A Book of Remembrance

The Presbyterian Church

NEW SCHOOL

1837-1869

An Historical Review

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Prefatory.

Your Fathers, where are they?
And the Prophets, do they live forever?

❧

The Righteous shall be in Everlasting Remembrance.

❧

A Book of Remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His Name.

❧

Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof: Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the Generation following.

❧

If I forget Thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning: If I do not remember Thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

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A PERSONAL WORD.

CHAPTER FIRST.

American Presbyterianism.

Its Transplantation and Development.

The history of the Christian Church contains hardly any chapter of greater interest than that which recounts the progressive importation of the various types of religious thought and life in Europe to this new continent, and their respective rooting and growth in its virgin soil. It is true that many other incentives, such as the lust of empire, the greed of gain, the spirit of adventure, the aspiration after a measure of freedom which could not be secured anywhere in the Old World, were blended largely with the distinctively religious motive, in inducing the remarkable migration which, running on through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, populated and possessed the continent. But such secular incentives, however strong or pervasive, could never have brought about that migration, with all its multiplied developments and issues, had not the religious factor been present, in addition to all other agencies, both animating and regulating the complex process of colonization. This was especially the case in that interesting series of colonies, extending from Massachusetts to the Carolinas, which were founded and built up into strength by representatives from the British Isles and from the adjacent sections of northern Europe.

The colonist at Jamestown, though actuated in large measure by other motives political and personal, brought his Episcopacy with him under the royal

charter, and gave it from the first a conspicuous place in his organized existence. The Dutch settlement in New York, established almost simultaneously with that in Virginia, had its distinctive type of both doctrine and ecclesiastical order, derived directly from the parental source in the Reformed Protestantism of Holland. Even in the cabin of the Mayflower the immigrants to New England, acting on the basis of Puritanism, ordained the supremacy of the church over the state, and from the outset their strong religious convictions ruled in their public as in their personal life. A little later came the Lutheranism of Sweden to seek under royal patronage a provincial home in Delaware, bringing with it as its chief treasure that sturdy form of Protestant belief which had travelled northward from its primal seat in Germany, and had found cordial acceptance in the country of Gustavus Adolphus. Roman Catholicism also, springing not from the ultramontane but from the finer English stock, planted itself in the same period in adjacent Maryland, mainly as a refuge for persecuted Catholics, yet with a degree of toleration for immigrants holding the Protestant faith. In like manner the Calvinism of France, represented by Huguenot colonists resident at various points on the Atlantic coast but chiefly in the Carolinas, established itself, especially after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, as one of the permanent religious forces in the New World. William Penn brought with him the doctrines and usages of the disciples of Fox, and incorporated them as fundamental constituents in the colony which bore his name. At an earlier date Roger Williams founded the colony of Rhode Island, primarily

to be the representative of his belief respecting the sacrament of baptism, and of his doctrine of religious liberty. During the later decades of the century Scotch Presbyterianism, though existing in an unorganized form until the beginning of the century subsequent, became a distinct and prolific element in the religious life of New Jersey and the adjacent provinces. It is needless to refer to other and minor varieties of religious belief, transplanted at earlier or later dates into the scattered settlements along the Atlantic shore. The striking general fact is that in these various ways almost every influential type of Protestant faith or polity in Europe was reproduced on American soil, and became from the first a factor more or less conspicuous and commanding in giving form and character to American life.

But that reproduction was largely affected in its historic development by certain special conditions amid which these transplanted faiths, and also those that followed them during the eighteenth century, took root and grew into maturity in the New World. The vital relations of soil and air, sunshine and shower and other contributing agencies, to the unfolding and maturing of the living plant may serve as an illustration here. These special conditions deserve passing though it be brief consideration:

One of these was the progressive separation of these colonial faiths from the Churches of the Old World, with all that such separation involved. The Atlantic was indeed a broad ocean in those primitive days, and communication was both scant and infrequent. Yet for a long time each of the transplanted organisms

clung with a filial tenacity to its parental connection. Each preserved so far as possible the ancestral names and usages, imported its ministry and its educating agencies, and but slowly adjusted itself to its modifying environment. All alike shrank from the possibility that, in the exigencies of frontier life on a continent so vast and distant, the venerated creeds of Europe might come to be regarded as no longer binding, and the historic forms of polity and worship, so precious in memory, might be thoughtlessly set aside. There was real peril at this point, as the rise of some erratic and grotesque developments, especially in New England, clearly showed.

But on the other hand too close an adherence to these ancestral connections, too much of the traditional element, too infantile dependence, would have proved repressive, if not fatal to healthful growth. It was better that broad seas should roll between the parental Churches and their American representatives — especially between the old Protestantism with its rigid forms and teachings, and that young Protestantism that was to spring up into vigor and fruitfulness on American soil. While what was inherited was to be cherished and so far as possible preserved, these implanted organizations were constrained to become in large measure independent in their development — more and more acclimated to the soil wherein they were to take root. One marked illustration of this necessity appears in the fact that those denominations have thriven most, and are now exerting the most potent influence as religious forces in the nation, which were the readiest to drop off foreign names and usages and

affiliations, and to adjust themselves to the demands of their position as distinctively American Churches.

A second condition appears in the geographic collocation and commingling of these denominations, and in their consequent struggle for existence and for growth in their new spheres. In the Old World, geographic boundaries were keeping apart, not only Romanism and Protestantism generally, but also the various types of Protestantism; and in the American colonies similar territorial lines at first separated sect from sect, giving to each its own special area of development. Virginia, New York, New England, Maryland, Delaware, had each its own authorized and dominating Church, even to the exclusion of all others. But by the necessities of the case such segregation could not be permanent. As new settlements began to be formed in the developing provinces, and common interests drew together in many ways the adherents of differing sects, it became impracticable for any one Church to maintain an exclusive title to denominational supremacy in any part of the public domain. Provincial seclusion gradually ceased to be regarded as desirable or just; the right of each sect to establish itself wherever opportunity offered, came by degrees to be broadly recognized; the aspiration to be not provincial but continental began to actuate all alike; and the gradual diffusion of their various types of faith and order throughout the continent was the final result.

Such diffusion and commingling produced their natural consequence in eager struggle for position, for influence, for church supremacy. The spirit of the

denominations inevitably came to be, not one of friendly amity and mutual helpfulness, or even of amicable rivalry: too often it degenerated into a temper of suspicion, of aversion, and even of open antagonism. As the domain to be occupied broadened and became continental, the effort to possess it became more and more intense; and an era of sectarian zeal and strife such as has hardly a parallel in Christian history followed. Yet it is pleasant to note that the severe strife of sects in America, a phenomenon as painful as it is unique, was one which by its own nature could not be permanent. The warfare of the Puritan against the Baptist, of the Episcopalian against the Quaker, of sect with sect, could not last always. Each Church was compelled to acquaint itself with the principles and methods of other Churches: minor differences were gradually seen to be unimportant: contact and comparison tended at length to induce concord: and from the whole experience there emerged by degrees a practical toleration and a measure of mutual respect and confidence such as has appeared in no other land.

A third condition to be noted is the progressive separation of the Church in whatever variety from the State, and the universal enthronement of the voluntary principle in church support. How much the Regium Donum and other kindred bestowments,— the asserted obligation of the civil power to contribute toward ecclesiastical maintenance, and the consequent obligation of the ecclesiastical to sustain the civil power, and even to submit spiritual matters to its control, has done to corrupt the Church in belief and action, in head and mem-

bers, is well enough known to every careful student of the religious history of the Old World. The same theory was at first, and for long periods, regarded as valid and authoritative by most of the American Churches. For generations every property holder, of whatever religious belief, was required by law to support financially the established Episcopacy of Virginia. A century has not passed away since the maintenance of the local church was laid as a legal obligation on every resident of the Connecticut parish. Similar requisitions prevailed, with more or less of rigor, in most of the colonies.

But the various attempts to establish State Churches came by degress to be recognized as defective in both theory and practice, and were gradually abandoned. The broader principle that any specific form of religion should be maintained by those only who accept it, and that in the eye of civil law all existing varieties of religious belief should not only stand on precisely the same footing, but should be alike left to stand or fall according as the zeal or the indifference of their adherents might determine, came by degrees to be generally accepted. The obligation of the State to protect and foster the common Christianity continued to be recognized: the propriety, for example, of exempting from taxation property devoted exclusively to religious uses was widely admitted: public worship and the Sabbath were protected; but no consequent right to dictate terms of religious belief or prescribe rules of church administration or discipline was anywhere allowed. The State might neither enact laws establishing religion nor prohibit the free exercise of religion, nor re-

quire any religious test as a qualification for civil trust or office. Within its own sphere the Church of whatever name came to be regarded as a kingdom not of this world — a kingdom far above all civil jurisdiction or control, so far as its own interests were concerned.

That there were some undesirable consequences following from a change so radical — from the enthronement of voluntaryism as the universal rule, may easily be admitted. It too often tended to develop an inordinate denominational zeal,— to incite an intense though narrow love of sect or of party which was inconsistent with broad and generous regard for the one Church Catholic. It sometimes imposed too great burdens on the membership, especially in the erection of sanctuaries and the support of ordinances. It occasionally led selfish and worldly minds into indifference to the claims and blessings of the Christian faith as represented and expressed in and through the Church. Yet voluntaryism has justified itself an hundred fold in the energy it has induced, in the temper of sacrifice it has engendered, in the better administration of church affairs, and in the loftier estimate of religion which it has taught the people at large to cherish. It has proved its value also in the larger interest it has developed in all varieties of Christian beneficence and charity, in the generous support given by individual munificence to all forms of higher education, and in the zeal for missions supported by free gifts and including the whole race of man within their loving and Christlike sweep.

Absolute liberty of thought and of speech was still another general condition, closely related to the preced-

ing,— the full right of every denomination and of each believer to express and declare in all proper ways their respective convictions, without check or restraint either by the arm of civil law or through any repressive force of popular sentiment. That right, as all know, was distinctly enunciated in the Reformation: it is embodied in the very word, Protestant. It stands out in perpetual antithesis alike to the claims of churchly authority in whatever form, and to all assumption by the State of any warrant to prohibit the free expression of personal belief within the civil domain. It is a right inhering inalienably in all intelligent minds, especially within the religious sphere. How much the exercise of this right was challenged and obstructed in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is known to all historical students. Instances are not wanting in America where both the State and the Church, and the Church Protestant as well as Papal, have attempted to invade this right, and under some pretext to repress legitimate freedom of speech. Yet it is to the glory of American Christianity, and especially of American Protestantism, that it has more and more firmly and cordially come to recognize this inalienable prerogative as vested not only in the Church as an organization, but in each believer as a moral person, supremely accountable for his belief and his utterances to God alone.

That there are serious dangers accompanying the exercise of such liberty,— that it may degenerate into reckless license, or become a medium of destructive error, or an inciting cause of revolution and anarchy within the religious sphere, is quite obvious. Under the

banner of free thought, all varieties of opposition to the Christian Faith, all types of unbelief however irrational have at times banded themselves together, and wrought immeasurable mischief to the cause of true religion. Nor is it strange that in the natural revolt against such perversion of liberty, thoughtful minds should sometimes question the validity of the principle itself, or should seek shelter from such dangers under the wing of what is supposed to be an infallible and authoritative Church. Neither is it strange that the Church should sometimes assert, even to an unwarrantable degree, its right to protect itself against such pernicious license, especially when manifest within its own communion.

Still, the right to think as one chooses concerning religious matters, subject only to the scrutiny of conscience and the tests of right reason, and the correlated right to express under proper limitations what is believed, is a heritage so precious, a privilege so unquestionable and sacred, that we may well rejoice that it came so early to be recognized in the American colonies, and has now become so thoroughly established as an essential condition of American Christianity. Protected by positive statutes and by court decisions, upheld by multiplied ecclesiastical deliverances in its defense, and sustained by concurring popular sentiment, such liberty of thought and of speech has become for all the future a primal principle both in our personal and in our denominational life as a people — a law universal and unchallengeable.

Such in brief were the four generic conditions under which the various Christian denominations in America

began their existence and development, and by these the Presbyterian Church found itself surrounded and affected from the first, as it took its place among these religious bodies, and entered upon its ordained and distinctive work. While it retained with tenacity its affiliation with European and especially with Scotch Presbyterianism, it still was constrained even from the outset to recognize its essential independency, and to take on forms and features such as the new continent with its fresh and unique life was imposing. And while it naturally emphasized its own strong system of belief and its particular form of ecclesiastical organization, even claiming for the latter an exclusive jure divino authority, it was at once compelled to adjust itself to the companionship of other sects claiming like warrant, to recognize their rights and their excellencies, and to labor side by side with them in substantial harmony for the promulgation of the Christian Faith.

So, while in Europe, especially in Britain, it had aspired to become a state religion, and had claimed pecuniary as well as moral sustenance from the civil power, here it was obliged from the beginning to depend entirely on voluntary support, even while Episcopacy and Independency were still receiving contributions to their respective maintenance from or through public treasuries. And in like manner it was obliged at an early day to drop off all ecclesiastical assumption in matters of belief, and to grant not merely to its own ministry and membership, but to all men of whatever religious body or whatever shade of religious opinion, full democratic liberty in thought and speech. In all this it had

a notable example in that bold and firm independence of spirit, as against all civil control, which had led the Assembly of Westminster to stand out so bravely against both the asserted domination of Charles I. and the equally unwarranted domination of Cromwell.[1] A free Church in a free State became its motto and aspiration, even from the outset in its organized career; and this freedom, assumed for itself and justly and generously asserted alike for all, became one of its cardinal characteristics.

The manner of its transplantation strongly emphasizes the need of conformity with these practical conditions. That transplantation indeed began early in the seventeenth century when Presbyterianism found its first home in the New England colonies, and became a visible though an unorganized type of Protestantism at other points along the Atlantic shores. Churches presbyterially constituted and grounded doctrinally in the Westminster Symbols thus came into existence here and there, sparsely during the first but especially in the latter half of the century. But the process of denominational evolution, by which such churches became organically one in and through the presbytery, and the sect as such took its rightful place among the existing denominations, was postponed until the dawn of the eighteenth century. From that time the process of denominational organization went on under the conditions already named, and the body became an independent, a catholic, a voluntary, and a free and liberal Church,— putting off by its own choice not merely the narrownesses but even in some measure the legitimate characteristics of the mother Church whether British

or Continental, and accepting freely all that was needful in structure or spirit to make it truly and heartily American.

It is not needful here to trace in detail the interesting history of this implantation, or to emphasize further the conditions under which the young denomination grew into vigor and influence. Turning rather to the organic evolution that followed, we may note in brief its two main elements, the doctrinal and the ecclesiastical:

American Presbyterianism was from the outset founded as to doctrine generically upon the Calvinism which, centering and generating in Geneva, had worked its way with remarkable energy northward, not only on the continent, but into the British Isles,— where in fact it gained and held a firm position even after it had in some measure declined in commanding force beyond the Channel. More especially it was founded on the Confession and Catechisms of Westminster as being the last and best formularies of Calvinism: faithfully representing that doctrinal system as distinguished from both Lutheranism and Arminianism. Under the teaching and training of that remarkable system the young denomination was developed from the start and through successive generations; and from it there has never been, as to essential and generic principles, any marked departure. From the organization of the first Presbytery in 1706, and especially of the first Synod in 1717, the Church — it may safely be affirmed — has continued to be in all stages and varieties truly Calvinistic.

But differing views as to what is really essential in Calvinism, differing interpretations of particular doctrines, differing judgments as to the degree of minuteness and stringency with which subscription to the accepted formularies should be required, arose early. One prominent source of such differentiation reveals itself as one notes the composite and somewhat diverse elements brought together in the young organism,— particularly the foreign, such as the Scotch and Irish and other European constituencies on one side, and the native and more thoroughly American on the other. Other sources appear in the extended and complex doctrinal system itself, in varieties of speculative tendency manifest in the interpretation, in different modes of explaining and applying specific truth, and especially in the exercise of that rational liberty which all were in form agreed in allowing. This differentiation made its appearance at an early day, even in the conflict respecting the proper rule of subscription to the Adopting Act itself. The Synod had been constituted twelve years before by the subdivision of the original Presbytery into three (perhaps four) but its membership had been held together rather through spontaneous affinity and through agreement respecting church order than by any prescribed compact,— the Adopting Act of 1729 being the first formal affirmation of the doctrinal basis on which the Church was planted. The rule laid down was clear and just. While recognizing the liberty of opinion vested in all alike and disclaiming any intention to impose its form of belief on the conscience, the Synod held and agreed that the Confession and Catechisms of Westminster should henceforth be formally

adopted "as being in all the essential and necessary articles good forms of sound words and systems (systematic statements) of Christian doctrine," and as such should be received and adopted by all who might hold office within the Church.

But the underlying question as to what are essential and necessary articles, and as to the measure of liberty to be allowed in the interpretation of the good forms of sound words, still remained. In 1730 it was declared by the Synod that all candidates or intrants must receive and adopt the Symbols in exactly the sense agreed upon by those who concurred in the Adopting Act; and in 1734 particular inquiry was instituted as to the measure of compliance with this rule, though not without opposition in the interest of denominational freedom. In 1736 the stricter party, being in the ascendency numerically, and believing that dangerous distinctions were being introduced as to certain essential articles and their interpretation, secured the further declaration that the Synod adhered to the Symbols, not only as containing the true system of doctrine, but also as involving their acceptance "without the least variation and without regard to such distinctions." Such rigidity of subscription was not contemplated by the Westminster Assembly neither was it required in Scotland or Ireland until it seemed to be demanded as a safeguard against the influence of Episcopacy on the one hand and the subtle tendency to Arianism or Moderatism on the other.

Nor could a rule so rigid command universal acceptance within the Synod itself, and by degrees the differentiation between the two parties, conservatives

and liberals, become so acute as to bring about controversy, conflict, destructive antipathies, ending in the disruption of 1741 — the first in that series of disruptions which more than almost any other cause have hindered the growth and influence of Presbyterianism on the continent. It is needless to speak of the specific aspects, ecclesiastical as well as doctrinal, which the general issue assumed. The story of the struggle between the Old Side and the New Side, as the parties were respectively called, is a story not merely of discussion and difference as to doctrine and order, but also of narrowness and partizanship, of suspicion, alienation, bitter antagonism, wholly unworthy of men who bore the Presbyterian name. It is easy now to see that a calmer temper, a broader spirit of fraternity, a larger measure of Christian insight and wisdom, might have held and ought to have held the parties together within the one Church, notwithstanding all the irritating issues involved.

But in spite of all attempts made by moderate men on both sides to heal the festering sore, the separation continued for seventeen long years,— both parties and especially the New Side increasing in numbers, each organized in separate presbyteries and synods, though both were all the while agreed as to the general terms and conditions of the Adopting Act itself. But conciliatory opinion and sentiment began more and more to displace the original antagonism, and in 1758 a formal reconciliation was effected, resulting in the organization of the unified Synod of New York and Philadelphia. The history of the negotiations, continued through six or eight years, which led on to this result —

of the various proposals for compromise and agreement, and the prolonged and patient labors of the intermediate party with both classes of extremists, is not only interesting in itself but is full of instruction to all who desire to know what the doctrinal foundations of American Presbyterianism truly are. The object sought was well defined by the Synod of Philadelphia, four years earlier, as the uniting of the various presbyteries and synods in one body "on such scriptural and rational terms as may secure peace and order, tend to heal the broken churches, and advance religion hereafter."

The union thus secured was not a mere scheme of aggrandizement to be effected through the combining of denominational forces, without establishing internal and essential concord as a condition; the movement was rather in the interest of that catholic unity, that communion of saints, which according to their Confession ought to characterize Presbyterians everywhere. Its doctrinal basis was none other than the Adopting Act of 1729, before that Act had been interpreted by the Old Side as requiring subscription without the least variation, and with no recognition of the distinction between things essential and things not essential in the accepted system. Its truly Christian spirit, as well as its broad doctrinal quality, is admirably set forth in the Plan of Union as finally adopted. In earnest terms that noble document describes the injury done to the Church and to the cause of religion through the disruption, pleads for the taking away of all occasion for reproach and the banishing of all jealousies, exhorts to submission to the will of the majority and the cordial cultivation of the sentiment of brotherhood, pro-

nounces all careless charges of heresy or heterodoxy a censurable evil, urges the uniting of divided presbyteries and congregations wherever practicable, defines the proper standard of church membership and the true tests of religious experience, and affirms it to be the solemn purpose of all concerned to advance through the Union the common kingdom of Christ among men.

During the half century prior to 1758, the young denomination had grown from the single presbytery centered at Philadelphia into an ecclesiastical body of considerable magnitude, notwithstanding the mischief wrought through the disruption, and may fairly be said to have already taken its place by the side of Congregationalism and of Episcopacy as one of the three dominating types of Protestantism on American soil. Its area had extended northward into New York and Long Island, and southward into Maryland and Virginia, and at the date of the Union it comprised nearly a hundred organized churches and a somewhat larger number of ministers. The Great Awakening which under the preaching of Whitefield and Edwards and others of kindred spirit had quickened so thoroughly the religious life of New England, had imparted a like gracious impulse to the Presbyterian churches, even while the unhappy division continued, and doubtless contributed largely to the union itself. Meanwhile new missionary fields were opening to view in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, and also in Virginia and the Carolinas, wherever immigrants of the Presbyterian faith from Britain or from the Continent became resident. There is pleasant evidence that the consciousness of such a missionary work in prospect — of the

manifest and attractive opportunity to plant the old and revered standards on new soil, had as much as the developed sense of essential oneness even amid diversities in belief, to do with the consummation of the union itself. For nothing unifies Christians like the consciousness of a common work to be done together for God and the souls of men. It must be confessed, however, that that needful and beneficent work would have been much better done by the Church during the generation that followed the union, had the disastrous disruption never occurred.

That generation includes both the period of antecedent agitation in civil affairs and the years and trials of the Revolution, and extends to the formation of the first General Assembly in 1788. Doctrinal issues had now retreated largely from view, in the presence of the political struggle that issued finally in national independence. It was a time of extraordinary trial and of severe privation. Religion was at a low ebb in the country at large. The churches were enfeebled in both membership and resources. The influx of ministers from Europe diminished steadily and finally ceased altogether. It was to provide a native rather than a foreign ministry that Princeton College was founded, even during the period of disruption; without its contributions in the generation that followed, the ministerial supply would have been totally inadequate. As early as 1761, the united Synod declared it important that special provision be made by the College for the better instruction of students in the knowledge of divinity; and in 1768, President Witherspoon, soon after his inauguration, gave lectures on theology and also in-

structed candidates for the ministry in the Hebrew Scriptures. In 1771, special provision was also made for the partial support of students engaged in such studies. But the churches were too poor either to maintain properly such supplies as they already had, or to push forward adequately the missionary work of the denomination, whether in the colonies then established or in the new settlements which were rapidly being planted on the frontier lines of civilization. And during the dark years of the Revolution the impediments to denominational progress were in various ways greatly multiplied. Ministers were persecuted for their loyalty, always conspicuous, to the cause of independence; sanctuaries were sometimes seized by the royal forces, congregations were scattered, and sacred ordinances and worship suspended; presbyteries and the Synod met but infequently, and spiritual desolation was widespread.

With the return of peace through the establishing of constitutional government and the new nationality, the interests of the Church rapidly revived. The scattered congregations came together again; ministers and missionaries were more fully supplied and more adequately supported, and the great task of church extension was resumed as fast as resources and opportunities allowed. And in 1788, five years after the close of the War, the final step in perfecting the continental organization of the Church was taken in the constituting of the first General Assembly at Philadelphia. It is important to refer to this procedure just here, only to direct attention to the doctrinal position of the denomination at this interesting juncture in its

history. No changes were made in the Confession of Faith except at those points which treated of the civil government and magistracy, and these amendments consisted simply in an exclusion of all asserted claim of the civil authority to interfere in church doctrine or administration. The amended Confession affirmed indeed the obligation of the government to protect the Christian Church of whatever name in the enjoyment of its spiritual privileges, but declared also that all classes and bodies of Christians should enjoy an equal measure of religious liberty, without interference by the State. The Catechisms were also adopted as authoritative formularies, with the significant omission of the clause which in the original declared the toleration of a false religion to be one of the sins forbidden in the second commandment.

But while this action was, like the Adopting Act of 1729, a formal commitment of American Presbyterianism to the theology of Westminster, there is abundant evidence that the action was taken in no temper of extreme ecclesiasticism. During the War the influence of the foreign element in the Church, from which chiefly the demand for strictness in subscription had come, had steadily declined, and in fact had almost wholly given way to the more liberal and catholic, the more American, disposition of Witherspoon and his associates. The spirit of liberty was quite as prevalent in the Church as in the country, and the strong sense of brotherhood which was binding the colonies together and drawing them all notwithstanding minor differences into unity within the one centralized government, had its counterpart in the

fraternal and mutually trustful disposition of the large majority of those who, whether from Britain or the Continent or from New England, now constituted the one denomination doctrinally as well as ecclesiastically. Indeed the strongest objection to the adoption of the Westminster standards seems to have come from those who questioned whether it was best for the young Church to be hampered in belief or teaching, as they feared it might be, through the formal acceptance of any such authoritative formularies of faith. Had the effort been made to proclaim the Confession and Catechisms as doctrinal standards to be accepted without the least variation, to the exclusion of all distinctions between the essential elements and the elements not essential to the Calvinistic system, there is good reason to conclude that the first Assembly could not have been organized as it was, at least without the loss of some of its most intelligent and liberal and most thoroughly American constituents.

The Church thus organized now grew far beyond its original boundaries, migrating by degrees from the Atlantic coast into central New York and Pennsylvania, crossing the Alleghenies by the two or three great mountain passes, and gaining a foothold even in Kentucky and Ohio. It was soon represented by four synods, composed of the membership of sixteen presbyteries, which in turn comprised more than four hundred congregations and about half as many ministers. The rapid development of the country, socially and commercially as well as politically, was favorable

to this marked expansion,— especially as this was aided before long by the considerable immigration from Presbyterian regions in the Old World. In many respects the prospect of large organic growth and of even continental influence seemed bright as the morning.

But it is also true that the baleful spread of irreligion, particularly through the poisonous growths of the open unbelief so current in France and also in England, proved to be a powerful hindrance to this denominational development. Skeptical philosophies, false theories of life, flagrant vices originating during the War and abundant afterwards, the secular spirit and the zeal of new enterprise absorbing the thoughts and strength of the multitude,— to say nothing of the bitter political controversies developed in the process of framing and organizing the civil government — constituted in their combination a barrier to religious progress, in all denominations alike, which seemed at times to be absolutely insurmountable. Such adverse agencies would indeed have been insurmountable, had not the gracious help of God at this juncture, just as the new century was dawning, manifested itself in that remarkable series of revivals which, whatever may be said of their grotesque and sometimes highly objectionable accompaniments, changed so decisively the moral aspect of society, and lifted the whole nation up to a higher religious level. It was found by actual experiment that the evangelical doctrines, and among Presbyterians that the Calvinistic exposition of these doctrines, still had a potency which unbelief, however intellectual or courtly, however

gross or malignant, could not withstand. It was found that the faithful proclamation of these doctrines by those who believed them and lived up to their belief, could convince men of sin and turn them unto righteousness, could confirm and quicken languid churches, could stir whole communities and regions with the impulses of a divine life, and could confute skepticism by a living and practical process which no skepticism in any age has ever been able to gainsay. Within a few short years, through these revivals affecting especially the western half of the Church, but manifesting their efficacy also at many points in more easterly sections, the whole denomination was lifted up, not only spiritually and numerically, but doctrinally also. Its confidence in the practical as well as theoretic cogency of its theological system had been greatly strengthened, and its determination to state, proclaim, defend, exalt its Calvinism became stronger and stronger.

Yet out of such a condition and purpose arose by a singular evolution another doctrinal agitation and conflict, culminating in what is known historically as the Cumberland Schism. It is not strange that in the stir and zeal of such revivals the growth of congregations and the opening of new missionary fields should exceed the capacity of the Church under its ordinary methods to supply the wide ministerial demand. Nor is it strange that such extraordinary demand should be met here and there by bringing into service as ministers some who had not attained that degree of mental discipline and equipment which had been regarded by the Westminster Assembly, and ever

subsequently, as essential in the sacred office. Neither is it strange that in the practical application of the Calvinistic formularies in such seasons of excited revival there should be some among accredited ministers who relatively ceased to lay stress on the sovereignty of God in grace as in nature, and on the depravation and utter helplessness of sinners apart from effectual grace, and who emphasized rather the ability and the duty of all men to repent and believe, and their consequent guilt for every moment of impenitence or unbelief.

Nor is it remarkable that it should be affirmed by some earnest men of this class, not indeed without some show of reason as is now admitted, that if certain propositions in the Confession did not positively teach a spiritual fatalism as absolute as any fatalism in nature, they were at least so far fatalistic in form and in the impression they made on many minds, that they might safely be left out of view by the preacher who was anxious only to save souls. Affirming as much as this, and carrying their convictions out along logical lines, such men further held that the acceptance of such fatalistic teachings was not essential to proper loyalty to the Presbyterian scheme of doctrine, or to be required as a test in Presbyterian ordination,— especially in a great spiritual emergency such as had arisen, in which persons not prepared or willing to meet such test and requisite, might yet be found in practical experiment quite competent as ministers to preach the essential Gospel, particularly in destitute regions, and thereby to lead sinners to genuine faith in Christ and his redemption.

Here were the conditions of a strenuous controversy, at once theological and ecclesiastical. The controversy speedily arose, and was carried on with spirit on both sides, and with growing divergence between the parties, until at length the judicial authority resident in the Form of Government was invoked, and those who held such views or shared in such usage either were formally excluded from the Church or voluntarily withdrew from its fellowship. Whether this painful result was necessary or was right in itself, will always be questioned. Abstractly considered, the doctrine of particular and unconditional election is so embedded in the Symbols, and so prominent in them, that it seems impossible to regard the doctrine as less than essential. But the question still remains whether certain modes of stating that doctrine found especially in the Confession do not tend, as the excluded or withdrawing party believed them to tend, to a species of fatalism not warranted in Holy Scripture, and practically injurious to both faith and life. Was it sufficient to hold the doctrine in general terms such as were accepted by Calvinists elsewhere or were embodied in other Reformed symbols, or must every phrase or expression in the Confession be formally assented to as a condition of ordination or of ministerial standing in the Church? Might not persons otherwise acceptable and giving good evidence of ability so to preach the Gospel as to win and save men, be wisely and rightfully ordained, even if they were in doubt as to individual and unconditional election or felt themselves unable to proclaim the Gospel under the forms and limitations imposed by that doctrine? Such

in essence was the issue raised between the parties,—at once a question both of official subscription and standing and of theological opinion and belief.

At this distance in time and in the light of recent events, it seems altogether probable that due consideration by each party of the actual position of the other, proper regard for the practical exigency that precipitated the issue, intelligent study of the Reformed theology in general, close scrutiny of the records of preceding controversies of like character, just comprehension of the real nature of American as distinct from European Presbyterianism, would have led to a considerate settlement of the questions involved, and saved the Church from another disruption, with all its piteous consequences. But it is characteristic of Presbyterians when they differ, to differ positively and sweepingly, to hold their differences too tenaciously and in too litigious a temper, and finally too often to split asunder where they would better a thousand fold have tolerated their diversities of opinion, and determined to remain together within the common Church. The disruption of 1741, with its disastrous influence on the growth and prosperity of Presbyterianism in the century preceding, ought at least to have awakened in both parties, in this instance, a livelier sense of the mischief and the wrong of schism, and have predisposed both to allow at least that degree of divergence respecting the mysterious tenet of election, with its correlate in the dogma of reprobation, which is now freely allowed within the united Church.

Postponing at this point the survey of the doctrinal element in the life of the developing Church, we may

now glance in brief at the corresponding ecclesiastical element which figured so largely in its earlier, as it has figured also in its later history. Much that falls properly within this division of the general subject has already been introduced incidentally in the consideration of the more vital element of doctrine. Faith is always more than form. How a Church is organized and governed, is in the nature of things a question subordinate to and one largely answered by the more fundamental question, what does the Church truly believe.

It is a notable fact that a particular form of church government has almost invariably accompanied the Calvinistic scheme of doctrine, — the two being conjoined historically in many countries and ages by some subtle and tenacious bond of affiliation. It is true that the Presbyterian polity has in some instances maintained its hold where distinctive Calvinism has in a measure declined; it is also true that Calvinism has held its place in some instances where another form of government, or at least a modified form, has been preferred. Yet the general fact remains that for reasons which undoubtedly lie in the nature of the two things rather than in mere location or outward circumstance, Calvinism and Presbyterianism have dwelt together in special harmony, each suggesting and confirming, each commending and strengthening the other. This generic fact is abundantly illustrated in church history, and it goes far to explain the other significant fact that Presbyterianism has shown larger capacity for transplantation and diffusion, and is now

habitant in more countries and under a wider variety of conditions, than any other type of Protestantism. In view of these two facts the query why Presbyterian bodies the world over should bear a name which describes their method of organization and internal administration rather than one that should represent that system of doctrine which they agree in holding so tenaciously as their chief heritage and glory, is one not easily answered.

But the Presbyterian polity like Presbyterian doctrine has been passing in this country through an evolutionary process which has rendered the American type of it, especially as we now have it, a quite different thing from the norm of the same name which had its chief seat in Scotland and for a little time throve and dominated in England in the first half of the seventeenth century. The imported Presbyterianism which was represented in the mother presbytery in Philadelphia and in the original Synod, was essentially a foreign fabric; its principles and methods, its precedents and rules and administration were British. But to hold on invariably and indefinitely to a mode of government so foreign,— to live and act generation after generation under the regulative force of European usage and tradition merely, was from the nature of the case impracticable. And the records of the Adopting Act, of the disruption of 1741, and of the subsequent organic union of 1758, together with all that followed ecclesiastically during the remainder of the century, all show how of necessity new rules and methods were gradually introduced, new precedents established, a new order and style of administration

by degrees brought into use, to meet the special exigencies imposed by the novel conditions of American life and work.

One illustration of this fact has already come under notice in the early controversy respecting the proper theory of subscription — a controversy substantially in the first instance between the close adherents of foreign order and the advocates of personal liberty, but one which it has required more than a century in various forms to bring even to its present stage of solution, and which as an issue between conservative and progressive parties may in the future as in the past rise again to disturb, possibly even to divide the Church. Another kindred illustration may be seen in the historic issue raised between the original Synod and the presbytery of New Brunswick respecting the relative rights and prerogatives of the two bodies as to the reception of candidates and their licensure and ordination. That issue is not yet entirely settled, for while the presbytery has now come to be recognized generally as the true unit and source of authority in this particular and indeed in all matters not directly limited under our Constitution, there have been at times even recently strong efforts to lift the synod, and especially the Assembly, into a degree of supremacy which the Form of Government framed in the Jerusalem Chamber did not give it. In all varieties this is the old conflict between centralized and distributed power, between oligarchy and democracy in the Church, between the freedom of the individual unit acting within its legitimate sphere and the domination of an organism, naturally too indifferent to individual

rights, and often ready to assert control even at the sacrifice of personal prerogatives and personal welfare.

The union of 1758 was a clear triumph for the time of the freer, more generous interpretation of our ecclesiastical system. Under its terms the official was not permitted to dominate over the private member, nor the presbytery over the humblest minister or church, nor the synod over its weakest presbytery. The organic law was to determine the relative positions, rights, prerogatives, of all persons and all organizations within the unified Church. And the administration of that law was to be not technical, narrow, rigid, domineering, as indeed it is always possible for such administration to become under our Form, but rather tolerant, generous, brotherly throughout,— with supreme desire to allay differences, remove offences, preserve the sense of fraternity at all points, without assumption or show of magisterial power. Nor is there reason to think that, although some sagacious minds apprehended such a result, the organization of the General Assembly thirty years later changed in any essential feature either the mode or the spirit of church administration. At least at the outset, before the stress of contingencies real or fancied wrought otherwise, few if any traces appear of a tendency in that supreme judicatory to excessive centralization or to the assuming of any control not warranted by just and generous interpretation of the organic law.

The Cumberland Schism like the disruption of 1741, illustrated painfully the peril of departing on any side from this conception of church government. To revert for a moment to that sad event, there can

be little doubt that, strictly construed, both the Confession and the Constitution forbad those divergencies in faith and teaching and those departures from proper ecclesiastical regulation out of which that schism grew, and technically called for the exercise of discipline on that account. But is there not as little room for doubt that if that issue had been met in the spirit of the Union of 1758,— if all the occasions for divergence or variation had been duly considered and so far as possible provided for,— if all parties had been willing to adjust their issues on the true American basis of large toleration and on the true Christian basis of brotherhood, the ecclesiastical rupture might have been avoided, and Cumberland Presbyterianism might have remained a prolific and valuable branch of the one continental vine, the one undivided Church?

Still it is obvious in general that, notwithstanding occasional variations, the earlier history of organized Presbyterianism in America reveals a decisive and healthful development in the ecclesiastical as in the doctrinal sphere. The extent of that evolution is greater than many are accustomed to suppose. It is inconceivable, for example, that an American Assembly, even in the eighteenth century, should call on the civil power, were there any such power adequate to the task, as the Assembly of Westminster more than once did, to order the seizure and burning of a doctrinal treatise believed by it to be heretical. It is equally inconceivable that an Assembly at least in our time should require, as the Synod of 1741 required, that the church standards should be subscribed by every official person without the least variation, to the

exclusion of the fundamental right of private interpretation. Hardly more conceivable is it that, in this age, those sacred guarantees with which the Constitution surrounds every minister and every member of the Church should, even to correct lawlessness or repress heresy, be so much ignored or set aside, as they were even a century ago. More and more a wider, freer, nobler interpretation alike of our organic law and of our confessional teaching has come in, not merely to modify Old World usage or tradition, but also to confer new power and new dignity on the Presbyterian name.

The growth of the Church during its first century clearly shows the inestimable value of the twofold evolution here described, and establishes the right of the denomination to a large place and to strong and practical influence on American soil. Within a hundred years from the organization of the first presbytery, with its seven ministers and five churches, located in a comparatively narrow space on the Atlantic coast, the Church had extended its area throughout almost the entire country, excepting New England, and its ministers had increased thirty fold and its congregations more than seventy fold. Its strong, clear, consistent and commanding creed, fairly interpreted, had found favor in the eyes of men, and as in an eminent sense the Church of the Doctrines the denomination had acquired for itself a teaching function within the religious sphere which no other Church seemed quite so competent to fill. Meanwhile, its representative type of government resembling so closely that of the nation, and its fine adjustment in administration be-

tween an excessive individualism on one hand and hierarchal assumption to the other, had also done much to inspire general respect and win public confidence and support. On the whole, it is safe to say that a hundred years ago no other type of Protestantism exhibited evangelical belief and church life in more attractive ways, or contained in itself larger elements of popularity and influence. And when the nineteenth century opened there was much, notwithstanding existing impediments and the distracting issues doctrinal and ecclesiastical, to justify the hope that the place and influence thus reached would broaden with time until Presbyterianism should become one of the most extensive and commanding forms, if not indeed as some of its adherents fondly expected, the dominant form of Protestantism in America — in the best sense a free Church in a free State.

CHAPTER SECOND.

The Disruption of 1837.

It is indeed a pleasant picture which the Church in the first three decades of the nineteenth century presents. Out of various collisions and conflicts earlier and later the principle of toleration had come to be widely recognized, and even to be enthroned as a sovereign law in the denominational conviction and activities — as indeed it is recognized and enforced in the confessional Chapter on the Communion of Saints. The consciousness of substantial unity around the main tenets and interests of the Church had risen into commanding prominence; circumstantial diversities had for the most part disappeared. This was in some degree a natural result, flowing from past experiences both agreeable and painful, and developing more freely as the organization became less foreign and variant, more and more distinctively American in temper and habit, and as the great denominational work spread out before it more fully and attractively. Doubtless it was also a supernatural result, induced by the presence of the Divine Spirit, and nurtured into strength by that gracious culture which everywhere reveals one of its most beautiful manifestations in the experience and fellowship of the organized Church. And surely no one in contemplating the condition and prospects of the denomination at this juncture would have dreamed it possible that within a brief period explosive differences would arise, partizan antagonisms would be developed, the sense of oneness and

brotherhood would vanish, and bitter struggles be begun,— all ending in a rupture which a decade or two earlier all parties would have pronounced impossible.

But the conditions of further conflict still remained. The old questions respecting faith and order were not, could not, be settled once for all; the composition of the organism was more or less explosive in its nature; new issues of policy and instrumentality were of necessity from time to time arising. Spontaneous conflagrations, exploding gases, infectious diseases, were always possible agents of michief and of ruin. And back of all lay the latent poison, the corrupting potency of original sin — of original sin in a hundred forms of mutual blindness and narrowness, of obliquity in motive, of selfishness and ambition and the spirit of evil. A brief survey of some of the more conspicuous among these deteriorating or destructive forces is essential to a just comprehension of the result that finally came to pass. At this distance of time, when partizan feelings and purposes have happily died away, and when another and more substantial unification has taken place, such a survey may properly be undertaken,— provided it be conducted in the historic temper, and with no disposition to attempt the distribution of praise or blame among the parties involved.

It would be a judgment both shallow and unjust to condemn all differences or diversities among evangelical people as departures from the essential principles of the common Christianity, or as a reflection upon the religious character or profession of those who are concerned in them. For while there is much

in that Christianity respecting which its adherents are not at liberty to differ — much which it becomes sinful schism in them to wrangle about, there is also just room within the religious sphere as elsewhere for the free action of specific and particularizing tendencies, for the play of many diversifying sentiments and convictions, even for large differences as to creed and organization and church life,— all permissible within reasonable limits so long as they do not militate against the supreme good which all parties are pledged alike to revere and subserve. Ancestral tendencies flow all unconsciously in our blood; the traditions and impressions of childhood affect in many ways our maturer convictions; personal temperament phlegmatic or sanguine, and personal education or culture, influence largely our theologizing and our ecclesiastical preferences; the associations into which we are providentially brought, our specific environments, aid in developing our religious views, feelings, habits — our friendships and also our antipathies, even within the one household of faith. Such influences are embedded in the very muscles of our spiritual, as both healthful and pernicious germs are embedded in our physical organism. Neither the private disciple nor the assembled Church can escape them, nor can their presence in either be regarded as always a serious reflection on the unifying nature or the practical workings of the common Christianity.

In the instance under consideration, although the denomination was becoming year by year more homogeneous in composition, there were still certain national and racial tendencies — the English persistence,

the Welsh enthusiasm, the Dutch phlegm, the Huguenot temper, eminently the Scotch positiveness and readiness to do battle to the death for cherished belief on one side, and the equally strenuous Puritanism of New England, no less conscientious in belief or less ready to insist to the last extremity on the other — tendencies which were still operative as differentiating forces within the one Church. To these should be added all those segregating influences already adverted to, personal and social, which tended in many ways not only to impair the sentiment of unity and the zeal of service, but also to magnify existing differences and imperceptibly to prepare the way even for division. And beyond these we should note the impersonal occasions for diversity frequently arising from the complex conditions amid which the work of the Church was being carried forward,— the varied problems of sphere, method, instrumentality, resource: giving rise often, first to zealous debate, then to wide variety in their solution, and finally to antagonism and alienation, all tending toward open rupture in the end. To the careful student of the history of the period the presence of such disintegrating causes is painfully apparent, and sadly ominous of the division that was to follow.

But turning from this general survey to a more specific view of the denominational situation, we may note six particular causes which all will agree in regarding, though there may be varying degrees of emphasis laid upon one or another, as producing in their combination the historic Disruption. These were, first, diversity of opinion as to either the essential

content of certain doctrines, or to the proper mode of stating or explaining these doctrines; second, difference of judgment as to the measure of liberty allowable in subscription to the accepted standards of belief, or of toleration to be granted to those who might vary more or less from these standards; third, diversity as to the requisite degree of conformity to the church polity in certain details, or of adherence to the Presbyterian system as against all other forms of church government; fourth, the question respecting the relative claim and value of ecclesiastical agencies as compared with voluntary associations, in carrying forward missions both foreign and domestic and other kindred forms of Christian work; fifth, difference respecting the theological soundness, the prevalent methods and the spiritual results of the revival movements extensively current in certain sections of the Church; and sixth, diversity of opinion as to the institution of domestic slavery, and to the duty of the Church toward those among its members who were not conforming in practice to its various testimonies against that institution. Some consideration of each of these particular causes is indispensable to a proper apprehension of the historic result.

Among the various types of Christian theology, none is so remarkable as Calvinism, in the generic sense of the term, for the effort on one side to include in one comprehensive scheme all the main elements of our Holy Faith, and on the other to adjust these elements in their proper relationship, and so to balance all opposites as to secure through their interblend-

ing the finest attainable measure of both completeness and harmony in the enunciation of divine truth. All types of theology, worthy of the name, are indeed confronted by the same complex problem, and must concern themselves with the same effort at solution. God and man, sovereignty and freedom, depravity and responsibility, justice and grace, election and salvation, regeneration and conversion, faith and works, — these and other kindred antitheses confront the thoughtful mind under whatever sky or name it may seek to formulate or express the truth of God in creed and system. And the endeavor to attain such formulation, to set forth the great verities of Christianity in one conjoined, harmonious, comprehensive structure — a scientific scheme of doctrine — has been going on almost from apostolic times, and is likely to continue so long as the Truth of God, revealed in nature and in His Word, presses its sacred, solemn claim on the believing soul.

But among all who undertake this task, the disciple of Augustine, of Calvin, of Edwards will always be foremost. The manner in which he approaches the work, the philosophic principles which regulate his inquiries, his high sense of the supremacy of what is divine above what is human in the material, his strong faith in the intrinsic harmony of the various elements, even of those which seem most opposite if not antagonistic and mutually exclusive, his scientific aspiration after unity and his untiring temper and zeal,— all these constrain him to theologize, and to theologize with the utmost possible measure of patience and thoroughness, and with an unconquerable

confidence that, when rightly apprehended and adjusted, the doctrines of the Word will become as truly harmonious, as truly one, as the songs of the angels are. Hence come his diligent attempts at comprehension, his careful adjustment of elements apparently in conflict, his studied statements and balanced propositions, and finally his strong and broad and cosmic system, standing forth among the other theologies as Mount Blanc among the mountains of Switzerland. Hence also come his resolute adherence to the convictions wrought into his mental and moral structure by such a process, his pride sometimes extreme in his formulated creed, his readiness to battle against all comers in defense of the truth as he has thus formulated it, and his strong affection and sympathy toward all those who dwell harmoniously with him within what has been well termed the Church of the Doctrines.

But how obvious it is that a scheme of theology thus framed, with its strenuous efforts toward comprehensiveness, with its balancings and adjustments, with its measured statements and its strict demands upon both intellectual credence and religious acceptance, must from the nature of the case furnish many occasions for difference in the use of material, for variations in method and form and emphasis, for diversities in the actual product, and even for tenacious and sometimes bitter conflict among those who still hold conscientiously to the generic Calvinism. How easy it is to exalt one element or one section of doctrine unduly while relatively retiring another section or element from view, to attempt jointure where it

seems to human view impossible, to lose the just balance in proposition and statement, to construct the system disproportionately and unsystematically, and too often to become partial, narrow, dogmatic in the enunciation of the fabricated Truth. Hence no class of Christian thinkers seem quite so liable as Calvinists to differ around unessential elements in doctrine, or to debate concerning minor issues of phrase or interpretation, even until debate ends in distrust or alienation or possibly in open rupture. No system of theology seems quite so liable to lose its broad generic quality, or to split into a series of small systems, having indeed a common historic likeness, yet diverse and partial in each instance, and often more hostile toward each other than any of them are toward widely differing types of theological construction. And hence have come largely those numerous issues and conflicts among Calvinistic divines which ever since the age of the great Swiss teacher have had so prominent a place in the records of Protestantism, and have done so much — more than any and all opposition from the outside — to prevent Calvinism from attaining its legitimate position among the theologies of Christendom.

It is needless to enter here upon any account of the specific issues respecting doctrine out of which the Disruption arose. One who reads with care the list of sixteen doctrinal Errors which were charged upon one party by the other as indicative of a radical departure from the Calvinism of the Symbols, and the sixteen Answers presented by the party so arraigned, will have no difficulty in seeing just where the theo-

logical cleavage started and just how far it extended. Summarily stated, the matters in issue may be reduced to four in number. The first of these related to original sin, the extent and form of its imputation to the race, the fact and nature of human depravation in consequence, and the measure of ability and responsibility and guilt remaining in the sinner. The second related to the eternal purpose of God in respect to human deliverance and salvation, the nature and scope of the divine election, and the extent and application of the atonement as a gracious provision for the proper satisfying of divine law and justice in conjunction with the full redemption of all who believe. The third involved the great problem of justification, with its essential elements of pardon and acceptance and adoption, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, and the way and form in which faith receives and appropriates the justification thus provided. And the fourth, springing logically from the three preceding, involved the sovereignty of the Spirit in the application of these divine provisions, his supremacy in regeneration, the quality of that experience, the responsibility of the sinner in the matter of his own salvation, and the nature of the new life implanted in the believing soul.

It is not difficult in this later and brighter day to see that, important as they were, these were issues respecting which in their various aspects earnest men might differ, and differ seriously, who still were essentially at one in their adherence to the generic Calvinism. Nor is it difficult to see how the center of conflict might shift widely among these issues, or how

the differences evolving here or there might vary greatly, according to the temperament and training of the disputants, and the heat of the actual controversy. Nor is it difficult to conclude from our present point of observation that, however serious these differences in doctrine might be, or might seem to be, they were hardly sufficient in themselves to justify relentless antagonism or open rupture within the Church. For men may dispute tenaciously, emphasize their conflicting opinions strongly, antagonize one another openly in minor matters of faith, and even cast suspicion on their opponents and strive for supremacy over them in place and influence on such accounts, without proceeding to the extreme of schismatic revolt or outright division. In all great and wide denominations it is not only possible but necessary for opposite persons and parties to dwell together and to work together for the common good, though consciously varying and even conflicting around subordinate questions in belief. The experience of Presbyterianism since the Union of 1869, as well as that of various other Protestant communions, and even of the Church of Rome, so strongly unified and consolidated amid its recognized diversities in theological opinion, proves beyond question both the possibility and the vital necessity of such toleration.

The second cause of separation sprang from the extent and complexity of the church creed, and centered itself, as in the preceding century, around the question of subscription, the degree of closeness requisite in adherence to the specific terms and propo-

sitions of the Symbols. It was in substance that great issue of toleration which had agitated the Westminster Assembly and inspired the pen of Milton, and which in one form and another had been one of the most perplexing problems in the pathway of Presbyterianism,both European and American, for nearly two centuries. In this instance it was natural that those who were conscious of differing more or less extensively from the very letter of the Confession should draw fresh lines between what is and what is not essential in doctrine, should interpret phrases and propositions with unusual freedom, and should claim for themselves a large measure of liberty in opinion and in teaching. And it might be expected that in some cases the privilege of private interpretation would be abused, and liberty would degenerate into harmful license, until here and there men might arise who, perhaps by processes of which they were themselves but dimly conscious, were actually transgressing proper confessional boundaries and becoming something other than Presbyterian Calvinists.

The result would naturally follow that the advocates of strictness in subscription and interpretation would become more strict, that the lines of liberty would be narrowed, and more stringent demands on allegiance be made, in the presence of divergencies such as these. The legitimate boundary between the necessary articles in the Confession and the articles not necessary would be limited or erased, the freer interpretation would be regarded as disloyalty, the claim of Christian tolerance would be ignored, and those who could not subscribe to the very letter would

be denounced as unfaithful to the Symbols and to the Church. The story of the Disruption will tell us what came to pass. It is enough to say here that what could not have been brought about by the doctrinal diversities alone, occurred readily through this confessional issue, working on and on until it became a question whether two parties so widely separated in their estimate and interpretation of the church creed could dwell peacefully within the one denominational fold.

Just here arose the third cause of division, involving the rightful utilizing of the church polity as a corrective in the response to this very practical and perplexing question. To that polity the party of strictness would naturally turn as a suitable instrument in suppressing what it regarded as doctrinal looseness, and in restoring theological harmony and ecclesiastical peace, while the party of liberty on the other hand might seek to find in its provisions some safeguard against what they regarded as an unwarrantable imputation and an unjust challenge of their title to standing in the Church. Too much cannot be said in general respecting that polity as to its inherent strength, its careful adjustments and balances, its remarkable adaptation as a judicial guardian alike of denominational unity and of personal rights. No Church in Christendom has a more carefully devised or more potential or effective method of government. In multitudes of instances from the Westminster period down to our age this polity has proved its efficiency and value, and no small share of the prestige of Presbyterianism generally may justly be attributed

to its influence and working. Often as it has been criticised and sometimes denounced, especially by those who have experienced its corrective or punitive force, the Church has just occasion to be proud of it, and to preserve and commend it. Like the Calvinism with which it has been almost always closely affiliated, it has stood thus far and now seems likely to stand all the tests which time and the developing experience of the various churches bearing the Presbyterian name may require.

But like every other denominational mode of government, history has more than once or twice shown that this mode may become an agency of harm rather than of blessing. Its capabilities of good however marked may, if unwisely or unrighteously used, become capabilities of evil. Injurious mistakes, grave errors, have sometimes occurred in the application of its principles. The inconsiderate zeal of men or parties has sometimes perverted its salutary rules. Even the passion, the selfishness, the ambition of men have sometimes through its instrumentality wrought grievous wrong to individuals or to parties in the Church. In the last resort, everything seems to depend on the temper with which its requisitions are interpreted and applied — the spirit that moves and acts within its polished machinery. In the instance here considered, as we shall see, both the intrinsic efficiencies and the attendant perils apparent in this polity made their appearance in various ways,— good men, brethren at heart, but disagreeing respecting some articles in the common Faith, differing widely, disastrously, as to what might be and what ought not to be sought or ac-

complished through this dynamic instrumentality. Nor will it be strange or unprecedented if such difference, long continued and aggravated with time, should be found to end at last in a formal rupture, justified by one party on constitutional grounds, and resisted by the other as unwarranted either by church law or by that justice which is higher than law.

The fourth cause of the Disruption comes into view in this immediate connection,—in the general question whether the church polity, viewed now not as an instrument in judicial procedure, but as an agency in carrying forward the work and especially the missionary work of the Church, was to be preferred and utilized to the exclusion of all voluntary, undenominational organizations such as were at the time conspicuously active in that great field of Christian effort which is the World. That this general question should arise at this juncture, involving a series of particular issues respecting missions at home and abroad, respecting the education of ministers, respecting the publication of religious literature, and the support of other kindred undenominational agencies, was perhaps inevitable. During the earlier and simpler life of the Church in the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century, such issues were relatively few in number and of small importance. But as these voluntary agencies grew in magnitude and activity, and as their points of contact with the church life became more frequent and more close, the problem of denominational connection with them became more and more urgent, and the query whether the Church could not better do its share of the great work

in its own way and through the instrumentalities existent in its polity, soon arose in various forms asking for an early solution.

The issue thus raised was at first prudential rather than fundamental: it involved questions of efficiency in service, of brotherly union with other Christian peoples, of practical methods and demonstrated results, quite as much as the application or enforcement of abstract principle. But by degrees the same parties that were in conflict around the three direct issues already described, came into collision at this strategic point also. Loyalty to the Church and its machinery and methods, as against loyalty to these voluntary agencies acting outside of the Church and not directly responsible to it, grew to be the watchword of the more conservative and churchly party. That intense, even bitter controversy should arise in time between this party and those who entertained an opposite opinion, and found superior delight in conscious brotherhood with believers of another name, naturally followed, and filled a real, not an initial or main — as some suppose — but rather a subordinate, place among the causes which brought on the final rupture.

Two other contributing causes are to be considered here. Of these the first related to the nature, the doctrinal teaching, the special methods, and the real value of the revival movements which for almost a generation before the final division had been prevalent in certain sections of the Church. To these movements it was earnestly objected that they were a departure from the normal and healthful process of church growth

suggested in Scripture and illustrated in the best experience of Protestantism, — that they were largely the product of physical excitement and of social agitation,— that many of their methods were at best questionable, and some of their manifestations positively offensive and discreditable to the very name of religion. It was alleged that many of the ministers conducting such revivals were silent respecting such weighty truths as the elective grace of God, the spiritual deadness of the sinner, the sovereignty of the Divine Spirit in salvation. It was further alleged that some of the ministry had not only surrendered such essentials of Calvinism but had substituted positive Arminian heresy and were teaching dangerous error from the pulpit. It was also said that many of the supposed conversions were spurious, that the churches were being filled up with a membership in fact unconverted, and that the whole denomination was consequently in danger of becoming not only heretical in belief but also corrupt in heart and life.

The friends of these movements were no less earnest in enforcing the opposite view. They claimed that such special visitations of grace were promised in Scripture and illustrated in the Pentecost, and verified at many points in the history of spiritual Christianity. While they admitted that in some instances improper methods had been adopted, and animal excitements had been aroused, and grotesque consequences had been manifest, yet these in their judgment were only occasional, and could not be justly adduced against the movement as a whole. They claimed also that, although there had in some instances been departures

more or less distinct from sound doctrine, yet in the main the preaching had been in substantial harmony with the Symbols and thoroughly Biblical in both content and spirit. They affirmed that the conversions in such revivals were genuine in general, and that the religious character developed was often of the highest and noblest type, and consequently that the churches in the regions visited by such revival influences had been wonderfully increased in numbers and activity, and in their power to proclaim and commend the Gospel in the communities where they were planted. That this issue should induce suspicion, disputation, antagonism was inevitable; the diversity between the parties was wide, intense, and for the time incurable. What is to be noted just here is the serious fact that this controversy was in direct line with the conflicts and antagonisms already noted, and that it became, especially in the later periods of the denominational struggle, a strong factor among the forces that brought about the final result.

The sixth and last among the causes of division named was the relation of the Church to the institution of domestic slavery. As early as 1818, the General Assembly had adopted an emphatic deliverance condemning such slavery as a grievous wrong, and enjoining all churches and presbyteries to discountenance the institution in all possible ways, and especially to discipline church members guilty of selling slaves, unless some mitigating circumstances should appear. This was in harmony with the action of the Synod in the preceding century and it was followed in subsequent years by other declarations equally clear and

emphatic. But the marked growth of the Church in the south, and the prominence of its ministry and membership in that section of the country — to say nothing of other influences social and political contributing — induced in some sections of the denomination, first passive endurance, then culpable indifference to the existing evil. But in other sections the sense of the enormity of slavery steadily increased, and the hostility to it grew more intense, until at length the determination was reached to array the Church more decisively against the evil at whatever cost to denominational development. The issue was as unavoidable in the Church as in the Nation; neither could permanently exist half slave and half free. And it is noticeable that long years after the Disruption, both branches of the divided Church were rent in twain by that issue, and that within a generation the Nation was passing through the agonies of civil war to protect itself against a disruption which slavery sought to effect.

That the antagonism developed around this issue became, especially in the later stages of the general conflict, one of the active forces in bringing about the final division can hardly be questioned, although its influence was more incidental than direct. Hostility to slavery and the desire to limit or to end it by whatever legitimate means were manifest in nearly all sections, even in the more southerly portions of the Church, at least along the Atlantic coast. But such hostility was most openly manifest in those regions where the most liberal interpretation of the Symbols prevailed, where revivals were most abundant, and where church gov-

ernment assumed its freest type. And while the more conservative party gradually became inclined to suffer the abhorrent institution in silence, leaving all action respecting it to the discretion of southern churches, presbyteries, synods, the more progressive and liberal element became all the more earnest in antagonism to it, and the more strenuous in the purpose to utilize the judicial as well as the moral authority of the Church in order to its abolition.

It is not to be supposed that the six causes here described were always working together at all times, or were equally active or equally visible at any given time or place; or that they always wrought in obvious conjunction, each conscious of its affinity with all the rest; or that the result when it came to pass could, so far as responsibility extended, be distributed among them severally, with accuracy and with impartiality. The movements and the issues of history do not submit to such close analysis. In conjunction with these productive causes, one important occasion or condition should also be introduced here — what is known historically as the Plan of Union. During the later decades of the eighteenth century the vigorous Congregationalism of New England and the developing Presbyterianism of the other Atlantic States became associated in several ways more or less formal and extensive, in implanting the Gospel in which they alike believed throughout the rapidly expanding West. As early as 1766 the Synod of New York and Philadelphia approved a definite scheme for fellowship in such missionary endeavor,— the object being declared to be

the spread of true religion, the founding and strengthening of churches, and the magnifying of the name and influence of the two denominations in what were then the frontiers of the nation. Conventions in furtherance were held annually and alternately in New England and New Jersey until the War of Independence compelled their suspension. But in 1790, the General Assembly, just constituted, sought a renewal of such conference, and two years later a plan of correspondence with the Association of Connecticut was established, which in 1794 was so far extended as to give the representatives of that body a right to vote in the Assembly — a privilege which a few years later was granted to kindred Associations in Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Out of such fellowship grew in 1801 the Plan of Union, whereby on the principle of mutual toleration and fellowship churches and ministers of the two denominations might become affiliated ecclesiastically on terms which, it was believed, would secure the just rights of all parties without doing violence to either of the two types of church government. Arrangements working toward this end had already in fact occurred. Presbyterian ministers had organized Congregational churches, and Congregational ministers had organized Presbyterian churches, wherever the preponderance of the one element or the other seemed to determine the form of organization. Presbyteries, oppressed with the vastness of the field and work and with the inadequacy of their own sources of supply, had assigned Congregational ministers to service within their own bounds, and some Associations had pursued a similar

course wherever this was deemed expedient. It was inevitable that such procedure should in time result in such a broader, better organized, more effectual scheme as the Plan of Union when adopted aimed to be. Its special provisions need not be described here. It is enough to say that a most sincere and earnest desire existed on all sides that in actual operation neither party to the Plan should have precedence of the other in whatever form, and that the Plan in every detail should be so administered as best to subserve those great missionary interests to whose furtherance both denominations were alike devoted.

High encomiums were pronounced upon the Plan; it was wisely recognized and admired as the finest expression of Christian fellowship and of denominational comity which the continent had ever witnessed. Yet from the nature of the case it was but a temporary expedient. As what was the frontier at the opening of the century became more fully settled and better furnished, it was natural that each of the denominations should become more distinctly conscious of its own independent strength, and should seek to establish within itself more positive and controlling forms of fellowship. The retreating frontier might continue to call for such fraternal interaction in its behalf, but in the more matured sections of the missionary field such demand naturally grew less and less. There crept in also a growing inclination to emphasize denominational differences and laud denominational excellencies, which tended more and more to reduce interest in the Plan, to embarrass its practical operations, and to render many minds less ardent in its continuance.

By degrees the doctrinal and ecclesiastical diversities arising within the Presbyterian fold gave occasion for questioning and even for opposition to the Union, partly among more zealous Congregationalists, but chiefly among more strict adherents to the Presbyterian standards, who apprehended the corruption of doctrine under and through the existing compact.

Nor were these the only unfavoring influences. The question between the relative value of voluntary methods and ecclesiastical methods in carrying on religious work also entered as a disintegrating issue. The education of the ministry for distinctively denominational work, the publication of literature adapted to the needs and designed to satisfy the tastes of each communion, the use and distribution of moneys collected for common purposes, and many other kindred problems came in to complicate, if not to divide. In such various ways the original temper of toleration and of trustful brotherhood gave way to a more pronounced denominationalism on both sides; the weaker elements of the Plan became the occasion of heated discussion; suspicion and jealousy grew more manifest in its varied applications. And thus in a single generation what seemed in 1801 to be so beautiful a manifestation and bond of concord, and so advantageous a method of carrying on the one great continental work, became a chronic and an acute occasion of difference — difference not only between the two communions now consciously parting company, but between the conservative and progressive parties within the Presbyterian body itself, until at last it came to be an efficient inducement, and possibly even, as some

have thought, a principal factor in the rupture which, in 1837 as in 1741, rent the Church in twain.

The causes and occasions of division now became intensely active; countervailing forces adequate to arrest them no longer existed; the atmosphere was charged with inflammable material, and the explosive process of disruption went rapidly on. That process may be said to have begun at the point of doctrine, though the doctrinal rupture drew along with it the ecclesiastical and administrative, and involved as well the various practical elements of diversity, including the Plan of Union. The divergence in doctrine, leading on to conflicting interpretation of the Confession and Catechisms, may be said to have had its origin historically as far back as the Improvements, as they were called, made by Jonathan Edwards in the Calvinistic system — improvements incorporated in the subsequent theology of such disciples as Samuel Hopkins and the dogmatic teaching of President Dwight and other New England divines in the first decades of the nineteenth century. That new form or formulation of Calvinism, as is well known, found acceptance among many Presbyterian ministers and people — especially those who dwelt along the lines of latitude where the migration from the New England States had flowed most freely in its westward course. As a more fresh, effective mode of stating and explaining the accepted truth, it had distinctively influenced the teaching in many pulpits, affected the religious life within the churches, set forth the old Gospel in ways which unquestionably, as its friends believed, multiplied

its power over the popular mind. And the condemnation of it as a departure from sound Calvinism had only made more firm the grasp of those who embraced it, and rendered them all the more earnest in defending it, should any necessity arise, as not a departure but a valuable improvement rather on the older type of Calvinism which prevailed more generally within the Church.

The necessity soon arose. In 1829, a sermon by Albert Barnes, entitled the Way of Salvation, excited zealous opposition as indicative of a serious deviation from both the letter and the substance of the Confession of Faith. The opposition became more intense and more earnest upon the appearance a little later of his commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, in which he was said to have made still more manifest his theological affiliation, not merely with the theology of Edwards, but with that new type of Calvinism, so called, which on the basis of the Edwardean system was rising into prominence in New England and elsewhere. Radical procedures occurred in quick succession, two trials in presbytery and as many in synod, both carried up to successive Assemblies from 1831 on, until the Assembly of 1836 declared the teachings though objectionable in statement still not heretical, and restored the author to the ecclesiastical standing of which during some portion of the intervening time he had been deprived.

The intense dogmatic interest awakened by these procedures was increased by the almost simultaneous appearance of two other instances of supposed defection from the established faith. The first of these

arose on the publication by George Duffield of a treatise on Regeneration, in which it was thought that the part of man had been unduly exalted and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit impugned, in his analysis of the sweet and sacred and in some sense ineffable experience which that term was used to describe. In the judicial trial that followed, the author was exonerated by presbytery from the charge of heresy, but warned against certain dangerous speculations discovered in his treatment of the profound theme. The action of presbytery failed to secure the approbation of the synod, but the case was carried no further in the ecclesiastical judicatories. A more notable case occurred in the arraignment of Lyman Beecher on the charge of teaching in his place as a Professor of Theology what were described as Arminian, even Pelagian, doctrines on such vital matters as free agency, human accountability, original sin, total depravity, regeneration and salvation through grace. He also was exonorated from this accusation in presbytery, and the action was sustained in synod, but was never brought in judicial form before any Assembly.

Meanwhile what may now be called the Edwardean Calvinism, as elaborated by his successors and disciples in New England, became in and through these three ecclesiastical procedures more openly visible and more widespread and influential. It was accepted by many ministers as helpful in setting forth the claims of the Gospel; it rooted itself in the conviction and the experience of many churches and believers; it produced large results in seasons of revival. It made its way into presbyteries, agitated synods, and year by

year disturbed even grave Assemblies. It also drew with it most of the other prime causes of disruption already indicated,— the rule of subscription and the right of free interpretation, the general principle of toleration and the claims of brotherhood, and also the nature and range of church government and discipline. The issue thus became continually more extensive, more complicated, more troublesome alike to those who regarded the new doctrine as erroneous and corrupting to faith, and to those who viewed it as a broader and better statement of essential truth.

It was natural that in the presence of so grave a matter the first class should turn, as in the three instances mentioned, to the Book of Discipline for relief. It being profoundly believed that the new doctrine was not in fact Calvinistic, but in reality heretical or at least tending toward dangerous heresy, and that its toleration could not be a duty but rather would involve betrayal of fundamental truth and unfaithfulness to the standards, nothing remained for them, as they supposed, but to invoke the corrective aid of the church polity in order to secure purity of belief and harmony in church life and work. The second class claimed on the contrary that their doctrine was in concord if not with the very letter, still with the substantial teaching of the Confession, or at least fell clearly within the lines of variation permissible among Christian brethren. They further claimed that no judicial procedure should be undertaken until all possibilities of harmony and adjustment had been exhausted, and then only within the clear lines of action and limitation prescribed by the Constitution itself.

Evils and errors, if indeed there were such, that could not be reached by constitutional processes should — it was maintained — be endured until the meliorations of time, and the influence of further light and knowledge, and of patient and loving fellowship, should under the gracious providence of God provide a practical remedy.

But as the discussion and the conflict went on toward the later stages, it gradually became apparent to all that the issue in controversy had become too extensive — that the new doctrine with all that accompanied it, had infected so many ministers, churches, presbyteries, and even synods, as to be incurable through any series of ecclesiastical trials however protracted, and thus had passed beyond the reach of the Book of Discipline. The party of resistance therefore found itself facing the query whether some procedure of a more general and radical nature, one lying even beyond the express provisions of the Constitution, could not be invoked to meet the grievous exigency. And when at this stage it was noted that the infected sections of the Church were almost wholly those which had come into being under the provisions of the Plan of Union, the question was at once raised whether this Plan was not itself unconstitutional and in its nature at variance with sound Presbyterian polity and principle. And this query soon led to the further question whether the various ecclesiastical proceedings under the Plan were not in consequence irregular and void — in other words, whether the churches organized, whether the ministers ordained or installed, whether the presbyteries and synods constituted under this ar-

rangement, were not fatally tainted by defective title, and might not on this account be justly barred out as no longer a legitimate section of the Presbyterian Church. It is not needful here to answer these questions or to discuss their legitimacy; it is enough to note that their introduction into an arena already rent with belligerent discussion rendered more sure, more inevitable, the Disruption that followed.

The final step could not be much longer delayed. All unifying considerations, all coalescing agencies were found to be powerless. The counsels of moderate men on both sides were unheeded; the prayers of many who loved the Church and desired its continued unity and peace were unanswered. The general declension in religion, as indicated partially by an actual loss in the roll of membership during the four years preceding the actual rupture, may be regarded as an inducing cause no less than a lamentable effect of the existing agitation. The chief arena of controversy passed, as we have seen, from presbyteries and synods to the General Assembly; and the history of the Assemblies from 1830 to 1837 tells us how the one party or the other in different years predominated, how the struggle went on with increasing intensity, how the current grew swifter and more ominous until the final plunge was made. The records of several conventions, held especially by the conservative party in order to secure concerted action in the Assemblies, also bring into distinct view the persons, the movements, the measures, that figured in the producing of the final result. That result at the last was comprehensive and conclusive. It included every element or

issue that had come under discussion during the preceding years of strife,—strict interpretation of the Symbols and positive loyalty to them, the obligation of close subscription, fidelity to the church polity and full allegiance to the denominational name and interests. It included also the enthronement of the churchly as distinguished from the voluntary principle in all forms of Christian work, and the severance of the relations heretofore existing between the Church and the four principal undenominational agencies for the promotion of home missions, of foreign missions, of ministerial education, of religious literature and publication, which had so long shared in the support and beneficence of its membership. It questioned the permanent value of much that passed under the name of revival, and declared its preference for more ordinary and quiet methods of church growth. And it consummated the whole procedure by formally abrogating the Plan of Union as unconstitutional and void, and declaring four synods, with their presbyteries and their churches and ministry, to be no longer in form or in fact integral sections of the Presbyterian Church.

That this decision was an act of supreme power for which no provision existed in the Constitution, and which assumed more the character of a revolution than of a transaction under law, may be admitted. That the act was, in view of the circumstances of the case justifiable and necessary, an expedient to meet a fearful exigency which could in no other way be met, is a proposition that remains and will always remain a painful question. But the fact survives in history

that a Church which, after passing through one disastrous rupture, had lived in concord for almost a century, and meanwhile through much labor and sacrifice had attained dimensions well-nigh continental, now came through a singular combination of untoward causes and occasions to a second disruption, far more disastrous than the first, and became two Churches — each still retaining unchanged the same polity, still adhering to the same Confession and to the Calvinistic name, and alike conscious that in their essential principles they still were truly one, yet variant and much embittered in spirit, and going forth before all observers as rival claimants for position and influence in the land.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Genesis and Evolution.
1838-1849.

Within the domain of Protestantism new sects have almost universally come into existence through the voluntary withdrawal of some group or party in a parent organization on the ground of some particular difference in doctrine, order or sacrament, resulting in the genesis of a new denomination, with a distinctive name and a separate life, partly as an expression of dissent or perhaps avowed antagonism, but chiefly for the better manifestation or wider diffusion of that to which the withdrawing party specially adhered. In the instance whose history is here to be traced, the new sect became a distinct organism, not by its own selection, but through the process of exclusion which has been already described, and in defiance of its earnest desire to remain, with title unchallenged and its liberties unabridged, within the ancestral abode.

Overwhelmed at first by the perplexities of its anomalous position, the excluded party was in no condition to organize itself as a separate denomination. Considerable variety of opinion still existed among its members as to some of the phases of doctrine involved in the conflict which had resulted so disastrously, as to the value of the Symbols and the limits of interpretation, as to the policy of emphasizing the points of difference rather than the points of agreement still remaining. Nor were they consciously agreed in the measure of their loyalty to the Presbyterian polity, or the amount of fealty due to the prev-

alent Presbyterian sentiment or methods. Though all or nearly all preferred the voluntary above the strictly ecclesiastical form of evangelizing effort, there still remained considerable diversity both of judgment and of practice at this point also. Between the four exscinded synods there were no direct channels of communication; their various presbyteries had no practical points of contact one with another; ecclesiastical unity hardly suggested itself to any as a possibility. Indeed, the exscinded party was at first little more than a confused collection of ministers, churches, organizations, swept away together as by some resistless flood, — an aggregation but dimly conscious of any unity in purpose or prospect, and wholly unprepared to take any immediate steps toward consolidating themselves in one unified, compact, effective organization.

In a situation so perplexing there were wide diversities in individual judgment and inclination. Some were wholly disinclined to attempt the experiment of independent ecclesiastical existence amid conditions so unfavorable. A few preferred some sort of compromise even at the cost of humiliating surrender, and some strongly desired to make their way by almost any fair and honorable procedure back into the dear ancestral home. Some differed from others as to the best process of forming a new organization, should one be attempted, and scattered abroad as they were, many were unable to cherish that measure of mutual trust and assurance out of which alone such an organization could grow. Moreover, the loss of all church properties and endowments, and of all the church

machineries and influence, left the synods and their dependencies in a helpless condition, resourceless and impoverished almost to the point of despair. The situation has sometimes been compared with that of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843, but in fact it was far more trying. That body went out from the mother Church voluntarily, with the banner of a single and distinct issue waving over it, and with a degree of homogeneousness and a compacted purpose and temper which made its separation a happy exodus rather than an unwelcome banishment.

The perplexity was greatly increased by the action of the Assembly of 1837, in opening the door for individual ministers and churches within the four synods to return to the fold upon proper acceptance of its jurisdiction and decisions. In response to this invitation, some of the persons excluded withdrew early from fellowship with the rest, and went back into the old relations. In August of that year four ministers and one or two churches publicly announced the severance of their connection with the excluded presbyteries, and cast in their lot with the adjacent presbytery of Susquehanna, and within a few years this presbytery grew by addition and subdivision into three presbyteries, comprising thirty ministers and twenty-two churches. In a similar way a fourth presbytery, Ogdensburg, came into being after a little, and in 1846 these four presbyteries were combined in the rival synod of Buffalo. Secessions of members from churches that adhered to the excluded presbyteries occurred in many instances, with much of feeling and no small measure of conflict among those who once

had been friends. Bitter debates and strifes, suits respecting church property, unseemly rivalries between churches, and other disastrous events followed, and it was soon manifest to all that the career of the new denomination, should one be organized, must be attended by widespread rupture, struggle, sacrifice, and the keenest sorrow.

Nor was this the only source of embarrassment. In August, 1837, the Congregational Association of New York advised all such churches as had been organized under the Plan of Union, now formally declared null and void, to withdraw from all Presbyterian connection and become entirely Congregational in organization and fellowship. It proposed, in other words, that all churches and ministers that were agreed with it in polity and doctrine, should sever their relationship with the excluded synods, and form under its banner a better ecclesiastical union, free from all entangling affiliations. However kindly or just the invitation, it could only multiply and intensify the embarrassment surrounding the exscinded body. Yet its effect was less disastrous than might have been anticipated. While a few churches, weary with the strife existing and fearing further trouble, accepted the proposition, the large majority of the Plan of Union churches preferred to continue their historic relationship, and to stand firmly by their brethren who had suffered and were suffering so much, partly on their account. The living consciousness of substantial unity in belief, the strong spiritual ties established during the recent revivals, the pleasant bond of neighborhood and brotherhood socially developed, and pos-

sibly the conviction that the Presbyterian mode of government, rightly administered, was not so far out of the way, held them in their place.

The first positive step toward an independent organization and life — a step taken in the face of such unfavorable conditions — was the Convention of representatives from the excluded body, with some delegates from sympathizing sections of the Church, which was held in the August after the disruption at Auburn, New York. The main object of this Convention was to bring about better acquaintance and larger consciousness of unity within the excluded body, to consult respecting the course proper to be pursued in the painful emergency that had arisen, and incidentally to gain so far as practicable the sympathy and support of friendly parties in other sections of the Church. It was composed of one hundred and sixty-nine persons, clerical and lay, all of whom but fourteen had been commissioned to this service by thirty-three presbyteries within the bounds of the four synods. Some of the members represented, more or less formally, other presbyteries in the States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the east, and in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois in the west. It is surely a significant indication of the extent and strength of the opposition excited by the disruption that in those days of difficult travel so large a company should have come so great distances and at so much expense to attend such a convocation.

In respect to personal character and to denominational standing the Convention was a remarkable body.

James Richards, Lyman Beecher, Samuel Hanson Cox, Luther Halsey, and Drs. McAuley, of New York, and Hillyer, of New Jersey, and Judge William Jessup of Pennsylvania,— not to mention others — were men of the first rank in the Church and in society. Two of their number had been Moderators of the Assembly from which they were now formally expelled. In general, the membership represented, not the more ardent and belligerent, but rather the moderate and thoughtful, and in a proper sense conservative elements in the exscinded section. The venerable Dr. Richards who was first a pastor in New Jersey, and now had been for fourteen years a professor of Systematic Theology in the Seminary at Auburn, a man of singular wisdom and prudence and of unquestioned orthodoxy, was chosen to act as chairman, and his considerate and devout temper became a controlling influence throughout the deliberations that followed.

It was anticipated in some quarters that the Convention would in the course of its discussions make manifest the existence of wide, possibly irreconcilable diversity among its members, in regard not only to doctrine and polity, but especially to the real character of the emergency that had brought them together and the course to be pursued in view of that emergency. There were those who prophesied that the Convention would dissolve into fragments, and that the result would be the return of the better portion to the ancestral fold, with such a statement of doctrinal views and of loyal disposition as would enable the Church to receive them back with cordiality, while the lesser, more pernicious portion would break away altogether

and pass over into the Congregational or other communions. Such anticipations, such prophecies, were happily disappointed. Tendencies to disintegration, so far as they existed, were held in check from the start; the proposal that the ecclesiastical separation which had taken place, should be regarded as final, precluding all attempts at reconciliation or return, was disregarded. As the records, and also the subsequent testimony of participants show, wiser and better counsels prevailed throughout.

On one side it was earnestly affirmed that the action of the Assembly in cutting off the four synods with their dependencies, and on the ground of vague and unsupported charges declaring them no longer constituent parts of the Presbyterian Church, was unconstitutional and therefore itself null and void. This affirmation was one in which all could and did agree, and it constituted in a word and in positive form the ecclesiastical platform of the Convention. On the other side it was with equal positiveness and unanimity affirmed that the purposes and movements of all the excluded judicatories ought for the time being to be directed to the preservation of the unity and integrity of the Presbyterian Church on the principles of good faith, brotherly kindness and the Constitution. The effect of this affirmation was to arrest any inclination to independent action on the part not only of presbyteries but also of particular churches and ministers, and to show to all that there was to be nothing hurried, premature, frantic in any steps that might in future be taken.

In accordance with these resolutions, it was spe-

cially agreed that all the presbyteries directly involved should retain their existing organization, and should elect and send commissioners to the next Assembly as usual. A committee was also appointed to secure such action in the several presbyteries, and in general to labor toward the attainment of the ends sought by and through the Convention. The spirit of union and the desire and purpose to act together in all essential matters predominated at every stage, and the several declarations and resolutions were passed with great unanimity,— the body pausing in its business to offer solemn thanksgiving to God for the unity that had characterized its proceedings. A day of fasting, humiliation and prayer was appointed in view of the divided condition of the Church, and the low state of religion in the country; and the Convention, after four days of deliberation, was formally closed with the singing of the one hundred and thirty-third Psalm and the apostolic benediction by the venerable Chairman, then in his seventieth year, and who six years later entered into eternal rest.*

Important as were these ecclesiastical deliverances of the Convention, its action respecting church doctrine was much more important. The general charge of doctrinal defection, made in various forms during

* James Richards, D. D., born Oct. 29, 1767; licensed, 1793; pastor Morristown, N. J., 1794-1809; Newark, N. J., 1809-1823; Prof. of Theology, Auburn Theol. Sem., 1823 till his death, Aug. 2, 1843. Moderator of Gen. Assembly, 1805; D. D., Yale, 1815; Author of *Lectures on Mental Philosophy and Theology;* also, volume of *Discourses*, both published after his death. "With considerable learning, and a terse and simple style, he combined in a high degree the talent which is best of all talents — common sense." So testified William H. Seward, his neighbor and friend.

the progress of the judicial trials already referred to, was formulated more definitely in the notable Act and Testimony, a document presented by the conservative minority to the Assembly of 1834, and in the Deliverance of the Assembly of 1835 against opinions existing within the Church which — it was said — were not distinguishable from Pelagian or Arminian errors. But in a Convention held just before the meeting of the Assembly of 1837, a further Testimony and Memorial was adopted which contained a list of sixteen specific errors alleged to exist, of such nature and magnitude as — it was declared — to demand prompt judicial consideration. The doctrinal issue was thus brought at once to the front, and became,— as has been stated — one main feature and topic in the discussions that preceded the Disruption. It was consequently incumbent on those who were charged with holding these errors, both to disavow the heresy described and to set forth by contrast what they really believed. Hence arose the counter document, at first styled Errors and True Doctrines — a statement prepared by members of that Assembly in refutation of the charge of teaching what was contrary to the Confession of Faith. But the Assembly virtually rejected their explanation, and, thus left the responding party under the grievous imputation of unsoundness in the faith as set forth in the church standards.

But the statement thus rejected by the Assembly became the headstone of the corner in the Auburn Convention, and afterwards in the developing denomination. The convention took up the statement originating in such painful circumstances, and openly

adopted it as expressing its own matured belief and that of the churches and ministers which it represented, on the several doctrines involved. It thus became what is now known as the Auburn Declaration — a representative document, not indeed to be regarded as a substitute for the Confession of Faith, as has sometimes been supposed, but simply as a reasonable and satisfactory explanation and commentary on what the Confession was believed to teach. The Convention had not been called together to make a new creed, or even to expound the old creed authoritatively, and it was careful not to go beyond its proper sphere. But as the original document had been put forth as a formal protest against injurious allegations, and as such allegations continued to be made against the ministers and congregations comprised in the four synods, it was deemed needful to utter this open and positive Declaration, in the hope that it would check all unjust interpretation and would make manifest to all men what was the real belief of the excluded party.

A full account of the contents of this Declaration, undoubtedly the most interesting and commanding statement of essential doctrine in the history of American Presbyterianism, is not needful or practicable here. The main points defined or expounded in it are, first, the introduction and transmission of sin, and the condition of mankind as fallen and corrupt through sin; second, the relation of the divine and the human in regeneration and deliverance from sin, and in the spiritual life resulting; and third, the nature and characteristics and extent of the plan of salvation, through the mediation and atonement of Christ.

But more specifically each of these main points was expanded in the document in a series of minor propositions or articles, so framed as to meet in each particular the charge of Pelagian or Arminian error on one side, and on the other to present the antithetic truths, sixteen in number, as these are set forth in Scripture and in the Symbols also, in contrast with what the Convention believed to be defective, possibly erroneous, interpretations of the creed set forth by the conservative party — the party of prosecution. The chief values of the Declaration lay in what it was as a protest against narrow or defective confessional exposition, and as a clear and open testimony to what was held and cherished as essential truth. In this respect it resembled and followed the Confession itself. And as such its verbal lucidity, its fine balancings in statement, its reverential pauses at each point where real doctrine might degenerate into disputatious speculation, and above all its thoughtful moderation and its devout temper and spiritual influence gave it wide currency from the first, and still continue to make it, though signed and sealed by no formal endorsement even by the denomination that accepted it, one of the most interesting and fruitful symbols of recent times.

During the autumn of 1837 and the trying winter that followed, the general situation was unchanged. The excluded churches and ministers carried on their special work with a measure of diligence which possibly was energized by their sense of the wrong wrought in their estimation, and by a growing conviction that

their position was essentially right and was therefore certain to secure extensive sympathy and support. In some quarters this sense of wrong led to extreme hostility toward the exscinding party, and even toward Presbyterianism itself. But such was the commanding influence of the Auburn Convention, that all revolutionary tendencies, so far as these existed, were held in check, and although lowering clouds hung darkly over the future, the spirit of unity survived, and a temper of courageous devotion was manifest. And in the spring of 1838 all of the presbyteries but two, following the advice of the Convention, elected commissioners to the General Assembly as heretofore.

In taking this course the majority, though not all, hoped that this Assembly would reconsider the action of its predecessor, and take some steps which even at this stage would preserve the Church from rupture absolute and perpetual. It was hoped that the temperate and judicious course of the Auburn Convention would lead the dominant party to see, not perhaps that wrong had been done in the excision, but at least that the way was still open for some adjustment, upon the principle of mutual toleration, which might prevent the scandal of utter and bitter separation. There were also many outside of the bounds of the four synods, who though themselves remaining within the Church, were still in active sympathy with the excluded party, and strongly desired that its representatives should be received by the Assembly, and that an earnest attempt at reconciliation and adjustment should be made. And there is reason to believe that if all parties had approached the difficult problem in the temper of broth-

erly love and mutual forbearance — if the spirit of faction and the love of supremacy and the heats of resentment and other like infirmities had been suppressed on all sides, the evils of complete disruption might even at this last stage have been escaped.

What followed, it would be painful to describe in detail. At the organization of the Assembly its officers refused to recognize the commissioners from the ejected presbyteries as members, on the ground that the bodies they represented were no longer constituent parts of the Church. A motion to enroll them, offered by other commissioners who believed the action of 1837 to be unconstitutional, and therefore held that these representatives were still within the Church and entitled to admission to the Assembly, was declared to be out of order and illicit. The door of admission was thus closed; conference within the Assembly with a view to some adjustment became under this ruling impossible. At this juncture, amid great confusion, the unprecedented process of deposing the obstructive officials, and electing others in their stead, was undertaken,— commissioners from twenty-nine presbyteries outside of the four synods, nearly sixty in number, joining in this revolutionary measure. Such a procedure could be justified, if at all, only on the ground that the officials arraigned were assuming prerogatives not vested in them, even though the Assembly of 1837 had instructed them to act as they were acting,— that the party in power was nullifying the Constitution, and trampling on the rights of loyal Presbyterians,— and that no alternative was left to the aggrieved party but to secure their rightful place within the Church

even through such revolution. It may be added that eminent legal counsel had advised that in such an emergency as had arisen, such a process of organization must be carried through in order to secure to the liberal party its place and title and property interests within the Church.

Whether with or without sufficient warrant, the revolutionary step was taken. The offending officers were superseded; one who had become conspicuous in the movement, Dr. Beman, a former Moderator,* was called to preside; other action requisite to complete the organization was adopted; and those who shared in the procedure, claiming now to be the true and only General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, adjourned and withdrew to meet elsewhere. Those who remained, making the same claim, proceeded to complete their organization as an Assembly, the superseded officers presiding, as if no interruption had occurred. And the fatal die was now cast; the separation was complete and final. The faithful historian, viewing in all its stages and aspects the conflict thus ending, especially in the light of subsequent history, and applying to it such tests as Christian principle and Christian charity may supply, will probably be led to conclude that if all inferior motives and doubtful measures had been cast aside, and the vast denominational

*Nathan S. S. Beman, D. D., born New Lebanon, N. Y., 1785; graduated Middlebury College, 1807; pastor Portland, Me., 1810; missionary in Georgia; pastor Troy, N. Y., 1822-1863; died Carbondale, Ills., 1871. Author of *Sermons on the Atonement* and other discourses; compiler of *Church Psalmist*. Moderator of the General Assembly in 1831, six years before the Disruption.

interests imperilled had been duly considered, in the temper of brotherly love and true loyalty to the one Church and Kingdom of God among men, something better, something nobler, something more beautiful and Christlike, might have transpired.

Those who withdrew from that scene of strife and gathered themselves together in another sanctuary, now realized as never before that a new denomination had by their act come into being. They proceeded at once to the performance of the duties incumbent upon a General Assembly under the Form of Government. The roll of membership having been duly adopted, the Rev. Samuel Fisher, D. D.,* was elected Moderator; stated and permanent clerks were chosen; committees on rules, on bills and overtures, on judicial business and other kindred matters were appointed; and the body — much oppressed meanwhile by the strangeness and the difficulty of the situation—settled down to work and to serious contemplation of the future.

The personnel of the first Assembly was noteworthy. Among its members were Albert Barnes and Thomas Brainard, Erskine Mason and William Patton, Beman and Squier and the venerated James Richards, President Pierce and Aikin and Cleveland, President Edward Beecher and Flavel Bascom, Lyman Beecher and Baxter Dickinson, whose facile pen had

* Samuel Fisher, D. D., born in Sunderland, Mass., June 30, 1777; graduated Williams College, 1799; pastor Wilton, Conn., 1804-9; Morristown, N. J., 1809-14; Paterson, N. J., 1814-34; Ramapo, N. Y., 1834-40; Greenbush, 1844-50. Died Dec. 29,1856, at Suckasunny, N. J., D. D. Coll. of New Jersey, 1827. Father of Samuel W. Fisher, D. D., Moderator, 1857.

drafted the Auburn Declaration. Many others of somewhat less prominence were present, representing not only the exscinded territory, but also presbyteries as remote as Illinois and Tennessee. There were valuable elders also, men prominent as judges, lawyers, physicians, teachers, merchants,— men of character and influence who did much to guide and give tone and weight to the deliberations. For the new movement was not something in which ministers only were concerned: there were many laymen in all sections who deeply felt the shock and pain of their enforced separation from a Church in which many of them had begun their religious life, and to whose upbuilding they had up to that fatal crisis been ardently devoted.

The first formal act of the Assembly was the adoption of a preamble and resolution condemnatory of the excision of 1837, and affirming the title of the excluded synods and presbyteries to full standing within the Church; denouncing the exclusion of the commissioners from these bodies as unwarranted, and declaring the entire proceedings of the conservative party an unworthy violation of the rights guaranteed under the Form of Government. Claiming to be the only true Assembly, it demanded all records and other papers in the hands of the other body, including the commissions of all delegates, and proceeded to elect trustees to care for all church property, and directors of the several theological seminaries under Assembly care, as though it alone had legitimate jurisdiction in these matters. It also appointed a special committee, with full power to act in respect to all legal questions and all pecuniary interests, that might need attention

during the year to come. At the same time after full discussion it declared itself willing to agree to any measures that might be proposed, looking to an amicable adjustment of the existing difficulties.

The Assembly further defined its position, in contrast with that of the Assembly of 1837, by affirming the usefulness of the American Home Missionary Society and the American Education Society, and commending these undenominational agencies to the continued confidence and support of the churches. Also, by rescinding the rule of the Assembly requiring the examination of ministers passing from one presbytery into another, and also its rule regulating the admission of commissioners from presbyteries newly formed. It took action also in regard to the use of abbreviated creeds in the particular churches, such use having been condemned by the previous Assembly as tending toward lax departure from the church standards, and while declaring that no occasion existed for such apprehension, recommended the presbyteries to take special pains toward securing a wider circulation of the Confession of Faith and the Form of Government. It also declared against all desecration of the Sabbath, specifying certain varieties of such desecration; commended daily reading of the Scriptures as a personal and domestic duty; and designated the first Monday in January as a day of special prayer for the revival of true and undefiled religion throughout Christendom.

Considerable routine business was transacted by the Assembly, — chiefly the erection of a new synod of Pennsylvania, the preparation of a Digest, the choice of delegates and the sending of official letters

to other ecclesiastical bodies. Its most important action was the preparation and adoption of a Narrative of the State of Religion, and of a Pastoral Letter, drafted by a committee of which the venerable Lyman Beecher* was chairman, for distribution among the churches. Each of these documents deserves special attention, as illustrative of the existing situation.

The Narrative spoke at length of the order and discipline, the orthodoxy and liberality of the churches, defending them warmly against the charge of doctrinal looseness, and claiming for them as great a measure of loyalty and devotion as existed in any section of the Presbyterian Church. It dwelt especially on the revivals of religion enjoyed during the year, notwithstanding the prevalent ecclesiastical agitation,— such revivals having occurred in no less than two hundred and thirty-four churches within the limits of the disowned synods, the presbytery of Philadelphia disbanded by the last Assembly, and other sympathizing sections, chiefly in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Much interest was reported in the spiritual training of the young both in the home and in the Sabbath school, in catechetical instruction, in tract distribution, in the cause of temperance and the Sabbath, and in missions at home and abroad. The three theological seminaries, Union and Auburn and Lane, all affiliating doctrinally

* LYMAN BEECHER, D. D., born, Oct. 12, 1775; Yale, 1797; pastor East Hampton, L. I., 1799–1810; Litchfield, Conn., 1810-26; Boston, 1826-32; President and Professor of Syst. Theol. in Lane Theol. Sem., 1832-50; died Jan. 10, 1863. D. D., Middlebury, 1818. Author of *Works*, three vols.; including *Six Sermons on Intemperance*, other Discourses, and *Views of Theology*.

with the new denomination, were cordially commended as fountains of sound erudition and nurseries of sacred enterprise. On the other hand, while the general outlook was said to be in an extraordinary degree hopeful, certain inauspicious events and tendencies, chiefly those springing from the Disruption, were discussed at length and their existence lamented.

The Pastoral Letter contained a more detailed account of the ecclesiastical conflict in its various aspects and general character, with an earnest justification of the course which the Assembly had been constrained in the exigency to pursue. While disclaiming any desire to condemn the motives of the party that effected the disruption, it set forth vividly the evils consequent, — the violation of the rights of conscience and of free thought, the checking of religious life and activity, the sundering of old freindships, the rupture of churches, the exposure of property interests to vexatious litigation, and other related evils. Meanwhile the churches were strongly exhorted to adhere to the voluntary agencies in evangelistic effort, — specially to continue their contributions to missions home and foreign, and to the cause of Christian education. They were also exhorted to cultivate the temper of charity toward those by whom they had been wronged in the excision, — to lay hold of their specific work with unabated zeal,— and especially to be much in prayer for the presence and powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the particular churches and in the general counsels of the young denomination. And in view of the charge of the lack of orthodoxy the Letter, in language which easily suggests the fervid mind of

its author, while declaring that the Confession of Faith is not the Bible nor a substitute for the Bible, yet describes it as an illustrious monument of the independent investigation of the most gifted minds, and adds these pregnant words:

We love and honor the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church as containing more well-defined, fundamental truth, with less defect, than appertains to any other human formula of doctrine, and as calculated to hold in intelligent concord a greater number of sanctified minds than any which could now be framed; and we disclaim all design past, present or future to change it.

Such were the opinions, spirit, purposes, acts of the General Assembly which came into existence in 1838 through the Disruption, and which by what it wrought gave at once form, tone, vigor, to the nascent denomination. Whatever may be thought of what transpired in its organization, it must be admitted that the subsequent course of the Assembly was on one side judicious and in the main conciliatory, — on another side firm, vigorous, inspiring. With its adjournment after ten days of earnest conference, and the return of its members to their homes, the parts and sections of the new organism began at once to draw together, a fresh throb of conscious unity soon was everywhere pulsating; and a process of growth and extension, far beyond what had been anticipated ere long revealed itself. During the subsequent autumn two new synods were organized in New York through the division of the synods existing; one in New Jersey, subsequently combined with that of New York; one in Virginia,

including the District of Columbia; two in Ohio, and one in each of the States of Indiana, Michigan and Illinois, and one in eastern Tennessee. The list of presbyteries was correspondingly increased, and the roll of membership grew in like proportion. Instead of dying out as had been predicted,* the movement developed rapidly in both area and momentum, and it soon became manifest to careful observers that out of the unhappy rupture a new denomination was rising whose spirit and resources were such as to insure to it not only continued existence, but also healthful growth and an important sphere of influence in the land.

The Assembly of 1839 was convened according to appointment in the historic First Church of Philadelphia. No less than fifteen synods and seventy-two presbyteries, comprising 1181 ministers, 1286 churches, and a membership of more than 100,000, were represented in it. Baxter Dickinson, D. D.,* of the presbytery of Cincinnati, the chief author of the Auburn Declaration and one of the leading actors in the organization from the beginning, was chosen Moderator. Among those present were Samuel Fisher, the first Moderator, and Erskine Mason, stated clerk, Dr. Cox

* The Assembly of 1837 comprised 23 synods, 135 presbyteries, 2140 ministers, 2865 churches and 220,557 members. How great the loss had been through the disruption is revealed by the fact that in 1839 the synods had fallen from 23 to 17, the presbyteries from 135 to 96, the ministers from 2140 to 1243, the churches from 2865 to 1823, and the members from 220,557 to 128,043. The loss of men of ability and character who had held high rank in the Church, was even greater in proportion.

and Williston and Duffield and Gilbert and Hill, William Wisner and Josiah Hopkins and John Rankin, Judd and Wing and Gale, and Professor Calvin E. Stone, together with many valuable and influential elders. It is needless to say that the various matters of routine, such as the constituting of subordinate bodies, the electing delegates, and the adjustment of other like affairs, were transacted with unanimity and dispatch, and that an earnest and prayerful temper was manifest throughout the deliberations.

One of the most important subjects of consideration was the report of the special committee appointed in the previous year to have charge of all pecuniary interests and all legal questions involved in the Disruption. The committee had instituted a suit quo warranto, not yet settled, in order to test in law the validity of the title to certain church properties, and also the validity of the act of 1837, by which the young denomination had been cut off from the benefits of its just share in these properties. The committee also reported a detailed Plan of Division, afterwards approved by the Assembly, for the peaceable separation of the two Churches, including a fair division of all church funds, a just distribution of immunities and privileges, the right of ministers and churches to make their own election between the two denominations, and the amicable adjustment of all

* Baxter Dickinson, D. D., born Apr. 14, 1795; Yale, 1817; pastor Longmeadow, Mass., 1823-29; Newark, N. J., 1829-35; Prof. of Sacred Rhetoric, Lane Sem., 1835-39 also, in Auburn Sem., 1839-47. Secretary, Boston, 1850-59; died, Brooklyn, N. Y., Dec. 7, 1875. D. D. Amherst, 1838.

other difficulties on the basis of entire equality and in the interest of permanent peace in the future. It being ascertained that this Plan would not be accepted, the Assembly adopted a formal Declaration, in which the history of the division was recited, the position and purpose of the new Church were defined, and a solemn appeal was made to the Christian world touching the justice of its cause.

In connection with the public Declaration, a lengthy and elaborate Pastoral Letter was sent to all the churches under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, in which the whole matter of the separation was again detailed, the charge of schism was resented, the need of faithful adherence to the principles at stake was urged, fellowship and unity were commended, and the churches were enjoined and encouraged to go on with utmost energy in the great work divinely set before them. The Narrative of the State of Religion also issued is an interesting illustration and proof of the practical realization of what was thus suggested, and also an impressive evidence of divine favor, and of the reviving and edifying energy of the Spirit of God even in the midst of difficulty and trial. In conjunction with these documentary appeals, the Assembly itself paused in its business and spent a session in special prayer, with fasting, that it might be divinely guided and God might be glorified through the prospering of Zion.

In addition to an annoying case of discipline, which was continued at intervals through five successive days and engrossed far too much attention, no very important principle being involved, — the first in

a sad succession of like cases, — two particular matters occupied perhaps too largely the time and thought of the body. One of these was the use of abbreviated creeds, short summaries of faith, in some of the churches, especially in connection with admission to membership. The committee appointed by the previous Assembly made a full report, showing that such creeds or summaries, as actually in use within twenty-five of the presbyteries where unsoundness in doctrine was supposed to prevail, were found on examination to be to a gratifying extent orthodox on all the essential points of Calvinism. — The other matter was domestic slavery, with the responsibility and duty of the Church respecting it. Overtures on this subject were sent in by various presbyteries, and an excessive amount of time was spent in somewhat heated discussions, — followed finally by the adoption of a resolution, referring the whole matter to the lower judicatories, to take such action as they should deem most judicious, and best adapted to remove or limit the evil.

Overtures were adopted to be sent down to the presbyteries, proposing that hereafter the synods be made the courts of final appeal and jurisdiction in all cases of discipline, — that the Assembly should be regarded simply as an advisory counsel in all church administration, — and that its sessions should henceforth be held triennially instead of annually, meanwhile retaining its place and power as the supreme judicatory of the Church. And then, with the transaction of some minor business, the Assembly after eleven days of deliberation was adjourned.

The history of the several Assemblies during this period of genesis and evolution is here presented somwhat in detail for the reason that it furnishes so distinct a photograph or transcript of the history of the Church itself. The Assembly of 1840, as it convened, had special occasion to rejoice in the encouraging growth of the denomination during the preceding year, as shown in the increase of its presbyteries from 75 to 89, of its ministers from 1181 to 1260, of its churches from 1280 to 1375, with correspondent enlargement of its membership and its territory which now included eight States in addition to the two in which the original synods were located. The organization was thus almost as large already as the other Church which reported for the same year 95 presbyteries, 1615 ministers, 1673 churches, and a membership of 126,583.

There were indeed some churches and ministers, originally counted, that had either returned to their former connection or gone elsewhere, but many more had made the opposite exchange, especially in the territory more remote. The revivals enjoyed during the year had done much not only to increase the membership, but also to inspire hope, courage, zeal in all hearts. The vexing and fruitless claim to the properties and privileges vested in the parent Church had been yielded, not because it was regarded as unwarranted, but because it was felt to be useless to prolong a struggle so painful. The minor strifes and litigations within particular presbyteries and congregations had now measurably ceased. The separation was seen to be a permanent fact: and the conviction that the nascent Church must live in and by itself, if it lived at all,

had become not only a fixed conclusion, but also a stimulus to consecration and activity such as nothing less than such an emergency could have secured. The awakening sense of a valuable opportunity to be grasped, of a providential mission to fulfil, of a large and noble destiny possible, was felt by all as an electric inspiration. And the Assembly, meeting under such conditions, was quite ready in temper to welcome the strong doctrine of the opening sermon touching the Spirit poured out from on high, and the wilderness becoming under his gracious influence a fruitful field — such as Isaiah saw in sacred vision.

The attendance was not so large as had been anticipated, many of the presbyteries in the farther west and south being unrepresented. While the absence of some who had been prominent in the earlier organization was felt, the body was not lacking in wise and safe leaders, — notably the Moderator, the venerable William Wisner, D. D.,* one of the honored pastors and fathers of the Church, the veterans Cox and Dickinson and Hill, Drs. DeWitt and Riddle of Pennsylvania, Kirk and Parker and Mills and other men of like value. The sessions were comparatively brief, and the business was concluded within nine days.

Favorable responses having been received from the presbyteries it was ordained, in accordance with the overtures transmitted to them, that the ratio of

* WILLIAM WISNER, D. D., born Warrick, N. Y., April 18, 1772; admitted to practice law, 1805; studied theology privately. Pastor for two long periods in Ithaca, N. Y., also pastor in Rochester and St. Louis. Died in Ithaca, Jan. 7, 1871. D. D., Delaware Coll. Father of Wm. C. Wisner, D. D., Moderator, 1855.

representation in the Assembly should be one minister and one elder from each presbytery whatever its membership, with the recommendation that no presbytery should contain more than twenty-four ministers, and on the other hand that none should be so small as to be incapable of discharging efficiently its constitutional functions. It was further ordained that the synods should become the courts of final resort in all matters of discipline, and should come to be — as was said — provincial assemblies, with enlarged responsibilities both in interpreting church law and in acting for the welfare and edifying of the denomination. It was also ordained that the Assemblly should meet triennially instead of annually, and that it should become more fully a conciliar and spiritual body — a grave and holy convocation of the Church, as was said, for the promotion of the interests of truth, piety and benevolence. Among the motives leading to these constitutional changes, some undoubtedly were the general feeling awakened by the arbitrary proceedings of several Assemblies prior to the Disruption, the natural opposition to centralized power, the preference for a wider distribution alike of responsibility and of service, and a conviction that after all the presbytery is the true unit and primal authority in the Presbyterian system. It is not impossible that one motive may have been to remove from the arena of the Assembly that troublesome question of domestic slavery which was annually forcing itself into notice there, and was even then threatening to convulse and divide the Church. In fact, that question did absorb no small amount of time and excite no small degree of conflicting feeling in the Assembly,

the prolonged discussions finally ending in an indefinite postponement.

It was natural that the interest of the body should still be centered largely in the Disruption and its various issues. The chief act in this direction was the adopting of a Declaration of Principles, so called, in which the Assembly once more expressed its estimate of the excluding Act, and again defined its own position and claims under what was styled the historic Constitution of American Presbyterianism. The Declaration affirmed that this Constitution was no nullity but rather a grand and inviolate charter, whose provisions and requirements were to be preserved unsullied and sacred in all ecclesiastical administration. It affirmed that no member of the Church should be deprived of his constitutional rights and privileges thus guaranteed except by fair and regular process; that no one should be impeached, discredited or disfranchised by private judgment, by calumny or any illicit form of procedure; and that all members, officers, judicatories of the Church should always hold themselves under most solemn obligation to act in every case in accordance with these fundamental principles. In the light of all that had transpired during the three or four years preceding, the force of this vigorous Declaration can be easily understood, and its passion may be easily condoned.

The general-temper of the Assembly appears in its action respecting some other matters of interest. A troublesome judicial case, involving chiefly the rulings of certain lower judicatories, claimed too large an amount of time and attention. In view of the unusual

prevalence of drunkenness with its kindred vices, a strong resolution was passed in favor of temperance. The prevalence of Sabbath desecration led to like action on that subject — pastors being counselled to preach respecting it, especially on the Sunday preceding the Fourth of July. The Assembly declared itself, even more fully than its predecessors had done, in favor of the voluntary societies organized in the interest of home and foreign missions, ministerial education, tract distribution and Sunday school work, and made an earnest appeal for enlarged liberality in all departments of religious enterprise.

The general condition of the young Church is graphically sketched in the Narrative of Religion adopted by the Assembly. On one hand the Narrative describes the difficulties and discouragements manifest, — external, in the general state of the country, the commercial depression current, the spread of vices, the indifference of the multitude to spiritual things, — internal, in the coldness and inaction of many among professed believers, the temper of worldliness prevalent, the contentious sectarianism, and specifically the measure of controversy still manifest between those who once were brethren within the one Church. On the other hand it dwells with enthusiasm on some evidences of outward prosperity in the churches, the organizing of new congregations especially on the frontiers, and the strengthening and increase of many of the older congregations. It emphasizes even more joyously the signs of spiritual advance, the numerous revivals adding from 12,000 to 15,000 members on profession of faith, and the growing sense of unity

within the Church. It exhorts to increased confidence in the Gospel and in the stated ministrations of the Word, to the culture of greater stability in church life, and the cultivation of deeper interest in mission work especially in the far West. And the Narrative closes with these earnest words: Finally, we recommend seasons of special private and social thanksgiving to God for the spiritual mercies of the ecclesiastical year which has just closed. It was begun in darkness and fear, in fastings and tears and supplications. It has closed in triumphs and joys which have brought heaven and earth to mingle in holy sympathy.

Three years elapsed before another Assembly was convened, and the history of the Church during this period can be gathered only from occasional and somewhat scant indications. The organization still labored under the opprobrium which had fallen upon it, or the nucleus of it, at the Disruption — still encountered opposition, sometimes unfair and even cruel, from the conservative sources. Moreover, it had as yet neither churchly machinery nor wealth nor much other helpful resource: it was still weak in various ways. Yet it had reason for encouragement in the quieting or elimination of undesirable elements and tendencies, in the developing spirit of unity, in the increasing consciousness of responsibility and of progress, and in its rapidly widening area. There had also been an actual increase, though slight, in the number of synods and presbyteries, ministers and churches, and a somewhat larger growth in membership. Added to all this was the cheering fact that the sympathy and aid of various

other evangelical communions were freely manifested in its interest.

The Assembly of 1843 met, as its predecessors had done, in the First Church of Philadelphia of which Albert Barnes was the loved and honored pastor. The attendance was large, and among the commissioners were many conspicuously earnest and active men, from both the East and beyond the Alleghenies. Still it is obvious that the change from an annual to a triennial convocation, together with the large transfer of jurisdiction to the synods — a change which was later on to reveal more fully its injurious quality — detracted somewhat from both the number and the weight of the assembled body. The Moderator chosen was Ansel R. Eddy, D. D.,* and the business in hand went forward promptly, the sessions closing on the tenth day. It is needful to refer here to only a few items of special interest.

The general disposition of the Assembly is indicated by its action respecting the observance of the Sabbath, respecting promiscuous dancing as inconsistent with Christian propriety, respecting benevolent collections for religious uses, respecting days of fasting and prayer for special objects, respecting its own religious exercises daily and a solemn communion service. The approaching centennial anniversary of the convening of the Westminster Assembly was recognized by appropriate preamble and resolution. As to

* Ansel R. Eddy, D. D., born, 1799; grad. Union Coll., 1817; Andover Sem., 1822; pastor, Canandaigua, N. Y., Newark, N. J., Chicago, Ills. Agent A. and F. Christ. Union. Died Lansingburgh, N. Y., Feb. 7, 1875.

slavery a strenuous discussion was carried on day after day, with various propositions and some bitterness of feeling, to the exclusion of other important matters, and with some harm to the unity of the body, — the whole ending in a resolution adopted, not without dissent and protest, declaring it inexpedient to take present action. A judicial issue, involving the suspension of a minister, and revealing some irregularity in discipline, added to the excitement of the body, and was finally referred to the synod implicated for review and correction — a considerable minority protesting against the decision.

The special committee which had been charged by the preceding Assembly with the oversight of the pecuniary interests and claims of the Church involved in the Disruption reported that the quo warranto suit had been abandoned, and the Assembly approved its action, but with a declaration that this step must not be regarded as waiving or extinguishing its legal and equitable rights in the properties of the parent Church. In the same temper it was resolved to forego the election of trustees or directors to look after these ancestral interests — these valuable heritages. An important resolution was also adopted in this connection, expressing gratification at some evidences of increase in the measure of kindness and courtesy shown by the other Church, and counselling all ministers and churches to cultivate a responsive measure of brotherly love toward that body.

The Narrative of the State of Religion is the most distinctive evidence now attainable as to the spiritual condition of the Church at that juncture. It

records with devout gratitude to God the remarkable series of revivals which had been enjoyed both in the Atlantic sections of the Church, and equally in the central West wherever the standard of the denomination had been planted. It refers to the rapid development in the farther West, instancing especially one of the frontier States where a few years earlier there was not a single presbytery, but where now there were no less than five presbyteries, united in one strong synod. It speaks of increasing interest in the study and the distribution of the Bible, in the cause of temperance and the Sabbath, and in Christian benevolence and activity: also of greater permanence in the pastoral office, and the increasing confidence shown in the outcome of the faithful preaching of the Word publicly and from house to house. In this connection it commends the three theological seminaries as furnishing many faithful young men for the ministry, and urges the duty of pressing on the continental work of home missions with fidelity and vigor. All in all, the condition and prospects of the young Church were said to be such as would justify enlarged confidence and the broadest expectations for the future.

The remaining years of the first period in the life of the young Church, extending to and including 1849, may be sufficiently described with smaller detail. The process of evolution went on steadily, and with less of outward opposition or of interior agitation, except in one or two directions, as the years advanced. When the Assembly of 1846 met in the usual place, it chose as Moderator a gifted and brilliant man, who had

shared conspicuously in the movement from the beginning, Samuel H. Cox, D. D.,* and entered with some enthusiasm on the discharge of its proper ecclesiastical functions. But its proceedings were soon disturbed by the incursion on the second day of memorials from nearly thirty presbyteries and four synods touching the subject of slavery and specially the relations of the Church to that enormous evil. A discussion followed, largely to the exclusion of other matters, which was continued for eight consecutive days,— the roll being called, and each commissioner given opportunity to express his judgment. Wide variety of opinion was developed, involving much excitement and no small strain upon the brotherliness of the body, and injuriously protracting its sessions. The discussion was finally closed by the adoption, not without a large negative vote followed by two or three protests, of a formal Declaration, which on one side referred the whole matter of discipline for slaveholding to the minor judicatories to which it properly belonged, but deplored on the other hand the existence of the institution of slavery, endorsed the condemnatory action of previous Assemblies from 1787 to 1818, exhorted all who might be implicated to put away the evil, and meanwhile counselled all others to abstain from divisive or disturbing action. But this was not the end: eleven years later the controversy rent the Church in twain.

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* Samuel Hanson Cox, D. D., born Aug. 25, 1793; pastor, Mendham, N. J., 1817-21; New York City, 1821-34; Prof. of Pastoral Theol. Auburn Sem., 1834-7; pastor, Brooklyn, N. Y., 1837-54. President of Ingham Univ. Died, Bronxville, N. Y., Oct. 2, 1880. D. D. Williams, 1823; LL. D., Marietta, 1835.

Special interest was manifested in the matter of fellowship with other religious bodies. Delegates from such bodies, including the German Reformed and the Evangelical Lutheran Churches, were welcomed: steps were taken toward wide reciprocal correspondence, embracing not only American denominations, but also the Congregational Union of England and Wales and the Free Church of Scotland. The Evangelical Alliance was heartily endorsed and its approaching convocation in London was anticipated with hope and exultation as a step toward union throughout Christendom. A special committee was appointed for conference with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, with a view to closer fellowship, if not to organic union. A fraternal communication was addressed to the Assembly of the O. S. Church, then in session in Philadelphia, proposing a joint celebration of the Lord's Supper, — a proposal which was kindly but firmly declined on the ground that the Assembly as a corporate body had never shared heretofore with any other like organization in that sacred observance. In view of the existing war with Mexico and of prevailing rumors of war, a day of humiliation and prayer was appointed, and earnest effort in the pulpit and elsewhere was recommended in the interest of universal peace.

But it was evident that the inordinate discussion respecting slavery, while it prolonged the sessions of the Assembly for more than two weeks, had crowded out injuriously other subjects, such as temperance, the Sabbath, psalmody, doctrinal literature, which were

of great practical moment to the Church. It also became evident that Assemblies, meeting but once in three years, could never give adequate consideration to these and other kindred denominational interests. It was also realized that though since 1843 there had been some advance in the roll of ministers and churches and membership, as the statistics showed, the Church had suffered in several respects in consequence of so long an interim of fellowship in and through the Assembly. It was therefore resolved, not without serious questionings as to validity, that the Assembly when it adjourned should meet at Cincinnati in the coming year: and an overture was sent down to the presbyteries proposing a return to annual sessions and a restoration of appellate power to the Assembly. The Narrative of Religion was then read, referring with interest to the Church growth as real though small, and lamenting certain hindrances such as the spread of pernicious literature, the rise and influence of gross forms of error, and especially the prevalence of war as a public condition always unfavorable to the progress and power of the Gospel of Peace. And the Assembly then adjourned.

When the body met again in 1847 according to adjournment, the attendance from both the east and the farther west was found to be but small, and a shadow seemed in view of the recent constitutional rule to rest upon the convocation. But the constitutionality of the adjournment was affirmed by an elaborate opinion from Chancellor Kent, and further justified by the report of a special committee appointed to consider the question. The reasons given in that report were

that owing to the protracted discussions respecting slavery business of importance had been wholly set aside or unfinished, — that the plan of triennial sessions had left the Church too much without visible unity and adequate supervision, — that the mission work in the far west had suffered especially for the lack of such care as the Assembly alone could supply, — that the education of the ministry, the upbuilding of other church interests, the extension of religion in the land, not only justified but demanded annual sessions of the supreme judicatory. The Assembly adopted this view, and accordingly sent down to the presbyteries a series of overtures providing for the change.

Care was taken, however, to limit the transactions of the Assembly chiefly to business left unfinished at Philadelphia and to matters of ecclesistical routine. The only important exception related to the work of home missions, brought before the body by an able Memorial and earnestly discussed in several interlocutory sessions. A special report adopted by the Assembly advocated various provisions for strengthening existing churches, urged greater care by presbyteries for destitute populations both native and foreign, commended generous assistance to feeble congregations in erecting houses of worship, and counseled diligence in seeking out young men of piety and promise, and training them for ministrations on the frontier. A committee of six ministers from the western synods was appointed to consult and correspond on the whole matter, under instruction to report to the next Assembly. Here one reads the beginnings of that process of withdrawal from joint action with undenominational

agencies in this field, which was to end finally in the assumption by the Church of an independent responsibility in all home missionary work.

The General Assembly which was convened in Philadelphia in 1849, may be regarded as marking the point of transition from the first to the second stage in the life of the denomination. During the earlier years the Church had been coming gradually into a distinct consciousness of its real character and position as an independent organization. The process of aggregation and assimilation had been going on, not without external difficulty or inward embarrassment, yet steadily and safely. Both the doctrinal position and the ecclesiastical structure had by degrees become clearly defined. The geographical area to be occupied and the vast work possible to be done were also somewhat fully manifest. The spirit and the purpose were now well matured, but the organism was as yet infantile, and the methods and machineries requisite to efficiency in action and service were as yet lacking. Still the young Church, with its twenty synods and more than a hundred presbyteries, located along the most favorable lines in no less than twelve States, was now prepared not only to live on, but to complete its organization, perfect its methods and system, gather up its resources, and proceed in strength and hope to fulfill its providential mission in the land.

The attendance was large, all sections of the denomination being well represented, and among the commissioners were many both of the original leaders

and of younger men on whom the task of leadership was to fall during the next decade. The organization was completed by the election of Philip C. Hay, D. D.,* as Moderator. A majority of the presbyteries concurring, the proposed change from triennial to annual Assemblies was agreed upon, and steps were taken toward the resumption of appellate power and an adjustment of the ratio of representation. Several changes in synodical boundaries were arranged, and provision was made for the extension of church lines, notably in the erection of a presbytery in distant California. Various questions, such as a term service in the eldership, the establishment of a theological seminary in the northwest, correspondence with other Churches, exchange of delegates with the Assembly O. S. were discussed. Nineteen memorials touching slavery were received, and after some consideration the troublesome subject was disposed of for the time by the adoption of an elaborate report, in which the deliverances of preceding Assemblies were cited and reaffirmed, the main principles involved were forcibly stated, and the matter dismissed with instructions to the subordinate judicatories to exercise kind and salutary discipline and with general counsel to patience and Christian forbearance an all sides.

While no definite advance was made in the line of denominational assumption of the work of home missions, the resolutions adopted show active and grow-

* Phillip Courtlandt Hay, D. D., born in Newark, N. J., July 25, 1793; grad. Princeton Coll.; licensed 1820; pastor in Newark eleven years, afterwards in Geneva and Oswego, N. Y.; teacher and principal. Died, Dec. 27, 1860.

ing interest in the work itself in all its branches. This is partly indicated also in the Narrative adopted, which indeed acknowledges the presence of spiritual dearth in the churches, and of what are described as extensive defections, but points cheerfully to occasional revivals reported, to the building of sanctuaries, to increase in benevolence, and various other signs of life and prospering. The Narrative is, however, too general and too diffuse to be accepted as a safe index to the denominational situation. The statistical report indicates a slight decline in both churches and membership during the three years reviewed — a decline which may be explained partly by the extensive defections so far as there were such, as alleged in the Narrative, toward Congregational fellowship on one side and the O. S. communion on the other. Close examination shows that, while the denominational growth was more rapid during the first half, there was still a healthful advance in all particulars during the latter half of the period which has here been passed in review.

A comparison between the statistics of 1839, the first full year in the life of the young Church, and those of 1849, shows an increase of synods from 15 to 20, of presbyteries from 85 to 104, of ministers from 1181 to 1453, of churches from 1286 to 1555, and of membership from 100,850 to 139,047. The figures in the first series are probably excessive, many churches and ministers being counted who never really cast in their lot with the excluded party. There were also many internal causes,— differences in temperament, training, religious associations, theological bias, locality and outward conditions, — which operated

strongly against the rapid development of unity, of mutual affection, of absorbing devotion to the common cause. The Church, moreover, was sailing year by year between the deep sea of Congregationalism and the rugged cliffs of a conservative Presbyterianism, and was at every moment liable to be engulfed by the one or shattered to pieces on the other. All things considered, it seems remarkable that an organization begun as this was, and so sorely beset, should have survived and grown as it did,— survived and grown not merely through human energy and sacrifice but, as its friends believed, because the divine favor rested benignantly upon it. And imperfect as it was in both experience and resource, erring occasionally in both plan and temper, far from being what it ought, the young Church must be said to have exhibited a remarkable measure of vitality and power, and to have justified thus early the belief that it was destined yet to do a good and great work for Christ.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Organization and Advance.
1850-1859.

The first stage or era in the life of the Church, with all the conflicts and diffculties, the efforts and sacrifices involved, had now been safely passed. The hope of an honorable reconciliation and of union with the Church from which it had been excluded — a hope long cherished by many minds and still lingering in some, was now seen to be vain. The earlier unwillingness to set forth upon an absolutely new existence, with all the trying problems involved, had now measurably died away. The sense of unity, awakened at first by the presence of common dangers and common trials, had now developed into a strong and lofty sentiment of union. The preliminary questions respecting its doctrinal foundations, its ecclesiastical principles and policy, its right to exist, its providential sphere and mission, had for the most part been answered. Its relations not only to the other Church but to various evangelical denominations, had been sufficiently determined. In the short space of eleven or twelve years, but as a span in the career of most Churches, a remarkable work had been accomplished.

But the decade that followed was to witness a development still more remarkable,— a process of organization such as would thoroughly fit the Church with agencies and machineries adequate to the filling of its providential sphere, and a steadfast progress toward healthful, vigorous maturity. In fact, the work of organization had been already begun, not indeed with-

out much discussion of ways, methods, agencies, or at times without some ominous differences in judgment and feeling, yet in the main with heartiness and with a measure of genuine success. But, as will appear in the progress of the history, there were greater and more difficult tasks remaining. Strong as the Church already was in its convictions, ardent as were its purposes and aspirations, a completer organization and equipment was the necessary condition to permanent advance — to full maturity. It is to this second stage, therefore, the stage of organization and advance, that attention must now be directed.

One illustration of the geographic development of the Church appears in the fact that the Assembly of 1850 met, not in the historic church in Philadelphia where it came into being and where all the previous Assemblies had been convened, but in what was then the somewhat remote city of Detroit. All of the synods except that of Mississippi whose connection was very slight and was entirely terminated a few years later, were represented by eighty-four of the one hundred and two presbyteries on the roll, — coming to the convocation from no less than twelve States lying mostly within those parallels of latitude along which the best elements in our national civilization had flowed in their westward course. David H. Riddle, D. D.,*

* David Hunter Riddle, D. D., LL. D., born April 14, 1805; ordained, 1828; pastor Winchester, Va., 1828-33; Pittsburgh, 1833-57; Jersey City, 1857-62. President, Jefferson Coll., 1862-5; Professor in, 1865-8; pastor in Canonsburg and Martinsburg, Pa., 1868-79; died at Falls Church, Va., July 16, 1888.

who had proved himself an active and efficient servant of the Church as well as an honored pastor, was made Moderator; and the ordinary business was promptly transacted. But the subject of slavery, notwithstanding the elaborate action of the preceding year, brought on an exciting and unprofitable discussion, engrossing most of five out of the twelve days of the session — a sad precursor of the larger conflict and estrangement that were to follow.

The matter of fraternal correspondence and the restoration of fellowship with the O. S. Church excited earnest and prolonged debate, but was at length indefinitely postponed with a formal statement of the failure of previous movements toward that end, an expression of regret that such movements had hitherto proved fruitless, and a declaration of desire to establish close fraternal relations whenever such a step should be found practicable. Various other special matters, such as provision for the support of aged ministers, publication of doctrinal tracts, the correction of synodical records, were acted upon. The answers to the several overtures sent down to the presbyteries by the previous Assembly showed that the proposed alterations in the Constitution as to the limitations of appeals and the ratio of representatives had not been approved — the Constitution therefore remaining unaltered.

The central subject of Home Missions was introduced by a sermon from the Moderator which was a forceful delineation and defense of the four main principles which the Church was set specially to represent: first, religious liberty in contrast with ecclesiastical

authority; second, living Calvinism in contrast with a rigid dogmatic system and a literal subscription; third, coöperative activity in religious work in contrast with an exclusive ecclesiasticism; fourth, an aggressive in contrast with a conservative type of church life. It was maintained that it should be the great work of the denomination to proclaim and illustrate these four principles. A series of strong resolutions was adopted by the Assembly in harmony with the discourse; suggesting significantly, however, that in organizing churches and supplying destitute regions the presbyteries may act by themselves as well as through the American H. Mission Society — a suggestion which contained the germ of the complete separation that occurred a few years later.

The Narrative of Religion reports various favorable and unfavorable matters, and claims a fair degree of consolidation and progress, but the statistics show no appreciable increase or expansion — a small advance beyond the figures of 1849. The best attainable index of the actual condition of the denomination appears in a thoughtful volume prepared that year, under the authority of the Synod of New York and New Jersey, by a committee of which Drs. Judd, Skinner, Hatfield and Spear and Judges Hornblower, Haines and Jessup were members. The volume was designed to set forth before the Christian public the real position and claims of the Church, to correct current misunderstandings respecting it, and to further its interests by a full statement of its belief, temper, purpose. It contains a considerate and just account

of the Disruption as to its causes and procedures, and closes with the following emphatic testimony:

Many of the obstacles to our progress, by which we have been embarrassed most of the time since our organization in 1838, are now removed. During a large part of this period much of our time and energies was necessarily devoted to the defense of our position and rights. Now we can consecrate them to labors for extending the borders of our heritage, and the spread of the Gospel through the world. We are not, indeed, rich in moneyed investments: all that the Church possessed previous to the Division our brethren . . . have appropriated to themselves. We are confident, however, that God approves our principles and policy, and that if we humbly confide in Him, He will not withhold His blessing from us. . . . With more than fourteen hundred ministers, more than fifteen hundred churches, and more than one hundred and forty thousand communicants, embracing a large amount of talent, learning, wealth and influence, if associated as we pray it may be with a spirit of activity and of humble dependence on God, what by His blessing may we not achieve for the dissemination of His truth, for the promotion of His honor, and the salvation of our sin-destroyed, suffering world!

From the organization of the first General Assembly at Philadelphia in 1789, its successors with but four exceptions had met, prior to the Disruption, in that honorable seat and home of American Presbyterianism. But the continental expansion of the Church had suggested even before that event the im-

portance of a more distributive policy, and in 1844 the O. S. Assembly set an example of migration, which was followed, as we have seen, by the session of the adjourned N. S. Assembly of 1847 in Cincinnati, and again by that of 1850 in Detroit. Twice only did it subsequently meet in the parent city, — migrating meanwhile from New York on the east to Chicago and St. Louis in the west. There were both advantages and disadvantages in such geographic distribution, and it was long queried whether the benefits or the evils were greater. In later times the spread of both the Nation and the Church has seemed to compel occasional visitations of the supreme judicatory even to the far Pacific coast. The Assembly of 1851 was convened in Utica, N. Y., in the very heart of the exscinded Synods. The body honored itself and gratified the entire Church by the unanimous election of Albert Barnes* as Moderator — a man whose calm and just bearing during the controversies preceding the division had won the respect even of those who questioned his orthodoxy, and whose counsels and influence subsequently had been valued as highly as those of any other leading mind in the denomination. The attendance was large and fairly representative of the whole Church, and the sessions were both more harmonious and more brief than those of some previous years.

* Albert Barnes, born in Rome, N. Y., Dec. 1, 1798; grad. Hamilton Coll., 1820; Princeton Sem., 1824; pastor Morristown, N. J., 1825-30; First Church, Philadelphia, 1830-67, when he resigned; died, Philadelphia, Dec. 24, 1870. Author of *Notes on the New Testament*, and on *Isaiah*, *Job*, *Daniel* and the *Psalms*; sermons on the *Way of Salvation* and *Life at Threescore*; vol. on the *Atonement*, and on *Revivals*; *Evidences of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century*.

The transactions of the Assembly call for no detail. Various ecclesiastical matters, such as the adjustment of presbyterial boundaries, the erection of a new synod, the review and correction of synodical records, the consideration and dismissal of a judicial complaint, were duly decided. The judicial committee congratulated the Assembly on the peaceful relations existing within the lower judicatories, and the manifest disposition prevalent to terminate personal difficulties without extended litigation. As to moral issues the Assembly repeated the former deliverances on the Sabbath, on temperance reform, and after some discussion, on slavery. In view of the recent passage of the fugitive slave law, a declaration that no human enactment can make it a duty to send back, or assist in sending back, to hopeless bondage persons who are innocent of crime, was debated but finally laid aside as inopportune. The existing societies organized in the interest of missions, of the circulation of the Bible and of tracts and religious books, and also of liberal and theological education, were all cordially endorsed. The matter of correspondence with the General Association of New York, Congregational, while friendly in tone resulted in the passage of a significant resolution deprecating the spirit of rivalry and the spirit of proselytism on whatever side. The home missionary sermon preached by request of the Assembly was an earnest and influential appeal for more strenuous church extension, and after discussion the whole subject was referred to a special committee under instruction to report to the next Assembly.

The statistical reports for the year show a small

advance in ministers, churches and membership, and the annual Narrative indicates a healthy, even prosperous condition in the Church. While the theological seminaries are commended, the scarcity of ministers duly qualified and faithful, especially in the newer regions of the church domain, is lamented. Revivals of religion, especially in the colleges, are reported, and the hope is expressed that from this source the needful supply of ministers may soon be secured. Increase in church attendance, accessions to the churches on profession, the organizing of some new churches and the increase in older ones, the cancelling of church debts, are also reported. The central subject of church extension, in its relations to the evangelizing of the whole country, is urged as a matter of prime importance. All in all, the situation must be pronounced encouraging.

The Assembly of 1852, held in Washington, William Adams, D. D.* being Moderator, was one of special importance. The general expectation that something significant would be done toward the more thorough organizing of the Church for effective work, added to the attractions of the place of assembling, brought an exceptionally large attendance, and imparted special interest to the proceedings of the body. It had been widely realized that however successful

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* WILLIAM ADAMS, D. D., LL. D., born Colchester, Ct., Jan. 25, 1807; grad. Yale, 1827 and Andover Sem., 1830; pastor Brighton, Mass., 1831-4; New York City, 1834-1873; President of Union Sem., till his death, Orange, N. J., Aug. 31, 1880. Author of *Three Gardens, Thanksgiving, Conversations of Christ*, and other productions.

undenominational agencies at work in the great field might be, the Church as an organism was suffering for the lack of that discipline, culture, enthusiasm which direct participation in such departments of Christian activity would induce. For it is an universal fact of experience that neither the individual disciple nor the organized household of faith can grow into full maturity through any commitment of what is personal work for Christ to other hands, however efficient those hands may be. It was also believed by many that the Church was steadily losing ground, especially in the matter of home missions, which it could hold with advantage through an independent administration. In some minds there was also a growing impression that in several other directions, if not universally, something resembling the general policy of strictly internal management followed by the Church O. S. was becoming important if not vital to the healthful development and progress of the Church. And such views and impressions were much intensified in a practical way through some defection toward an aggressive Congregationalism on one side, and the return to the other Church of some who preferred at heart its stricter theory and administration.

It is hardly needful to refer to the ordinary transactions of the Assembly, though some of these had more than usual interest. The visit of the body to the tomb of Washington and the provision for a suitable block of marble to be placed in his Monument then in process of erection, should be mentioned. In respect to the grave matters just suggested, it was inevitable that two somewhat diverse parties should arise, —

one clinging tenaciously to the existing undenominational agencies and counting it even a species of treachery to withdraw from them in full view of the good they had wrought, — the other looking more to the future than to the past, regarding some of these agencies with suspicion, and believing that union with them could not be continued without serious loss. In some sense each of these classes of opinion had its way. On one side it was declared that the Plan of Union still existed in full force, though in fact but few if any churches had recently been organized under its provisions; and the abrogation of the Plan by the Assembly of 1837 was pronounced unconstitutional and void. Correspondence with Congregational Associations was still maintained, although the preceding Assembly had been obliged to protest against the spirit of rivalry shown by some parties, degenerating into acts of proselytism. Representatives of the various voluntary societies were present, but little room was found for consideration of their respective causes. Both the time and the interest of the Assembly were absorbed rather by the three practical subjects submitted by the committee of the previous year on church extension.

Of these the most urgent and important was home missions. For two or three years, as we have seen, the subject had been pressing itself with increasing force on the attention of the Church, as one involving its growth if not its existence. After prolonged discussion it was determined that the American H. M. Society should continue to be the agency through which this form of missionary work should be carried

on, — that annual contributions to its treasury should continue to be secured by the presbyteries and churches, — but that each presbytery should have the right to recommend applications for aid independently of the agents representing that Society, and should have the further right to appoint itinerant missionaries within its own bounds who should explore destitute fields and prepare the way for the formation of new churches wherever in the judgment of the presbytery these were needed. Further, each presbytery and likewise each synod was empowered to elect annually a standing committee on church extension, in order to supervise all such special work, and each synod was authorized to call for a specific collection from each of its churches, to be distributed directly for the erection of houses of worship within its own bounds or beyond them: and such committees were required to make annual report of their doings and of the condition of the churches under their care, in all particulars, to the Assembly ensuing. As a conciliatory measure, a special committee was appointed to confer with the officers of the A. H. M. Society in order to secure its concurrence, so far as possible, in the provisions thus made.

The second of these subjects was education for the ministry — a matter which had for some years demanded special consideration, and which now excited much earnest discussion. The Assembly finally recommended that each presbytery appoint a standing committee on this subject, to secure the presentation of the cause in all its churches, to press upon parents their duty to devote their sons and upon young men

to give themselves to the ministry, to take charge of all church collections and disburse them, and to have special supervision over all candidates for the sacred office. The formation of what was called the Western Education Society, to be located at Cincinnati, and authorized to act as a general agency for the promotion of the cause, was recommended under certain prescribed conditions. The theological seminaries also were both cordially endorsed and encouraged in their actual work, and requested, notwithstanding their independent mode of organization, to make full reports of their students and their general condition to each Assembly.

The third subject presented by the committee related to the adoption of measures suited to promote through the press the dissemination of those truths and principles which were regarded as characteristic of the denomination, — in other words, an agency for the publication of doctrinal tracts and other church literature. The proposed issuance of a Quarterly Review, the first number of which in fact appeared shortly after the adjournment, and the assurance of the management of the New York Evangelist that that periodical would be so conducted as to subserve the interests of the Church in this regard, were cordially welcomed, and these two publications were commended to the patronage of ministers and people. But a more significant step was the appointment of a standing committee to provide for the publishing of a series of tracts explanatory of the doctrines, government and missionary policy of the Church; — said committee being located in Philadelphia and empowered to ap-

point a secretary and treasurer, and to solicit funds from the churches in support of the cause; and instructed to report its doings to each Assembly.

It now becomes apparent that after fourteen years of experiment the Church had come into a more mediate position on the issue between voluntary societies and strict ecclesiastical agencies in carrying forward these three forms of religious activity. Partly through such experimental conviction, and probably in part through other influences, it had reached the point where in view of the career providentially opening before it, it found itself constrained to supply itself with more effective instrumentalities of this class than it had heretofore possessed. The second stage in its life had thus begun, and the process of organization once started could only progress toward still larger provisions of this kind in the near future. The Narrative for the year reveals both the widespread need of the action which the Assembly had taken, and the encouragement to go forward in supplying that need through the agencies thus chosen. Special emphasis is laid in the Narrative on the threefold form of the work waiting to be done,— among the destitute population of American birth along the spreading frontier, among the incoming multitude of immigrants from the Old World, among the colored people in the South. The condition of the Church at this interesting stage is well described in the introductory article of the Quarterly Review just mentioned:

"We have with us the confidence of other Christian communions; we have in our body the grand and essential elements of truth, order, liberality and the

spirit of progress; we have no stain of injustice on our history; we have our ancient cherished communion and cöoperation, as had our fathers, with the churches of New England; we have our noble and well manned collegiate and theological institutions; we have under our special influence the northern belt of this glorious land, with its rapid advance in a free population; we have near sixteen hundred ministers, and nearly one hundred and fifty thousand church members, representing a population of some six hundred thousand souls; we have wealth, enterprise and — it is to be hoped — the blessing of God. Well may we congratulate ourselves on our prospects. We can afford to love our branch of the Church and consecrate our labors and prayers and charities to its prosperity."

The plan of organization initiated at Washington determined largely the policy and methods of the denomination during the remainder of its separate life. Though some doubted the wisdom of the new movement, and a few among the special friends of the voluntary method withdrew from the body, Church Extension, especially along the three lines specified, became the accepted and general watchword. The act of the Albany Convention, Congregational, during the same year, formally setting aside the Plan of Union, justified distinctly the course taken, particularly in the field of home missions. Other indications there were which need not here be described, going to show that the new policy had not been inaugurated too soon. And when the Assembly met at Buffalo in 1853, though some diversity of judgment and feeling still

existed, the pathway of progress seemed to most to be clear and inviting — a way of safety and a way of growth. The Moderator chosen, Rev. D. Howe Allen, D. D.*— a man of great personal worth and charm, and who had been extensively known as a wise and safe counsellor — was called to the place with the cordial approval of all, because he was known to be in sympathy with the measures already adopted and with the plans in contemplation for further advance. The large attendance, especially from the West, made plain the loyal adherence of the denomination generally to these measures and prospective plans. While some doubted and a few held back, it was clear that the Church was at least as far unified in its acceptance, as loyal in its temper, as could have been expected at that stage.

That there was no disposition to break away at once from all undenominational activity is evidenced by the cordial action taken in endorsement of the American Bible Society, the Sunday School Union, the American and Foreign Christian Union, the National Temperance Union, and some other kindred organizations, and also by the hearty welcome given as heretofore to the delegates representing other evangelical communions. The Am. H. M. Society with which the Church was still conjointly carrying on the home missionary work, with the exceptions already noted,

* Diarca Howe Allen, D. D., born, Lebanon, N. H., July 3, 1808; grad. Dartmouth, 1829 and Andover Sem., 1833; Prof. Marietta Coll., 1833-40; Prof. Sac. Rhet. Lane Sem., 1840-51; and Syst. Theol., 1851-67; emeritus Prof., till his death, Granville, O., Nov. 9, 1870. D. D., Marietta, 1848.

disavowed all disposition to interfere with the proper functions of the presbyteries, and gave cordial assurance of just and impartial administration of its trust, without any discrimination between the two denominations interested. On this basis the Assembly advised that the work of the Church should so far as possible be conducted through that agency,— at the same time declaring that there were some important parts of the work which could not be adequately cared for through the Society and must be carried on therefore, if at all, through special denominational instrumentalities.

As to education and publication there was no recession from the plans determined upon by the previous Assembly. It was strongly urged by some that the Church should at once assume full responsibility for the supply of a trained and sufficient ministry by instituting an agency of its own for that purpose: and a committee was finally appointed to consider and digest a plan to this end with instruction to report such plan to the next Assembly. Meanwhile reports from the several theological seminaries were received with special interest; and colleges and also schools for the education of youth of both sexes were commended to the fostering care of Christians in all suitable localities.— The standing committee on publication was again instructed to issue a series of tracts for general distribution, clearly setting forth the doctrine, polity and general policy of the Church, in order to answer current calumnies and to show to the world its true position. The committee was also authorized to secure in any practicable way funds for the building

of a house of publication. In this connection the volume on the division, already mentioned, was particularly commended to both ministers and church officers and members as a correct and acceptable history of the painful Disruption.

A fourth step in the line of complete denominational organization was taken by the Assembly in determining to appoint another standing committee in the interest specifically of church erection — the aiding of feeble congregations in the securing of houses of worship as indispensable adjuncts in the upbuilding of the Church in more destitute regions. It was also resolved to raise a permanent fund of $100,000, to be loaned or otherwise used in furtherance of this object. The committee was empowered to solicit subscriptions from all the churches, to appoint its own salaried secretary, and to make all needful rules and provisions, subject to the Assembly, for the wise administration of the trust committed to its care.

The strong deliverances of the Assembly on the subject of religious liberty and on the observance of the Sabbath, its wise suggestions concerning forms of public worship, its protest against promiscuous dancing as an amusement unworthy of Christians, its commendation of the scheme of African colonization, its judicious action on certain synodical records involving a matter of discipline and the erection of two new synods, must be passed without special notice, though they well illustrate the general attitude and spirit of the body. The troublesome question of slavery made its appearance here as in every previous Assembly, exciting a debate both bitter and prolonged

— ending in the adoption, with large dissent, of a report recommending presbyteries in the South to make particular inquiries as to the number of church members holding slaves and to the treatment and religious training of slaves by such masters. This action was followed by two vigorous protests, claiming that the request of the Assembly was one which that body had no constitutional right to make, and one with which the presbyteries addressed had no constitutional power to comply. It seems clear that if that request is to be regarded as a summons to these presbyteries to institute an investigation at a point where they had no ecclesiastical authority, specially with a view to furnishing to the Assembly a series of facts that might be made the basis of judicial proceedings against themselves, there was just warrant for such protestation.

The statistics for the year show that in the number of ministers and candidates for the ministry, of churches and presbyteries, and in the additions to the membership, there had been a small increase over the figures of the preceding year, which were the largest in the history of the Church thus far. The Narrative, while it speaks of the developing spirit of benevolence, of churches reaching the stage of independence and of increasing interest in church extension in its several forms, and emphasizes especially the cheering facts of revivals enjoyed in more than half of the presbyteries, reports on the other hand a lamentable dearth of ministers, particularly in the farther West, and earnestly deprecates the existence of two great evils from which the Church was suffering,— an aggressive

sectarianism operating from without to the impairment of concord and the disruption of churches, and the prolonged agitation respecting slavery, with its bitter and schismatical accompaniments, threatening year by year to be the destruction of the denomination.

The three years that followed, 1854-1856,* were years of advance in organization and equipment, and also in position and influence. They were so nearly alike in their experience and movement that they may readily be surveyed together in this review. In 1854, the Church was represented by twenty-three synods with one hundred and eight presbyteries, distributed

* The three Assemblies were held at Philadelphia, St. Louis and New York, respectively, and the presiding officers were:

1854. THOMAS HARVEY SKINNER, D. D., LL. D., born in North Carolina, March 7, 1791; grad. Princeton Coll., licensed, 1812; pastor, Philadelphia; Prof. of Sac. Rhet. Andover; pastor, New York, 1835-48; Prof. Sac. Rhet. and Past. Theol. Union Seminary, 1848 till his death, Feb. 1, 1871. Author of *Aids to Preaching and Hearing, Hints to Christians, Discussions in Theology*, and other publications.

1855. WILLIAM CARPENTER WISNER, D. D., son of Dr. William Wisner (Mod. 1840), born, Elmira, N. Y., Dec. 7, 1808; grad. Union Coll., 1830; pastor Rochester, 1832, and other places; Lockport, 1837-76. Died July 14, 1880. Author of *Prelacy and Parity*, and many published sermons.

1856. LAURENS PERSEUS HICKOK, D. D., LL. D., born Bethel, Conn., Dec. 29, 1799; grad. Union Coll., 1820; ord., 1824; pastor, Kent, Ct., 1824-9; Litchfield 1829-36; Prof. Theol. in Western Reserve Coll., 1836-44, and in Auburn Sem., 1844-52; Prof. and Vice-Pres. Union Coll., 1852-66; President, 1866-8; died in Amherst, Mass., May 6, 1888. D. D., Hamilton, 1843; LL. D., Amherst, 1866. Author of *Rational Psychology, Empirical Psychology, Moral Philosophy, Creator and Creation, Humanity Immortal*, and other works.

through no less than fourteen States, and comprising a membership of one hundred and forty thousand. Six of these synods, having a membership of about fifteen thousand, were located in five of the southern States, chiefly in Virginia and Kentucky. The statistics of three years later show but very slight increase in ministers and churches, and a small loss in membership — a fact which may be accounted for in part by reference to the two great evils mentioned in the Narrative of 1853. Still, when the hundreds of revivals reported during these years are taken into account, and when statistics show additions of more than seventeen thousand on profession of faith and nearly fifteen thousand more by letter, the lack of registered advance at the close seems inexplicable.

Viewed on the interior, the situation was not unfavorable: the various forms of church activity, notwithstanding occasional questioning or indifference, went on with a good degree of efficiency. Church extension continued to be an inspiring watchword. The complex task of home missions was prosecuted as heretofore under the original arrangement with the Am. H. M. Society: further years of discussion and of adjustment must be passed before the Church could entirely and with unanimity undertake that task for itself. But the aggregate of special or exceptional cases was steadily increasing, and larger provision was consequently needful to supply this growing need. In 1855 a permanent committee on church extension was therefore appointed, which was empowered to employ synodical or presbyterial or exploring agents for the purpose of planting churches of the Presbyterian faith

and order in country or in city, and also to solicit and disburse any funds that could be secured for this purpose. This step was justified, notwithstanding the arrangement with the H. M. Society, on the general ground that the Church is one, that its stronger sections ought to support the weaker, that all are alike interested in the general development and expansion, and that the Assembly is the proper organ for the supplying of this denominational need. The report of this committee to the next Assembly showed that some valuable results had been secured through this process, and that some thousands of dollars had been obtained for this purpose without — it was claimed — diminishing the contributions to the Society.

In the department of church erection, similar activity was manifest. In 1854, a committee appointed the previous year presented an elaborate plan, which was adopted with unanimity by the Assembly, establishing a permanent committee, prescribing its sphere and functions, authorizing it to secure a charter, to appoint a secretary and treasurer, to receive and disburse all moneys contributed to this cause, to hold in trust all permanent funds, and instructing it faithfully to discharge the duties thus designed under the supervision of the Assembly. At the next Assembly this plan was further revised and some changes were made: the requisite charter was reported, trustees were appointed under it and the permanent fund was placed under their care; and from this time the perfected scheme began to work out the beneficent results hoped for, as in fact it continued to do while the Church lived.

In the interest of theological education, a similar

committee was appointed in 1854, to operate in conjunction with the two undenominational Societies already existing and engaged in this form of service. This committee was to be a representative of the Assembly in this special department, and was empowered to appoint a secretary, to solicit and use funds, and do whatever else the welfare of the cause might demand. The synods and presbyteries were exhorted to use all diligence in furthering the operations of the committee, and to secure annual collections in its support. The discussions on this plan were prolonged and intense, — considerable diversity of view being manifest on one side as to both principle and expediency, offset on the other by a controlling desire to conserve the denominational unity and harmony. In 1855 and again in 1856, the plan was more fully elaborated, the committee enlarged, its powers and duties defined, its sphere more distinctly described: and the cause thus constituted was earnestly commended to presbyteries and churches throughout the denomination. In the latter year the theological seminaries were eulogized for their efficiency in a special report, which closes with these words: We commend these institutions, their teachers and students, to the prayers and cordial support of the Church: they are our hope for continued and increasing influence and power among men.

Mention has already been made of the appointment in 1852 of a standing committee for the publication of doctrinal tracts and other church literature, — enlarged with additional powers and duties in the following year. In 1854, this committee was also

organized on a basis similar to that already described in the departments of church erection and theological education: the plan was more fully elaborated in the two years following; and in 1856 the Assembly declared its conviction that there was here an important field of influence and usefulness which could well be occupied without interference with voluntary Societies or other agencies engaged in supplying a more general evangelical and evangelizing literature, and therefore authorized annual collections from the churches, and the solicitation of a permanent capital such as might be needful in carrying forward this special work.

It is thus apparent that during the three years now passing under review the Church had been carefully and firmly organizing itself along these four main lines for the better furtherance of its own life and growth. Even though this process involved more or less of friction with the several undenominational agencies engaged in these four departments of Christian effort, it cannot justly be said that there were no adequate reasons for the course so adopted and pursued. Nor can it fairly be alleged that either an aggressive sectarianism or a culpable indifference to the claims of these agencies marked the transition in policy thus wrought. The repeated and hearty commendation of these particular agencies, and the earnest loyalty of the successive Assemblies to the American Bible Society, the Sunday School Union and some other like organizations, are clear evidence to the contrary. The determination to do nothing toward organizing presbyteries by missionaries in pagan lands is another in-

dication of the catholic spirit and purpose of the Church. The complex process as it went on year by year is simply to be regarded as a needful provision for the completer unifying and knitting together of the denomination, and for the more effective prosecution of its ordained mission among men.

It is not needful to present here a resumé of the numerous matters of minor moment acted upon by the three Assemblies. No doctrinal issues arose, beyond the question of framing a short confession to be used especially in the admission of members, which after consideration was decided adversely. The common, or authorized, version of the Bible was commended, and the proposal to prepare a new version discountenanced. No judicial cases appeared in proper form for adjudication, nor did any other ecclesiastical issue of much moment present itself. The troublesome question of slavery made its appearance in each of the three Assemblies, and received what is described as protracted, deliberate and prayerful consideration, — ending in 1856 in the adoption of a strong report affirming the constitutional jurisdiction of the Assembly, and its right to press specific inquiries respecting the matter on the synods and presbyteries of the South. An elaborate minority report was presented, denying the right of the Assembly to pronounce slaveholding an offence recognizable in the Book of Discipline, and questioning its authority to institute judicial action in any direct form against the class of persons so described.

The Narratives of the State of Religion for the three years are too brief, general, indefinite, to shed

much light on the actual condition of the Church. A degree of prosperity is reported as evidenced in the building of sanctuaries and the support of the ministry, the comparative though inadequate supply of ministers in destitute sections, growth in denominational zeal and the sense of unity, interest in moral reforms, and especially the presence of revivals in many churches and presbyteries. There is little mention of the various hindrances obstructing the path of progress, and no explanation is given of the disheartening fact, appearing in the statistics as already mentioned, that while no less than 17,290 persons were received during this interim on profession of faith, there was an actual loss at the end of 1,692 members.

The three succeeding years, 1857-1859, may be considered together as completing the second decade in the life of the developing Church. With such completion, genesis and evolution, organization and advance, were to give way for the final decade of maturity and consummation. The Assembly of 1857, the largest ever held up to that time, met in Cleveland, and was organized by the election of Samuel W. Fisher, D. D.,* as Moderator. It met during the

* SAMUEL WARE FISHER, D. D., LL. D., (son of Samuel Fisher, D. D., Moderator, 1838), born Morristown, N. J., April 5, 1814; grad. Yale, 1835; student in Princeton and Union; pastor West Bloomfield N. J., 1839-43; Albany, N. Y., 1843-7; Cincinnati, 1847-58; President Hamilton Coll., 1858-67; pastor Utica, N. Y., 1867-71; died College Hill, O., Jan. 18, 1874. D. D., Miami, 1852; LL. D., Univ. N. Y., 1866. Author, *Three Temptations, Occasional Sermons and Addresses.*

earlier stages of that great spiritual awakening which like a gale from heaven swept over the land during that year, and its deliberations, even at points where controversy was waged, were calmed and hallowed by that gracious visitation. The ordinary business, such as the erection of synods and presbyteries, the review of records, fraternal correspondence, was transacted with despatch. One item of interest was the approval of the Presbyterian Historical Society, as a joint association of several Presbyterian communions, and an agreement to share in a proposed commemoration of the reunion of the two historic Synods, in 1758, after seventeen years of separation. The subject of church extension in its four branches or departments was the matter of chief interest. Full reports on various sections of the home missionary work, on church erection, on publication, and on education for the ministry, the latter accompanied by a plea for aiding students in their theological training, were considered and acted upon, and various measures to increase the efficiency of these departments were discussed. Their great value to the Church was now assured. Both in the Narrative and elsewhere the growth of a healthful denominational feeling is mentioned as a direct consequence of the establishing and effective action of these ecclesiastical instrumentalities.

The one painful event in the Assembly was the protracted, bitter, disastrous debate on slavery and the responsibility of the Church concerning it. Several memorials brought up the subject in forms which seemed to demand not only thorough discussion, but some decisive and final result. The deliverance at last

adopted on one side admitted that slaveholding was not in all possible cases an offence calling for discipline, and expressed sympathy with all those who were doing what lay in their power for the bodily and spiritual welfare of persons held by them in bondage under existing law. On the other side it affirmed anew the numerous declarations made by Synods and Assemblies from the beginning, in condemnation of the institution of slavery as it actually existed in the South.

In the next place it affirmed the right of the Assembly, acting under the Constitution, not only to bear general testimony against this gigantic moral as well as public evil, but also to take orderly measures for the cleansing of the Church, even through processes of discipline, from all contamination with that evil. There can be little doubt, that this deliverance was abstractly right, even at the debated point of judicial jurisdiction, but the practical issue it involved was the issue of disruption. The protest of the minority challenged the jurisdiction claimed, and held that the exercise of authority as proposed was contrary to the organic law of the Church, in itself unrighteous and oppressive, degrading to the southern churches and membership, and one which carried with it virtual excision. Their cause was greatly damaged by at least an implied affirmation that slavery was, as one presbytery had openly averred, an ordinance of God, justified by biblical precept and example, and in itself, notwithstanding occasional wrong done, rightful and worthy. The adoption of the deliverance by a majority of more than six to one was a decisive conclusion of the whole controversy. Nothing was left to the protesting

minority but to submit to the judicial investigation proposed — which could have ended in nothing short of disintegration within the section of the Church which they represented, or to withdraw in sorrow from the communion of which for twenty years they had been a valuable part.

It will always be a question whether it was wise for the young Church, with so many practical problems at hand calling for early solution, with so many other difficulties besetting it, to carry on for twenty years in every Assembly from first to last so distracting and divisive a discussion as that which slavery elicited,—whether the successive judgments and measures were all constitutional, equitable, considerate enough in view of all the difficulties developed, — whether the assumption of authority by the later Assemblies did not resemble too closely the course and action of 1837, — whether it would not have been better to refrain at last from a disciplinary proceeding which could have no possible issue but division and separation. There is also room for the antithetic query whether the general sentiment in the Church did not compel such discussion and action,— whether the defense and advocacy of slavery by the separatists was not a flagrant error which could not be condoned, — whether their extrusion was not necessary to the unity and peace of the denomination, — and whether on the other hand it would not have been wiser for them, for the Church, for the country, if they had chosen to abide in a connection and fellowship grievous at one point, but so beneficent in many other ways. But whatever may be the right answer to such ques-

tionings, the sad result is a matter of history now.

In a convention called by the protestants and others, held during the year at Richmond, Va., the withdrawal became a settled fact, and the United Synod of the Presbyterian Church — as it was called — was duly organized as an independent denomination, substantially on the ecclesiastical basis defined in the protest. And when the Assembly of 1858 met, six synods, with twenty-one presbyteries, located in Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri and Mississippi, and comprising 285 churches with 16,137 members, were unrepresented. In receiving the accredited delegate of the Synod, the Assembly formally declared its regret at the separation, deplored the loss of opportunity for mutual aid and encouragement in the one great work in which all were engaged, and expressed the hope that all parties might ultimately become of one mind touching slavery, as they were on so many other moral and religious as well as doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters. But the rupture had become irrevocable. The names of the synods and presbyteries were retained on the roll, but in 1859 and thereafter the places of their commissioners remained vacant. The ominous clouds of civil war were already filling the political skies, and when the dark era of conflict began, all possibility of union was gone. A portion of the synod of Missouri retained its allegiance, but the other synods continued in their independence until a few years later when they united with a similar body of separatists from the Church O. S. in forming what is known as the Southern Presbyterian Church.

It is pleasant to turn from this sad story of con-

flict and rupture, to contemplate the extensive spiritual reviving which swept over the country just at this juncture and in which the Church shared largely. The Narrative of 1858 describes in brief the origin of this remarkable awakening, enumerates its chief characteristics and the specific instrumentalities employed, and testifies that every presbytery and almost every church in the denomination had shared in the heavenly visitation. It speaks of the results already gathered, the statistical report showing no less than 9,128 additions to the churches on profession of faith, and of the happy influences flowing in upon the Church in many ways through this gracious experience. It also speaks of the work as still going on, and expresses the hope that what has been enjoyed is but the inauguration of a grand revival era. The Narrative of 1859 testifies in terms equally glowing to the blessing that had come upon the churches, in an elevated type of piety, in greater prayerfulness and activity among church members, in family religion, in benevolence denominational and voluntary, and in the addition of 10,705 persons on profession of their faith. Well may that Narrative say: Taking the two years together we may record with profound gratitude to God the display of his grace with unprecedented power over our whole Church, in which city and country alike rejoice, and the full effects of which will be known only when time shall end.

The Assembly of 1858 was convened at Chicago, specially in the interest of that vital work of church extension on which the denomination had now en-

tered so heartily, and on whose development particularly in the West since the southern door had been closed, its future was seen to be very largely dependent. The Assembly of 1859,* met at Wilmington, Del., almost on the southern border of the denominational domain, — probably in the hope of regaining some proportion of those who had withdrawn two years before, particularly in Virginia where several leading minds had shared actively and sympathetically in the movements and work of the Church, from 1837 onward, and where the strongest among the withdrawing synods was located. To the ordinary routine in the two Assemblies no special attention is requisite. In 1858 two judicial cases commanded marked interest, particularly one which involved a serious and practical issue respecting marriage and divorce, — the Assembly adding to its decision an earnest plea for the sacredness of the marriage bond, and a solemn protest against extending beyond the clear warrant of Scripture the grounds of divorce. Another item of interest was the discussion respecting the preparation of a summary of Christian doctrine, to be used especially in the admission of members. Such a summary was prepared and reported and referred to

* The presiding officers were in 1858, Matthew L. P. Thompson, D. D., and in 1859, Robert W. Patterson, D. D., LL. D.

Robert Wilson Patterson, D. D., LL. D., born in Blount Co., Tenn., Jan. 21, 1814; grad. Illinois Coll., 1837; Lane, 1841; pastor Chicago, 1842-73. Prof. of Christian Evidences, McCormick Sem., 1873-81; President Lake Forest Univ., 1876-8; Lecturer on Evidences, Lane Sem., 1881-4. Died, Evanston, Ills., Feb. 28, 1894. D. D., Hamilton, 1856; LL. D., Lake Forest Univ.

the presbyteries for consideration, but the summary was never adopted, — probably because it was deemed inexpedient to take any step that might seem to imply an indifference to the existing standards of faith.

Both Assemblies were chiefly occupied with the work of denominational development in its four main departments. In respect to home missions there was said to be much encouragement as to both contributions to the cause and the measure of success actually reached. The growing difficulty in adjusting this work to that still in the hands of the Am. H. M. Society was recognized, and careful effort was made to guard as far as possible against collision or conflict between the two kinds of administration. In respect to theological education it was declared that a large increase of the ministry was indispensable to success in the vast home missionary field, and that such increase could be secured only through the practical support of the plan devised by previous Assemblies. In view of the urgent need of laborers, pastors were exhorted to make use of lay talent so far as this could be consistently done. Encouraging reports were presented respecting both church erection and publication, and the larger use of the issues of the latter agency in both church and family was urged. The Assemblies declared their continued fealty to the American Board of Foreign Missions, and counselled the churches to contribute more freely to the treasury of that Board, it being agreed that missionaries are at liberty to organize presbyteries in their several fields so far as this is found to be advisable.

With the adjournment of the Assembly of 1859,

the second era in the life of the Church may be regarded as closed. The era had been begun in the presence of much outward obloquy and opposition; the Church had done little more than maintain its existence amid the wrench and pains of the Disruption. Inwardly it was suffering greatly from the lack of anything resembling corporate consciousness, from smallness of resources, from incomplete and ineffective organization. It was an infantile rather than a matured denomination, and its title to a place among the various evangelical communions had hardly been recognized. But now the difficulties in the path of progress, both external and internal, though still in a measure present, had been largely overcome. The denominational instinct, desire, purpose, had grown steadily although slowly, and were now vigorous and absorbing. The unifying bond and solvent had been found in the movement for church extension, and the organizing of the four practical helps for the attaining of that cherished end. Though the body had become widely scattered in area and had suffered from the lack of practical contact, section with section, still its parts and members had become knit together with the passage of the years, and a measure of just denominational pride and ambition, hardly adequate indeed yet strengthening continually, now moved it on with vigor toward what it believed to be a grand continental mission.

One singular fact remains to be mentioned. During the three years just now considered, an aggregate of 25,391 persons had been added to the churches on profession of faith, and during the entire decade as

many as 65,820 — an annual average of more than six thousand five hundred new communicants. During the same period 47,728 had been received by letter, a considerable percentage of whom must have come from other denominations. Yet the astonishing fact is that the roll of membership at the end of the decade was somewhat smaller than at the beginning. Deducting the loss of the six southern synods with a membership of 16,137, how is the enormous shrinkage of the roll to be explained? On natural grounds such as death or migration it is inexplicable. No serious controversy as to doctrine or sacrament or order, no destructive heresy or violence of faction, can be found to explain it. Did the prolonged discussions respecting slavery lead to the secession or withdrawal of many in the northern sections of the Church? During the revival excitements were many enrolled who never were Christians, and who in more quiet seasons dropped off from the churches, as untimely blossoms are blown away in springtime? Were the attractions of the two strong communions, largely occupying the same territory and in some sense rivals, eager to increase their numbers and strengthen their footing in the country, powerful enough to draw away such multitudes from the fellowship of the Church? Were many hundreds of names dropped from the rolls year after year in ways not authorized by the church constitution? Can it be presumed that the annual reports of accessions coming from the churches and presbyteries were far above rather than below the actual aggregate? In whatever direction we turn, the startling problem seems insoluble.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

Maturity and Consummation.

1860-1869.

With the dawning of the third and final decade in its history, the Church passed beyond the stages of infancy and of youthful development, and entered on an interesting though brief period of maturity and of marked efficiency and influence. The four original synods located in two States had increased, prior to the withdrawal of the southern section, to twenty-six synods, with one hundred and fourteen presbyteries, distributed through fifteen States including distant California. Although in that secession it had lost five States, with six synods and about twenty presbyteries, it had not been seriously weakened in either members or resources: it had in fact been strengthened by some compensating advantages especially in the farther West. Though it had not increased appreciably in numbers, it had developed greatly in constitutional capabilities and in its machineries for practical work along all lines of religious effort. Those who had been leaders in its organization and earlier development, such men as Richards and Beman and Fisher, Sen., and Beecher and Dickinson, Cox and Hay and Mason and Gilbert and others of like ability — not to mention by name noble elders such as Judges Jessup and Haines and Hornblower, and others, men conspicuous in civil life as well as in church affairs — had either already passed or were now passing through the valley of age and infirmity into the rest and

felicities of heaven. But there remained a still larger group of men, both ministers and elders who, stimulated by such examples and trained under such guidance, were quite competent to lead the Church forward into another era of vigorous life and of fruitful service. Meanwhile many particular churches had grown from weakness into strength; pecuniary resources had been accumulating with the years; educational institutions and provisions had multiplied or matured; and notwithstanding much hindrance the denominational zeal and diligence had been healthfully intensified. And thus in various aspects the way was now opening attractively for a strong, worthy, fruitful career.

The new decade was to be marked by two especial and momentous events, the Civil War with all its serious bearings on the denominational life and work, and the Church Union with its various movements and stages ending in the consummation of November, 1869. The first of these events involved in several ways the intricate problem of the relations between the Church and the State and Nation. The second involved the equally intricate problem of the relations between the two Churches which, though holding the same system of doctrine and the same polity and name, and occupying in the main the same territory, had now for more than twenty years been living out, not without competition and conflict, an independent and in some degree an adverse life. These two events naturally divide the decade into two shorter periods, the first extending to the close of the War, and the second to the happy hour of organic Union.

The Assembly of 1860 was convened at Pittsburgh,

and having elected Thornton A. Mills, D. D.,* as its Moderator, entered with vigor on the discharge of its appointed duties as the supreme judicatory of the denomination. The representation of the Church was large and uniform, the southern section excepted, and the temper of the body was earnest and resolute, though the absence of delegates from the south cast its sad shadow over the convocation. The work of church extension in its four main branches was the chief matter of interest throughout the sessions. The most decisive measure was the determination to dissolve the partnership which had so long existed in the work of home missions and to take the necessary steps toward independent operations in that vast field. The reasons for this course in brief were the increasing complications and embarrassments of the partnership and the inability to effect any satisfactory adjustment of various differences on one side, and on the other the paramount right and duty of the whole Church to care immediately for its weaker portions and members, and also to extend its own area of influence without hindrance in all sections of the country. It was declared that this determination neither involved any break of faith with the Am. H. M. Society or reflection upon its good name, nor any inclination to interfere with the plans or movements of Congregational Associations eastern or western; and these

* THORNTON A. MILLS, D. D., born, Paris, Ky., 1810; grad. Miami Univ., 1830; labored in Ky., 1833-6; pastor Cincinnati, 1836-48; editor *Watchman of the Valley*, 1848–53; pastor, Indianapolis, 1853-6; Sec. Com. on Education for the Ministry, 1856, till his death, June 19, 1867.

parties were invited to such fraternal conference as would, it was hoped, secure wise and Christian adjustment of the whole matter in question. Meanwhile the committee on church extension was instructed to prosecute the work in this department as assigned to it with all energy. It is suggestive of the hope that this work might still be carried on in the southern States, that a resolution forbidding the granting of aid to any church which had slaveholding members, was not without protest voted down as not warranted under the Constitution and as at variance with Christian expediency.

Provision was made for the equitable distribution among the several synods of the income derived from the church erection fund, and gratifying testimony was given as to the practical benefits secured through this fund during the preceding year. While progress was reported in the matter of publication, a number of valuable tracts and books having been issued during the year, it was said that a painful lack of sympathy with this department existed in the churches: and the Assembly therefore authorized a special contribution, to be preceded by special discourses on the subject, and also an effort to raise an adequate working capital for future use. As to ministerial education, the Assembly expressed its regret that, notwithstanding some unusual efforts in this regard, there was no perceptible advance in the number of candidates for the sacred office, — a fact especially lamentable in view of the increasing demand in both the home and the foreign field, and strongly urged the churches to greater prayerfulness and greater generosity in behalf of this

vital interest. After hearing a report of conference with the representatives of the American Board of Foreign Missions, the Assembly declared its undiminished confidence in that agency, disclaimed all purpose to enter upon independent work in the foreign field, referred with interest to the approaching jubilee of the Board, and enjoined the churches to give it their confidence and their most liberal aid.

Several specific questions such as whether adult baptism should be administered outside of the visible church, whether a formula for admission to church membership should be framed, whether elders should take part officially in the ordination of ministers, whether the ministry can be demitted otherwise than by death or deposition, elicited somewhat prolonged discussion, but were all decided negatively. The Assembly evinced its catholic temper by uniting in a service of prayer and praise with the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, by its correspondence with the Free Synod, and by appointing a delegation to attend the Convention to be held in Edinburgh in commemoration of the establishing of Protestantism in Scotland three hundred years before. The Narrative of the State of Religion laments the fact that the spiritual awakening of the two preceding years was apparently abating, but speaks of some encouraging indications such as the organizing of new churches, the erection of houses of worship, the interest shown in the religious education of the young, and in pecuniary contributions to the various interests of the Church. The statistics show a small advance in membership over the preceding year.

When the Assembly of 1861, met at Syracuse, N. Y. and was organized by the election of Jonathan B. Condit, D. D.,* as moderator, the aspect of civil affairs had undergone a fearful change. The secession of the southern States had begun, Fort Sumter had fallen, armies were gathering on one side for the overthrow of the Union and on the other for the defense of the national Capitol, and the tempestuous shadows of civil war, destined to grow darker and more dreadful in the coming years, were already overspreading the land. The attendance in the Assembly was large, every synod and all but five of the remoter presbyteries being represented. It seemed to be realized by thoughtful minds throughout the Church that a dread crisis was approaching which was destined to involve not merely the integrity and perpetuity of the Nation but also the welfare, possibly the continued existence, not of Presbyterianism simply, but of the entire Church and Kingdom of Christ, and of a civilization based on evangelical Christianity. The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth, was the appropriate topic of the opening sermon.

As the captain of some stanch vessel would hasten to trim his craft at every point in prospect of some dangerous storm, so the Assembly gave itself with promptness and diligence to care for each and every denominational interest in view of the civil agitation

* JONATHAN BAILEY CONDIT, D. D., born, Hanover, N. J., Dec. 16, 1808; grad. Princeton Coll., 1827, and Sem., 1830; pastor Longmeadow, Mass., and Newark, N. J., 1830-51; Prof. Sac. Rhet. Lane Sem., 1851-5; same in Auburn Sem., 1855-1874. Died at Auburn, Jan. 1, 1876.

close at hand. Each of the four departments of church extension received the most careful consideration. The claims of particular churches and sections on the church erection fund were met proportionally, so far as the income of the fund could be made to reach. The importance of a denominational literature, authentic, homogeneous, reliable, — such as would command the interest of pastors and people, was declared to be a great desideratum, and the committee in charge was instructed to do all in its power to provide for so urgent a need. A more elaborate plan for the education of an adequate ministry was adopted: an act of incorporation was obtained and other adjustments made, in the hope of securing wider interest and greater efficiency in this department. Reports were heard from the theological seminaries and certain Presbyterian colleges, and these were commended to general confidence and support.

In respect to home missions the action of the Assembly was particularly significant. The committee on church extension was made in substance a permanent committee on home missions, with a definite constitution, to become the direct and sole agency of the Church in this field; and instructed as to its specific duties, empowered to secure legal incorporation, and enjoined to administer its trust with impartiality, economy, and the utmost measure of efficiency. The churches in turn were called upon to give the committee the amplest encouragement and support in the work thus defined. Respecting foreign missions the Assembly again recommended the American Board as a reliable and adequate agency, and in view of the

urgency of its work and of its financial needs, earnestly exhorted all ministers and congregations to give it liberal sustenance. Initial steps were taken toward inaugurating a plan, with suitable endowment, in aid of disabled ministers and their families. The subject of systematic beneficence was also urged upon the attention of the whole Church. No judicial business or other constitutional matter of much moment, with one exception, came before the body. In view of the new work and duty likely to arise out of the impending war, the Bible Society, the Tract Society, and also the organizations in the interest of the Sabbath and of Temperance, were endorsed with more than the usual earnestness.

But over and above almost everything else the state of the country seemed to demand supreme consideration, with a view to such action as it might be suitable to take by reason of the existing conditions and prospects. As a result of the deliberations a formal paper, containing an extensive preamble and resolutions, was adopted without audible dissent, affirming the just claims of the existing government and pledging the Church to positive and cordial loyalty to the Union in both principle and act. It was declared that the preservation of the national life was indispensable to the interests alike of civil liberty and of evangelical religion, and that those to whom this solemn task was specially committed, were entitled to the sympathy and support of all good citizens. It was therefore recommended to all pastors and congregations that continuous prayer be offered for the President of the United States, for Congress, for the

General commanding the army, and for the soldiers in the field. And inasmuch as slavery was regarded as the irritating cause of the war impending, the Assembly repeated its preceding testimonies against that evil, and counselled that prayers be offered more fervently than ever for its removal from the land.

This solemn deliverance was sent to President Lincoln, and the Assembly united in a season of special supplication for the country and its rulers. A day was also named, in view of the prospect of material and moral desolation in the country, to be set apart as a day of united fasting, prayer and humiliation before God, with confession of national and personal sins and earnest pleading that He would even now save the country from the calamities of civil war. The efforts of the Bible and the Tract Societies in supplying bibles and religious literature to the soldiers in camp and field were strongly approved. The Narrative for the year recounts but little of special moment in the spiritual history of the Church, but emphasizes the spirit of patriotism prevalent, urges watchful interest over those who have entered the army, and expresses satisfaction in the fact that the denomination was practically an unit on this whole subject while some other religious bodies were agitated and rent by discussions respecting it.

The desolations of civil war, apprehended by the Assembly of 1861, were only beginning to be realized at that date, and were to be experienced in broader and more dreadful forms by the Christian Church in all its branches as well as by the Nation in all its

sections during the years that were to follow. Nor were the Assemblies of 1862, 1863 or 1864* permitted to record the close of the intestine strife, but the rather found themselves almost unendurably burdened by its continuance and by the outward disabilities and the spiritual loss induced by it. It is surely an illustration of the vitality and strength of evangelical Christianity that none of its representative communions died out during the stress of the war, but the rather held on their way with so much of patience and courage, and came out from the struggle at last with all their banners unfurled, and with an unimpaired purpose to uphold the common Gospel as the divinely ordained savior of both nation and people.

The three Assemblies went on with their work as

These three Assemblies met respectively in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and Dayton, Ohio. Their Moderators were,

1862. GEORGE DUFFIELD, D. D., born Strasburg, Pa., July 4, 1794; grad. Univ. Penn., 1811; licensed 1814; pastor Carlisle, Pa., 1815-35; Detroit, 1838, till his death June 26, 1868. Author vol. on *Regeneration*. Left Mss. of vol. on *Atonement*.

1863. HENRY BOYNTON SMITH, D. D., LL. D., born Portland, Me., Nov. 21, 1815; grad. Bowdoin, 1834; studied Theology Andover, Bangor and Germany, 1835-40; licensed, 1840; pastor West Amesbury, Mass., 1842-7; Prof. Mental and Moral Phil., Amherst Coll., 1847-50; Prof. Church Hist. Union Sem., 1850-4, and of Syst. Theol., 1854-74; Prof. Emeritus and Lecturer till his death, Feb. 7, 1877. Editor of Amer. Theol. Review, Presbyt. and Theol. Review, and Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review. Author, *Chronological Tables of Church Hist.; Faith and Philosophy; Introduction to Christian Theol.. System of Christian Theology*, and a multitude of valuable articles, reviews and discourses.

1864. THOMAS BRAINERD, D. D., born, Leyden, N. Y., June 17, 1804; student at Andover; pastor Cincinnati, 1831-7; Phila., 1837, till his death at Scranton, Pa., Aug. 22, 1866. Author of *Life of John Brainerd*. Assoc. Editor Presbyterian Quarterly.

vigorously as possible, and with a fair degree of success. In 1862 it was declared that the salvation of the country was the first and highest duty of the Church, and in this conviction the body urged all its churches to contribute liberally to the cause of home missions, counseled both diligence and economy in the prosecution of the work, pressed the task of exploration especially along the frontiers with the purpose of planting churches wherever these were needed, and called loudly for ministers suited to such service. In 1863 the Assembly congratulated the Church on the measure of success attained in this department, declared its confidence in the plan of independent action and in the wisdom and efficiency shown by the committee, asked for the co-operation of every synod and every presbytery, and called again for both means and men to carry on the growing work. In 1864 it was said that the diversity of feeling and counsel respecting the policy of the Church in this great field of Christian activity had passed away,— that the receipts in the treasury and the number of laborers had increased in a gratifying ratio, — that new regions were opening in the distant west, far beyond the capacity of the Church to supply them, — that some sections of the south were already becoming promising fields, — and that the war instead of diminishing was vastly augmenting both opportunity and responsibility.

In 1863 and 1864, the subject of theological education as adjunctive to this missionary work was carefully considered; existing difficulties were discussed and objections answered; the rules were revised and new provisions and adjustments made; the necessity

for the plan in hand was strongly argued; and presbyteries were exhorted both to greater care in receiving candidates for the sacred office and to greater effort to secure the requisite funds. On the whole, the three years exhibit a gratifying advance in this department, though the cause had not yet gone far beyond the stage of infancy. The story of the other adjunctive agency, church erection, is somewhat similar, though with less of criticism and adjustment, and a fair degree of success. But the large number of exceptional cases presented, the inconsiderate demands of presbyteries and synods, and the palpable inadequacy of the permanent fund, rendered such success less extensive and thorough than it might have been. The fourth agency, publication, is represented as still struggling with special difficulties, yet more and more proving its right to exist and its value as an effective aid in the church life.

One new agency which was destined to grow into popularity and usefulness was established in 1864 under the title of Provision for Disabled Ministers, including also their families. The strong reasons for such an agency were recognized by the Assembly, a tentative plan was drafted, contributions were solicited from congregations and individuals, and the distribution of such funds was placed for the time in the hands of the trustees of the Presbyterian House. In 1862 an elaborate report on systematic benevolence, as a condition essential to the largest success of the various agencies of the Church, was adopted and commended to the churches. A proposition to establish new missions under denominational control in regions

not occupied by the American Board, though strongly advocated, was declined on the ground that such a step might imperil the cordial relations subsisting between the Board and the Church.

The matter of organic union with the Church O. S. was considered as early as 1862, but while regret at the separation and the existence of cordial feeling were affirmed, it was deemed desirable to take no action, — one reason given being the possibility of diverse sentiments and judgment respecting slavery and respecting the obligations of loyalty to the government. In 1863 an invitation to institute fraternal correspondence through delegates was accepted, and the hope was expressed that this step might lead to a better understanding of the relations proper to be maintained between the two Churches. In 1864, a more formal declaration was adopted by unanimous vote, welcoming all signs of returning love and unity, suggesting reasons why the Churches should come together, and expressing a readiness to enter into full and cordial union on terms that were just and equal. It may be said here that the withdrawal of the southern section from the Church O. S. and other incidents of the war probably explain these conciliatory actions on both sides.

It is hardly needful to advert to the various minor proceedings of the three Assemblies: their position on the issues involved in the civil war is in fact the most significant feature in their history. What had been said and done at the outset, in 1861, had determined substantially the attitude of the Church throughout, and prepared the way for all the succeeding action

which shines so brightly in the denominational records. In each of the three years the deliverance of 1861 was repeated in elaborate and emphatic terms. The rightfulness and value of the national Union and of the government established under it, the wrong and the crime of secession, the references to slavery as an institution which secession had been organized to subserve, the horror and sin of civil war in such a cause, were all set forth in the strongest language. Expressions of confidence in the principles and purposes of President Lincoln and those associated with him in authority were heartily adopted. An official letter manifesting the sentiment of the Church was addressed to the President in 1862, and another in 1863, and in 1864 a committee was sent to Washington to express that sentiment in person. All pastors were instructed to read these deliverances on the Sabbath to their respective congregations, and continual prayer for the country was enjoined upon all — the Assemblies setting the example by repeated seasons of united supplication and strong crying before God. Various practical measures were also urged, such as caring for the physical wants of the soldiers, supplying aid to the wounded in camps and hospitals, securing the services of chaplains and other religious helpers, providing religious literature for distribution, contributing generously in every way calculated to sustain the Union. The Christian Commission and the Sanitary Commission, and other similar agencies, were commended for their valuable services.

The Narratives of the State of Religion during these three years reveal the disastrous influence of a

condition of domestic war on all religious interests and movements — an influence illustrated most painfully in several particulars. But they also indicate that the deliverances of the Assemblies had had a marked effect in the development of patriotism in synods and presbyteries, and that the Church everywhere was standing manfully on the ground so defined. It is stated that large numbers of communicants had joined the armies, and that many of these were showing themselves true Christians and loyal men even in the shock of battle. It was also said that in view of the unexampled exigency, and of the evils specially induced by war, such as intemperance and the violation of the Sabbath, many churches and members were thinking and feeling and praying as never before. What is most remarkable is that many revivals of religion are reported as having been enjoyed in various presbyteries during these years, — 14,719 persons having been added to the churches on profession of faith. All in all, the position of the Church, as thus evidenced, was one of steadfast loyalty both to the country and to the cause of religion, and its course throughout, in both directions, was one of which American Presbyterianism may well be proud in the coming ages.

The Assembly of 1865, met in Brooklyn, and was organized by the choice of James B. Shaw, D. D., as Moderator. The civil war had just ended in a final vic-

* James Boylan Shaw, D. D., born in New York, 1808; ordained 1834; pastor Utica, 1834, and later, Rochester for forty years till his death, May 8, 1890. D. D., Univ. of Rochester.

tory for the government and nation, but the joy which such an issue had excited throughout the loyal States had been greatly lessened by the tragic death of the President whose wisdom, patience, courage and energy had made that issue possible. The attendance was large, with full delegations from almost every presbytery, and contained an unusual proportion of the leading minds in the Church. It may be imagined that the regular business of the Assembly was carried through with a vigor and a hopefulness such as the restoration of peace in the land would inspire.

The work of home missions naturally received the chief attention. While both laborers and contributions had increased during the year at an encouraging ratio, it was realized that the work to be done had grown much more rapidly. The western field seemed never so inviting or the call from the frontiers more urgent: a vast empire, it was said, was fast growing into greatness, and sanctuaries and the preaching of the Word and other evangelizing agencies were needed everywhere. Two presbyteries in Tennessee, withdrawing in 1857, now returned and were received, and a synod was at once erected in that State as a step toward the establishment of the Church in the southern sections of the Republic. It was justly felt that the fourteen seceding States, devastated and prostrated by the ravages of war, had still a strong claim on all denominations in the North, and on none more distinctly than upon the body from which the United Synod had withdrawn. The work among the freedmen also presented itself as one of vital moment and of great urgency. And in view of these wide and varied

opportunities the Assembly resolved itself to undertake, and also to summon all its churches and membership to help in carrying forward in all its branches, this supreme work of home evangelization.

But a task so complex and so great could not be prosecuted with efficiency without the aid of the other three administrative agencies of the Church. The Assembly therefore, while encouraged by the increase of candidates and contributions reported, and by the good condition of its theological seminaries, emphasized afresh the loud call of Providence for a larger number of trained and devoted ministers to meet the expanding need. As to church erection it was said that, the hindrances occasioned by the war being removed, there was now in both the west and the south an extraordinary summons for help in building houses of worship such as would cheer and strengthen the feebler churches everywhere. The peculiar exigencies of the hour, it was said, also called upon the Church to print and scatter abroad more freely its religious publications, and presbyteries were counseled to employ ministers or other colporteurs in this hopeful form of evangelistic service; and in this connection the religious papers affiliating with the Church and the Quarterly Review were strongly commended. The attention of churches and of individuals having means was directed to the straightened circumstances of many disabled ministers as calling loudly for sympathy and for timely aid. The claims of foreign missions were said not to be impaired by the recent events or the great need at home, but were declared to be as sacred and as urgent as ever. Reference to other important action

on kindred lines must be omitted. As to the matter of union with the Church O. S. the Assembly expressed its gratification with the kind spirit manifest and with the restoration of fraternal relations, and also its general desire for organic union, but queried whether the hour for consummating that union had really come.

The action of the Assembly respecting civil affairs was especially important. It affirmed anew the loyalty of the Church to the government and the Union, condemned the secession as treasonable and fraught with wrong, declared its belief that the hand of God had been manifest in the overthrow of slavery and of the confederacy, and expressed the conviction that in its issues the conflict which had cost so much would prove at last a blessing to the nation and to the Church of God in the land. It declared its profound sorrow over the death of President Lincoln whom it pronounced one of the noblest of men and whose services to the nation it held to be above all valuation, spoke of its tender and prayerful sympathy with his bereaved family, and pledged to his successor the loyalty and the support freely given to him during his illustrious administration. It also avowed its sympathetic interest in the loyal people of the south, and its desire to aid them in the trying task of reconstruction, while in terms now seen to be immoderate it declared the course of those ministers who had encouraged and justified the rebellion in the interest of slavery as one of the most astonishing moral perversions to be found in history. It emphasized the duty of all to care for the wounded and destitute soldiers, and for the widows and orphans whom the war had bereaved. As to the

freedmen it advocated the recognition of the rights of citizenship as inhering in every man of whatever class or complexion who had been true to the country and the flag, yet admitting that there might be honest difference of judgment among good and loyal men as to the immediate conferring of such rights. The Narrative for the year reports similar sentiments as prevalent everywhere among the churches, speaks hopefully of the future notwithstanding much current demoralization, and recounts many revivals as enjoyed, — the statistics showing an addition of nearly seven thousand to the church membership on profession of their faith.

As the earlier years of the decade were largely engrossed with the problems precipitated upon the Church by the Civil War, so the remaining four years in its history were to be chiefly concerned with the absorbing problem of ecclesiastical Union. In the Narrative of Religion for 1862, the general position and condition of the Church, at the end of the quarter of a century from the Disruption, were concisely described, and its adequate equipment for service as an independent denomination was strongly stated. The three subsequent years had furnished practical evidence on these points, and when the war closed and the way for a broader development was providentially opened, the capability of the Church to take and hold such a place had become still more manifest. Its progressive zeal had been somewhat attempered by a healthful conservatism such as is generally evolved in the process of practical activity, yet without any impairment of its

actual efficiency. It had become more homogeneous, more compact, more consciously and heartily one, without being stiffened or solidified through such unification. It had fully justified its claim to be in a worthy sense Calvinistic in doctrine and Presbyterian in polity, but had suffused both its polity and its doctrine with the American spirit and purpose, and had come into a throbbing consciousness of its mission as a representative of these high qualities before the American people. As its statistics showed, it was entering upon a period of growth more marked than any in its earlier history. And there is no just reason to doubt that, if it had chosen to continue an independent life, it would have held indefinitely an honorable place among the evangelical communions of the land.

The records of 1866, 1867 and 1868* which may here be grouped into one statement, furnish a good

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* The Assemblies for these years met respectively in St. Louis, Rochester, and Harrisburgh, and their presiding officers were,

1866. SAMUEL MILES HOPKINS, D. D., born Geneseo, N. Y., Aug. 3, 1813; grad. Amherst Coll., 1832; Auburn and Princeton Sems., 1834-7; pastor Corning, N. Y., 1839-43; Fredonia, 1843-6; Prof. of Church Hist. Auburn Sem., 1847, and emeritus Prof. till his death, Oct. 29, 1901. D. D., Amherst, 1854. Author, *Manual of Church Polity*.

1867. HENRY ADDISON NELSON, D. D., born Amherst, Mass., Oct 31, 1820; grad. Hamilton Coll., 1840; Auburn Sem., 1843-6; pastor Auburn, 1846-56; St. Louis, 1856-68; Prof. of Theology in Lane Sem., 1868-74; pastor, Geneva, N. Y., 1874-8; editor of Church at Home and Abroad, 1887-98; D. D. Hamilton Coll., 1857. Author, *Seeing Jesus; Sin and Salvation*.

1868. JONATHAN F. STEARNS, D. D., born in Bedford, Mass., grad. Harvard, 1830; student in Andover Sem.; pastor, Newburyport, 1835-49; Newark, N. J., 1849 till his death, Nov. 11, 1889. D. D., Coll. New Jersey, 1850.

test of the working value of the several instrumentalities or agencies already described through which the Church with the return of public peace and prosperity was carrying on its denominational mission. However absorbing the movement toward Union became during these three years, there is no evidence that it led to any cessation in church activity along these chosen lines. The work of home missions, always central, went on with undiminished efficiency. The Assembly of 1866 strongly declared that the work was great beyond conception and beyond all competition, that the Church was thoroughly qualified to undertake it, and that the propitious time had come. Its description of the field embraced not only the sustenance of the feebler churches and the exploration and occupying of the wide western frontiers, but also fraternal care for the south, the freedmen included, and evangelistic effort among the numerous immigrant populations. The task of evangelizing the whole country, laid upon the Church, was said to call for a large increase of faith, labor and prayer; and the manifestation of the gracious influences of the Spirit in many quarters was said to be proof that the endeavors of the Church in these directions were accepted and blessed of God.

In the following year similar reasons for encouragement were named, full confidence was expressed in both the machineries and the spirit of the Church, and two new fields were specially commended — work among the German people and among certain Indian tribes. In 1868 the Church was again called to express its thanksgiving to God for His favoring help

throughout this broadening field in both its older and its newer sections, though it was meanwhile confessed that neither means nor men sufficient to prosecute successfully this complex task had been obtained. The duty of caring for the higher interests of the freedmen as to both religion and education was especially urged as one which no denomination was better qualified to discharge with advantage. The detailed reports of the home mission work in all its branches during these three eventful years are almost thrilling in the multiplied evidences they give of the gracious favor of God granted with divine freeness to the industrious Church.

While the records of the other church agencies are hardly less stirring, only the briefest reference to them can be introduced here. The duty of providing an educated ministry was urged from year to year, and with a good degree of success; practical measures to cultivate interest in the cause were proposed; and in 1868 encouragement and admonition were blended in an earnest appeal for liberality and prayerfulness — the statistics showing a steady though not large increase in the roll of ministers in actual service. Some beneficial changes were made in the administration of the fund for church erection, but the fund was found to be quite inadequate to meet the widening need, and further contributions were called for, in order that, as was said, a suitable house of worship might be provided as a Christian home wherever a church was duly organized. The value of the agency for the publication of denominational literature was emphasized in view of the broadening demand; the Church Psalmist

and Presbyterian Monthly and other issues were commended; the need of suitable literature for the Sabbath school was more than once urged; donations of books to home missionaries for use in their work were authorized; and in 1868 this agency was particularly named as an indispensable help in church development. Foreign missions, ministerial relief and other important interests were in like manner approved and commended.

Though engaged thus earnestly in the prosecution of the denominational work, the state of the country just emerging from the War and the duty of the Church toward the Nation in such trying circumstances, were not overlooked. The Assembly of 1866 adopted unanimously an elaborate paper on this subject, which was presented to the President and to the presiding officers in Congress. This deliverance expressed great satisfaction with the ending and the results of the War, recognized the guiding hand of Providence throughout the fearful conflict, rejoiced in the temper of loyalty developed among all classes and especially in the grace bestowed on the churches and ministry, confessed the sinfulness of the nation and particularly the sin of slavery whose abolition forever was regarded as calling for devout thanksgiving, petitioned for the recognition by the government of every right of citizenship which might properly be granted to the freedmen, and finally extolled the Christian religion as the only safeguard and chief glory of the Republic. No nobler document than this was issued at this juncture by any branch or section of the Christian Church.

The three Narratives of Religion for the years here reviewed are interesting and important as being in the main authentic accounts of the condition of the Church, both outward and internal. The first relates the external prosperity enjoyed by the churches generally, the interest shown in moral reforms, in benevolence, in the religious instruction of youth, and specially the revivals enjoyed in more than two hundred congregations,— describing in general the prosperity of the Church as greater than in any previous period, its helpful agencies as in effective operation, its standing and influence in the country increasing steadily, and the smiles of Providence as resting upon it. Similar statements were made in 1867 and again in 1868: the latter testifying especially to the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit as certified by marked revivals, by advance in personal piety and in Christian activity, by a developed church life and better ministerial support, and by practical interest in all church enterprises, particularly home missions and missions to the freedmen. The significance of these testimonials becomes apparent in the remarkable fact, shown in the statistics, that during the three years 34,433 persons had been received into the churches on profession of faith. Such an accession had never been known in the previous history of the Church. Well did one of these Narratives say: Looking back over a few years it is easy to see that very remarkable improvement has taken place. A new order of things has commenced. The Church has received a new baptism from on high and has been invigorated with new strength and life. We have gotten into complete working order. Having

given us a great work to do, God smiles upon us in doing it.

Deferring for the moment reference to the action of these three Assemblies respecting Union, we may turn to note the events of 1869, the last year in the independent life and history of the Church. The Assembly was convened in New York, every synod and every presbytery but that of San Francisco being represented. The Moderator chosen was Philemon H. Fowler, D. D.* Though all minds were fixed chiefly on the supreme matter of organic union, the usual business was vigorously and harmoniously transacted, every department of the church work receiving its proper share of attention, just as if the denomination were to continue its independent life. A glance or two at these proceedings must suffice:

The cause of home missions was carefully considered in all its varieties, — the rapidly growing west, the feebler churches in the east, city evangelization, care for the inflowing tides of immigration from Europe, provision for the Chinese on the Pacific coast. The general call was declared to be bewildering in its magnitude and importance, and the force of nearly five hundred missionaries in the great field was said to be wholly inadequate. The kindred work among the

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*Philemon Halsted Fowler, D. D., born Albany, N. Y., Feb. 9, 1814; grad. Hobart Coll., 1832 and Princeton Sem., 1836; pastor Washington, D. C., 1836-9; Elmira, 1839-50; Utica, 1850-74. Died Dec. 19, 1879. D. D., Williams Coll. Author, *History of Presbyterianism in Central New York.*

freedmen was the subject of a special report in which the claims of these needy millions were earnestly set forth, and a general plan for their spiritual supply was considered. Church erection was also earnestly commended; the new regulations were said to work well in actual experiment; larger contributions were called for, and the presbyteries were counselled to exercise careful oversight and economy; and it was said that every dollar given to church erection was ten times that sum saved to home missions. In this connection the anticipated Union was strongly commended as an assured source of new life and usefulness in the broad task of continental evangelization.

Substantial advance was reported in the matter of publication, especially in the line of Sabbath School literature and in the planting of Sabbath Schools in destitute regions. Encouraging reports were presented in respect to education, to ministerial relief, to systematic beneficence, and these interests were urgently commended to the care of ministers and churches. Other matters, such as stability in the pastoral office, the problem of unemployed ministers and vacant churches, questions in church polity, fraternal correspondence with Canadian Presbyterians and other communions, the Evangelical Alliance and Protestantism, the Encyclical Letter of the Papacy, were all duly considered. The Narrative of Religion contains various illustrations of the prosperous condition of the Church at this juncture, but its chief significance lies in its account of numerous revivals enjoyed and of large accessions to the churches, — no less than 9,707 additions on profession being reported in the statistical records. The

accessions for the five years were 50,745, and the net increase for the period was 34,486 — a gain almost equal to that of all the five and twenty years preceding.

But the interest of the Assembly was centered in the matter of Union; everything else was considered in its relations to this supreme concern. Prior to 1866, the action on this subject had been limited to a friendly interchange of delegates, to the expression of desire for a better understanding and some declarations of cordial regard, and to an assurance of readiness to consider organic union on the historic basis of earlier Presbyterianism as soon as Providence should seem to open the way. In that year, both Assemblies being convened in the same city, more decisive steps were taken. In the Assembly O. S. a series of resolutions was adopted, containing strong assurances of regard, and expressing an earnest desire for organic union at the earliest moment consistent with recognized agreement in doctrine and polity; and also proposing the appointment of a joint committee to confer respecting the desirableness and the practicability of such union. The assurances of regard and the desire for union were cordially reciprocated, and the proposition was accepted by the appointing of such a committee of conference, under instructions to report to the next Assembly. A joint religious service for fellowship and prayer, and also a joint sacramental service were agreed upon and cordially observed. It was further enjoined upon all ministers and churches to abstain from all that might hinder true Christian fellowship, and to seek the union of all believers, and especially those of like history, faith and order.

In 1867, a basis of union, containing certain specific terms which had been agreed upon by the joint committee, was laid before the Assembly, — the proposal being accompanied by an elaborate paper in favor of union as soon as satisfactory terms and conditions could be reached. The course of the committee was thus far approved, and its continuance for another year was agreed upon. It was also deemed wise to submit the proposed basis tentatively to the consideration of both Churches in order to ascertain what modifications might be found necessary or desirable, — leaving to future Assemblies the task of revising the basis, so far as needful, and of submitting the whole matter, if this were deemed advisable, to the presbyteries as required by the Constitution.

In 1868, the joint committee presented terms of union in a form somewhat modified in order to meet queries and objections which had arisen, and strenuously urged the desirableness of union in view of the rapid expansion of the country and the wide opportunity consequent, of the baleful growth of various forms of unbelief and of corrupt religion, and also of the salutary influence that would flow forth from such union upon other evangelical communions. Two of the terms submitted excited earnest dissent in the Assembly, but in view of the importance of an early settlement of the whole matter, it was agreed to submit the basis as modified to the presbyteries in the form of Overture, — together with the report of the committee by way of explanation. The Assembly also accepted the report of a committee which had been appointed by the two Assemblies to investigate all

questions of property or of vested rights which might stand in any way related to the question of union. Both Assemblies also agreed to spend a certain hour during their respective sessions in special prayer for divine guidance in a movement so momentous.

When the Assembly met in 1869, it was found that the Overture had been, not indeed without questionings here and there, almost unanimously approved by the presbyteries, — but four voting directly against it, chiefly to express objection to one or more of the particular terms contained in the basis as proposed. But it was also found that although a large majority of the presbyteries in the Church, O. S. had accepted the basis, with several modifications, a considerable minority was adverse. It became needful therefore either to abandon the scheme of union for the present, or to endeavor by further conference to frame a basis for which broader unanimity might be secured. A joint committee was appointed for this purpose, and while this committee was for some days in session, friendly delegations were sent from each Assembly to the other bearing assurances of mutual regard and confidence, joint services for prayer were held, and social gatherings in the interest of closer fellowship were enjoyed. This committee finally presented a Plan of Reunion in which the doctrinal basis was stated in terms more simple, and a preferable mode of procedure was proposed; and with this Plan a series of what were termed Concurrent Declarations was also presented as a practical method of adjusting various details involved in the general Plan. This report was unanimously adopted by the Assembly, and with but small dissent

by the other Assembly also, and by joint agreement this new basis was overtured to the presbyteries in each of the two Churches for examination and for formal acceptance if they should deem this advisable, — the vote on the whole subject to be taken at an early day. In the expectation that their decision would be favorable, and desiring that the union might be speedily consummated, the two Assemblies met together in an impressive communion service, and each agreed in recommending to the churches under its care that the second Sabbath in September be observed as a day of united prayer in view of the new relations contemplated. Anticipating a favorable result in both Churches, each Assembly adjourned to meet in the city of Pittsburg on the second Wednesday in the ensuing November.

When the Assembly met in adjourned session at the time and place designated, various matters besides the central subject of union claimed attention. Among these were an important deliverance on amusements, a protest against the exclusion of the Bible from the public schools and another against the support of denominational schools by the State, a suggestive report respecting certain methods of Presbyterian Churches in Great Britain, a declaration in favor of the union or confederation of all branches of the Presbyterian family in this country, and resolutions favoring the erection of manses wherever practicable, and endorsing the Presbyterian Historical Society. Special action was taken in respect to the future relations of the churches to the American Board of Foreign Missions:

certain other adjustments were made in contemplation of the immediate union.

As to the union itself it was ascertained that each and all of the one hundred and thirteen presbyteries had approved the basis submitted in May, and that in all but three where a slight negative vote had been cast, the approval had been unanimous. The Assembly was also informed officially that one hundred and twenty-eight presbyteries in the Church, O. S. had approved the basis, that only three had declared against it, and that thirteen, chiefly in missionary fields, had taken no action. It being thus apparent that the judicatories of both Churches had in due constitutional form approved the measure, the Assembly resolved unanimously and by a rising vote that the Basis of Reunion was henceforth in full and binding force, and that on that Basis the two Churches were hereafter to be one. The Assembly was then formally dissolved with prayer and thanksgiving and the apostolic benediction, and with this solemn act the New School Presbyterian Church, after a generation of conflict and trial, of planning and labor and sacrifice abundant, of growth and maturing and success divinely bestowed, ceased to be.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

The Union of 1869.

The General Assembly, representing the two denominations now united in one Church, was convened in 1870, in Philadelphia, the ancestral home of American Presbyterianism. It was by far the most important convocation in the history of that type of Protestantism on this continent. The numerical contrast with the first General Assembly which also met in that city, and which was composed of only twenty-two ministers and ten elders, representing twelve presbyteries, was marked indeed. But the contrast in equipment and resources and institutions, in knowledge and experience and capacity for effective service in the spiritual field which during the intervening period had spread out in such various forms and such continental magnitude, was much more marked. Compared with the Assembly of 1837, it represented twice as many ministers and members, and nearly twice as many churches and presbyteries as that body contained prior to the act of excision. It had fifty-one synods, located in as many as eighteen or twenty States and in China and India, and embracing nearly half a million of communicants. And well might those who shared in this memorable convocation, as they called the past to mind and measured the promise of the future, rejoice together in the task of organizing what was in essence another, a new and grander Presbyterian Church.

For such in fact it was. Neither of the two denominations joined the other: neither received the

other into its communion. One did not return to the other as an ancestral home, nor did one admit the other as a sharer in an inheritance which it had hitherto held exclusively. The fact that one had retained during the disruption the archives, properties, heritages once held in common, gave it neither priority in position nor a special right to continued life. In fact both organizations alike ceased to be, and in dying both alike gave their possessions, their endowments, their all, to the Church that came into being in and through their dissolution. The new organization was no more either of them than an infant is one of the parents that united in giving it birth. Nor can it properly be said that that organization was the same with the Church that existed before the separation, ever since the convening of the first Assembly in 1789: for that body had also ceased to be in the dark catastrophe of excision. The name, the polity, the standards and doctrine survived, but the organism that maintained and represented them became extinct in that unhappy process. Its traditions, usages, precedents, history were well preserved as precious heirlooms by both of the Churches that succeeded it in time, but neither was or could properly claim to be that historic and venerated communion. What came into existence in 1870 was therefore neither an absorption nor a resurrection but rather a new and grander Church, through whose veins the warm ancestral blood was flowing, on whose countenance the strong ancestral lineaments were traceable, but which had come into being through a fresh generative process, was endowed with a life largely

independent, and was divinely ordained for a broader and nobler work.

Yet this new Presbyterian Church was not only to be composed of materials supplied by the denominations preceding it in time and becoming merged in it: it was also solemnly bound in the entire process of organization to hold sacred the terms and conditions, all and singular, which had been agreed upon by the two dissolving Churches prior to the act of union. The last will and testament of each of these Churches was in its hands, and this was to be executed throughout with the same fidelity with which a faithful son would carry out the wishes of his deceased parents. It had no right at first, neither at any stage in its history can it ever acquire the right, to ignore or violate any of these sacred provisions. No new discovery made in the practical task of organization or adjustment could have justified it, neither can any discovery developing itself anywhere in the future justify it, in setting aside any of those terms, conditions, covenants, on which either of the denominations relied when entering into the compact on which as a basis the union was formed. A disposition to do this would be equivolent to treachery to that union: to attempt it could result only in an explosive disintegration.

The particular and somewhat elaborate process of organization through which the new Church became a living, compact, efficient structure deserves careful examination. The Assembly was a body remarkably well adapted to attempt and carry through such a complex process. A glance at its roll shows that not only

a large proportion of those who had been actors in the antecedent negotiations, but also a great number of men who in one sphere and another had been leading minds in both communions — including seven or eight Moderators of preceding Assemblies — and also an unusual proportion of elders conspicuous in commercial and public affairs, were present. The body was constituted by the unanimous choice as Moderator of Rev. J. Trumbull Backus, D. D.,* who had been a member of the original committee on the Union, and for nearly forty years one of the honored pastors of the Church. The Minutes show how large an amount of business was transacted during the fortnight of earnest and diligent deliberations that followed, and with how much of harmony the results were secured, as if in response to the opening discourse: There is One Body and One Spirit, even as ye are called in One Hope of your Calling.

The first step toward completeness of organization was the adjusting of the boundaries of the several synods and presbyteries, together with the question of representation in the Assembly. An Enabling Act was therefore passed, reducing the number of synods from fifty-one to thirty-four, defining the territory of each, determining the possession of all rights and franchises, prescribing the manner of the organization of each, and assigning to each the jurisdiction of the several presbyteries or parts of presbyteries lying within its speci-

* Rev. J. Trumbull Backus, D. D., LL. D., born Albany, N. Y., Jan. 27, 1809; grad. Columbia Coll., 1827; student in Princeton, Andover, Yale, 1832; pastor Schenectady, 1832-73. Died Schenectady, Jan. 21, 1892. D. D., Union Coll. 1847.

fied bounds. Under this enabling act the number of the presbyteries was reduced during the year from two hundred and fifty-nine to one hundred and sixty-five. Recommendations in respect to the number of ministers in each presbytery, comprising those without charge resident within the prescribed limits, were adopted, but no change in the ratio of representation was proposed. To discourage pertinacious litigation in future Assemblies, and assist in the dispatch of business there, overtures were sent to the presbyteries, proposing that all cases of appeal or complaint be limited to the synod, except on questions of constitutional law or the trial of a minister for heresy in doctrine. By adopting these measures the Assembly completed the ecclesiastical organization of the Church so far as this was needful at the outset of the denominational life.

The second step in the process was the adjustment of the several agencies engaged in carrying on the church work, — permanent committees on one side and permanent boards on the other, with their respective secretaries and other officials — the general object being to secure practical unity and the highest degree of efficiency in and through these instrumentalities. In respect to the four main departments already effectively at work in each of the two Churches, comprehensive statements of sphere and method were submitted, and little more was needful than consolidation, location, general rules for administration, and the choice of supervisory and executive officers. A glance

of each of these departments as thus adjusted, must suffice:

The Assembly was fully alive to the claim of home missions as primal and central. American society in its present formative state was waiting — it declared — for the institution of pure, simple Protestant Christianity. Never were such imperial opportunities presented for rapid and successful evangelization. This work — it was added — was now assuming before the united Church new proportions and vastly greater importance. A Board of Home Missions was accordingly planned, two secretaries and a treasurer were elected, the location was defined, some needful provisions were made for administration, the necessary legislation was provided for, the appointment of district missionaries was approved under prescribed conditions, competent support for missionaries was urged, and the whole Church was encouraged to prosecute this work with a hope of being able to occupy every point of influence in this vast country in the name of the Master.

Similar provisions were made for the constituting of three other Boards, to have charge of the departments of education, of church erection, and of publication respectively, with all needful arrangements as to place, office, treasury and sphere. The claim of the Board of Education, with its six hundred candidates for the ministry, was earnestly commended to the sympathy and support of all the churches, — especially in view of the widened opportunity and the enlarged demand for efficient ministerial service. Some needful adjustments were made in organizing the Board of

Church Erection, and this agency was also recognized with emphasis as a most valuable help in establishing the Church everywhere, — in the cities, on the prairies, along the railways, and on the shores of the Pacific. The Board of Publication as thus organized was commended in terms equally strong; instructions were given to it respecting Sabbath School literature, psalmody and other publications; the appointment of colporteurs was advised, and a central house of publication was judged to be an essential adjunct in the prosecution of the work in this department, — a work earnestly declared to be one of vital moment to the whole Church.

A fifth agency, a Board of Foreign Missions, was also established by the Assembly, with provisions and adjustments similar to those just mentioned. The way to such a step had been made clear by a conference with the official representatives of the American Board of Foreign Missions — a conference eminently friendly and satisfactory, in which proposals for the transfer of certain missions with their property, and for the adjustment of the ecclesiastical relation of the missionaries concerned, were amicably made and cordially accepted. That venerable institution — as it was described — was assured of the continued sympathy and good will of the Church, although the Church felt itself constrained in the interest of the general cause to assume the entire charge of the missionary work within its own jurisdiction. While individual donors were regarded as still at liberty, if such was their preference, to contribute to the treasury of the American Board, the churches were counseled to sustain the de-

nominational agency, now appointed, with their means and with their prayers.

The work among the freedmen and the provision for the relief of disabled ministers were carefully considered by the Assembly, and permanent committees — which afterward became Boards — were appointed under suitable regulations to care for these two important interests. The vast significance of the former work was strongly emphasized in its bearings both upon the religious culture of the colored race and upon the moral welfare of the south and of the whole country. The committee was empowered, acting in conjunction with the Boards already constituted, to receive and disburse funds, to sustain existing institutions and organize others for the education of the negro population. The committee on ministerial relief received special instructions in regard to the collection and disbursement of funds, and the cause itself was warmly commended to the churches as one deserving their cordial sympathy and aid. And with all these various agencies thus established, the Church was fully equipped at the outset of its organized life, for practical endeavor in every department of evangelical and beneficent service. All that the experience of half a century had suggested as desirable was now in order and fully empowered, and nothing more was needful except a correspondent temper of work and sacrifice, to carry on a truly benevolent, a truly apostolic mission for the Church and for mankind.

The third step in the process of organization here considered was the adjustment of the relations between

the Church and the theological seminaries already existing within its ecclesiastical domain. These institutions, founded chiefly before the separation of 1837, and acting under the auspices of the one or the other of the two uniting Churches during that separation, had been established and conducted on principles in some respects quite diverse. Those affiliating with the Church, O. S. had been constituted by the Assembly directly, their teachers and managers elected by it, their funds chiefly under its control, and their courses of instruction and their theological teachings subject to its supervision. Those affiliating with the Church N. S. though they had always been cherished as its special wards and representatives, had made annual reports to its Assemblies, and were often formally endorsed by it, were originally founded, as they were afterwards supported, entirely through the generous zeal and sacrifice of Presbyterians acting independently in their several localities. Their charters were conferred not by ecclesiastical but by the civil authorities, and their funds and interests were in the hands of boards of trustees or directors who were not responsible to the Assembly for their administration, and who provided perpetually for their own succession, outside of any direct ecclesiastical oversight.

To bring two classes of institutions so unlike in their origin and constitution and their antecedent relations to the Churches for whose benefit they were severally maintained, under one uniform plan, in one and the same sort of relationship to the Church of the Union, was early seen to be unattainable; and the Assembly of 1869 wisely declared that complete uniform-

ity was impracticable, and the attempt to secure it altogether undesirable. It was well known that to require the seminaries of the second class to surrender their autonomy, put aside their civil charters, place their funds under the control of the Assembly, and confer on that body a supreme right to elect their teachers and direct their internal administration, or in case of refusal to relegate such seminaries to an inferior position within the Church, or regard as less worthy their claim upon the sympathy and support of the entire body, would have rendered the Union impossible. A more feasible and equitable scheme was therefore devised. It was agreed that in seminaries of the first class the several boards of directors should have power to fill vacancies in their own number, to elect or remove teachers, to conduct the internal affairs of such institutions at their own discretion, — the Assembly retaining the right to veto any election of directors or instructors, to inquire into the proceedings of the several boards, and to require full account of all funds and transactions whenever demanded. As to the institutions of the second class it was agreed that, while their civil charters could not be altered, or the obligations resting on their boards of trust under such charters be ignored, or their true autonomy in any way disturbed, the Assembly should have the right to express by formal veto its disapproval of the election of any instructor, and so far forth to bring the instruction given in these institutions under direct ecclesiastical control. In the explicit language of one of these boards subsequently adopted, it was agreed that in case any Assembly should by vote express its disap-

proval of any election, such professorship should from and after such vote of the Assembly be ipso facto vacant, — it not being the pleasure of this board that in such case any such professor should continue in office.

The scheme thus outlined met on both sides of it the cordial approval of the Assembly. It was explicitly declared that this scheme would secure all the uniformity necessary to ensure general confidence and satisfaction. Less than this, it was said, might excite jealousy; more than this, it was added, would be cumbersome and undesirable. And when this result was reached with entire unanimity, an eminent leader in the Assembly pronounced such agreement a conspicuous evidence that the whole movement for union was from God. And it was added that an agreement so cordial at a point where special difficulty had been apprehended, was an earnest not only of perpetual unity and harmony within the Church, but also of increased efficiency in every department of church work. Such was the sober judgment of the hour; and so far as strict fidelity to this historic covenant has been maintained, the seminaries of both classes have for a generation justified the conspicuous place then granted them among the beneficent and fruitful agencies of the Church.

But while the Assembly was thus earnestly and wisely occupied with the process of organization and structure in the three directions now described — giving form, coherency, effectiveness to the Church externally in and through these administrative agencies,

it was not unmindful of certain interior, more generic conditions on which the future existence and prosperity of the Church were seen to be no less vitally dependent. Of these conditions the most fundamental was the development of a positive and cordial regard for each other as Christian men and brethren, on the part of all who were henceforth to become members together in the one household of faith. Compliance with this primal condition was as difficult as it was indispensable. There was much to be forgiven and forgotten — much to be changed or greatly modified. The prejudices, the jealousies, the animosities of a generation were to be done away. Estrangement was to give place to unity and rivalry to love. Suspicions as to belief and teaching, diversities of usage or interest, the many barriers to personal fellowship which had been set up or had grown up with the years, were all to be laid aside, and a new Caritas like that which Paul commended to the believers of Corinth was to take their place. How difficult this personal task of reconciliation and cordial fellowship was, only those who lived through that eventful period and shared in its experiences can truly apprehend.

But this indispensable culture was not personal and individual only. Churches long more or less hostile or rival in their separation were now to be united in common activities, and in many instances to become organically one. Presbyteries were to be composed of men who had lived apart, and possibly lived in antagonism for half a lifetime. New associations as well as new boundaries were to be instituted everywhere as signs and products of the union now defined

and established. The apostolic injunction to love the brotherhood was not only to be accepted as a supreme law by each disciple in every congregation, but written also as a golden rule of wide and tender import in the records of every judicatory from session to synod. This was indeed a difficult task — an elevation of disposition, temper, activity in some directions almost unattainable, but none the less indispensable to the healthful life and growth of the new organism. For it was fully realized that, apart from this interior experience, this spiritual reconstruction, this indwelling and triumphing sense of brotherhood pulsating through its veins, all outward adjustments and provisions however skillfully devised would be but worthless, the union would become a fretting bondage as well as a mere outward form, and the Church would inevitably sooner or later fall off into incohering fragments, and ultimately cease to be. How fully the Assembly realized all this — how carefully it carried forward the process of formal organization under the influence of this fundamental conviction, is apparent to every considerate reader of its records.

A second condition of like nature in the judgment of the Assembly, was the cordial agreement by all parties that the accepted polity of the Church should not only command universal fealty, but should be administered throughout in a free, broad, fraternal spirit and method, — in harmony with the Union itself. It is a fact of history that Christendom thus far has evolved no more effective or beneficent type of church polity, if rightly administered: but it is also a fact of history that no Protestant polity works more in-

juriously if administered in the temper of tyrannizing power. It was seen to be indispensable to the success of the Union that the extremes of intense ecclesiasticism on one hand and mischievous laxity on the other should be alike avoided. All tenacious stickling for forms or usages, all dogmatic narrowness or persistency, all illicit license or lawlessness, were by the nature of the compact to be excluded. Faithful regard for the rights of the individual, cordial recognition of all just prerogative, an administration of law as gentle and brotherly as it is just, were to be required of all — acknowledged by all.

Both the prescribed prerogatives of the several judicatories and the constitutional limitations of their jurisdiction were to be faithfully regarded. Centralization of power in the Assembly was to be resisted as a departure from the spirit of the Constitution: indifference to superior jurisdiction or authority in the presbytery was no less a departure. Above all, a broad generosity which could appreciate the fact that in the kingdom of God there are many ways of administration, and could rejoice in practical ends gained by whatever process admissible under the common law of the Church, was to be the pervading, controlling spirit in the ecclesiastical sphere. That this was the temper of the Assembly itself is very apparent: that it also sought to enthrone this spirit as a supreme element in the life of the Church for all the future, is no less apparent to the thoughtful student of its records. And so far as the succeeding generation of church judicatories has recognized and regarded this fundamental condition, the accepted and enthroned polity has been,

never an injury, always a helpful and gracious element in the denominational life and history.

The cordial recognition by all alike of substantial uniformity in belief and doctrine was the third, and probably the most important among the interior conditions on which the Assembly regarded the life of the Church as dependent. This uniformity had been affirmed in the Plan of Union itself, though the explicit statement of it had been omitted from the final draft of that document. All were agreed that the Symbols were to be interpreted as standards in the Calvinistic or Reformed sense, and in that sense only. It was understood that various methods of viewing, stating, explaining and illustrating the teaching of the Symbols, in accord with that general test, were to be freely allowed in the united Church as they had been in the two separate communions. But the two extremes of Antinomianism and Fatalism on one hand, and Arminianism and Pelagianism on the other, were — as the first draft said — to be faithfully shunned by all schools and parties alike. In a word, the uniformity affirmed was to rest on a distinctively Calvinistic basis in harmony, not indeed with every letter nor with the interpretation of any special school, but with the substance and heart of that Confession of Faith to which all alike avowed their allegiance as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.

This type or measure of uniformity was in fact that on which the Westminster Assembly itself rested while engaged in setting forth before the world its strong, compact, systematical scheme of faith. It was the type of uniformity in which the American Presby-

terianism had found rest in 1758, after eighteen years of contention over the proper rule of subscription. It was the uniformity which the two separated Churches, after thirty years of disputation and conflict, gradually came to see and appreciate as the only foundation on which organic union was possible — on which a really broad, comprehensive Presbyterianism could build with vigor and with hope. And there is abundant evidence in the records of the preliminary negotiations, and in those of the Assembly as well, that the Church being organized under its skillful hands was planted doctrinally on this broad, yet firm and distinct and sufficient basis — becoming in the full sense, a Calvinistic Church. But it should be added here that the Assembly in its affirmations and its acts held also that while the Church was to be stanch and positive in opposition to error in whatever form, it was to be in the largest sense free, cordial, catholic, in including within its sacred circle all of whatever type or school who worthily wore the Calvinistic name.

The remarkable catholicity which the Assembly manifested in its own acts, and by its example taught the Church, deserves to be emphasized as still another of the interior, spiritual conditions on whose maintenance the future growth and power of the denomination were to rest. The Assembly showed in various ways its own broad, cordial, loving disposition toward all men and all communions that had a just place in the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ among men. It welcomed to its convocation representatives of the Lutheran, the Reformed, the Congregational and other evangelical denominations in

America, and also delegates from Presbyterian bodies in this country and Canada, and from England, Scotland and Ireland, and in turn appointed delegates to each of these Churches. It received a fraternal letter from the Presbyterian Church in distant Bohemia, and responded to it with a cordial assurance of interest and regard, to be borne by a special deputation to the supreme council of that ancient and long persecuted household of faith. It declared the Heidelberg Catechism, the doctrinal standard of the Reformed Church both in America and abroad, to be a valuable scriptural compendium of Christian doctrine and duty proper to be used in family instruction, and in that connection expressed its great satisfaction in the increasing evidences of agreement among all those whose symbols maintain in common the faith once delivered to the saints. It also commended the free public schools as an essential part of our republican system, conducive to the moral unity, the common spirit and kindly sympathy of American citizenship, and avowed its readiness to unite with all Christian people of whatever name, and with all good citizens, in supporting and perfecting the plan of popular, as opposed to all forms of sectarian education.

The most significant act of the Assembly in this direction was the appointment of a delegation to the Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, then in session in Louisville, Ky., commissioned to assure that body of the friendly interest cherished toward it, and to propose fraternal correspondence for the future. It was hoped that this might prove an introductory step to closer relations, if not ultimately to organic

union. The action was not regarded with favor by that Assembly, and the proposal to establish fraternal correspondence was decisively rejected in a formal communication in which, among other things, the union between the two northern Churches was said to involve a total surrender of the historic testimonies of Presbyterianism as to some fundamental doctrines of grace. To this the Assembly responded with an expression of profound regret over the decision announced, and of hope that negotiations might soon be resumed under happier auspices. Twelve long years passed before that hope was realized in an exchange of delegates, with mutual expressions of fraternal regard. The Assembly also commended the Historical Society, in which all Presbyterian bodies in the country are associated, as an important agency in preserving the records of American Presbyterianism in all its branches, and all memorials of its growth, trials and conflicts, and of those who had been its honored champions in whatever branch.

The practical wisdom, the sanctified temper, the tireless assiduity manifested by the Assembly in the various directions here described and in others, during its twelve or thirteen working days of existence, lift it into prominence as the grandest Assembly ever convened on this continent — a prominence not likely to be superseded until the meeting at some future day of that Assembly yet to be, in which all varieties of Presbyterianism, however separate now, shall be brought together organically in one continental communion of belief, order, activity in the service of its

one and only Lord and Redeemer. The Narrative of Religion adopted by the Assembly exhibits in an interesting form the general condition of the Church at the outset of its career. It reports all parties and sections as becoming one in practical sympathy and fellowship, and one in loyalty to the accepted doctrine and polity, and to the one divine and adorable Head. It commends the movements in the interests of home missions and of church extension as in large degree successful. It mentions the work among the freedmen as showing commendable progress. It represents the Sabbath School interest as encouraging, and urges the establishing of mission schools in neglected districts, especially in our great cities. It laments the prevalence of Sabbath desecration, of intemperance, and of other social vices, and calls for more strenuous effort to counteract such evils. But it also reports the fact of revivals enjoyed in at least eighty presbyteries, and the addition during the year as shown in the statistical tables, of thirty-two thousand members on profession of their faith. It pleads for large increase in Christian benevolence in view of the extraordinary demand for financial expenditure. And the Assembly crowned all its previous action by calling for the raising of five millions of dollars as an offering of gratitude to God for the Union, and in order to the more effective prosecution in all its branches of the grand mission of the Church, as God had clearly appointed.

The Minutes of the Assembly of 1870, report the Church as consisting at the date of its organization of fifty-one synods and two hundred and fifty-nine pres-

byteries (reduced by the Enabling Act to thirty-four synods and one hundred and sixty-five presbyteries) with 4,238 ministers and 4,526 churches, having an aggregate membership of 446,551. The Minutes of 1837, prior to the disruption, report thirty-three synods, and one hundred and thirty-five presbyteries, comprising 2,140 ministers, 2,865 churches and 220,557 members. The loss through the two secessions during the interim on account of slavery amounted to at least sixteen synods and sixty-eight presbyteries, with about 1,300 churches and more than 92,000 communicants. Including these figures as representing a real part of the aggregate growth during the thirty-three years of the separation, that growth may be estimated at 120 per cent. in the number of churches (with a like increase in the ministry) and at 135 per cent. in the roll of membership. During the thirty-four years since the Union, the increase in churches and in ministers has been about 80 per cent. and in communicants not far from 140 per cent. These figures seem to suggest the conclusion that the Union has not thus far had the large effect anticipated from it, so far as the annual increase of the Church is concerned. A comparison of the contributions per member for congregational uses and for all benevolent purposes also seems to show no increase but rather a decline in the beneficences of the denomination — a result the more remarkable if the vast accummulation of wealth in Presbyterian hands since 1870 be taken duly into the account.

But if comparative statistics should not show that the united Church has grown in numbers and resources since the Union at a ratio superior or even equal to

that of the two combining Churches during the period of separation, the Union has justified itself fully in other ways. Increase in members or in resources is not always the last or the best measurement of the growth of any church organism: in the kingdom of God there are other measurements of far greater moment. The Union of 1870, whatever may have been the results reported in the statistics subsequent, was in many aspects a grand fact accomplished. It was a great thing to terminate a schism and a rivalry which had been prolonged through an entire generation, and which had become a scandal not only to the two denominations involved, but to the general cause of Protestant Christianity. It was a vast gain, not merely in economics, to consolidate into one group of effective agencies the various committees and boards at work in the separate Churches, and so to adjust and improve these as to make them in higher degree useful as denominational and evangelizing forces. It was a large advance in government and administration when the differing, somewhat variant conceptions of the church polity were so fully harmonized and unified on the basis of the common Constitution justly and generously interpreted. It was a still larger and more significant advance when the varying types of Calvinism which had been warring bitterly against each other around issues minor and relatively unimportant, were brought together under the banner of a broader, more spiritual unity,— when the long and sad era of disputation was ended in a theological as well as ecclesiastical reconciliation.

Nor was this the whole. It was a noble thing thus to lift up the Presbyterian name into its just prominence, to cleanse it from the dust and blood of gladiatorship, and make it shine with some measure of fitting lustre and of brightening influence. It was a worthy deed to set before the varying, somewhat antagonized sects and parties in the land the winning spectacle of disagreements harmonized, of generous ignoring of old alienations, of unity attained through legitimate concessions, and of loving fellowships reigning where discord and alienation had once prevailed. And it was worthiest and noblest of all to secure by this combination of elements and forces a larger capacity for diligent and fruitful service in the vast field of spiritual ministration which just at this juncture was opening before the organized Church — a field as wide as the nation, as wide as the world. Assuredly no Christian organization on American soil ever saw a grander opportunity awaiting it, or was consciously better equiped for successful activity as one among the evangelizing agencies of the age. These one and all were results actually gained or at least made possible in and through the grand transaction of 1869. And if we are obliged to confess, as we must, that the realization at the end of a generation has not equaled the promise or the potency apparent at the beginning, we may still rejoice that the Church has both preserved faithfully the principles and heritages then possessed by it and also has done in this land and in foreign lands a great, if not the greatest possible work for God and His Kingdom among men.

The task of the historian is already ended: the narrative of the genesis, evolution, organization, advance, maturity and consummation of the Church whose existence began in 1837, and was terminated in and with the Uniting Act of 1860, is now finished. One serious question still remains to confront whoever thoughtfully reads the simple story — the question whether the Church which came into being through that historic Act will continue to live for generations to come, increasing in volume and influence, and possibly including other Presbyterian bodies now separated within its broadening communion, — or will become itself the victim of internal controversies preventing such development, and ending possibly in other disruptions or in ultimate decay. It must be confessed that no section of Protestantism has exhibited stronger disruptive tendencies than the Presbyterian. Its divisions in Britain, especially in Scotland, have been many and marked, although it is justly questioned whether the reasons for separation, with one or two exceptions, had any large significance when contrasted with the fundamental matters in which the separating parties were in both substance and spirit agreed. The multiplied divisions in America, once or now existing, hardly seem more significant when thus tested. And certainly the presence among us at this late day of so many Presbyterian communions, accepting in nearly all essential features the same standards of faith and order, yet dwelling in separate tents and with more or less of alien feeling, must be regarded as a blemish on the Presbyterian name, as well as a serious hind-

rance to the advancing of that generic system of doctrine and polity which all alike desire to uphold.

It is impracticable here to do more than merely advert to the causes which underlie or produce such divisions wherever Presbyterianism exists. They undoubtedly lie partly in the nature of the system itself: such an extensive and positive symbol as the Westminster Confession, such an elaborate scheme of government and order, together with such a type of training and character as these tend to develop, may easily induce diversity instead of concord in their practical operations. Various secondary causes suggest themselves, — differences of form, usage, observance, worship, for example, such as have often rent asunder or kept apart those who for reasons far deeper ought to have lived happily together within one gracious household. It must be confessed also that many less creditable causes, such as the prejudices of race, provincial sentiment, inordinate zeal of party, even political differences, have sometimes been potent — as history shows — in sundering ligaments whose healthful preservation was essential to the best life in each of the divided communions.

The noble Church whose horoscope we are studying cannot expect to be altogether free from the influence of such disintegrating causes. In the sphere of doctrine, for example, two conflicting tendencies are always liable to manifest themselves within it, — on one side, looseness in adherence to what is essential in belief, a disposition not always conscious or open to decry doctrine, disparage creed, exalt personal opinion, encourage erratic notions, and even condone positive

heresy, — on the other an excessive orthodoxy which fails to appreciate the real breadth and liberal temper of the Symbols, insists on verbal subscription, proposes microscopic tests of belief, and bursts forth into noisy criticism over every slight divergence. In the sphere of polity also two kindred liabilities are apparent, — on one hand, the liberty guaranteed under the Constitution may degenerate in exercise into heedless license, the just regulations and restraints of law disregarded, autonomy changing into an independency which is indifferent to constituted authority and ever ready to break out into schismatic revolution, — on the other, an undue assertion and centralization of power, easily degenerating into an invasion of individual rights or local prerogative, changing possibly into a subtle tyranny exercised by adroit minds to the injury or the overthrow of truth or liberty.

Questions of organization or administration involving in some cases real principle, in many others simple expediency, may in like manner arise at various points to disturb the peace or impair the usefulness of the Church. It is an historical fact that Presbyterians are somewhat more likely than other Protestants, first, to invent a wide variety of ways to accomplish some desirable end; then, to discuss at length the relative merit of these ways; and finally, to break up into parties around the mere question of method, — too often at last in the heats of controversy losing sight practically of the object whose attainment all were at first agreed in desiring. The several church Boards for example, furnish constant opportunity for debate as to their number and relative value, their organiza-

tion and modes of working, the persons officially employed, the periodicals or other instrumentalities used in their furtherance. The problem of improvement in these Boards is one which by the nature of the case can never be settled abstractly or absolutely: imperfections are as inseparable from such agencies as are the contingencies of accident in a complex machine or of disease in the human body. It is obvious, moreover, that as the Church grows into continental magnitude, and takes under its care a greater multiplicity of interests and demands, such questions will inevitably increase in both number and complexity, and wise, just, calm action respecting them, such as will conserve all conflicting interests and secure the largest attainable results for the whole Church, will become more and more difficult as well as more and more imperative.

These scant suggestions may be sufficient to illustrate the fact that the life of the Church which we are contemplating is always exposed in these various ways to trouble or disaster: conflict, controversy, alienation, even division may be said to be always hanging as stormy possibilities over its pathway. Two specific preventives or guarantees against such liability cannot be too strongly emphasized. The first of these lies in firm, just, inviolable adherence to the historic compact, signed and sealed in the Union through which the Church came into existence. In that compact the Church bound itself to be and remain in a comprehensive and catholic sense Calvinistic; on one hand receiving the existing standards in their pure and sim-

ple meaning, but confined to no specific mode of interpreting these standards; cherishing generous tolerance toward all who truly accept the generic system, and meanwhile — in the language of the Westminster divines — ever ready to admit and receive any truth not yet attained whenever God shall make it known. In that compact the Church also bound itself to be and remain Presbyterian; accepting as its formal basis the strong, just, effective polity cherished alike by the two Churches merged in that Union; abiding loyal from the heart to the common Constitution, yet averse to all tyranny and all undue assumption of ecclesiastical power, and recognizing as admissible no form of administration which is not suffused with the irenic and loving temper of the New Testament. Whatever changes or adjustments may be found needful in its application, the organic law itself from which the Church derives its name must stand like its system of doctrine unaltered and unalterable.

In that compact there were various concurrent declarations and agreements, which from the nature of the Union were to be no less sacred and inviolable than were the accepted polity and doctrine, and whose faithful observance is hardly less essential to the preservation of the church unity and life. The equal standing of all ministers from either body within the united communion, the organizing of churches on the denominational basis only, the measure of authority due to antecedent rules and precedents, the preservation of official records and evidences, the consolidating of corporate rights, the preference for church boards above undenominational organizations, the doctrinal

publications permissible, were each and all essential parts or elements in the covenant which made the two Churches one, and these are therefore each and all as perpetual as the covenant in their sacredness. The agreement respecting the equal rights and prerogatives of the theological seminaries existing within those Churches and welcomed with equal cordiality within the Union, has already been mentioned as one of these terms of union. No question considered in that complex movement was more delicate, no solution of recognized difficulties was more happily received, and no contract was deemed more sacred, or more unchallengeable. And so long as the Church stands on its granite foundations of belief and government, so long must this article in the compact like the others be preserved in its integrity and its preciousness; to disturb it by whatever form of subversive disparagement would be treachery to the Union itself.

In that entire compact the one comprehensive guarantee above and beneath all the rest was love, — love overcoming prejudice and alienation, love cementing differences, love solving all problems, love inspiring to mutual ministrations, love blending all elements in holy and enduring concord. It will not be questioned that the one thing which more than every other beautified and glorified the memorable transaction of 1869, was the Christian affection which characterized it. That affection was the more remarkable when contrasted with the bitternesses of 1837, and with all the antipathies and rivalries that followed after the Disruption. It was the upspringing and blooming of a Caritas as divine in its origin as the Gospel itself —

an unquestionable bestowment of the Spirit of God, now manifesting its supernatural potency where alienation and division had ruled before. And in that heavenly gift Christ obligated the Church to mutual love for all the future — its coalescing bond both of fellowship and of action. And that Caritas can hold the Church continually in doctrinal unity, establish perpetually its polity and government, render sacred forever all its historic declarations and covenants, — that and that only. Surely no branch of His Church on earth is more supremely pledged to live on from generation to generation under the sway of that heavenly love which in so signal a degree gave it birth.

The second preventive and guarantee against the evils or perils which of necessity beset the pathway of the Church is an absorbing devotion to that broad, complex, grand work for which, we may justly presume, Christ gave it being. God always ordains the work while He is ordaining and preparing the worker. He gives spiritual life to no man, He vitalizes no body of believers, excepting for some service already planned for and provided. On any other hypothesis such a transaction as the Union of 1869 would be wholly inexplicable. How large, how momentous in itself and in its issues that work is for which Christ then brought his alienated peoples together and made them one, the Church created by their union has hardly begun even yet to realize. Ages will be needful to determine its full measurement: eternity alone can comprehend its magnitude or its worth. On its interior side, it is a work of spiritual development, — the culture of believers in knowledge and in piety, the evolving of a

nobler Christian manhood and womanhood, the Christianizing of the family, the nurture and training of baptized youth within the household of faith, — in a word, the realization of what has well been called the outpopulating power of the Christian stock, producing successive generations of renewed and sanctified disciples, born and matured within the Church, and through grace endowed for useful service in all the multiplied spheres of Christian activity and culture. On the external side it is a work of conquest, including all the many activities and agencies through which the great unsaved world may be won for Christ and through Him brought into the Church, — the planting of churches in his name on our widening frontiers, city evangelization and rural evangelism, ministrations to the destitute native population in mountain regions, to the foreign immigrants, to the negro race, the giving of Holy Scripture and of religious literature to the needy and sinning multitudes everywhere, the establishing of Christian charities and homes for the suffering, and the sending of the Gospel and the missionary to all the continents and islands of the wide earth.

Development and Conquest, growth from within by virtue of an indwelling spiritual energy, growth from without by virtue of the faithful proclamation of the truth of God to all classes and conditions of men the world over, — these doubtless are the two regulative laws, these the two aspiring aims, these the two aggregated results, for which Christ has organized and ordained the Church whose horoscope we are contemplating, — for these He has given it unity, strength,

resources, capabilities as great as He has bestowed on any Church in our land and time. May it prove worthy of this gracious, sublime calling. For many an age may it continue to be more and more what He has planned it to become, — surrendering itself wholly, consecrating all its heritages and powers, to Him who conferred upon it so noble a mission.

It was the rich privilege of the writer of this Historical Review to receive his ordination to the ministry, more than fifty years ago, by the laying on of hands of the Church whose brief but impressive biography is here recited. It was also his privilege to stand joyfully in his place as one of its loyal servitors from the day of his ordination until its separate existence was ended in the Union of 1869. He also enjoyed the felicity of being somewhat in contact during his earlier ministry with some, and later on with many of those who were the animating and guiding minds of that Church, especially during the second and third decades in its independent history. And it may be added that he counts it a signal honor to have had some small share as both preacher and teacher in its experiences, its trials, its efforts and its successes, as it advanced year by year from the stage of organization to that of strong and noble maturity.

It is hardly needful to say that the writer has not been animated consciously in the preparation of this sketch by any impulse of partizanship or any desire to revive issues long past, or to impugn the motives or criticise the course of any of the actors in the events

here described — actors who have now almost wholly passed into the life immortal. Considerations of quite another class have inspired him. One motive has been a filial desire to chisel afresh on a tablet more or less enduring the names of those devoted and capable men through whose agency the Church was enabled to grow in a single generation into such fair proportions and achieve such noble results — names already beginning, too early, to be obscured by the mosses of subsequent time. Nor is he ashamed to say that his pen has sometimes paused spontaneously, and his page grown dim with tears, as he has remembered how earnestly and how well they wrought for the Church they loved. Another motive has been to bring before the vision of a younger generation this picture of a Church which once came into being through great trial, assumed form and strength with the years, lived out worthily its separate life, and then as worthily gave up an independent existence, in order that the Church of the Union might be. To candid and thoughtful minds in this later age, alive to the incidents and the teachings of history, such a picture, though traced with a tremulous hand, can hardly fail either to awaken interest in the story told, or to suggest profitable lessons for the present and the future. Nor is the writer without the still larger hope that the noble Church, to which he has cordially given a generation of service, and for whose growth and usefulness, in the seclusion of declining years, he offers daily and nightly prayer, might find in this simple narrative a taper to shine along its path, a lesson in faithfulness and devotion, a warning so far as needful, an encour-

agement in every form of Christian activity, and an assurance of preservation, development, success in the ages that are yet to come. In this larger hope he ventures to offer to that Church, as his last word,

THIS BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE.