MINUTES, 1847.

Cincinnati, May 20, 1847.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met, pursuant to adjournment, in the Second Presbyterian church of Cincinnati, on Thursday, May 20th, 1847, at 11 o'clock A. M., and was opened with prayer, by the Rev. Samuel H. Cox., D. D., the Moderator.

The whole of the morning-session was spent in devotional exercises.

In the absence of the Rev. Alfred E. Campbell, the Rev. James B. Townsend was chosen Temporary Clerk.

The Assembly then adjourned until 3½ o'clock, P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Thursday, 3½ *o'clock, P. M.*

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The Roll was called, and the following members were present:

I. SYNOD OF ALBANY.

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Albany,	Samuel W. Fisher.	

II. SYNOD OF UTICA.

Oswego,		John E. Dutton.
Utica,	George I. King,	Milton Brayton.

III. SYNOD OF GENEVA.

Geneva,	Ira Ingraham.	
Cortland,	Hercules R. Dunham.	
Chemung,		Simeon Benjamin.
Pennsylvania,	Elijah D. Wells.	[136]

IV. SYNOD OF GENESEE.

Genesee,	John B. Preston.
Buffalo,	Levi A. Skinner.
Angelica,	Charles Crocker.

V. SYNOD OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY.

Hudson.		Theo. L. Jackson.
New York, 3d,	Edwin F. Hatfield,	John L. Mason, Esq.
New York, 4th,	Charles H. Read.	
Brooklyn,	Samuel H. Cox, D. D.	
Montrose,	Henry A. Rowland.	

VI. SYNOD OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Wilmington,	E. W. Gilbert, D. D.	
Philadelphia, 4th,	James P. Wilson.	
Harrisburg,	Franklin D. Harris.	

VII. SYNOD OF WEST PENNSYLVANIA.

Meadville,	Richard Craighead.	
Pittsburgh,	Samuel M. Sparks.	

VIII. SYNOD OF WESTERN RESERVE.

Grand River,	Dexter Witter.	
Trumbull,	Benjamin Fenn,	Chester Andrews.
Cleveland,	Cyrus L. Watson.	

IX. SYNOD OF MICHIGAN.

Detroit,	George Duffield, D. D.,	Eurotas P. Hastings.
St. Joseph,	Alfred Bryant.	
Monroe,	E. N. Nichols,	Charles Noble.
Washtenaw,	Elijah P. Marvin.	

X. SYNOD OF OHIO.

Athens,	Lucian C. Ford,	Silvanus Bartlett.
Licking,	Charles M. Putnam,	James Young.
Marion,	James Rowland,	J. W. Thompson.
Scioto,	Joseph Chester,	Richard Long.
Tuscarawas,	Addison Kingsbury.	

XI. SYNOD OF CINCINNATI.

Cincinnati,	Calvin E. Stowe, D. D.,	Jno. C. Macy.
Dayton,	William Gray,	J. M. Skinner.
Hamilton,	Horace Bushnell,	William Carey.

XII. SYNOD OF INDIANA.

Salem,	James Brownlee,	William C. Connor.
Madison,	John M. Dickey.	
Crawfordsville,	James H. Johnston,	James L. Allen.
Indianapolis,		William H. Wishard.
Logansport,	Joseph G. Wilson,	[137]
La Porte,	Samuel N. Steel.	
Fort Wayne,	Alexander Lemon.	
Evansville,	Samuel K. Sneed,	Hon. Wm. Olmsted.

XIII. SYNOD OF ILLINOIS.

Illinois,	Albert Hale.
Alton,	Robert Stewart.
Des Moines,	John M. Boal.

XIV. SYNOD OF PEORIA.

Peoria,	Henry G. Pendleton.
Knox,	Solomon S. Miles.

XV. SYNOD OF MISSOURI.

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
St. Louis,	James B. Townsend.	
Lexington,	Tapping S. Reeve.	

XVI. SYNOD OF VIRGINIA.

Winchester,	Andrew H. H. Boyd,	William D. Gilkeson.
Dist. of Columbia,	William McLain.	

XVII. SYNOD OF TENNESSEE.

Union,	Gideon S. White,	Daniel Meek.

XVIII. SYNOD OF KENTUCKY.

Harmony,	Eliphaz P. Pratt,	J. R. Thornton.
Providence,	George W. Kennedy.	
Green River,	Alexander W. Campbell.	

XIX. SYNOD OF WEST TENNESSEE.

Shiloh,	Alfred H. Dashiell.
North Alabama,	Conway P. Wing.

XX. SYNOD OF MISSISSIPPI.

General Synod of the Ger. Ref. Church, Rev. George Glessner.

The Committee of Commissions reported the following Commissioners as duly accredited, and their names were added to the Roll, viz.:

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Union,		Daniel Meek.
Genesee,	John B. Preston.	
Fort Wayne,	Alexander Lemon.	
Angelica,	Charles Crocker.	
Cincinnati,	Calvin E. Stowe, D. D.,	John C. Macy.
Harrisburg,	Franklin D. Harris.	
Evansville, (new)	Samuel K. Sneed,	Hon. Wm. Olmsted.
Tuscarawas,	Addison Kingsbury.	
Harmony,		John R. Thornton.
Scioto,		Richard Long.
Dayton,	William Gray,	J. M. Skinner. [138]
Salem,		Wm. C. Connor.
Winchester,	Andrew H. H. Boyd,	Wm. D. Gilkeson.
Utica,	George I. King,	Milton Brayton.
Monroe,	E. N. Nichols,	Charles Noble.
Detroit,		Eurotas P. Hastings.
Washtenaw,	Elijah P. Marvin.	
Shiloh,	Alfred H. Dashiell.	
Hamilton,	Horace Bushnell,	Wm. Carey.

The Rev. George Glessner, a Delegate from the German Reformed Church, presented his credentials, and was received as a Corresponding Member.

On motion, the Rev. H. H. Rowland, G. Duffield, D. D., Rev. J. P. Wilson, and Messrs. T. L. Jackson and Wm. Carey, were appointed a *Committee*

to report *on the Constitutionality and Powers of the Assembly* as now convened.

A communication was received from Prof. O. M. Mitchel, inviting the Assembly to visit the Cincinnati Observatory. The invitation was cordially accepted; and the Stated Clerk was directed to inform Prof. Mitchel, that the Assembly will be happy to visit the Observatory on Monday next at 5 o'clock, P. M.

The following communications were received and referred, viz.:

A letter from the Rev. Justin Edwards, D. D., in reference to the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the promotion of Temperance; which was referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures:

A communication from the Presbytery of Palestine on the powers of the Assembly, which was referred to the same committee:

A memorial from the Presbytery of Cincinnati, on the powers of the Assembly, which was referred to the Committee on the Polity of the Church:

A memorial from the Presbytery of Indianapolis, on a new edition of the Standards, which was referred to the same Committee:

A memorial from the Presbytery of Hamilton, on the subject of Slavery, which was referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Adjourned until to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Friday, May 21st, 9 o'clock A. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer. The usual time was occupied in devotional exercises.

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

The Committee of Commissions reported the following additional Commissioners:

PRESBYTERIES.	MINISTERS.	ELDERS.
Licking,	Charles M. Putnam.	
Knox,	Solomon S. Miles.	
Athens,	Lucian C. Ford.	
Trumbull,	Benjamin Fenn,	Chester Andrews. [139]

A memorial from some members of the church of Jersey, Licking co., Ohio, on the subject of Slavery, was received and referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Also, a communication from Rev. B. F. Teft, inviting the Assembly to supply the Wesley chapel with preaching on Sabbath next; which was referred to the Committee of Arrangements.

The Rev. C. H. Read, moved that the action of the Assembly be confined to the unfinished business on the docket in June, 1846.

After some discussion, his motion was postponed with a view to hear the report of the Committee on the Constitutionality and Powers of the Assembly.

Rev. H. A. Rowland, from that Committee, presented a report, which was accepted.

The Moderator informed the Assembly, that in company with the Stated Clerk, he had waited upon Chancellor Kent, of New York, and obtained his opinion in respect to the constitutionality of the adjournment; a copy of which he presented at the request of the Assembly.

This opinion was read, and was ordered to be incorporated with the preceding report.

It was then moved, that 250 copies of the above report be printed for the use of the Assembly.

It was then moved to postpone the motion to print, with a view to take up the report itself, which was carried, and the consideration of the report was resumed.

It was then moved, that the first resolution of the report be adopted.

The motion to print was then renewed, and, after some discussion while the question was pending, the Assembly adjourned until 3 o'clock, P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Friday, 3 *o'clock*, *P. M.*

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The Minutes of the last session were read and approved.

The Rev. Tapping S. Reeve, a Commissioner from the Presbytery of Lexington, Mo., appeared and took his seat.

The unfinished business of the morning, viz.: the motion to print the report of the Committee on the Adjournment, was resumed; and, after some further discussion, the motion was carried.

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Stated Clerk was appointed receiver of any moneys intended for the Contingent Fund of the General Assembly.

Messrs. Wm. Olmsted, John C. Macy, and E. P. Hastings, were appointed a *Committee on Mileage*.

Rev. C. P. Wing, from the Committee on Correspondence with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, made a report, recommending the adoption of a plan of correspondence with that body.

The report was accepted; and, after some discussion, it was *Re-* [140] *solved*, that, for the sake of more definite information in reference to our brethren of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church; for the clearer ascertainment of the wishes of our own churches in reference to this union; and also, for the sake of securing the action of a larger Assembly, this whole matter be recommitted to the same Committee, with instructions to report to the next Assembly. And that Rev. Messrs. J. M. Dickey, J. B. Townsend, Cyrus L. Watson, D. H. Riddle, D. D., and G. Duffield, D. D., be added to the Committee.

A memorial from the Rev. Thornton A. Mills, on the subject of Home-Missions, was presented, and referred to Messrs. S. M. Sneed, C. Stowe, D. D., and J. M. Dickey, to consider and report.

Resolved, to hold an interlocutory meeting to-morrow, at 10 o'clock, A. M., with reference to the state of the churches in the West.

Rev. G. Duffield, D. D., from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported, recommending the adoption of the following resolution:—

"*Whereas*, there have been various public discussions of late, relative to the authenticity of certain provisions of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., so as to excite doubt to some extent as to the correctness of the recently published edition of the Book of Discipline and Form of Government—

"Therefore, *Resolved*, that a Committee of eight be appointed to investigate and report in detail the entire history of the provisions of the Assembly, and the Presbyteries, and the Committee *ad interim*, in reference to the elementary and verbal alterations in the Constitution of the Church."

Before the question was decided, the Assembly adjourned until to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Saturday, May 22d, 9 o'clock, A. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer. The usual time was occupied with devotional exercises.

The Minutes of the last session were read and approved.

Rev. C. E. Stowe, D. D., H. A. Rowland, and L. A. Skinner, with Mr. E. P. Hastings, were added to the Committee on *Church Polity.*

Rev. Messrs. Wm. McLain, H. Bushnell, and E. P. Pratt, with Messrs. J. R. Thornton and S. Benjamin, were added to the Committee on *Bills and Overtures.*

The Rev. C. H. Read, from the Committee on Devotional Exercises, presented a report, which was adopted, recommending that the Assembly unite in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in this house to-morrow, at 3 o'clock, P. M.; that the Moderator preside and invoke the divine blessing.

Reading the Scriptures and Hymn by Rev. Ira Ingraham;
Address on the Nature of the Ordinance, by Rev. John M. Dickey.
Administration of the Bread, ... " Rev. G. Duffield, D. D.
" " Cup, ... " Rev. A. H. H. Boyd.
Concluding Address, ... " Rev. J. B. Townsend.
Hymn and Benediction, ... " Rev. E. W. Gilbert, D. D. [141]

A memorial from the Presbytery of Des Moines, on the subject of Slavery, was received and referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures.

Also, memorials from the Presbyteries of Washtenaw and St. Joseph, complaining of certain proceedings of the Synod of Michigan, which were referred to the same Committee.

The unfinished business of yesterday, viz.: the consideration of the Resolution from the Committee of Bills and Overtures, was resumed.

The motion for the appointment of a *Committee on the Revision of the Standards* was carried; and Rev. Messrs. E. F. Hatfield, G. Duffield, D. D., H. A. Rowland, S. W. Fisher, and R. Craighead, with Messrs. John L. Mason, Simeon Benjamin, and E. P. Hastings, were appointed that Committee.

The Committee on Home-Missions reported in part, and were continued.

The Assembly then resolved itself into an interlocutory meeting, on the state of the churches in the West. At 12 o'clock the meeting dissolved, and the Assembly resumed business.

The report of the Committee on the memorial of the Rev. T. A. Mills, was referred back to the same Committee, with instructions to mature and propose to the Assembly some plan for carrying out the suggestions contained in the memorial.

The subject of Home-Missions was made the order of the day for Monday, at 10 o'clock, A. M.

The Rev. G. Duffield, D. D., from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported the following resolutions which were adopted:

1. *Resolved*, that the Assembly recommend for general circulation among the families belonging to our churches, the *Manuals* which have been prepared by the Rev. J. Edwards, D. D., on the subjects of Temperance and the Sabbath.

2. *Resolved*, that the Rev. D. Gibbs, agent of the American Protestant Society, be heard for ten minutes, on Monday afternoon, immediately after the commencement of the session.

The Committee further recommended that certain memorials referred to them, relating to matters that have originated since the meeting in Philadelphia, be returned; and their recommendation was adopted.

Leave was given to the Rev. O. S. Powell to address the Assembly in reference to the sanctification of the Sabbath; but Mr. Powell was not present.

An invitation to attend a meeting of the Female Protestant Society at 3 o'clock, P. M., was received and accepted.

The Committee on Leave of Absence reported that Mr. Wm. D. Gilkeson had obtained leave of absence from the remaining sessions of this body.

Adjourned until Monday at 9 o'clock, A. M.

Concluded with prayer. [142]

Lord's Day, May 23d, 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Assembly met, according to previous arrangement, in the Second Presbyterian church, and united with their Christian brethren in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, when the several parts of the service were performed, agreeably to previous order.

Monday, May 24th, 9 o'clock, A. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The usual time was occupied with devotional exercises.

The Minutes of the last session were read and approved. The Clerks were directed to procure the printing of 250 copies of the Roll.

The Rev. John M. Dickey, from the Committee on Church Polity, presented a report, which was adopted, and is as follows:

That certain papers have been put into their hands, relating to alleged alterations of the Constitution; and that, inasmuch as a Special Committee has been charged with the consideration of this subject, they recommend that these papers be committed to that Committee. And they furthermore would express to the Assembly their unanimous opinion, that said Committee should recommend, at the present sessions of the Assembly, all such alterations as may properly be overtured to the Presbyteries for their action, and which may reduce our Constitutional Rules to a compact and uniform system, and relieve the churches from unsettled views on the subject, so soon as it is practicable with wisdom to be done.

The Rev. George I. King presented a request of the Rev. Selden Haynes, that a clerical error in the Minutes of the proceedings of this Assembly at its sessions in Philadelphia, in recording his vote on page 33 of the printed Minutes, might be corrected. He is there represented as voting "*non liquet;*" whereas he declined to vote at all, on the ground that the Assembly, in his opinion, had no jurisdiction in the case. Not being present in the Assembly after that vote was taken, he had no opportunity of learning and correcting the error. The request of Mr. Haynes was granted, and the Clerk was directed to make the correction.

The Moderator, from the Committee appointed to prepare a letter to the Free Church of Scotland, presented a report, which was accepted, and, having been amended, was adopted, and ordered to be forwarded, with a copy of the Minutes of the present Assembly.

At 11 o'clock the Assembly took up the order of the day, and resolved itself into an interlocutory meeting on the subject of Home-Missions, to continue one hour. At 12 o'clock the Assembly resumed business.

A memorial from the Rev. William Graham was presented and read. Whereupon it was *Resolved*, that in the judgment of this Assembly the consideration of the subject presented in the memorial of Mr. Graham properly comes before the next Assembly; and that Mr. Graham have leave to withdraw his memorial.

The choice of a place for the meeting of the next General Assembly was

made the order of the day for this afternoon. Cincinnati, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit and Buffalo were put in nomination. [143]

After which the Assembly adjourned until 3 o'clock, P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Monday, 3 *o'clock*, *P. M.*

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The Minutes of the last session were read and approved.

The Roll was called, and Philadelphia was chosen as the place of the meeting of the next Assembly.

The Rev. D. Gibbs, agent of the American Protestant Society, was heard, agreeably to previous appointment, in a short address. After which the subject was referred to the Committee on Bills and Overtures, with instructions to bring in resolutions in favor of that Society.

The subject of appointing a Day of Prayer for all our churches in reference to a National Peace, was referred to the same Committee.

The Assembly agreed to hear a report from the Rev. S. H. Cox, D. D., Rev. L. Beecher, D. D., and R. D. Mussey, M. D., on the subject of the Evangelical Alliance, at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning.

The Rev. S. K. Sneed, from the committee to whom was referred the memorial of Mr. Mills, made a report, which was adopted, and ordered to be printed in the Appendix to the Minutes.

The Rev. Messrs. Thornton A. Mills, A. S. Norton, John M. Dickey, Henry Little, C. P. Wing and T. Cleland, D. D., were appointed a *Standing Committee on Home-Missions*, under the foregoing resolution.

Adjourned until to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, A. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Tuesday, *May* 25*th*, 1847, 9 *o'clock*, *A. M.*

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The usual time was occupied in devotional exercises.

The Minutes of the last session were read and approved.

Rev. John M. Dickey offered the following resolution: "*Whereas* there is difference of opinion in the Presbyterian Church respecting the powers of our church courts in reference to Slave-holding; and *whereas* three Synods respectfully requested this Assembly, at its sessions last year, to send down to the Presbyteries an overture on this subject; therefore, *Resolved*, that the following overture be sent down to the Presbyteries for their action, viz.: "Shall the word 'Slave-holding' be inserted after the word 'Man-stealing' in the answer to the 142d Question of the Larger Catechism, among the sins forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?"

The Moderator decided, that, as the memorials from these Synods had been already acted upon, the motion was out of order unless that action was first re-considered by a vote of two-thirds. See General Rules, 17.

From this decision the Rev. H. Bushnell appealed; and the question being put, the chair was sustained.

The Rev. Joseph Chester moved that the Committee on Bills and Overtures be instructed to bring in a report on the memorials commit[144]ted to them on the subject of Slavery. The Moderator decided that this motion was out of order.

The Rev. Wm. McLain, from the Committee on Bills and Overtures, reported the following resolutions, which were adopted:

1. *Resolved*, That we deeply sympathize in the various efforts which are now being made for the spread of the principles of the Protestant Reforma-

tion: and that we cordially commend to our churches the various Societies engaged in the work.

2. *Resolved*, That we recommend to the churches to guard well the rising generation against the insidious approaches of the Man of Sin, and to educate them thoroughly in the principles of Protestantism.

3. *Resolved*, That we recommend to all agents of these societies and ministers preaching on the subject, to avoid all denunciation, and to speak the truth in love.

The Rev. E. F. Hatfield, from the Committee on Revision of the Standards, made a report, which was accepted, and ordered to be printed for the use of the house.

At 10½ o'clock, the Assembly resolved itself into an interlocutory meeting on the subject of the "Evangelical Alliance," when the Rev. Drs. S. H. Cox and L. Beecher were heard. At 12½ o'clock, the meeting rose, and the Assembly resumed business.

The consideration of the report of the Committee on the Constitutionality and Powers of the Assembly as now convened was made the order of the day for this afternoon.

Adjourned until 3 o'clock, P. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Tuesday, 3 o'clock, P. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The Minutes were read and approved.

The Rev. Messrs. J. B. Townsend and J. Rowland, with Mr. T. L. Jackson, were appointed a Committee to Ascertain and Provide for the Expenses of the Present Sessions of the Assembly.

The consideration of the report on the Constitutionality and Powers of the Assembly came up as the order of the day. The Rev. Wm. McLain moved the indefinite postponement of the whole subject, except so much as refers to the opinion of Chancellor Kent.

The motion was lost.

The whole subject was then re-committed to a special Committee, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. C. H. Read, C. Stowe, D. D., S. W. Fisher, and H. A. Rowland.

The Stated Clerk reported, "That he had effected a contract with the proprietor and publishers of the *Church-Psalmist*, by which they bind themselves, so long as the Assembly continue to approve of the *Church-Psalmist* as the authorized psalmody of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, to pay to the Treasurer of the General Assembly one hundred dollars per year, on the circulation as it now is (rated at 10,000 copies per year,) and an increased sum at the same [145] rate on every increase of the annual circulation, and the reverse;" and the report was adopted.

A copy of a new edition of the Church-Psalmist, in large type, suited to the pulpit and the aged, was presented to the Assembly by the Stated Clerk, in behalf of the publishers, which was gratefully accepted.

A memorial in reference to a new boundary line between the Synods of Indiana and Michigan, which had been presented to the Assembly in May last, was, on motion of the Rev. S. N. Steel, taken up for consideration.

The subject was referred to the Rev. Messrs. N. Kellogg, S. N. Steel, and A. Bryant, with Messrs. J. W. Cunningham and John J. Deming, with instructions to report to the next Assembly.

The Committee on Leave of Absence reported, that leave had been given to Messrs. J. L. Mason, C. Noble, F. D. Harris, C. P. Wing, and J. E. Dutton.

An assessment of fifty cents on each member was made, to meet the expenses of the present sessions of the Assembly.

Adjourned until to-morrow, at 8 o'clock, A. M.

Concluded with prayer.

Wednesday, May 26th, 8 o'clock, A. M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

The usual time was occupied in devotional exercises.

The Minutes of the last session were read and approved.

On motion of the Rev. George I. King, it was *Resolved*, that it be recommended to our churches to observe the second Sabbath of July next as a Day of Prayer, in view of the war now existing between this government and that of Mexico; and that our ministers be requested to preach, on that day, a sermon on the subject of Peace.

The Committee on the "Digest," not having reported, were discharged, and the subject was referred to the Committee on the Revision of the Standards, with instructions to report on the subject to the next Assembly.

The bills for printing and for janitor's services, amounting in all to $27, were presented, and ordered to be paid. The Rev. J. B. Townsend reported that $29.45 had been collected from the members of the Assembly. *Ordered*, that the balance be paid over to the Contingent Fund of the Assembly.

The Committee on "Doctrinal Tracts," appointed in May last, made a report, which was accepted, and, after some discussion, the whole subject was referred to a Committee, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. E. F. Hatfield, S. H. Cox, D. D., E. Mason, D. D., C. E. Stowe, D. D., and Joel Parker, D. D., with instructions to report to the next Assembly.

The Rev. S. W. Fisher, from the Committee to whom was referred the report on the Constitutionality and Powers of the Assembly, made a report, which was adopted, and is as follows: [146]

The Committee, to whom the report on the powers of the General Assembly was referred, respectfully represent: that the adjournment of the Assembly, to meet in this place, has given rise to various questions, in the inferior judicatories, touching its constitutionality and expediency. It seems, to your Committee, due to the character of this the supreme judicatory of our Church, that the grounds, on which the adjournment was made, should be distinctly spread out before the churches. We are satisfied to rest the constitutionality of our act upon the impartial and lucid exposition of the Constitution appended to this report. We are sure, that this opinion of one of the most illustrious interpreters of parliamentary law in America or Britain will have great weight, if not in convincing our fathers and brethren of the constitutionality of our proceeding, at least in evincing to them, that we have not acted without the apparent, and as we believe, the entire and real, sanction of the fundamental law, by which this body is bound, in common with the inferior judicatories.

Some of the reasons, however, which rendered the adjournment expedient, in our judgment, are not to be found on record; and it becomes necessary for us to state them briefly, before the Assembly is dissolved.

By the protracted discussion of the subject of Slavery, business of vast importance to the prosperity of our Church, especially at the West, was left totally unfinished and unattempted. In the absence of an annual Assembly, our Church has been left for a longer time than formerly without the visible bond of unity, and without the frequent supervision and control, of the highest judicatory. During this long period, it was not surprising that the churches at the West, in all stages of existence, among a heterogeneous and rapidly-increasing population, should feel the want of the presence and the

wisdom of the General Assembly, both to attract around a common centre these diverse elements, and to devise plans for the extension and consolidation of our branch of the Church through the waste places of these States. The Assembly listened to the urgent representations of those most conversant with this vast field, and felt that it was impossible, after having entered upon the third week of our sessions at Philadelphia, to take up and dispose of this wide subject. Should it have dissolved, and left these subjects of vital importance unattended to for three years more? Should it have dissolved, while much important business of the session remained unfinished—business which, in the opinion of many entitled to belief, must be done soon, or it would be wholly beyond our power ever to do it?

It was in view of these representations; to accomplish the very work for our Western churches for which we were commissioned; and which not to do would have been, in our view, culpable neglect of our appropriate mission, that the Assembly resolved to adjourn to this city. And since, in pursuance of this adjournment, we have visited this new world, the importance of a full investigation of the state of our churches,—of the Assembly as a visible bond of unity,—and the necessity of wisely-formed plans for the extension of religion and the [147] education of a learned ministry, have become more manifest. Deeply as we regret the feelings to which the adjournment has given rise, among some of the most respected and venerable of our fathers and brethren in the ministry, yet, aside from that fact, we are more than ever persuaded of the wisdom of the act that brought us hither. Had the Assembly been permitted to meet here in its original integrity; had the representation been full; and no untoward influence been brought to disparage this meeting and impair its moral power, the good effects of its sessions in this city might have been greatly enhanced.

The Committee further express the hope, that the records of this adjourned meeting, together with its happy effects upon the whole Church, and especially upon the interests of the Western branch of it, whose position and relations at this time are so important to us and the world, will show that the adjournment has resulted in many great and practical benefits.

The Committee conclude by referring to the

Opinion of Chancellor Kent, on the Constitutionality of the Adjournment of the General Assembly, to meet in Cincinnati, May, 1847.

Case.

The Rev. Dr. Cox has stated to me the following question of law, with a request for my opinion.

As the question is simply a dry legal question, touching the construction of an article in the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and involves no other consideration, I do not feel myself at liberty to withhold my friendly aid as counsel, though I give my opinion with great respect and diffidence, considering the venerable Assembly to whose powers it relates.

The General Assembly meets triennially, and generally sits until formally dissolved. It met last year at Philadelphia, and, after a week and upwards of discussion, it adjourned until May, 1847, in Cincinnati. The question is: Had the General Assembly, under the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, a lawful or rightful power so to adjourn?

Answer.

In my opinion, the power of adjournment rests in the sound discretion of

the General Assembly. I consider the power to be necessarily incident to every deliberative assembly, unless specially prohibited by its Charter or Constitution. It appertains of course to all legislative assemblies, and is occasionally exercised. This is the case with the English Parliament, and with the legislative assemblies in the United States.

The Constitution of the United States says, that Congress shall assemble at least once in every year, and on the first Monday in December. The only inhibition in the Constitution is, that neither House [148] shall adjourn without the consent of the other, for more than three days, nor to any other place. The Constitution is silent as to any other adjournment, and yet no question has ever been raised as to the power of Congress or both Houses, concurrently to adjourn the session to a future time.

So, in the Constitution of New York, the legislative term begins on the first of January, and the Legislature are to assemble every year on the first Monday in January, and neither House, without the consent of the other, can adjourn for more than two days. No doubt is raised as to the competency of the two Houses jointly to adjourn in their discretion to any future or distant day, and though the Legislature are to meet as prescribed, and are, as to the Assembly, elected annually, it is now in contemplation, at the present session, to adjourn over to the month of September.

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church leaves silently the same power of adjournment, precisely on the same footing of discretion. Thus the General Assembly are to meet at least triennially, or once in every third year. And the last Moderator, with the concurrence of the Stated and Permanent Clerks, may call a *pro re nata* meeting of the General Assembly, in case of any emergency, on four months' notice; and the Assembly is to be considered as the same with the previous one.

The adjournment preserves the identity of the Assembly. I have no doubt, that upon a sound construction of the Constitution, the General Assembly has the same analogous power as all other political legislative bodies to which I have alluded. If any greater restriction had been intended, it would have been expressed. The language quoted implies, as of course, a power of adjournment. It is a wise and necessary power to guard against calamities and overruling necessities, such as a desolating sickness, or conflagration, or insurrection, &c. It may be safely confided to such a representation, if anything may.

Even in ordinary civil corporations, where powers are granted very guardedly, and construed strictly, it is adjudged, that a corporation may transact any business at an adjourned meeting, which they might have transacted at the original meeting; (11 Vermont Reports, 385.)

For these reasons briefly, I conclude that the power of adjournment by the General Assembly the last year to Cincinnati was constitutional.

New York, April 19, 1847. JAMES KENT.

The Rev. H. A. Rowland made a minority report on the same subject, which was accepted.

The Assembly then took up the report of the Committee on the Revision of the Standards.

The Rev. George I. King moved the following resolution, which was adopted.

"*Whereas*, there is a doubt about the propriety of the forms of the overtures submitted to the Presbyteries by this Assembly, at its sessions in Philadelphia, therefore—*Resolved*, That the Presbyteries be requested to forward their reply to them in the following form: [149]

1. Shall Section 7th of Chapter XI., Form of Government, be altered so as to read "annually," instead of "triennially"?

2. Shall the first sentence of Section 7th of Chapter XII., Form of Government, be altered so as to read "The General Assembly shall meet at least once in every year," or shall it read, "The General Assembly shall meet at least once in every third year"?

3. Shall paragraph 2d of Chapter VII., Book of Discipline, be altered so as, after the word "Synod," to insert the words, "except in cases affecting the character of ministers of the Gospel"?

4. Shall paragraph 2d of Section III. of Chap. VII., Book of Discipline, be altered so as to prefix to it the words, "All appeals, except in cases affecting the character of ministers of the Gospel, shall terminate with the Synod; and"?

5. Shall paragraph 4th of Section IV. of Chapter VII., Book of Discipline, be altered so as to annex to it the words, "And all complaints shall terminate with the Synods, except in cases affecting the character of ministers of the Gospel"?

On motion of Rev. I. Ingraham, it was *Resolved*, unanimously, That in the judgment of this Assembly, the Constitution, as contained in the book which is now authenticated to the churches, is authoritative and binding, until it shall be regularly amended by proper Overtures submitted to the Presbyteries.

The remainder of the report on the revision of the Standards was recommitted, with instructions to report to the next Assembly.

Ordered, that the salaries of the Clerks be paid.

Mr. J. C. Macy, from the Committee on Mileage, reported that the sum of $40.25 had been received for the Commissioners' Fund, and that this sum had been equally distributed among the applicants. The report was adopted.

On motion of the Rev. C. H. Read, it was *Resolved*, unanimously. That the thanks of this Assembly be tendered to the Moderator, for the ability, kindness and patience, with which he has presided over the deliberations of the Assembly.

Also, to the Trustees of the Second Presbyterian church of Cincinnati, for the liberal use of their house of worship during its session.

Also, to the Committee of Arrangements, for their kind provision for the comfort of the members on their arrival in this city.

And also, to the families of this city, who have so kindly and with such readiness extended to us their hospitality.

Ordered, that the Minutes be printed, under the direction of the Moderator and Clerks, and forwarded to the Presbyteries.

The Minutes were read and approved.

The whole business of the Assembly having been finished, and the vote having been taken for dissolving the Assembly, the Moderator, with prayer and the apostolic benediction, declared the Assembly dissolved; and required another General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, to meet in the First Presbyterian church of Philadelphia, on the third Thursday of May, A. D. 1849, at 11 o'clock, A. M.

E. W. GILBERT,
Permanent Clerk.

Cincinnati, May 26, 1847.

APPENDIX.

REPORT ON HOME-MISSIONS.

The Committee on the memorial of Rev. T. A. Mills beg leave to present the following report:

It was one object of the Assembly, in adjourning its sessions to Cincinnati, to consider the condition of the Western churches, and devise means for their enlargement. No subject of greater importance can be presented for the consideration of the Assembly. Here is a country of vast extent, possessing in its soil, climate, vegetable and mineral productions, rivers and lakes, all the natural facilities for very great advancement in wealth and influence; already containing a population three times as great as the thirteen colonies at the American Revolution, and increasing with a rapidity unparalleled in the annals of the world. If this population were homogeneous, and under the influence of the Gospel, there would be nothing calling peculiarly for the extra exertions of the Church. But unhappily this is not the fact. The people of the West are a mixed multitude, from almost every nation under heaven; embracing opinions as diverse as our nationality, with a great multitude who care nothing for the whole matter. It is a clear case, that the population, wealth and influence of this valley, will be great; and as clear that the wickedness of the people will be very destructive, unless they can be brought under the sanctifying influence of the Gospel. On the other hand, what an influence for good will this valley exert on the destinies of the world, if it can only be consecrated to the Lamb of God.

The question, then, what can be done to secure this valley for Christ, is one of the most momentous which can be presented to the consideration of American Christians. Happily for us, we are not left in the dark on the subject; and if the execution of our plans were as easy as their development, we should at once bring this whole population to the feet of the Saviour. The same Heaven-appointed means which have converted to Christ other nations, in other ages, will bring the population of this great valley to bow before him and own him Lord. What, then, is to be done? Let the Church have faith in Christ, and go forward with the work as he has appointed. Let the Church "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature" in this great valley.

But this is a great work, and implies, not only the instruction of the people in the whole Bible, but also that mental culture which never fails to result from thorough instruction in divine truth. Moral and mental culture are Christ's appointed means for the redemption of the world. This it was which subverted heathenism in the Roman empire of old; and has subverted it of late in the Sandwich Islands; and which is now regenerating the Armenians and Nestorians. The church, the college, and the humble school-house, under the direction of godly men, have been the glory and the redemption of Scotland, and of the land of the Pilgrims. Impressed with these views, the General Assembly would say to all their beloved people, "Go forward in this blessed work." And while they rejoice in the great good which has already been accomplished for the West, by a preached Gospel, in connection with the Bible, Missionary, Tract and Education Societies, by the Sabbath-school, the day-school, and the college, they feel it incumbent on them to call the attention of the churches to some points of special importance in the prosecution of this great work.

I. The first thing to be done is to improve, strengthen, and enlarge our existing congregations. Let every pastor, and session, and church, feel that they are a missionary body, established in the midst of the most important missionary field in the world, and the object of their vocation is to lead all around them to Christ.

To this end, let every congregation be thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of God's word. Let them be thoroughly grounded in the doctrines of grace. By means of the sermons of their pastors, Bible-classes, and catechetical exercises, let them be thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of the Bible as contained in our Standards; and thus, by thorough training, let them be prepared for thorough and efficient action. Let every one of our congregations, from the largest to the smallest, be formed into Bible-classes, and into classes for instruction in the Shorter Catechism. In addition to this, let all our congregations exert themselves to the utmost for the establishment and maintenance of a proper system of district-schools, in which their children can be trained, intellectually and morally, by worthy and competent teachers, on the principles of the Holy Scriptures; and, in places where such district-schools cannot be maintained, let the congregations employ pious teachers for their own children, who will make the Bible a school-Book, and will labor as earnestly for their salvation as for their advancement in knowledge. Let not the Church leave the precious interests of their children to ignorant and ungodly teachers.

II. In order to reach the destitute population, the General Assembly recommend to all our Presbyteries carefully to survey their whole territory, and apply to the Home-Missionary Society for one or more missionaries, who shall be employed in itinerating labors among the destitute. They also recommend, that special attention be directed to the foreign population; and that they be supplied with the ministrations of the gospel, as far as practicable, in their own language. To this end, they would recommend to the Presbyteries to make all suitable efforts, to introduce into the ministry young men of piety and suitable acquirements who speak the German language. As also that many of our young men be advised to study the German, in order that they may preach therein.

III. They would further recommend to all the Presbyteries, and especially in the West, to make renewed efforts to train up young men of piety and promise for the holy ministry. To all ministers of the Gospel who are without charge, or are laboring in secular pursuits, the General Assembly would say, "The harvest is perishing for want of laborers; enter in and reap, and you will receive your reward on high."

IV. Finally, the General Assembly deem it very important that small appropriations be made, judiciously and wisely, to aid feeble congregations in erecting houses of worship.

But, as it is impracticable for us to enter at present into the details of the matter—

Resolved, that a Committee of five from the Western Synods be appointed to consult and correspond on this and the other subjects embraced in this paper; and to present a detailed report to the next General Assembly, embodying the different plans tried by the Presbyteries which have proved most successful, and presenting such recommendations and suggestions as the whole subject may seem to require. [See p. 143.*]

* Reprint, p. 189.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, and the brethren members of the Assembly, wherever and whenever convened; wishing health and salvation;

Reverend and Honored Sirs—

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, being in session at this time, in the city of Cincinnati, State of Ohio, are happy to deem it one of their incumbent duties thus to address you, in the spirit of fraternal love and Christian confidence; evincing our desire, which we doubt not meets also your own, for an established epistolary and affectionate correspondence with you, as the representatives of an important and interesting portion of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some of our own brethren, honored and beloved, remember with great pleasure their Christian intercourse, during the last summer, as well as at other times, in London and other places, with several of your distinguished brethren and fathers, both laical and clerical; and their reports of your Christian benignity, your soundness in the faith, your courtesy, your constancy, your trials, and your promise of future usefulness in the cause and kingdom of our common adorable Master and Lord, operate only to fortify and increase our desire of such correspondence, and our augury of good only as its probable result.

We are, indeed, at this time, five thousand miles in geographical distance apart. The sun that rises to shed the glory of morning on the inhabitants of the British Isles, travels in his steady course six full hours—one-fourth of his diurnal rotation—before his beams salute the meridian of this city. And here we feel, as well as learn, what relative things are the associations of East and West, North and South. On the great Atlantic seaboard, where so many mighty rivers run from the summit of the Alleghanies eastward to the ocean, in unremitting and unchanging flow, and especially in any of those cities which bestud and decorate the coast, we are wont to call this a Western city, and the Queen City of the West, with a population of nearly 100,000 inhabitants. But our vast and rapidly increasing country extends west and south of this for some thousands of miles, to the great Pacific coast, and almost to the central isthmus of two vast continents, where other States and cities are soon to be created, probably, by the sovereign pleasure of Providence, till the West and the East become each a corresponding terminus and counterpart to the other.

Very different, therefore, honored and reverend brethren, of necessity, must our associations and the development of our physical and intellectual energies, in this country, be, from yours, in a territory however wealthy and populous, yet not so large as some one of our counties, the organized compartments of our now thirty, and ere long to be—if the Lord permit—our hundred States and Territories. We say not this in vainglory, or with any spirit of boasting, but because we desire that we may respectively and reciprocally appreciate each other. Our country is new, vast, wonderful; requiring appropriate and peculiar measures of beneficence, and having many mingled elements of evil in the rare compound of its national millions. But God has cast into it also the salt of his covenant, the truth and the grace that come by Jesus Christ. The antagonism of principles and interests between Christ and Christians, and Satan and his retainers, here, is maintained, on the part of the former, with a good degree of exemplary courage and conduct, and with that trust in God alone which anticipates from his resources the strength of battle and the joy of victory.

Our circumstances are very different from yours; and with us, as with you, they must modify, as well as influence, our duties and our efforts for the progress of the kingdom of Christ. They must also leave their impress on our characters. Hence arises much of the relative difference, that often mystifies towards each other the Christians of one from the Christians of another hemisphere. It is difficult often for men to comprehend any where, why other men, in a distant and a different place, should not see altogether as themselves do, and act altogether as themselves do. And hence it has not been the fortune or the prestige of the short-sighted, the ill-informed, the partial, the ignorant, or the prejudiced, nor sometimes even of the wise and the good, to apprehend or appreciate their own brethren, when separated from them, or estranged by any of the circumstantials of society, which are ever found not only to checker its surface, but also to affect considerably at least the visible forms of its character. We trust in God that we shall be found to each other such happy exceptions to this rule, in some sort, as those of a common faith, and a common polity, and a common hope in God, may be supposed at once capable of being, and obligated to seem and to act, in all their mutual relations and conduct. Circumstances and surfaces therefore apart, we are happy to salute you in the Lord, as our honored and dear brethren, for Jesus' sake, having with us one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; and as being, in many subordinate ways, so related to us, as we also to you, requiring the expressions of our profound regard and affection, as to the ambassadors of God, the legitimate bishops of His Church, and the representatives of a learned and a time-honored section of his heritage. We have read your history, we have measured your territories, we have enjoyed your literature, we have studied your theology, we have sympathized with you in the recent disruption, and we feel toward you, reverend and beloved fathers and brethren, much of that filial respect and love which is due from us to our esteemed seniors in the land of our sires.

It is remarkable, in the providence of God, that a rupture and a schism in the great Presbyterian body of this country and of Scotland, should have occurred so nearly simultaneously both here and there. Presbyterians now with us are mainly two denominations; so are they also with you; and whatever are the causes that induced the separation here, while we mourn the mischief it has occasioned, we claim to have had towards it only or mainly a passive relation. Measures fundamentally unconstitutional were originated and enacted by a small majority in the Assembly of 1837, and made afterward "the basis" and the test of individual adhesion, or of prompt disownment and *ipso facto* exclusion. We have no desire at this time to uncover in detail the merits of the controversy, but only to allege, that in our circumstances we were morally necessitated to meet the latter alternative; and this we did, by rejecting the new basis, by denying the improper test, and by adhering to the Constitution in its whole integrity, against the explosive acts that had so far prevailed to supersede its jurisdiction. We, adhering to the Constitution while others adhered to the new basis, were necessitated to see our brethren of the latter party, in May, 1838, constituting another General Assembly with the same name as our own; and since that period the two Assemblies have proceeded distinctly, each in its own relations, and in the main, we hope, with some diminution, at present, of the acrimony that characterized the commencement of the separation. We indeed judged it duty to appeal to Cæsar for our chartered rights in respect to ecclesiastical property and the establishment of our own identity in law. The case was fully tried on its merits, and the verdict of the jury, as well as the luminous charge and analysis of the honorable court, gave the

decision unanimously and promptly in our favor. Our brethren, however, invoked the appellate jurisdiction of the Superior Court, on a motion for a new trial; and there, where the merits of the case were not tried, nor known, nor admissible, nor properly related to the issue, which was wholly new and different, five judges constituting said court, the motion was strangely, and as we have often said, with some of the best and most learned jurists in the country, fallaciously and with astonishing mistake, affirmed, by a vote of three to two of those judges; or rather, two to one, as only three officiated in the decision. This decision gives them, *pro tempore*, the continued possession, while it encumbers our way, and greatly prejudices our rights, in the prosecution of a new trial. We have therefore suffered the matter to rest for the present, with the reserve of the right to proceed whenever it may seem desirable and proper.

Great, however, is our aversion to all such litigations; and great it would be, even if assured as much of our success, as we are that the merits of the case are with us and not with our brethren. In all subordinate litigations, and several have occurred hitherto in reference to the ownership of particular church properties, where the merits of the question have come into legal investigation and review, the tribunals of justice in our country, have uniformly, so far as we have ever known, and without a single exception, reached the same result. These are facts; and we state them, not that we may involve or influence you to join with us and take our part in the controversy, but that you may at least see our position and know our views of the case. The end is not yet. We have not excluded them; we can forgive their wrongs; we desire peace and fraternal amity, on Christian principles; but we do not relinquish the righteousness of our cause, nor can we forget the perpetrated injuries they have done us, or the damage resulting to the cause of all we love as Presbyterians from the consequences of their exscinding measures, and the strange "basis" thus constituted that caused the separation.

True indeed, our brethren of the annual Assembly, or rather some few in connection with them, in this vicinity, are again agitating the members and the ministers of our now unhappily twain denominations. A suit of a strange and incredible character has been lately originated before the Supreme Court of the State of Ohio, in reference to the possession and proprietary relations of our Theological Institution in the vicinage of this city, Lane Seminary, the presidency of which is now ably occupied by our venerable friend and father, the Rev. Doctor Lyman Beecher, in conjunction with an able Faculty. What will be the result of this attempt to alienate the funds and the ownership of this our own cherished and beloved school of the prophets, in this great and needy valley of the West, we know not. There is such a proverbially "glorious uncertainty of the law," and yet such a hope in favor of equity and possession when their claim is combined, and when an independent court and an impartial jury concurrently pass on the righteousness of the case, that while we profess not to know, and may not therefore predict the result, we feel tranquil in the prospect. Still, it would be quite inequitable and even calumnious to mention this, as we do not, to inculpate our brethren collectively of the other Assembly. They and their churches are generally innocent in this transaction. Their judicatories have refused all recognition and counsel in the matter. Many of their wisest and best advisers and fathers, as well as worthy members and ministers of less distinction, approve it not at all; and we hope in God, who knows how to worry and countervail the officious wisdom of Ahithophel, that no issue may be reached that will either violate equity, or bequeath to our successors

an occasion of lasting animosity and bitterness, when we and its present actors shall have passed to the world of spirits.

Still, we deplore the schism, as disastrous to our common interests as Protestants and as Presbyterians. It has comforted and edified the proud and false pretensions of prelacy, both Roman and Anglo-American. It has in some quarters detached, from the Presbyterian platform and sympathy, a crowded emigration to the exulting and welcoming patrons of the Episcopal monopoly. It has disparaged and dishonored the excellent principles of our common polity, in the eyes of unintelligent thousands, to whom its coincidence with Scripture, and the sublimity of its divine warrant, were not palpable, or credible, or demonstrable even, for its vindication. In the mean time, the papacy also has made capital of our inglorious dissensions. The infidel has scoffed, the Socinian has chuckled, the heretic has rejoiced, and the visionary, and the schismatic, and the radical, and the destructive, have gloried together, in the fancied discomfiture of truth and order, with their sanctions, their interests, and their allies. Thus has the kingdom of heaven suffered by our severance. And why was it? We believe before God, that no adequate causes existed to justify it. Our differences in theology, when not over-estimated, when scriptural realities are distinguished from philosophic subtilties, and when the substance of our common faith is justly discriminated from the variant forms, in which our variant degrees of skill in the word of righteousness are wont to explain or to enforce or to defend it; our differences were not fundamental, were not singular or novel or wonderful, and they were not properly intolerable or incapable of reconciliation. If, however, the reverse is alleged, as it was often by some in the heat of partisan warfare and the stimulation of debate, we could easily show in reply these two other things, which are much more certain and quite incontrovertible; namely, first, that the same things existed before, and with little diversity of form, in our beloved Church for more than a century; and second, that precisely the same elements of speculative and didactic difference exist at this moment among themselves, unredressed and immedicable, by such means, and perhaps by any others in the potentiality of man. We abide however, by our former averment; and believe that no denomination beside in Christendom, that was so large and so circumstanced—if this were possible—was at once more orthodox, more united, or more potential, as a whole, than was our regretted Presbyterian Church; before it was so violently bisected and dishonored; never, we fear, to be reinstated in its organic integrity and unity and glory. But Jehovah reigns.

With the Constitution of our Church, doctrinal and governmental, we are cordially satisfied. The former we have not changed in a single particle; yet in respect to our polity we have made two changes, namely, that the Assembly should meet triennially instead of annually, and that the appellate jurisdiction of our Church should be restricted to the Synods as Provincial Assemblies, and of consequence be withdrawn from the powers of the General Assemblies. We know that busy fame has invented and spread another version of the matter, although it may not have reached you.

> Monstrum horrendum, ingens; cui quot sunt corpore plumæ,
> Tot vigiles oculi subter, mirabile dictu!
> Tot linguæ, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit aures.

Some have circulated the calumny that we were altering also our doctrinal standards, or the manner in which we "solemnly receive and adopt" them individually, when entering our official relations in the Church. It is all fallacy and mistake. No foundation was ever laid for the allegation with us,

more than with our brethren; and we make this statement also that our real status may be known from ourselves in this communication.

Happy as we are, reverend and beloved fathers and brethren in the Lord, to maintain with you a regular correspondence, we desire that its fruits to us and you may be pleasure not only, but mutual profit also and advantage. One source of this will ever be found, we think, in the interchange of correct information between us; touching our ecclesiastical statistics, our views of truth and duty, on any practical questions, as evolved in the providence of God, occasionally or continually, in connection with the defence of the Gospel, and the ever-changing phases and sinuosities and impertinences of error; or our relations to the civil power, to popery, to the world, to the cause of missions, to the interests of education, to the progress of civil liberty, to the prospects of society, and indeed to any one of the allied departments, directly or indirectly related, of the Church of Christ and the prosperity of the kingdom of God. And, if on any topic we may chance to entertain views of some variety or dissidence, we shall not on that account the less value our proposed epistolary and fraternal intercourse. Write to us, as we will to you, in the spirit of upright and magnanimous brotherhood, freely, fully, fearlessly, on any theme, sentiment, or occasion; and, by the grace of God, *ἀληθεύοντες δὲ ἐν ἀγάπῃ*, we may so benefit reciprocally our spiritual and ecclesiastical interests, as to afford another and an excellent illustration of the inspired way of mutual edification; "growing up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love."

The General Assembly of our Church at present includes twenty Synods, embracing 105 Presbyteries, composed of about 1500 ministers, and having under our care nearly 200 licentiates, and 1600 churches, comprising about 150,000 communicants, some hundreds of them candidates, in various stages of preparation, for the office of the Christian ministry. We are surrounded, indeed, in this free republic, with all forms and varieties of theological doctrine and ecclesiastical polity; but we are happy to believe that our own cherished Church has been ever exemplary in this land for its stability, its piety, its learning, its usefulness, its institutions, and its measures of aggressive benevolence. The Presbyterian Church of this country, whose history dates from about 1670, or near the time of the great Revolution in our then common empire, ultimately fixing the present house regnant on the British throne, has ever led the way, in this great world of the West, conjointly with our orthodox congregational brethren of New England, in sustaining a noble testimony, and a nobler example too, in favor of a pious and learned Christian ministry, providing the means of Christian education, founding and fostering colleges and theological seminaries, and promoting domestic missions and the extension of the means of grace through all our borders. In the progress of society and the improvements in science and the arts, which distinguish the age and adorn our country, we have not been unmindful of the duty of advancing proportionately in the elevation, as well as the maintenance, of the standard of ministerial education.

That department of official qualification, which traces theology to its sources in the inspired originals of the Holy Scriptures, and which accomplishes our pastors as men of God, thoroughly furnished for every good work, as durable and practical and scriptural preachers, has become increasingly honored and patronized and cultivated through all our Church; though we regard it as by no means having reached the culmination or the consum-

mation to which it is legitimately destined. To this enlightened system of ministerial furniture and competency, we have indeed been necessitated by the pressures of the times and the circumstances of our existence. A learned and faithful preacher, skilled and rich in the knowledge of the Hebrew and the Greek documents of inspiration, well read in the history of the sacred canon and the classification of manuscripts, and competent in all questions relative to the integrity of the sacred text, and the grammatical and hermeneutical science as related to it, as well as conversant and profound in systematic, polemic, casuistic, and didactic theology; such a preacher, when equally pious and sincere, wields a power incomparable, which secures his influence, edifies the Church, and puts to flight the armies of the aliens, in a masterly and intelligible way: and under God, we have no other influences so potential at our command, as comparatively we desire none other, on which to invoke his blessing, as we use them, hoping for victory in the cause of truth and righteousness.

And now, reverend and honored sirs and dear brethren, we request you to pray for us, that God may in all things lead us right. We invoke also your counsel and correspondence in the free spirit of the Gospel, as properly germane to the Free Church of Scotland. In your freedom we greatly rejoice, from the low-born and cringing spirit of Erastianism, as well as from the pseudo-protestant and crypto-roman discoveries and impositions of Tractarianism. The latter evil has more periled our country—the former, yours; both of them we regard as fallacious, insidious, and antichristian. But, while we view them and other evils as very hostile to the true interests of the kingdom of Christ, we feel that the only best way in which for us to endeavor their due prevention or their final extirmination, is—to preach every where the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel, and by our own coincident example to show to them a more excellent way, walking in the light of the Lord.

On the subject of Slavery, as it continues in the Southern States of this great national confederation, and as, in those sections of our Church, its contact with some of our members—only a relative paucity of them—still continues, the General Assembly, while they deplore the evil, and desire, under the guidance of that wisdom which is profitable to direct, as well and as effectually as they can, to subserve its entire removal from our borders, would respectfully refer our North-British brethren to the accompanying Minutes of our proceedings at Philadelphia last year, as a demonstration that we are by no means indifferent or inactive in regard to it. We have received your representation and remonstrance in the spirit that dictated it. We know your principles and your motives, appreciating their philanthropy and honoring their faithfulness. Still, our relations to the evil as it here exists, our duties in regard to it, our convictions of what is wise and proper, as contradistinguished from their opposites—which are in this country rife and mischievous alone—in reference to ecclesiastical action of a specific character for its redress; on these and all kindred topics of a practical nature respecting Slavery in this country, we must conceive that our own knowledge of the existing state and complications of the question, and in view of the short-sighted and infidel extravagances of too many anti-slavery champions, is considerably superior to any which could be imparted by distant strangers, however well-intentioned and properly influenced. Brethren, pray for us, that we may know and do all our duty, and write to us continually, as you see the fitting occasion, for our edification and improvement.

On another subject, that of Temperance, as related to the recent reforma-

tion and the œcumenical enterprise that anticipates its universal triumph, you will allow us also to say a word, in a kindred fraternal spirit, to you. The evil which it is its object to exterminate, we view with great and full conviction as in many respects worse than Slavery itself; being more consistent with refinement, with plausibility, and with good-looking palliatives; while it is in itself insidious, progressive, deleterious, deceptive, irresponsible, and ruinous, both to the body and the soul of its victim. We believe there is no good excuse for its continuance, or for any half-way or insipid measures for its redress. If the Church of Jesus Christ is not foremost in this reform, who may be expected to take the lead in it? Total abstinence from all that intoxicates is, we believe, the only certain remedy; the only line of safety; the only true panacea of recovery or prevention; the only practical and palpable discrimination; the only philosophy that is at once easy, cheap, innocent, universal, and infallible; the only sure safe-guard to health, character, conscience, and the blessings usually concomitant. We do not, however, presume to dictate to you, dear brethren, or forget your Christian liberty, or willingly disparage it. We only reciprocate your kindness to us, in this fraternal representation; though we have learned to believe, that in our cordially-honored Scotland peculiarly, ay, in her exemplary churches and among many of her honored and learned and venerable clergy too, this admonition may be quite applicable and very seasonable; even though herein we are at present so brief, and "would merely suggest, that, faithfulness and love seem to require that we should represent to our North-British brethren the views which we entertain," of which we have proved the sovereign and the wonderful advantages, and to which we would "solicit their earnest attention, as to a subject which excites so strong a feeling," with so increasing a power, "in the minds of American Christians." We know you will appreciate us, when we assure you, with all reverence and love, that we feel, more than we speak, on this great moral topic of individual obligation and universal interest; and as you desire us to appreciate you, in all your wisdom and fidelity may see fit to say to us,

> Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim;
>
> This privilege we mutual grant and claim;
> As yours or ours 't is equal and the same:
> A pagan sentiment or classic tie
> That more befits our Christian unity.

The late movement that has affected two hemispheres in favor of Christian Union, has met, in its motive and its object, our cordial approbation. It is founded on a grand truth of revelation, the divine unity of the Church. We have all, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, substantially one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. We are all called in one hope of our calling, and in one body, and that the body of Christ. We have all one Saviour, one Gospel, one Bible, one heaven, one destination, one and the same eternal home: by whatever name we may here be called, with whatever peculiarities diversified in appearance, in whatever prejudices alienated, or from whatever causes mutually unknown. Hence we approve of any well-appointed league and covenant in the nineteenth century, which, as the œcumenical Evangelical Alliance of the Church universal, enables all Christians to symbolize their substantial unity to all men, to defend their common interests, and to promote wisely the great cause of God in this sinful world. To honor the things in which they agree, without compromising those in which they differ, is surely wise, magnanimous, and safe, and we rejoice with

you in its probable and desired success, as the offspring of the grace of God. And now, brethren, we commend you to God our Father, to the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour, and to the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier and Comforter; and remain your affectionate brethren in the bonds of the Gospel.

By order and in behalf of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America.

SAMUEL HANSON COX, *Moderator.*
EDWIN FRANCIS HATFIELD, *Stated Clerk.*

Cincinnati, State of Ohio, May 24, 1847.