

Session II. — 1811.

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New York, 15th May, 1811, 7 o'clock, P.M.

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, agreeable to former appointment, met and was constituted sederunt. Members present:

————— Northern Presbytery. —————		
Ministers.	Elders.	Congregations.
Alexander McLeod Gilbert McMaster William Gibson — — — —	John Agnew — — — — Robert Beattie	New York. Duanesburgh. Ryegate. Coldenham.
————— Middle Presbytery. —————		
— — — — — — — — — — — — John Black Matthew Williams — — — —	Robert Orr John Reilly John Thomson William Gormley — — — — Thomas Hagleton	Philadelphia. " Conococheague. Pittsburgh. Pine Creek, Union, etc. Cannonsburgh.
————— Southern Presbytery. —————		
Thomas Donnelly	— — — —	Rocky Creek.

Gilbert McMaster, Moderator.

John Black, Clerk.

According to previous appointment the Synod was opened with a sermon by the Moderator, the Rev. Gilbert McMaster, from Job 36:18, "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee."

The Court then adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock, A.M.

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Eodem loco. 16th May. 10 o'clock A.M.

Agreeable to adjournment the Court met and was constituted. Same members ut antea. Rev. Gilbert McMaster, Moderator, John Black, Clerk.

John Reilly was called to take a seat in the Court as a ruling elder. He took his seat accordingly.

Robert Beattie, a ruling elder from Coldenham Congregation, appeared and took his seat.

1. As soon as the Clerk read the Minutes of the Constitution of Synod, the Rev. David Graham expressed disappointment at not having his name inserted in the list of constituent members, and demanded reasons for the omission. He was informed that both principle and precedent required in every instance the formal introduction of a new member to Synod before he could be recognized as a member of the Court.

He appeared insensible of this, and claimed the right of instant admission. The Court determined that the documents respecting Mr. Graham's restoration to the ministry, and his present standing, be first read.

It appeared from the minutes of Presbytery that after Mr. Graham had professed his sense of the justness of the sentence of deposition, had professed penitence and craved restoration, a Committee was appointed with authority to restore him. The minutes of said Committee testify that Mr. Graham had been by them restored to the holy ministry.

The Minutes of the Northern Presbytery testify that, at Mr. Graham's request, he was permitted by the Court to remain in New York City sometime as a school-master, that he might avail himself of the profits of his employments, and be thereby enabled to liquidate his Irish debts.

The minutes of the Middle Presbytery show that Mr. Graham had received and accepted a call to Cannonsburgh congregation, and that a petition for his installment had been rejected for reasons which implicated his ministerial character.

A Presbyterial Address from Ireland was also read, which exhibited his character, where he was best known, as that of a dangerous man, destitute of integrity, and unworthy of the holy ministry. Mr. Graham still, with great forwardness, urging his admission to a seat in the Judicatory, was, after the documents respecting his case had been read, permitted to speak for himself in support of his

right to a seat in Synod. He urged in support of his claim that he ought not to be considered as accused as a culprit at the bar, and yet he required this Court to try his cause; he afterward withdrew his request. That he did not know in what light to view himself, and that he stood as a fool before the Court. That he was represented as fond of speaking; that the popular opinion is that he is good at it, that he would, therefore, try it. That the Irish Presbytery asserted falsehoods about him; were his enemies and persecutors. He insinuated that the scandalous crimes for which he had been deposed and for which he professed repentance, were only fictitious. That he has now no character; that he had a respectable character among the Seceders, who, he said, libelled him for intention to defraud. That ever since he joined the Covenanters he was abused and persecuted, and that this Court were worse persecutors than the Irish. That when he came to America he was solicited, seduced, inveigled into the Church; that he was kept in the dark, and treated as a person unfit for society. That no charges against him are proved, and that "Stewart's Collections" supported his right of being admitted to a seat in Synod without waiting for a formal introduction or an examination of his ministerial standing.

To this amount, and a great deal more of the same kind of abuse and scurrility, both against this Church and the Church in Ireland, was Mr. Graham heard at length in a speech which had for its professed object to persuade the Synod to admit him as a regular member of the Judicatory. He was heard with patience, and repeatedly, by the Court. Synod at last adopted certain resolutions and reasonings in support of them, enjoining it upon the Middle Presbytery to institute a process for trial against the Rev. David Graham, and bring it to issue with all possible speed; rendering it the duty of the several parts of the Church to aid that Court in providing the necessary testimony; determining that Mr. Graham shall not be admitted to a seat in Synod until said

trial shall be completed; and directing that copies of the Resolution and Preamble be delivered to the Middle Presbytery and to the congregation of Cannonsburgh, as follows:

Whereas, It appears to this Synod by authentic documents from Ireland, that the Rev. David Graham, who had been a licentiate in the Secession Church, was charged by that connection with intention to defraud his creditors, and was not received by the Reformed Presbytery until his accounts had been settled; and it also appears that a short time after his ordination he was deposed from the office of the holy ministry by the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland because he had been found guilty of repeatedly asserting falsehoods and committing fraud in his pecuniary transactions. Because he, in violation of his ordination vows, absconded from his congregation; and, because in presenting a false certificate to certain ministers in London, he had committed forgery. It appears by the records of several judicatories of the Church in America, that the said Mr. Graham did acknowledge the justice of the censure, did profess deep humility for his offences; did request to be restored to the office of the holy ministry; and did both promise and exhibit the prospect of a speedy ability to perform the promise to liquidate all his debts in Ireland; and was accordingly absolved from the censure, and re-instated into his office. It also appears that after his restoration, Mr. Graham did petition the Reformed Presbytery of the Northern District of the United States for permission to continue in the capacity of a teacher in the city of New York for a specified time after his restoration in order to enable him to discharge his debts, which permission was readily granted.

It, however, appears that the said Mr. Graham has been called to the pastoral charge of the Cannonsburgh congregation, under the care of the Reformed Presbytery of the Middle District of the United States, and has accepted that call; and that said Presbytery has hitherto abstained from carrying out the settlement into effect; and

Whereas, a fama clamosa exists to the grief of the godly and to the great scandal of religion, and of this Church in particular, That Mr. Graham, after having made

aforesaid professions of humility for his sins and scandal, and of a resolution to discharge his debts; and, after having pledged his word by letters to Ireland speedily so to do, has disappointed these expectations, has not only not discharged his foreign debts but also has involved himself in this country; that he has not proved true to his contracts; and that instead of exemplary humility in Christian and ministerial duties to which his own promise had pledged him, and which former falls under scandal and consequent censure might be expected to produce in a mind truly penitent and pious, his deportment is equivocal, frivolous and extravagant.

And farther in the reasons urged by the Middle Presbytery for refusing to install Mr. Graham in Cannonsburgh, are implicated charges which demand a process for trial.

Now, therefore, to the end that the purity and edification of this Church be promoted, that her faithfulness to God and the dignity of her discipline be duly supported, it is hereby enjoined by this Synod, on all subordinate judicatories to abstain from any steps toward the settlement of the said Mr. Graham, in any congregation, until said fama clamosa be fully tried. It is also enjoined on the Reformed Presbytery of the Middle District, under whose inspection Mr. Graham now is, to institute with all speed a process which shall try the truth of the aforesaid fama clamosa, and so defend the reputation of Mr. Graham, if the charges be unfounded, and defend the reputation of the discipline of the Church by the exercise of suitable censure if he is found guilty. And it is, moreover, enjoined upon all the judicatories and upon all the members of the Church, to aid the said Presbytery in procuring all necessary information to bring said trial to a just, impartial, prompt and faithful issue. And it is further ordered that the said Mr. Graham shall not be admitted to a seat in this Synod until the said trial is held and completed. And that a copy

of this determination be delivered by the Clerk of this Court, duly certified to the Presbytery of the Middle District and to the congregation of Cannonsburgh.

2. The Minutes of the last meeting of Synod were read.

3. The reports of the Committee appointed to restore Mr. Graham were received, read, and approved.

The Court adjourned till 3 o'clock, P.M.

Moderator concluded by prayer.

Eodem die et loco. 3 o'clock, P.M.

Synod met agreeable to adjournment. Same members ut supra.

1. Unfinished business called up. The fourth minute of last Synod respecting the aliens of our Communion. Referred.

2. The Committee appointed to dispose of Mr. Kell reported that they had taken Mr. Kell under trials, and had licensed him in Pittsburgh, and afterwards ordained him in South Carolina, as a Missionary to Tennessee, Ohio, etc., as appeared at length from their minutes, by which addition of ministerial aid to the Southern District, the Southern Presbytery was enabled to be organized.

The Court approve of the Committee.

3. Messrs. McLeod and Gibson were appointed a Committee to enquire if there are any causes of fasting, also of thanksgiving existing calling upon this Church to essay these duties, and if any to report them.

4. A report was received from the Superintendents of the Theological Seminary. Mr. James Milligan, a student of theology, was returned to Synod from the Seminary, duly certified by the Professor as having paid strict and punctual attendance to study in the proper literature of the institution during the course of two sessions successively; as possessing good talents and having made solid and respectable attainments; his character exceedingly amiable; his integrity and piety undoubted. Mr. Milligan was delivered into the care of the Northern Presbytery to be taken under trials for licensure.

Adjourned till tomorrow at 10 o'clock A.M.

Eodem loco. May 17th. 1811.

Pursuant to adjournment the Court met and was constituted. Same members ut antea. Rev. Gilbert McMaster, Moderator, and John Black, Clerk.

1. The minutes of the Southern Presbytery were received and read. They contained an account of their constitution; their taking some steps with Mr. McGarragh, etc.

They were approved.

2. A report was received from the Northern Presbytery and read. It embraced an account of their judicial transactions from the constitution, a statistical account of the churches under their care, and a review of the state of religion within their bounds. Their report was approved. None of the other Presbyteries had been able to forward Presbyterial reports. Their reasons were admitted, and they were directed to have them in readiness to present to the next meeting of Synod. Several verbal reports were received from different members respecting the state of religion within their bounds, which were satisfactory.

3. A copy of the Presbyterial letter to the Irish Presbytery, agreeable to the act of the former session of synod, was presented, read, and approved.

4. Mr. Wylie had been appointed to prepare a draft a ~~pastoral~~ presbyterial letter to the Scotch Presbytery, but as he had been prevented from attending the meeting of Synod, nothing was learned concerning it.

5. The Court agrees to send a Synodical Address to our sister courts in Britain and Ireland, and Messrs. Gibson and McMaster were appointed a Committee to prepare and transmit these Addresses with all convenient speed. Copies of these Addresses are to be laid before Synod at its next meeting.

6. The Presbyterial fund, and the fund for the Seminary, which were formerly united, are now made distinct. Dr. McLeod is continued treasurer of the Synodical fund.

7. Mr. John Thomson is appointed treasurer of the fund for the support of the Theological Seminary.

8. The Court appointed the following persons Collectors of whatever monies may be obtained for the support of the Seminary in their respective districts: —

In New York – Daniel Fisher and Andrew Gifford.

In Philadelphia – Robert Orr and Thomas McAdam.

In Conococheague – John Scouller and John Renfrew.

In Pittsburgh – William Gormley and John Hodge.

In Cannonsburgh & Monongahela – Thomas Hazleton, George Kirk & S. Wylie.

In Beaver – Samuel Sterrett, James Young and Daniel Love.

In South Carolina – Daniel McMillan, James Cunningham and Isaac Reed.

In Coldenham – James Clark, John Boyd and Robert Beattie.

In Kortright – James Maxwell and Alex. McCrea.

In Galway – Joseph Shearer, John Monteith, Walter Maxwell and James Young.

In Albany – Peter Doig.

In Ryegate – James Whitehill, Thomas McKeith and William Gilleland.

In Baltimore – Samuel Russell and James Jennings.

In Ohio – Nathaniel Kirkpatrick, David Mitchell and Samuel Hyndman.

In Tennessee – Samuel Little.

The Clerk of Synod is to notify each of these Collectors of his appointment, and therewith transmit a copy of the Constitution and Address.

9. Dr. McLeod and Mr. Black are appointed a Committee to make such extracts from former Minutes and Minutes of this meeting as they may think proper, and publish them with all convenient speed, and transmit copies to our sister judicatories in Britain and Ireland. Order of the day for tomorrow is the hearing of reports of Committees.

Adjourned until tomorrow at 10 o'clock, A.M.

Eodem loco. 18th. May, 1811.

Same members ut antea.

Gilbert McMaster, Moderator.

John Black, Clerk.

1. A statiscal table was received from the congregation of Philadelphia. Approved.

2. The Committee appointed to inquire if there be any causes of fasting, etc., were called to report. They reported

progress, asked and received leave to sit again.

3. The Court passed to the consideration of the sermon which was delivered at the opening of Synod. It was approved, and Mr. McMaster was requested to furnish the Court with a copy prepared for the press as soon as convenient, with which he complied.

4. The Court agree that a Committee be appointed to revise those sermons that are to be printed, and that Messrs. McLeod, Wylie, McMaster and Black be that Committee.

5. Mr. Wylie had been appointed to deliver a discourse at this meeting of Synod on the duty of providing for the Church an able and learned ministry, but on account of his necessary absence, the appointment could not be complied with. The Court, therefore, adopt the following Resolution:

Whereas, Prof. Wylie has again been prevented from delivering the discourse which he was appointed to preach on the duty, etc.; and it is highly important that that subject should have a public discussion, especially in the Western country; therefore —

Resolved, That he be directed to deliver such discourse before the Middle Presbytery at Pittsburgh during the summer session, and deliver a copy of it afterwards to the above Committee of Revision.

6. A letter addressed to the Moderator from the Rev. Mr. Wylie was received and read. It referred to another which was also read. These letters implicated the character of Mr. Graham still further. In one of these letters, which was in the ~~hands~~ hand writing of Mr. Graham and subscribed by him, Dr. McLeod was charged with making an attempt to remove Mr. Milligan from the Seminary by a letter written to Mr. Milligan to that purpose. Mr. Milligan was called to say if this were fact. He declared it was not fact.

7. The Committee formerly appointed to print and transmit the Overture, reported that they had been printed but there had not been any opportunity of transmitting them as directed, before the meeting of Synod. The Committee is continued, and ordered to transmit the Overtures as soon as possible to our sister Courts in Europe.

8. Messrs. McLeod and McMaster were appointed a Committee to draft rules for the regulation of Synod in managing the judicial business.

9. The next meeting of Synod is appointed to be held in Pittsburgh.

10. Messrs. Hazleton and Beattie asked and received leave of absence for the remainder of the sessions.

Adjourned till Monday next at 10 o'clock A.M.

Eodem loco. May 20th.

The Synod met agreeable to adjournment and was opened with prayer. Same members ut antea with the exception of Messrs. Hazleton and Beattie. Mr. Hazleton, however, shortly appeared and took his seat.

1. Reports of Committees called for. The Committee appointed to draft rules for Synod presented a draft which was read, amended and sanctioned. Referred to the Committee for the publication of the Minutes.

2. The Committee appointed to prepare causes of fasting, etc., reported an incomplete copy, which was read and approved so far as it went, the completion and publication of which was committed to the Committee for the publication of the extracts of the Minutes. The Synod appointed the first Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving, and the last Thursday of December next to be observed as a day of fasting and humiliation.

3. It was moved for the reconsideration of the minute referring Mr. Graham for trial to the Middle Presbytery. The Court determined in the negative.

4. Resolved, That Mr. Reilly's time be disposed of in the following proportion — the Northern Presbytery shall have one-third thereof until the next meeting of Synod, to commence from the twentieth of June, 1811.

5. The Synod appointed the next meeting on the second Tuesday of August, 1812, at 3 o'clock P.M. Rev. Dr. McLeod to open the Synod by a sermon on "The Doctrine of Man's Disability to Comply with the Gospel Offer without Divine Assistance."

6. Resolved, that if Mr. Milligan be licensed by the Northern Presbytery he shall spend one-half his time till next

meeting of Synod within the bounds of the Northern Presbytery, and the other half within the bounds of the Middle Presbytery.

7. That either the Middle or Northern Presbytery is hereby authorized to ordain Mr. Reilly, if it find him duly qualified, and send him out as a missionary, if, in its judgment, it be found eligible.

Moderator concluded by prayer.

(Signed) Gilbert McMaster, Moderator.

John Black, Clerk.