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Vol. 3



EXTRACTS

FROM THE

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

✓
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA;

A. D. 1804.

Philadelphia:

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.....
1804.

AT A GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, &C. HELD IN PHILADELPHIA IN MAY 1804 :

“ RESOLVED....*That the Reverend Messrs. Janeway and Potts, aided by the Permanent Clerk, be a committee, to select such parts of the Records of this Assembly, as they shall judge proper to be published for the information of the people and judicatories of the Church : That the said clerk transcribe the same, and superintend the printing and distribution of 1500 copies ; allotting a part to each Presbytery, proportioned to the number of its members, and churches.*

RESOLVED....*That the said committee subjoin to the extracts, some account of the glorious prospects of usefulness opened to the Assembly by the reports of their Missionaries among the Indians ; affording ample encouragement to perseverance in a work, often pronounced hopeless.”*

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

Minutes of the General Assembly.

MAY 17th, 1804.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, met, agreeably to appointment, in the first Presbyterian church in the city of Philadelphia, at eleven o'clock, A. M. and was opened by the Rev. Dr. James Hall, the Moderator of last Assembly, with a sermon from Rom. x. 1.

“*Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*”

After prayer, the commissions were read, when it appeared, that the following ministers and elders, were duly appointed, and attended as commissioners to this Assembly; viz.

Of the Presbytery of Oneida;
The Rev. Samuel F. Snowden,
———— Jedediah Chapman.
Of the Presbytery of Columbia;
The Rev. Jonas Coe.*
Of the Presbytery of Albany;
The Rev. Joseph Sweetman.
Of the Presbytery of Hudson;
The Rev. Jonathan Freeman.
Of the Presbytery of New-York;
The Rev. Dr. John Rodgers, Mr. Henry Rutgers, }
The Rev. Edward D. Griffin, ——— Gilbert Allen, } Elders.
———— Buckley Carl, ——— Preserve Riggs }
———— Amzi Armstrong.†
Of the Presbytery of Long-Island;
The Rev. Aaron Woolworth.

* Appeared in the house the 4th day of the sessions.

† Appeared in the house the 3d day of the sessions.

Of the Presbytery of New-Brunswick;

The Rev. Dr. Samuel S. Smith, Mr. John Bayard, } Elders.
 The Rev. James F. Armstrong, — Daniel Agnew. }
 ——— Joseph Clark,
 ——— Holloway Hunt.

Of the Presbytery of Philadelphia;

The Rev. Dr. Wm. M. Tennent, Mr. David Cloyd, } Elders.
 The Rev. Jacob J. Janeway, — Charles Ogden. }
 ——— George Potts. — Robert Erwine. }

Of the Presbytery of New-Castle;

The Rev. William Arthur, Mr. Samuel Barr, } Elders.
 ——— Francis A. Latta, — James Porter, }
 ——— John E. Latta. — Geo M^cIlvaine.* }

Of the Presbytery of Carlisle;

The Rev. Dr. Robert Cooper,† Mr. James M^cLene,† } Elders.
 The Rev. John Linn, — Robert Brown.‡ }
 ——— Robert Kennedy,
 ——— David M^cConnaughy.

Of the Presbytery of Lewis;

The Rev. Stuart Williamson.

Of the Presbytery of Baltimore;

The Rev. James Inglis.

Of the Presbytery of Huntingdon;

The Rev. John Coulter, Mr. Wm. Montgomery,§ Elder.
 ——— Samuel Bryson.

Of the Presbytery of Redstone;

The Rev. Jacob Jennings,
 ——— Robert Steele.

Of the Presbytery of Ohio;

The Rev. James Hughes,
 ——— Stephen Lindley,
 ——— Cephas Dodd.

Of the Presbytery of Erie;

The Rev. Thomas E. Hughes.

Of the Presbytery of Winchester;

The Rev. Nash Le Grand.

Of the Presbytery of Lexington;

The Rev. Samuel Brown, Mr. Alexander Nelson,|| Elder.
 ——— John M^cCue.

* Appeared in the house, the 4th day of the sessions.

† Appeared each, the 2d day of the sessions.

‡ Appeared in the house, the 6th day of the sessions.

§ Appeared in the house, the 4th day of the sessions.

|| Appeared in the house, the 10th day of the sessions.

Of the Presbytery of Concord;

The Rev. Dr. James Hall,
The Rev. William C. Davis.

Of the 2d Presbytery of South Carolina;

The Rev. Robert Wilfon.*

The Revd Doct^r Matthias Burnet, and the Revd. Dan Huntingdon appeared in the Assembly, and exhibited a certificate of their appointment, as delegates to this Assembly, from the General Association of Connecticut: the certificate being read and approved, they took their seats as Members, agreeably to their appointment.

The Revd. James F. Armstrong was chosen Moderator of the Assembly, and the Revd. John E. Latta, temporary Clerk.

Whereas the Assembly, for several years past, have been taking measures to obtain materials for a complete history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America; which materials, as far as they have been obtained, are in the hands of the stated Clerk; and it seems expedient that the history contemplated, should be entered upon as soon as possible; therefore,

Resolved, That the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, and Mr. Ebenezer Hazard, be, and they hereby are, appointed to write the History of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America; under the care of the General Assembly; and to lay a copy thereof, when completed, before the Assembly: that they have the free use of the materials collected; and that the copy right of the History, when finished, shall belong to the said Dr. Green and Mr. Hazard.

AND WHEREAS there are certain Presbyteries and congregations, under the care of the Assembly, that have not yet furnished materials for their history, though often solicited, therefore,

Resolved, That all the Presbyteries & congregations be, and they hereby are, strictly enjoined, to do all in their power to complete their histories as soon as possible, and to forward them without delay, to the said Dr. Green and Mr. Hazard, resident in the City of Philadelphia, who are hereby authorized, if they find it necessary, to write to the Presbyteries and Congregations that may not forward to them the historical documents required; and to urge them to the performance of their duty, and to state to the Assembly the names of those Presbyteries and Congregations, if such there be, who shall not ultimately furnish the information necessary.

And this Assembly do also hereby recommend to all the people under their care, especially to gentlemen of literature and leisure, within their bounds, to furnish the gentlemen appointed to this ser-

* Appeared in the house, the 5th day of the session.

vice, with all the information in their power to give, relative to the history in contemplation, that this important work may be completed, in a manner as accurate and satisfactory as possible.

A communication from the Convention of the Congregational Ministers of the State of Vermont, was received and read. From this it appeared that the Convention have ratified, on their part, the plan of union and correspondence (agreed upon and transmitted to them by the last Assembly) with one exception, viz. That the Convention, considering the smallness of their number, and distance from the Assembly's usual place of meeting, cannot promise to send an *annual* delegation to the General Assembly.

Resolved, That this Assembly accept and ratify, on their part and behalf, the said plan of union and correspondence, with the exception aforesaid; and that the Assembly will, for the present year, send one delegate to attend the next meeting of the Convention.

Agreeably to an appointment made by the standing committee of Missions, the Revd. Dr. Samuel S. Smith, President of the College of New-Jersey, delivered last evening, in this Church, a Missionary sermon, from John iv. 35—*Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.*

On motion,

Resolved, That the said committee present the thanks of this Assembly to Dr. Smith for his sermon, and request a copy for publication.*

Resolved, That those who have heretofore received appointments as agents, for procuring subscriptions for the permanent fund, continue their exertions during the ensuing year, at discretion: that they especially endeavour to collect the sums already subscribed; and prepare to settle their accounts finally, during the sessions of the next General Assembly.

The committee to whom was referred the letter from the Revd. David Rice, reported the draught of a letter, purporting to be an answer from this Assembly to the letter of Mr. Rice.

The draught being considered and amended, was adopted, and is as follows.

* Dr. Smith declined giving a copy.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter of the 18th of April has been regularly laid before the General Assembly; and although it ought to have been accompanied with an extract from the minutes of the Presbytery of Transylvania, yet, the Assembly, having perfect confidence in you, easily waved *that* formality.

The enquiry which you propose, in the name of the Presbytery, concerning the propriety, in your present circumstances, of licensing and ordaining men to the work of the gospel ministry, without a liberal education, is certainly of great magnitude. Considering the great and ardent zeal on the subject of religion, which has been awakened throughout so large a portion of the United States; the multitudes who are earnestly demanding of you the bread of life, and the few, comparatively, who are regularly ordained to break it among them; the reasoning seems specious at first, which would encourage us, in the instances you mention, to depart from the spirit of our standards upon this subject: and some plausible facts frequently occur, which appear to confirm this reasoning, and mislead the judgments of many honest and well meaning men. On all subjects on which the human mind is roused to uncommon exertions, and inflamed with uncommon ardor, men become eloquent for a season; and even the most weak and ignorant, often surprise us by the fluency, and pertinency, as well as fervor of their expressions. And in general revivals of the spirit of religion, that copiousness and pathos in prayer and exhortation, which are not uncommonly to be found, even among men who are destitute of any liberal culture of mind; and often even of any considerable natural talents, may tempt themselves, and lead others to conclude, that they are endued with peculiar and extraordinary gifts for the service of the church, which ought not to be suffered to lie useless and unemployed.

An ardent zeal, too often united with a certain spiritual pride, and strong self-love, is apt to inspire some weak persons, of an enthusiastic temperament, with vehement impulses to preach the gospel; which they flatter themselves are calls from Heaven.—But experience has repeatedly shewn us, that these inward impulses most commonly affect men of great imbecility of mind, or of strong vanity—experience farther shews, that when this fervor is somewhat abated, all their barrenness, and defect of furniture for the holy ministry, and the sound interpretation of the sacred scriptures, become manifest: and too many unhappy examples have occurred, of those who have abandoned good morals, when deserted by their zeal. And with regard to supposed calls to preach the gospel; no man can be rightly called to that sacred office, out of the regular order which Christ has established in his church—no such inward call can be judged of by any

church judicatory, nor distinguished by any certain criterion, from the visionary impulses of enthusiasm. The judicatories of the church can judge only of the life and conversation of men; their knowledge, and their talents to teach.

Besides, we know that the nature of true religion is, to render men humble. And such is the solemnity and importance of the duty, of interpreting the word of God to the people, and speaking in his name, that a sincere penitent will rather wait to be sought out, than forwardly intrude himself into so holy a calling. And do we not find, in fact, that they are not usually the most prudent, judicious, and qualified to teach among the laity, who are most solicitous to be constituted public guides and instructors in the church?

We do not say that a liberal education is absolutely essential to a man's usefulness in the ministry of the gospel; but reason and experience both demonstrate its high importance and utility. And where ignorant men are permitted to explain the holy scriptures, it ought to be subject to the direction and control of others, of greater knowledge. But this is an order which it has not been thought proper to adopt, in the Presbyterian church. And the superior comparative prosperity and usefulness of our church, and that of our eastern brethren, which is similarly constituted, is a demonstration by no means equivocal, of the approbation and smiles of heaven upon us, in the exercise of our present form of government and discipline.—But, were our opinion on this subject different from what it is, we cannot lawfully and conscientiously depart from our present standards, till they be changed in an orderly manner, by the consent of a majority of the Presbyteries, which compose the body of the General Assembly.

You express your apprehensions lest, if certain illiterate and unqualified men, should not be admitted to the ministry of the gospel among you, they may withdraw from the church, and become the promoters of dangerous schisms. We answer, the path of duty is a safe path. Do what is right, and commit the event to God. If they are men of such a spirit, it is only a new proof that they are most unfit for the office to which they aspire. Parties created by them, will neither be important, nor durable. But if the gates of the church are opened to weakness and ignorance; she will soon be overflowed with errors, and with the wildest disorders. We shall bring the ministry into disgrace and contempt, which should be like the priesthood of Aaron, without blemish.—If men are sincerely desirous of promoting the glory of God, let them first bestow the necessary pains and time, to acquire the requisite qualifications, for feeding and leading the flock of Christ: let them be regularly initiated into the priesthood; and not hasten to offer unhallowed fire on God's altar. If they are sincerely desirous of doing good, let them do it in that

phere, in which they appear destined by Providence to move. In *this*, every christian, the poorest and the humblest; has ample scope to exercise his pious and benevolent dispositions, and to exert his talents, whatever they may be.

Notwithstanding the preceding reflections, it is the opinion of this Assembly, that where the field of labor is too extensive for the ordinary and regular ministry, certain assistants, like the helps or catechists of the primitive church, may, under proper restrictions and limitations, be usefully employed in instructing the young in the principles of our holy religion; and conducting the praying and voluntary societies of private christians. Great caution, however, ought to be used in employing such an order of men; lest an indiscreet zeal, should impel them to extravagancies which may prove dishonorable and injurious to religion; or lest, being lifted up with pride, they come at length to spurn the authority which has appointed them, create divisions in the church, and so fall into the condemnation of the *Devil*. In some parts of the church their utility might be very great, while in others, they would prove not only useless, but dangerous. It must be left solely to the regular and established judicatories of the church, according to the circumstances which may exist within their respective limits, to judge upon this subject. But, wherever it may be thought expedient to resort to such helps, we give it as our advice that none be employed but men of *prudent* and *sound* minds, as well as of sincere piety: men who are humble, and willing to submit to order, as well as zealous in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let their duties be clearly pointed out to them, and circumscribed within precise limits. And under the direction of the Presbytery, let them, as frequently as possible, be visited, and their conduct inspected, to see how far they are both able and faithful in discharge of the trust committed to them. They are not to be considered as standing officers in the church; but may be appointed, or removed, at the discretion of the Presbytery. But, if any, upon full experience, are found to possess uncommon talents; are diligent to acquire the requisite qualifications for preaching the gospel, and promise to be eminently useful in the church, they may, in time, *purchase to themselves a good degree*, and be admitted according to the regular course, to the holy ministry.

These things we leave to your prudence, and are, Dear Sir,

Your brethren, and

Fellow labourers, &c.

Signed by order &c.

Moderator.

Resolved, That a copy of the foregoing letter, be signed by the Moderator, addressed and sent to Mr. Rice, to be communicated to the Presbytery of Transylvania.

The Assembly, agreeably to the order of the day, proceeded to consider the reference from the Synod of Pittsburgh, relating to a certain Marriage.

It appeared that a Mr. James Gaston, had been censured, as guilty of *incest*, for having married a woman who was sister's daughter to his former wife; and had brought the cause, by appeal, to the Synod of Pittsburgh. The Synod, conceiving that the cause involved a high question of discipline, chose to refer it to the General Assembly, for their decision.

The Assembly having discussed the subject, at some length, a motion was made and seconded, *that the decision given by the General Assembly in the year 1802, in a case precisely similar, be adopted as the decision on the present occasion.* After some consideration, a motion was made and carried, *to postpone the motion before the house, in order to introduce the following as a substitute, viz.*

The Assembly having given repeated decisions on similar cases, cannot advise to annul such marriages, or pronounce them, in such a degree unlawful, as that the parties, if otherwise worthy, should be debarred from the privileges of the Church. But as great diversity of opinion appears to exist on such questions, in different parts of the Church; so that no absolute rule can be enjoined with regard to them, that shall be universally binding, and consistent with the peace of the Church: and as the cases in question are esteemed to be doubtful, the Assembly is constrained to leave it to the discretion of the inferior judicatories, under their care, to act according to their own best lights, and the circumstances in which they find themselves placed.

A question was then taken to agree to the substitute, and determined in the affirmative.

Resolved, That this Assembly will, on Tuesday next, enter into a free conversation on the general state of religion, within their limits.

Resolved, That Dr. Smith, Dr. Hall and the Rev. James Hughes, be a committee to take notes of the information which may be given on this subject; to form the same into a general and connected report, and lay it before the Assembly.

The Assembly proceeded, agreeably to the order of the day, to a free conversation on the general state of religion, within the bounds of the General Assembly.

The members being called, in the order of the roll, gave such information on this subject, as their local situation enabled them to give. Accounts were received from most of the Presbyteries under the care of the General Assembly; and the delegates from the General Asso-

ciation of Connecticut, communicated some interesting information, respecting the appearances of religion in that state.

The Committee appointed to draw up, and present to this house, a summary of the information received in the Assembly, during the free conversation on the general state of religion, exhibited their report.

The report being read and amended was adopted as follows.

ALTHOUGH every sincere christian must lament that inattention to the ordinances of religion, and the small impression which its sacred truths make on the hearts of men, which are visible in many and extensive portions of our country; yet, the Assembly have heard, with the highest satisfaction, of the prevalence, and increasing influence of vital and practical godliness throughout the greater part of the Presbyteries which compose our body. Within those wide districts, towards the south and west, from which the last Assembly heard, with so much pleasure, the glad tidings of the great salvation manifested there; the power of religion appears still to prevail, with little abatement. And although through the subtlety of the adversary of souls, and the influence of human frailty, some errors, extravagancies, and instances of reproachful behaviour, have taken place, which the Assembly do sincerely regret, and most unequivocally disapprove and condemn; yet are they happy to learn, and it is a sacred duty, which they owe to the churches, to announce, that, notwithstanding the malignity with which the enemies of religion have studied to misrepresent, and rejoiced to exaggerate these undesirable events, they are chiefly confined to one district of no great extent; and they are certainly very rare, considering the immense region, through which this work has prevailed, and the vast variety of characters who have been its subjects.

The Assembly, moreover, have the unspeakable satisfaction to announce, that the extraordinary influences of the Divine Spirit have, since the last year, been spread over new and very extensive countries, still farther to the south and west. To the north-west and north, from the river Ohio to the Lakes, a vast region which, a few years ago, was an uninhabited wilderness, new churches are forming with astonishing rapidity: and the Spirit of God seems to be remarkably poured out, and to accompany the word, and ordinances of the gospel, with the most solemn and affecting impressions.

The same spirit appears to prevail through a large portion of the Synod of New York and New Jersey and the Synod of Albany. Its effects though more silent, seem to be not less deep, nor consoling to the friends of true religion. Sinners are convinced, and sincere believers comforted, and established in the faith and hope of the gospel. Trophies are continually raised to the grace of the Redeemer; and numbers are almost daily added to the church of God, we trust, as shall be saved. In the churches in which these

extraordinary influences of the Divine Spirit are not so conspicuous, the power, and the salutary effects of the ordinances of the gospel, seem, notwithstanding, to be visibly progressing. That inattention to the things of religion; that neglect of its institutions; that tendency to infidelity, or to scepticism in principle, and to dissoluteness of manners, which, a few years since, the truly pious had so much reason to deplore, are, in most places, evidently arrested; and the tide of public sentiment is happily begun to flow in a contrary direction. Places of divine worship are, in general, more frequented; the institutions of religion are held in higher honor, and attended with greater solemnity, and apparent devotion.—The like agreeable tidings have been received from our associated brethren of the eastern churches, who are dwelling together in peace, and in the unity and faith of the blessed gospel.

The Assembly have likewise heard, with uncommon satisfaction, of the increasing number of societies for the purposes of prayer, and for the promotion of piety and good morals. It is the ordinary course of divine providence, that, when God designs to pour out his Spirit in a remarkable manner on his churches; and to increase and extend the influence of true religion; he first awakens among his own people a spirit of prayer, and of fervent supplication at the throne of grace, for this blessing. And the Assembly do earnestly recommend it to all who love the appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, to meet often together; *to stir one another up to love and good works*, and to wrestle in prayer with God, like the saints of old, for the prosperity of Zion, *till the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth*.

It is, moreover, no small ground of consolation, to observe the pious disposition manifested, and the increasing efforts which are made, more effectually to extend the knowledge of the way of salvation to the unhappy and enslaved blacks in our country; and so send the inestimable blessings of the gospel, along with the improvements of civilization, to the heathen and savage tribes in our vicinity; to save these wretched people from utter extermination; and to raise up from the remnants of so many destructive wars, the seeds of future and great nations, who shall enlarge the kingdom of the Redeemer. The reports of the Assembly's missionaries in the Cherokee, and Catawba nations, have rendered the prospects of introducing among them, letters & civilization, the arts of peace, and the precious lights of the gospel, more promising than, at any period, they have ever been.

Finally, the Assembly, rejoicing themselves in the grace of the Great Head of the Church, have again the happiness to offer to the churches under their care, increasing cause of thanksgiving,

and praise, to the God of all mercy and truth. And, they intreat the co-operation of their prayers, and their charity, for the promotion of the Redeemer's glory, and the salvation of precious and immortal souls.—And now, to God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy-Spirit, who hath given us this reason to rejoice, be glory and honor, world without end! Amen!

Resolved, That the members of this Assembly, with such of the Citizens as may chuse to join with them, will spend a part of next Thursday evening, in the second Presbyterian Church in this City; in special prayer, for the revival of religion, and other religious exercises directed to the same object: and that Dr. Cooper. Mr. Linn and Mr. Janeway, be a Committee to make arrangements for the occasion, and to designate the persons, who shall lead in the exercises.

The meeting for special prayer, and other religious exercises, was duly attended last evening in the second Presbyterian Church in this City, agreeably to appointment.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the Committee of Missions, to publish, by subscription, a periodical Magazine, sacred to religion and morals, and pay the profits into the funds of the Assembly; to be applied to missionary purposes.

The Committee appointed by last Assembly, “to consider the expediency of publishing a New Edition of the Confession of faith &c. of this Church: to consider, whether any, and if any, what alterations ought to be made, in the said Confession of Faith, &c. and to make preparatory arrangements on this subject,” exhibited their report.

The Assembly....having gone through the same by paragraphs, and made several amendments, it was adopted, as follows:

AFTER a very serious attention to the subject committed to them, your Committee have resolved to propose no alterations whatever, in the CONFESSION OF FAITH and CATECHISMS of our church; and are clearly of the opinion, that none ought to be attempted.

The creed of every church, as it ought to be derived immediately and wholly from the word of GOD, must be considered as standing on ground, considerably different, from that which supports the system of forms and regulations, by which worship shall be conducted, and government administered. And, if it be once rightly settled, can never be altered with propriety, by any change of time or external circumstances of the church.

Circumstances, indeed, may render it proper, in deducing a summary of faith from the scripture, to dwell more largely and particularly on some points, at one time, than would be necessary at another: and every attentive and intelligent reader of our standards will probably remark, that the state of the church, when our Confession and catechisms were formed, was, in fact, the cause that its pious and learned authors expressed their sentiments on certain topics, especially such as relate to the controversies between protestants and papists, more largely than would now be necessary, if the whole were to be formed anew. But still, as those sentiments are, we conceive, just in themselves, and as the particular delineation of them can do no harm, and will sometimes prove a guide both to the Clergy and laity of our communion, we cannot wish to see any retrenchment made. It would give alarm to many of our people, who might suspect that this was but the introduction to innovations of more importance. And your committee will take the liberty to remark, that it is by no means to be considered as a vulgar or unfounded prejudice, when alarm is excited, by alterations and innovations in the creed of a church. There are many reasons of the most weighty kind, that will dispose every man of sound judgment and accurate observation, to regard a spirit of change in this particular, as an evil, pregnant with an host of mischiefs. It leads the infidel to say, & with apparent plausibility, that there can be no truth clearly revealed in scripture; because not only its friends, of various sects, but of the same sect, pretend to see truths in it at one time, which, at another, they discover and declare to be falsehood. It hurts the minds of weak believers, by suggesting to them the same thought—It destroys the confidence of the people generally, in those who maintain a system, which is liable to constant fluctuations. It violates settled and useful habits—It encourages those who are influenced by the vanity of attempting to improve what wise men have executed, or by the mere love of novelty, to give constant disturbance to the church by their crude proposals of amendment—And it is actually found to open the door to lasting uneasiness, constant altercation, and, finally, to the adoption of errors, a thousand fold more dangerous and hurtful, than any that shall have been corrected—In a word, what was true when our Confession and catechisms were formed, is true now—We believe that this truth has been most admirably and accurately drawn into view in these excellent performances. They have become venerable from their age.—Our church has flourished under their influence; and we can see no reason to alter them. If there are a few things (and few they must be, and of less importance, if they exist at all) which it might be shown could be expressed more correctly, and in a manner less liable to objection, it is not proper, with a view to obtain this, to ex-

pose ourselves to the great inconveniencies and injuries that have been specified.

Leaving, then, the CONFESSON of FAITH and CATECHISMS of our Church untouched; your committee took into consideration the Form of Government, directory for worship and forms of process. These (as has already been hinted) were considered as standing on other ground than our creeds. The word of GOD in regard to these, is much less specific and particular, than in articles of faith. Many things in this part of a church organization, are, and must be, left to christian prudence, and modified by the peculiar circumstances of religious societies, guided by the general lights which the scripture holds forth.—Here churches in one country, may, and perhaps ought to differ from those of another. We have already differed very considerably from the church of Scotland, from which we derived our origin. And as it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for any man, or body of men to anticipate all the circumstances or cases which may turn up in practice, under a general rule or law, which is framed to provide for them, experience will point out some errors and many deficiencies; and thus may suggest many real amendments. Amendments too, not liable to the most material objections that have been stated in the former case. On this part of our ecclesiastical polity then, the work in some measure of *our own hands*, the committee have ventured to propose a considerable number of amendments; remarking, however, and begging that the remark may be particularly regarded, that the alterations proposed, are of such a nature, that if the whole of them should be adopted; they would not alter, but only explain, render more practicable, and bring nearer to perfection, the general system which has already gone into use.

The committee, having thus shortly detailed to the Assembly, the principles by which they have been governed (and which they wished to do for their own justification, as well as to fulfil so important a part of what they considered their duty) have only to call the attention of the Assembly to the alterations proposed; leaving it to such members of the committee, as are also members of the Assembly, to explain the reasons, on which the proposed alterations have been offered.

AMENDMENTS.

No. 1.

Chap. VIII. Section 1. Add to this section—*of whom three elders, if there be that number in the congregation, with the minister, shall be a quorum, to do business.*

No. 2.

Chap. X. Sect. 1. Strike out "so a Synod is the convention of several Presbyteries,* within a larger District." And insert—*so a Synod is a convention of the Bishops and Elders, within a larger District, including several Presbyteries.*

No. 3.

Insert a new section between the first and second in this chapter, in the following words :

Any seven ministers of the Synod, who shall convene at the time and place of meeting, with as many Elders as may be present, shall be a quorum to transact Synodical business; provided not more than four of the said ministers, belong to one Presbytery.†

No. 4.

Chap. XI. Sect. 6. To be altered in the manner which has been proposed to the Presbyteries, by the General Assembly, viz. change the words "standing rules," into—*Constitutional Rules.‡*

No. 5.

Chap. XII. Add to Sect. 2. *But in all cases, the persons elected, must be male communicating members in that church, in which they are to exercise their office.*

No. 6.

Chap. XIV. Sect. 1. § After the word "probationer" add—*or probationers.*

* Under this section of the existing Constitution, it has been doubted, whether the Members can proceed to business as a Synod, unless there are present *several Presbyteries*, i. e. at least three Ministers from one of the existing Presbyteries, and three from another. The doubt has not only caused delay, in several instances, but defeated the whole business of one entire meeting. This amendment, therefore, goes to make a Synod consist, not of Presbyteries, but, as it ought, of Bishops and Elders.

† In some of the Synods lately formed (and others such may hereafter be formed) consisting only of three Presbyteries; and these spread over a vast extent of country, this quorum is thought sufficiently large.—If business of great importance or expectation is to be done, a *small* quorum will be likely to make a large Synod.

‡ The Presbyteries which have already reported their consent to this amendment, need not report on it again, unless they chuse.—Some have reported their opinion that the words "standing rules," mean *constitutional rules*, and that no alteration is necessary, not knowing that this is the very thing in dispute: that serious disputes, and serious evils have resulted from the ambiguity, and that the object of the amendment is to obtain language the meaning of which, cannot be disputed. These Presbyteries, as well as these which have not reported on the article, are requested to forward their decision.

§ This Chapter takes for granted, that every congregation, about to call a Minister, has only one Candidate in view. The six following amendments are intended to provide for a case that often happens, viz. a Church about to call a pastor having *several* candidates in contemplation; or rather, they are intended to accommodate the Constitution, to *both cases*.

No. 7.

Do. Strike out "disposed to receive him as their minister" and insert—*prepared to elect a pastor.*

No. 8.

Do. Strike out "preparing a call for him" and insert—*conducting the election contemplated.*

No. 9.

Sect. 2. Strike out "prepare a call for _____ to be their pastor" and insert—*proceed to the election of a pastor, for that Congregation.*

No. 10.

Sect. 3. Strike out "in the case of _____ whether or not he shall be chosen to be their minister" and insert—*for a pastor if such be their desire; and when this desire shall be expressed, by a majority of voices; he shall then proceed to take the votes for a pastor.*

No. 11.

Sect. 4. After "the Candidate" insert—*who has a majority of votes.*

No. 12.

Chap. XV. Sect. 2. Strike out "together with a written citation to him" and insert—*if the parties be not prepared to have the matter issued, at that Presbytery, a written citation shall be given to the Minister.*||

No. 13.

Chap. I. Sect. 12. Strike out "and" in the last sentence, and add to the section—*and it shall be considered as regular, for any member or members, who may have dissented from the Judgment of the inferior Judicatory, to state and support their reasons, on the appeal.*¶

Chap. II. Sec. 8. Strike out "three times" and insert—*twice.*

Lastly. Let the Assembly appoint a suitable person, to prepare an index, to be added to the work.

Your committee beg leave to solicit the early attention of the Assembly to this subject. No amendment can be made in our standards, till a majority of the Presbyteries shall have expressed their approbation thereof in writing. A single amendment has been

|| This amendment is intended to provide, that *consent of parties*, shall shorten the Constitutional process, for translating a Minister.

¶ Those who gave the Judgment in the inferior Judicatory, become parties against the Appellant in the superior Court; and sometimes overwhelm him by weight of numbers and talents. This amendment is intended to provide a counterpoise—to enable the Minority, who may have dissented from the Judgment, to take part with the Appellant in the superior Judicatory.—This we believe they are not generally permitted to do.

heretofore attempted; and the exertions of five years have left the question undecided. More efficacious measures must be taken, or the contemplated edition will be deferred beyond the period, which the wishes of the Assembly, and the wants of the Churches require. If therefore the amendments proposed, or any of them, shall be sanctioned by the Assembly, your committee would submit the following resolutions;

(1.) That the amendments be numbered in a continued series, that so a reference may conveniently be made to them by the Presbyteries.

(2.) That the introductory part of this report, with the amendments, be printed with a few explanatory notes, during the present sessions; and that one copy, inclosed in a circular letter, signed by the Moderator, be addressed and sent to each Presbytery.

(3.) That the Presbyteries be required to decide on the amendments as soon as may be practicable; draw up their decision in writing, and immediately send it, by mail or otherwise, to the Rev. Philip Milledoler, stated Clerk of the General Assembly, residing in the City of Philadelphia, so that the same may be received, at farthest by next Assembly.

The Committee appointed to the service, reported the draught of a circular letter to the Presbyteries, and certain notes, explanatory of the amendments to the Constitution adopted on Saturday last. The Assembly having read and considered the same;

Resolved, that the notes be printed beneath the amendments to which they respectively belong; and that a copy of the circular letter be signed by the Moderator, and transmitted, agreeably to a former resolution of this house. The letter, as adopted by the Assembly, is as follows:—

[CIRCULAR.]

To the Presbytery of

BRETHREN,

THE constant and extensive demand for copies of the constitution of our church has rendered a new impression of it indispensable. Anxious to render the work as unexceptionable as possible, the General Assembly of the last year appointed a committee, carefully to revise the whole and to submit the result to us at our present sessions. This has accordingly been done, and the report of the committee, after being carefully considered and amended, is herewith transmitted to you, for a final adoption or rejection,

either in whole or in part, of the alterations suggested. Short notes are added to the proposed amendments, that you may see at once what were the leading considerations that have induced the Assembly to think that they may advantageously be made; and that less time might be necessary in making up your own minds on each particular article. Having thus done every thing in our power to abridge the labour of the Presbyteries; and taken effectual measures, we trust, for a seasonable communication to you of this important concern, the Assembly expect that no Presbytery under their care, will fail to make a decision on the subjects specified within the year; nor to transmit that decision, when made, to the stated clerk (the Rev. Philip Milledoler of Philad.) before the meeting of the next Assembly.—The necessity for dispatch in this business is obvious—The churches must remain unsupplied with copies of our standards till the constitutional number of the Presbyteries have made their report on the premises; or if supplied, they must receive a book, that will probably soon be found unsatisfactory, on account of the variations from its contents which are now proposed to be made.

Praying for the divine blessing on all your ministrations and services, for the promotion of the cause of our common LORD, we bid you farewell.

Signed by order of the General Assembly.

Philadelphia, May 29, 1804.

Resolved, that the usual Synodical Reports to the General Assembly; and the corresponding duplicates from the Presbyteries, instead of being read in the Assembly, shall hereafter be committed to a special committee, to report thereon: and that, *instead of adding in their duplicate reports to the Assembly the amount of collections made by each Church for the funds of the Assembly; (as is prescribed in the 4th Article of the General Regulation;)* the Presbyteries be required to make a distinct report, on this subject, to the Assembly; and that all reports, giving information on the Missionary business, be made to the standing Committee of Missions.

The Synods which manage the Missionary business in their separate capacity, were called upon to make the annual report, required to be made by them, on this subject. The Rev. James Hughes, in behalf of the Synod of Pittsburgh, informed the Assembly—that they sent out one Missionary last fall, to itinerate for one month, in the settlements adjacent to Lake Erie: one other missionary to spend one month, and one to spend two months, in the settlements down the Ohio River.

The Synod of Virginia exhibited a written report, stating, that, in the course of the last year, the Synod employed two ordained ministers as Missionaries for six months each; and four other ordained ministers, for two months each: that the said Missionaries were employed in several destitute places within the bounds of the Synod: that the Synod also employed, for two months, Mr. John Chavis, a licentiate, who was directed to confine his labours chiefly to the people of colour.

Resolved, That the several Synods of Pittsburgh, Virginia and of the Carolinas, be careful to forward to each General Assembly, a regular written report of their diligence and success in the Missionary business.

Resolved, That the Committee appointed for selecting and printing the extracts, add to the same, a list of the churches who have contributed to the fund, for and during one year, next preceding this date; with the specific sums paid by each: and that in ascertaining these sums, they avail themselves, as well of the foregoing report, as of the treasurer's books.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the Presbyteries, to continue their exertions to procure and forward annual collections from the churches under their care: that those who have been in any measure deficient, pay a special attention to this subject. If each Congregation shall punctually make one annual collection "as the Lord hath prospered them;" and seasonably forward it to the treasurer; and if this uniformity shall grow into a habit; the labour of Assemblies and Presbyteries will be diminished: the complaints of the forward against the deficient Churches will cease; and a seed will be sown which will "bring forth fruit unto eternal life." On the fund which is supplied by these free-will offerings, depend the Missionary efforts of the General Assembly: and never was there a time when the calls for Missionary labours were so loud or so frequent; And never was there a time when those "labours of love" for the souls of men, promised such an ample return.

Resolved, That, the Presbyteries and individuals who have received, or may hereafter receive religious books for distribution, report to the Committee of Missions from year to year, stating in what manner the books have been disposed of, the effects produced, and the books, if any, remaining on hand.

Resolved, That the Committee of Missions be requested to present the thanks of the General Assembly to those persons who have presented to them certain religious books, for gratuitous distribution.

Resolved, that the Committee of Missions be authorized and directed to distribute, at their discretion, the Books received as aforesaid; together with such part of the books received on account of the debt of Cornelius Davis, as are of a religious nature, and suitable for distribution.

THE Rev. Doctors Blair and Green ; the Rev. Messrs. Milledoler and Janeway ; Messrs. Ebenezer Hazard, Elias Boudinot and Robert Smith, were chosen Members of the Committee of Missions for the ensuing year.

*Missionaries for the ensuing year.**

The Assembly Resolved,

(1.) That the Rev. Jedediah Chapman, be appointed a stated Missionary for the current year; to spend six months in Missionary labours; and to receive the same compensation, as heretofore.

(2.) That the Rev. John Close, be appointed a Missionary for three Months; in the counties of Saratoga and Washington, in the State of New York; in the settlements about the head waters of Hudson's River, Lake George and the head of Lake Champlain.

(3.) That the Rev. John Lindsley, be appointed a Missionary for three months; in the county of Seneca, in the State of New York; thence across the Lake into Cayuga and Onondago counties; thence to Seneca River, to Junius, and through the counties of Ontario and Steuben, to the Painted Post, and thence homeward.

(4.) That the Rev. Joseph Sweetman, be appointed a Missionary, to spend two months on the west side of Lake Champlain; commencing his Missionary tour at Ticonderoga, and proceeding down the lake, to the Canada line.

(5.) That Dr. Thomas Read, be appointed a Missionary for two months; and the Rev. John E. Latta, for one month, on the Peninsula between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and the Ocean.

(6.) That the Rev. Dr. Robert Cooper, be appointed a Missionary for two months; to proceed to Great Island, near Pine creek, in Pennsylvania; and thence to the Painted Post in the State of New-York.

(7.) That the Rev. Matthew La Rue Perinc, be appointed a Missionary for three months: to visit the Congregation of Nine-Partners; proceed thence to the great Bend of the Susquehanna; Owego; the head of the Lakes, Geneva; Ulysses and the Church of Williamstown and Genesee.

(8.) That the Rev. Amzi Armstrong, be appointed a Missionary for two months in the vacant parts of Suffex county, New-Jersey.

(9.) That the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, be appointed a Missionary for two months, to the Cherokee Indians.

(10.) That the Rev. Dr. James Hall, be appointed a Missionary for six months; three of which to be spent in the Presbytery

* The Synods of the Carolinas, of Virginia, and of Pittsburgh manage the Missionary business in a separate and individual capacity, and employ (together) perhaps nearly as many Missionaries as the General Assembly.—

of Washington, Kentucky, consulting with that Presbytery or their standing Committee, on the subject of his Missionary labours; and the other three months as the Committee of Missions shall direct.

(11.) That Mr. John Chavis, be appointed a Missionary for three months; to be employed in the Southern parts of Virginia, and in North Carolina.

(12.) That 200 dollars be appropriated to the School Master, employed by Mr. Blackburn, in teaching the Indian youth, for his second year's services.

(13.) That the Missionaries be left at discretion, as to the season for performing their respective services.

Resolved, that it be recommended to the Committee of Missions, to employ the Rev. James Robinson, as a Missionary for two months, in the counties of Amhurst and Montgomery, in the State of Virginia; provided it shall be found, in the sequel, that the funds will admit of it.†

The Assembly, deeming it a matter of high importance, that the pulpits of the Missionaries, who have pastoral charges, be fully supplied, during the periods of their absence respectively, proceeded to devise means for the purpose, and resolved, to appoint Committees for making the proper appointments of supplies; and that the Committees be required to meet seasonably, and use their best endeavours to provide the contemplated supplies. Accordingly it was

Resolved, that the Rev. Messrs. James Richards and Aaron Condict be a committee, to appoint supplies for the Pulpits of Mr. Amzi Armstrong and Mr. Perine: that the Rev. Messrs. Simon Hossack and Eliphalet Nott, be a committee, to appoint supplies for Mr. Sweetman's pulpit; that the Rev. Messrs. William Arthur and Nathan Grier be a committee, to appoint supplies for the pulpits of Dr. Read and Mr. John E. Latta: that the Rev. Messrs. Janeway and Potts be a committee, to appoint supplies for Dr. Green's pulpit: the Rev. Messrs. Hill and Hoge be a committee, to appoint supplies for Mr. Le-Grand's pulpit: that the Rev. Messrs. James M'Cree and Samuel Caldwell be a committee, to appoint supplies for Dr. Hall's pulpit: that the Rev. Messrs. John M^r Millan and Joseph Patterfon be a committee, to appoint supplies for the pulpit of Mr. Marques.

A COPY of a record of the Presbytery of Baltimore was exhibited and read; stating that, in the opinion of that Presbytery, it would conduce to the interest of religion, if the General Assembly would occasionally meet within the limits of that Presbytery; and requesting that the next Assembly may be appointed to meet in Alexandria, where (as the Presbytery inform) sufficient accommodations will be provided.

† Two other Missionaries were appointed by the Assembly, under a certain limitation.

The Assembly having taken the above into consideration,

Resolved, That as a co-operation by and between the General Assembly, the committee of Missions, and the incorporated Trustees of the Assembly, appears to be conducive to the interest of the church; and as the members of the committee of Missions, and those of the Board of Trustees generally reside in Philadelphia, and can only hold their sessions there; the Assembly cannot, at this time, comply with the request.

THE Committee appointed to devise and recommend a plan for affording pecuniary aid to the commissioners from distant Presbyteries attending the General Assembly, reported.

The report being read and considered, was adopted and is as follows:

Your committee having taken the subject into consideration, were of opinion, that the contemplated aid, must, for the present, be derived from the voluntary contributions to be made by the more wealthy citizens, resident in other districts, and therefore submit the following resolution; viz.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the Presbyteries belonging to the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey, and to the Synod of Philadelphia, earnestly to advise the Churches under their care, to make an annual collection, to be specially appropriated to aid in the payment of the expences of the commissioners, from the more distant parts of the country, to enable them to attend the General Assembly; and that the money when collected, be put into the hands of the Treasurer of the Corporation, and paid to the persons who may attend as commissioners, under the direction of the General Assembly.

THE Committee to whom was referred the subject of the division in the Synod of Kentucky, reported. The report was read, amended and is adopted as follows:

Your committee having attended carefully to the pamphlets and letter on the subject, are of opinion, that the business has come before the Assembly in so informal a manner, that no regular judicial process can issue thereon in the present Assembly: and that the most eligible measure the Assembly can take in the case, will be to appoint a Committee of three, to meet with the Synod, or a Committee of the Synod of Kentucky, and endeavour to heal the disorders which appear from the said pamphlets and letter to have taken place in the bounds of the said Synod.

Pursuant to the report of the Committee on the division in Kentucky, adopted in the forenoon, the Assembly proceeded to elect by ballot, three persons, as a Committee, to meet with the Synod of

Kentucky at its next meeting; and for three other persons as substitutes, to serve in case of the necessary absence of the principals, or either of them. Accordingly Dr. Hall, Dr. Green and Mr. Marques, were chosen a Committee for the purpose aforesaid; and Mr. Alexander, Mr. Le-Grand and Mr. Baxter, were elected as substitutes: the substitutes severally to succeed to the places of the respective principals, in the order in which they are recorded above; yet so as that any one of the three members last named, who may be present at the meeting of the Synod, shall be competent to serve in the place of any one of the principals, who may be absent, and his place not filled.

Resolved, That the several Ministers chosen as aforesaid, perform the duty of Missionaries, so far as may consist with their other duties; and that they receive the pay of Missionaries, during the terms they shall necessarily be absent, from their respective homes, on the business assigned them.

THE Assembly resumed the consideration of the draught of a Pastoral letter, laid before the house yesterday. Having read and considered the same by paragraphs, and made several amendments, they adopted it as follows:—

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

United to you in the bonds of love, and of Christ, we feel all the constraint of the ties which bind us to you as one body in our common Lord. Assembled, by the good providence of God, in the supreme judicatory of the church, we feel the duty imposed upon us, as the guardians of the peace, order and purity of the body of Christ, of addressing you on the great subject of our common salvation.

Dear brethren, we still have cause of mutual congratulation and joy, on account of the increasing prosperity of Zion in these lands, which, not long since, were so dry and barren. They are, in many places, watered with the abundant dews of Heaven; and righteousness has run down the streets of our Jerusalem like a mighty stream. God has appeared to revive his cause in the midst of the years of great declension, and, in the midst of deserved wrath, he has remembered mercy. In many parts of our church, God has poured out a spirit of prayer upon his people, and has been graciously pleased to answer their prayers by a copious effusion of his blessed spirit. The boldness of infidelity, and the profligacy of impiety have been greatly repressed; and though here and there we still behold its violent struggles exerted against the Saviour, they appear to be only the convulsive struggles of despair. The truths

of revelation are gradually acquiring a decided ascendancy in all parts of our land; and in many, they are daily coming home to the hearts of men with uncommon evidence and power.

For more particular information on these subjects, we refer you, brethren, to that summary of the state of religion within the bounds of the General Assembly, which accompanies this letter. You will there perceive, however, that, amidst so many subjects of gratitude and praise to Almighty God, for the riches of his grace, displayed in the revivals of the spirit of religion, in various portions of our church, we have also some causes of deep affliction and regret mingled with them. Human frailty is apt to mar and disfigure, in some degree, what ever it touches; and the great adversary of souls and of Christ, taking advantage of the passions of convinced sinners, of the hypocrisy of deceivers, and of the imperfections even of the best of men, sets himself often too effectually, to tarnish the beauty and glory of the work of God.

An unhappy separation of five, who had formerly appeared to be zealous and successful ministers of Jesus Christ, in union with the Synod of Kentucky, has given no small occasion of grief to the churches. Too great an ardor of spirit for what they conceived to be the truth, and, perhaps, too great heat concerning the meaning and importance of words have created a division, which christian charity should exert all its powers to heal. We beseech you, brethren, yet receive one another in the spirit of love and forbearance. Remember how divisions and contests between men engaged in the same glorious cause will wound the hearts of sincere christians, and distract the minds of the weak; remember how apt they are to embitter the meek spirit of the gospel, and to quench the zeal of genuine piety, in the unholy passions of strife and contention; remember we entreat you, for the love of Christ, how the adversary will blaspheme and rejoice, and the Redeemer be wounded in the house of his friends. Brethren, reunite your hearts and your labours in this great and blessed work, and let not its progress be arrested, or its glory impaired, by the baneful influence of your divisions. Meet together for the purposes of conciliation, using the counsels and aid of the committee which the General Assembly has thought proper to send to you, to endeavour to repair so undesirable and dangerous a breach in the walls of our Zion. If you love the Lord, if you love and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, will you not sacrifice much to these objects so dear to every real christian?

With not less regret have we heard of certain extravagancies in the exercises and agitations of many persons, who, in this work, otherwise so desirable, have once been the subjects of strong religious impressions. That the sudden blaze of divine truth upon a

mind hitherto covered with thick darkness; that a deep conviction of guilt, and sense of the wrath of God against an offending worm of dust; especially, when these apprehensions are raised to the highest pitch by the power of sympathy, and the panic excited by the emotions of a vast assembly, should often produce strong bodily affections, is not surprising to those who are acquainted with the human œconomy. That the transports of a mind suddenly brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, suddenly raised from the borders of despair to the extasies of religious hope and joy, should be accompanied with a similar influence on the nervous system, is not incredible.

The preceding are not pretended to be assigned as the certain or the sole reasons, of many extraordinary appearances in some of our southern churches. It is sufficient to answer the views of the Assembly to shew that such causes are adequate to the production of the highest effects, of this kind, in order to preserve them from the unjust imputation of a fanatical, or demoniacal influence. But, when bodily agitations, which, in most instances, disturb the ferocious, sober, and rational exercises of the mind, instead of being soothed and restrained within the bounds of decency, are encouraged, and excited by those who lead the worship and some who join in it; they very easily run into excesses highly reproachful to religion. When they go into antic gestures, ridiculous contortions, to movements of apparent levity, and contrary to propriety and religious order, and which resemble the effects of delirium, or of a spirit very different from the spirit of the gospel; these are the evidences of a wild enthusiasm, whose extravagancies are infinitely various, and unaccountable. When each person has a psalm, a prayer, a triumphant exultation, in the public worship of God, is not this the very evil which once took place in the Corinthian Church, which the Apostle severely reproveth, saying, *God is not a God of confusion but of order?* In genuine and rational religion, however high and fervent may be its affections, *the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.* And if so, surely this power is still more necessary for the sake of order, in every ordinary christian.

We strongly bear our testimony against those persons who pretend to immediate impulses, and revelations from heaven, those divine communications which were given only to the Prophets and Apostles, who were appointed by God to reveal to mankind the way of eternal life. When men presume that the Holy Spirit, contrary to the established order of Providence, interferes by particular impulse to direct them in all the common affairs of life; when they deem themselves to be impelled by him, to particular acts, or particular religious exercises, contrary to the established order of the gospel, and the obvious duties of the moment; when,

finally, they pretend to miraculous powers, or prophetic influences, and the foretelling of future events; all these are evidences of a wild enthusiastic spirit, and tend, eventually, to destroy the authority of the word of God as the sole rule of faith and practice.— Ecclesiastical history furnishes us with many examples of such enthusiastic impulses, following great revivals of religion, which have ever been strongly and uniformly condemned by the voice of the whole church, as in the case of the French prophets, the fanatics of Munster, and we may add, the fanatical Jews who sprung up in such numbers, and persevered with such obstinacy, even while the disasters of their city and their temple, were daily refuting their predictions. And it will be a subject of sincere lamentation to us, if any ministers in our communion should unhappily be found to encourage such great evils. But we hope better things of you though we thus speak.

Dear brethren, and fellow labourers in the gospel of our common Lord, study to prevent excesses so dishonorable and contrary to the beautiful order of the church of Christ, or zealously endeavour to repress them, wherever they begin to appear. In a great and general inflammation of the human mind, we ought not to be astonished if these fervors operating sometimes on weakness, sometimes on an enthusiastic temperament, should impel a few men to very considerable errors and excesses. Such have happened in every revival of religion, and even in every great political commotion; and such especially happened in various instances in the memorable and glorious reformation of the christian church from the spiritual thraldom and the errors of popery. By common concert and counsel endeavour to restrain every irregularity in the worship of God at its very commencement. Disorders of an enthusiastic spirit may often be checked in the beginning with facility, which when suffered to progress, come at length to overleap all the barriers of authority, and burst through all the bounds of order and of decency. Solemnly bear in mind, brethren, how much the great head of the church has committed his glory and the glory, of his holy cause in the world, to your activity and your faithfulness, to your *prudence* as well as your zeal.

And now fellow christians, of every order and condition in life. we intreat you earnestly to co-operate with the public servants of Christ in promoting the glory and extension of the Redeemer's kingdom. Faithfully improve the precious season of divine grace which God is now bestowing on his churches.

By your prayers draw down the blessing of heaven on your families, on the church, on your country, on the world. God will appear for his people with a great salvation; but for all these things will He be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.—

Let your prayers for the prosperity of Zion continually ascend in secret to the throne of grace. Promote and encourage assemblies for social prayer. *For Jerusalem's sake rest not, and for Zion's sake hold not your peace.* Whenever God has appeared in any signal display of his mercy to the church, he has usually in the first place, *poured out on the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and supplication.*—That we may continue to wait at his footstool, he condescends to bestow his special and extraordinary grace in answer to the prayers which he himself has inspired.

Parents, train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Your houses should be temples of the living God, in which should ascend to his mercy-seat the continual incense of your daily sacrifices. Pious parents can most effectually preach to the hearts of their children by their affectionate precepts, and their holy example. *Your* instructions will best prepare them to receive benefit from the public ordinances of religion. And Oh! can you see these dearest portions of yourselves ready to perish without earnestly reaching forth a hand to pluck them as brands from the burning!

Children obey your parents in the Lord. You are the future hope of the church and of the world. Your early piety will be your glory and your happiness. And remember that shortly the glory of your Creator and Redeemer, in the world, will rest with you.

Beloved brethren! Christians of every class, *Be ye steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour by the purity, the simplicity and sanctity of your lives, that the enemies of the cross may have no occasion to blaspheme the master by whose name you are called. Let God witness the humility of your spirit, the sincerity and fervor of your devotion.—Let the world witness your ministerial charity and love, *that others seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in heaven.* We pray, dear brethren, that God may ever have you in his holy keeping. *And now to him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the throne of his glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude 24, 25.*

Resolved, That this General Assembly be dissolved; and that the next General Assembly be required to meet, in the first Presbyterian Church in the city of Philadelphia, on the third Thursday of May next, at 11 o'clock A. M.

Whereupon the Moderator dissolved the Assembly, agreeably to the form prescribed in the Constitution.

Concluded with prayer.

APPENDIX.

[*List of Churches belonging to the Synod of Albany, the Synod of New-York and New-Jersey, and to the Synod of Philadelphia; which have contributed to the contingent fund* of the General Assembly, from June 1st 1803, to May 31st 1804, both days inclusive; with the sums contributed by each: published pursuant to an order of the said Assembly.*]

THE Synods of Pittsburgh, of Virginia, and of the Carolinas, severally conduct the Missionary business, in a separate capacity. Hence the contributions of the churches under their care, pass into the funds of those Synods respectively; and no account of them can be given in this publication. The General Assembly have recently undertaken the Missionary business within the limits of the Synod of Kentucky, but have not, as yet, received any accession to their funds from the churches in that quarter.

	<i>Presbytery of Onedia:</i>		
Whiteborough,	D. 3 34	New-Hartford,	D. 6 00
Utica,	8 31	Coopers-Town,	11 12½
		Total,	28 77½
	<i>Presbytery of Columbia:</i>		
Troy,			12 1½
	<i>Presbytery of Albany:</i>		
Johnstown,			3 00
From other Churches in the said Presbytery not named,			13 25
		Total,	16 25

* The fund which is generally expended in the course of the year, for Missionary and other purposes. It is so called, to distinguish it from the *Permanent fund*, the principal of which is kept entire.

Presbytery of New-York :

Churches of New-York,	50 32	Newark,	21 50
Orangedale,	28 07	Morris Town,	17 50
Connecticut Farms,	8 48	Woodbridge,	5 00
Springfield	4 50	2d Ch. Woodbr.	4 00
South Hanover,	2 69		
From other churches not distinguished,			18 44
		Total,	160 50

Presbytery of Long-Island :

Received from this Presbytery, the contributing churches }
not being named, } 51 00

Presbytery of New-Brunswick :

Kingwood, Bethlehem,	} 24 00	Freehold,	12 00
& Alexandria,		Hackets Town,	2 40
Lamington, in 2 payments	21 48	Kington,	7 20
Amwell & Flemington,	9 60	Greenwich,	} 9 60
Trenton & Maidenhead,	} 19 20	& Mansfield,	
for two years,			New-Brunswick,
Allentown & Nottingham,	6 00	Princetown,	31 35*
Baskenridge,	35 40		
Cranberry,	12 00		
		Total,	199 75

Presbytery of Philadelphia :

Neshaminy,	7 00	Fairfield,	3 38
Woodbury & Timber-creek,	6 32	1st Presbyterian	
Abington, Norriton, &	} 11 00	Ch. Philad.	40 00
New-Providence,		2d do. do.	77 27
Great Valley, for 2 years,	9 16	3d do. do.	34 38
Newton and Bensalem,	} 9 00	Allens Township	2 50
for two years,			Deerfield,
		Total,	201 28

Presbytery of New-Castle :

West Nottingham,	9 00	Pequea,	14 00
Rock,	6 02½	New-London,	20 50
Christiana Bridge,	15 75	2d Presbyterian	
New-Castle,	12 67½	ch. of Wilming.	46 10
Chestnut Level,	9 00	Forks of Brand.	14 74
Upper Octorara,	10 00	Chanceford,	6 50
		Total,	164 29

Presbytery of Lewis :

Snowhill,	11 35	Buckingham,	8 03
Queponco,	7 00		
		Total,	26 38

* On June 14th, 1803, this church paid 16 dollars, which was credited in the extracts of last year.

Presbytery of Baltimore :

	Dollars.
First Presbyterian church of Baltimore,	32 00
<i>Presbytery of Carlisle :</i>	
Upper Connecacheague, 5 00	} 7 00
Carlisle, 13 68	
Shearman's Valley, 3 00	} 3 00
York & Hopewell, 10 00	
Tom's creek, & Piney } 7 00	} 3 00
creek,	
Total,	51 68

Presbytery of Huntingdon :

Bellefonte and Sick Run.	2 14
Total Collections,	946 04

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Two interesting papers relating to Missionary concerns among the Indians, were read before the Assembly; the one a letter, dated April 12th, 1804, from the Rev. Gideon Blackburn, the other a report to the Synod of the Carolinas by the Rev. Mr. Davis. Mr. Blackburn was appointed, the last year, by the Assembly to act as a Missionary for two months among the Cherokee nation of Indians. This mission he fulfilled with great diligence, zeal and judgment. His ardour to promote the gospel induced him to spend three instead of two months among this Indian nation. The design of Mr. Blackburn's mission was, not so much to preach the gospel regularly to them, as to conciliate their esteem and affection, and to establish a school for the instruction of their children. This was judged to be the best method for preparing them for the regular preaching of the gospel.

The success of Mr. Blackburn's mission was highly encouraging. He was received very cordially, and permitted by the Indians to establish a school, to which they send their children. "On the first day (February 21st there came, says Mr. Blackburn, 11 scholars; on the 8th of March there were 16; the 27th there were 20; and several more are expected in a few days, as soon as I can get cloathing ready for them. The children behave past expectation; and I am persuaded by a discipline well balanced, by inducements and well timed authority, they can be kept in as good order as any school on the continent. Their progress is very remarkable. The first day several of them could distinctly pronounce half of the alphabet. By the 8th of March all of them could say their letters backward and forward, and could know them wherever they could see them; and three could say their abs. They continue their progress, and I flatter myself that their proficiency will exceed the most sanguine expectations."

Since the establishment of this school, Mr. Blackburn has received a very earnest request from the principal chiefs of the lower district of the nation to establish a school among them.

The spirit, the zeal, the ardour, the diligence of Mr. Blackburn strikingly appear in his letter: "I have spent three months," says he, "in close service to the institution beside numberless attentions I am obliged to pay to it at home. The interest I feel in carrying this business into effect, would secure my exertions, should I receive no pecuniary returns from any person on earth. Should the Committee of Missions require the continuance of my services, I will use every possible means to forward the design; and if they should not, both my credit and happiness will bind me not to let it sink, if in my power. I have pledged myself to the nation, and my property is at stake on the issue of the undertaking."

Larger extracts from this very interesting letter would be given, were it not for the intention of the Committee of Missions to publish it, in connexion with a narrative of the state of religion in various parts of the world without the limits of the Assembly's superintendence and jurisdiction. The greater part of this narrative was read before the Assembly, and received their approbation. Accompanied with the Assembly's narrative, it will form a small pamphlet; which will present to the reader an interesting view of the state of religion, so far as relates to revivals and Missionary efforts, throughout the world. By this publication the Committee hope at once to edify those who read it, and, by the sale of it, to increase their ability for carrying on the very important concerns of Missions. Those who desire to aid their exertions, will do well to purchase this pamphlet both for their own profit, and for the advancement of religion. The Committee, it is expected, will take measures for circulating the pamphlet as extensively as they can.

Mr. Davis was appointed last year by the Synod of the Carolinas, a Missionary to Indian tribes bordering upon their limits. The Committee appointed to form this appendix, regret that they have not the report of Mr. Davis in their hands, and have to rely upon their recollection for particulars. This Missionary was cordially received by the Indians. He spent among them two or three months, during which time he established a school consisting of 25 Indian children. This report was highly interesting. It afforded great encouragement to hope that success will attend missionary labours among those tribes.

On the whole, it appears that it has pleased God to open a door for much usefulness among the Indian tribes bordering upon our country. Christians have reason to rejoice in the prospect, that, by efforts, vigorous and well conducted, these miserable sons of Adam may be delivered from a state of barbarity and heathenism, and

brought into a state of civilization and religion. The prospect is more encouraging and flattering than it has been at any past time. God has done enough to convince us that the work of civilizing and evangelizing the Indian tribes is not impossible, but practicable. What heart that loves the Lord Jesus and the souls of men will not rejoice? Shall the golden opportunity be suffered to pass away unimproved? Forbid it gracious God! Christians, embrace, improve it. Let the rich contribute out of their abundance pecuniary aid; let the ministers, who can devote themselves to this service, do it; let all send up their fervent cries to heaven for help; and we may soon behold our red brethren sitting with us around the same table, and meeting with us to worship the same divine Saviour.

WHEREAS among the donations, for pious uses, made to the General Assembly by last will, one was expressed in a very *informal* manner; whereby the pious intentions of the donor might, perhaps have been defeated: *And Whereas* it is expected, that many similar bequests, will hereafter be made; and it is desired that they may be made in the legal form, to prevent trouble, expence and disappointment: The committee have therefore judged it expedient to subjoin, the

FORM OF A DEVISE OR BEQUEST BY LAST WILL,

To the General Assembly.

To the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America; and to their successors and assigns, I give and devise the sum of [or a certain Messuage and Tract of Land, &c.] *to be added to their permanent fund; and the clear profits applied to the general uses of that fund, under the direction of the said Assembly. [Or, to be applied toward spreading the gospel on the frontiers of the United States: or, toward civilizing and instructing, in arts and religion, the Indians of North America; under the direction of the said Assembly;]* according as the pleasure of the Testator shall be; who may designate any other object of piety or charity; and the corporation are bound, by charter, to apply the donation accordingly.

The Committee of Missions have appointed the Rev. James Robinson a Missionary, agreeably to the Assembly's recommendation in page 62.









