12	45	...	1902	
2. Newburyport	17	...	18	34	367	
3. Champlain	25	19	313	...	1807	C. M. Seaton.
4. Troy	23	28	268	85	2735	N. S. S. Beman, D. D.
5. Albany	7	6	60	...	1073	E. D. Allen.
6. Columbia	29	22				
7. St. Lawrence	6	6	36	22	604	Beriah B. Hotchkin.
8. Watertown	13	23	212	113	2248	Marcus Smith.
9. Oswego	13	23	39	73	1040	Robert W. Condit.
10. Oneida	34	34	77	100	1993	Ira Pettibone.
11. Otsego	13	17	47	33	1655	A. E. Campbell.
12. Geneva	35	32	81	127	3561	Thomas Lounsbury.
13. Chenango	15	19	19	29	496	
14. Onondaga	15	22	53	...	2249	A. C. Tuttle.
15. Cayuga	32	24	...	...	2271	Seth Smith.
16. Tioga	12	15	58	23	925	Zenas Riggs.
17. Cortland	11	15	29	40	1875	Peter Lockwood.
18. Bath	12	19	15	49	853	B. Foster Pratt.
19. Delaware	8	19	17	14	1228	Fordyce Harrington.
20. Chemung	14	24	28	38	760	John Smith.
21. Ithaca	12	12	204	68	1898	Samuel Parker.
22. Genessee	27	24	58	83	1679	Selden Haynes.
23. Ontario	22	24	40	50	1087	John Barnard, Jun.
24. Rochester	29	25	233	249	2850	
25. Niagara	17	15	166	63	1184	Richard Dunning.
26. Buffalo	36	37	50	193	2221	Timothy Stillman.
27. Angelica	14	21	218	47	1500	A. S. Allen.
28. Hudson	14	14	...	...	1708	O. M. Johnson.
29. North River	20	22	63	34	839	Sumner Mandeville.
30. New York, 2d	7	4	79	36	792	Henry A. Rowland.
31. New York, 3d	33	22	516	325	5929	Edwin F. Hatfield.
32. Long Island	7	6	5	3	456	Abm. Luce, Jun.
33. Brooklyn	13	5	118	99	1115	William B. Lewis.
34. Newark	21	14	21	65	2875	Ebenezer Seymour.
35. Montrose	18	25	80	28	1062	Sylvester Cooke.
36. Rockaway	16	20	20	17	704	Joel Campbell.
37. Wilmington	10	12	12	20	1016	E. W. Gilbert.
38. Lewes	5	12	18	4	543	C. H. Mustard.
39. Philadelphia, 3d	34	33	857	246	6008	Robert Adair.
40. Harrisburg	8	6	60	10	722	William T. Sprole.
41. Pittsburgh	7					
42. Erie	11	24	43	45	1418	Pierce Chamberlain.
43. Grand River	27	35	110	98	1964	John W. Beecher.
44. Portage	28	22	48	84	1820	William Hanford.
45. Huron	32	36	145	132	2025	Xenophon Betts.
46. Maumee	6	7	40	26	243	Isaac Van Tassell.
47. Trumbull	12	18	3	17	1227	Benjamin Fenn.
48. Cleveland	15	12	256	72	1110	Joseph H. Breck.
49. Medina	10	14	80	19	681	Lewis F. Laine.
50. Detroit	18	32	152	106	1628	A. S. Wells.
51. Monroe	8	15	47	74	566	E. N. Nichols.
52. St. Joseph	10	16	55	46	435	P. W. Warriner.
53. Marshall	13	19	129	92	783	Elias Child.
54. Washtenaw	8	16	92	122	1009	Ira M. Wead.
55. Kalamazoo	4	5	...	9	335	Calvin Clarke.
56. Athens	14	18	36	41	502	William H. Bay.
57. Lancaster	14	18	74	127	1344	Francis Bartlett.
58. Marion	9	22	171	40	1072	Henry Van Deman.
59. Cincinnati	12	14	225	61	900	A. Benton.

PRESBYTERIES.	Ministers.	Churches.	Added on Examination.	Added on Certificate.	Total Communicants.	STATED CLERKS.
60. Dayton	3	12	210	25	790	Benjamin Graves.
61. Ripley	10	11	114	55	854	Jesse H. Lockhart.
62. Salem	7	15	92	38	527	Solomon Kittredge.
63. Madison	7	9	44	31	1385	James H. Johnston.
64. Crawfordsville	13	14	61	25	636	S. G. Lowry.
65. Indianapolis	5	11	37	28	404	Henry W. Beecher.
66. Logansport	5	8				
67. Illinois	7	10	28	10	316	Hugh Barr.
68. Sangamon	8	8	28	23	302	Lemuel Foster.
69. Ottawa	8	7	20	23	107	
70. Schuyler	10	10	41	11	408	Milton Kimball.
71. Palestine	4	4	3	28	73	Enoch Kingsbury.
72. Peoria	6	7	25	41	319	Lucien Farnam.
73. Alton	9	10	83	...	399	Charles G. Selleck.
74. Knox	7	5	84	72	318	J. Porter.
75. Missouri	7					
76. St. Louis	7	13	...	...	736	
77. St. Charles	13	20	...	...	823	
78. Winchester	7					
79. Dist. of Columbia	7	6	104	20	757	John Mines.
80. Hanover	8	8	...	...	292	Alexander Mebane.
81. Abingdon	7	14	...	...	574	Alexander M'Ewen.
82. Union	22	23	99	23	2020	Fielding Pope.
83. French Broad	8	16	...	...	1292	
84. Holston	10	13	139	4	1109	John W. Cunningham.
85. Kingston	11	11	58	58	472	
86. New River	5	7	4	...	337	George Painter.
87. Clinton	10	14	238	25	681	A. Newton.
88. Charleston Union	21	8	...	...	788	Benjamin Gildersleeve.
89. Arkansas	8	6	...	...	239	Joel Wood.
	1260	1375	7421	4180	102,060	