

Session V. — 1816.

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Philadelphia, May 16th, 1816.

Pursuant to adjournment the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met, and, agreeable to appointment, was opened with a sermon by Rev. John Black from Psalm 4:14, “We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.” After the sermon the Court was constituted, and afterwards adjourned to meet in Mr. Wylie’s Church tomorrow at half past 9 o’clock A.M.

Comment [NJP1]: [sic]

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Half past 9 o’clock, A.M. May 17, 1816.

The Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator of the last session, the Rev. Dr. McLeod; and, the Rules being read, the Synod chose the Rev. William Gibson, Moderator, and re-appointed the Rev. John Black, Clerk.

Upon calling the roll there appeared from the —

————— Northern Presbytery. —————		
Ministers.	Elders.	Congregations.
Alexander McLeod	Andrew Gifford	New York.
James Milligan	— — — —	Coldenham.
Gilbert McMaster	— — — —	Duanesburgh.
William Gibson	— — — —	Ryegate.

Middle Presbytery.		
Samuel B. Wylie — — — — John Black Robert Wallace	William Henry John Renfrew — — — — — — — —	Philadelphia. Conococheague. Pittsburgh. Licking Creek.
Southern Presbytery.		
John Kell John Reilly	— — — — — — — —	Beech Woods. Little Rocky Creek.

Absent: Rev. Matthew Williams of the Middle Presbytery, and Rev. Thomas Donnelly of the Southern Presbytery.

John Reilly had been ordained since the last meeting of Synod, and settled within the bounds of the Southern Presbytery. He was recognized as a member of Synod.

The unfinished business appearing on the minutes of the former meeting of Synod was called up. Referred.

A Synodical Address was received from the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and read.

A Synodical Address was also received from the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and read.

These valuable and highly important documents afforded us great satisfaction. The spirit of brotherly love, cordial cooperation, and ardent wishes for the prosperity of the Church in the United States, with which these Addresses everywhere breathed, was to us highly consolatory.

Resolved, That Synodical Addresses be transmitted to our sister judicatories in Britain and Ireland. Mr. Wylie is appointed to address the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and Mr. Black the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in the name of this Synod.

Resolved, That a Committee of three be appointed to examine the present arrangements of Presbyteries within the bounds of this Synod, and report with all convenient speed whether any, and if any, what new arrangement of Presbyteries is necessary. Agreed that Revs. McLeod, Wylie, and Kell be that Committee. Agreed that Rev. John Reilly be

added to this Committee.

A Committee was appointed to enquire if there be any causes of fasting and thanksgiving, to call this Synod and those under their inspection to essay these duties, and, if any, to report them. Dr. McLeod and Mr. Black that Committee.

Adjourned to meet tomorrow at 10 o'clock A.M.

May 18, 1816, 10 o'clock A.M.

The Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator. Same members ut antea.

1. Mr. Robert Wallace, who had been ordained by the Middle Presbytery, appeared, and was introduced to the Court by the Rev. John Black. On motion he was admitted to a seat in Synod.

2. The Committee on Foreign Correspondence was called to report whether they had written to our sister Courts in Britain and Ireland. They reported that they had, and produced duplicates of their addresses to the foreign Synods, which were read and approved.

3. The Overtures for a Directory of Worship, etc., were called up. They were referred to a Committee consisting of Revs. McLeod and Milligan. This Committee are instructed to prepare, along with the Overtures, a draft of a form of Church Government. Agreed that all the documents be referred to that Committee, and at the next meeting of Synod they report, with their own comments thereon.

4. The Committee appointed at last Synod to publish extracts of the Minutes, causes of fastings, etc., were called on to report. They reported that they had not complied with the appointment, and offered reasons which were sustained.

5. Enquiry was made at Dr. McLeod if he had complied with his appointment to draft a form of a Covenant and suitable address to our own Church, and the churches around, accompanying it. He replied that he had not, except in part, and offered reasons which were sustained; particularly that our brethren in Scotland were engaged in a similar work, and it would be prudent to await the result.

Referred until the next meeting of Synod. Mr. Wylie was appointed to draft an Address to our own and other churches to accompany the form of Covenant, and to report at next Synod.

6. Petitions from Ohio and Washington city, craving ministerial aid, were received and referred to the Middle Presbytery.

7. Reports of Presbyteries were called for. The Northern Presbytery presented a report of their proceedings since the last meeting of Synod, which was read and approved.

Adjourned till Monday at 9 o'clock A.M.

Philadelphia, May 20th. 1816, 9 o'clock.

The Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator. After prayer the roll was called, and all the former members answered to their names.

The Committee appointed to enquire into the present arrangements of the Presbyteries presented a report, which, with some amendments, was adopted, and is as follows:— The Committee report that, having duly considered the existing arrangements of the Presbyterian boundaries, they esteem it inconvenient, and capable of amendment. The great object of organizing different Presbyteries in the Church is the dispatch of business with the least possible inconvenience, and every arrangement of the boundaries should always be received as carried into effect with the most liberal construction consistent with good order. The contiguity of ecclesiastical officers, and the facility of administration, being more important considerations than mere geographical residence. The Committee recommend to Synod the immediate organization of four distinct Presbyteries.

1. The Northern Presbytery — including all that part of America which lies to the north and east of the Pennsylvania line.

2. The Middle Presbytery — including the States of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and that part of Ohio which lies north-east of the Muskingum river.

3. The Southern Presbytery — which includes that part of the United States that lies south of the line along the northern boundary of North Carolina and Tennessee.

4. The Western Presbytery — including the whole of the remaining States and Territories.

The Southern Presbytery reported. It was received, and ordered to lie on the table.

On motion the Synod took up the following resolution. Whereas, our Lord Jesus Christ has expressly provided that they who serve at the altar should live by the altar, and nothing but extraordinary circumstances should allow this maxim to be dispensed with; and,

Whereas, there appears such a degree of apathy on the part of the people of the United States to make adequate provision for the ambassadors of Christ — such a degree of apathy as to give just cause for anxiety, it is —

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to inquire whether the ministers and probationers belonging to our Church have adequate support; and if not, what way be the best means to remedy this inconvenience. Messrs. Wylie, McLeod, Black, Kell and Reilly were appointed a Committee of Finance for the above purpose, with power to send for persons and papers.

Adjourned till Wednesday at half past 9 o'clock A.M.

22nd. May, 1816. Half past nine o'clock A.M.

The Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator.

1. Committees were called to report. The Committee appointed to enquire respecting causes of fasting and thanksgiving declared that they were not in a state of readiness. The Committee appointed to enquire into the provision made for our ministers, respectfully reported progress.

2. A petition was referred to this Court from the Middle Presbytery. It had been presented to that Court by Samuel Wylie, licentiate, praying to be excused from appointments for a certain time not specified. Order was taken on that petition, and, after due consideration, the Court resolved that the prayer of the petitioner be granted.

3. A motion to have Mr. Wylie sent to Clark's Run, Ohio, was negatived.

4. Certain references were made to this Court from the Middle Presbytery respecting Samuel Robinson, licentiate. They were recommitted to the Middle Presbytery.

Synod appoints its next meeting at Coldenham, in the State of New York, on the first Wednesday of September, 1817.

The Synod expressed its approbation of the sermon preached by the Rev. John Black at the opening of Synod, and request a copy thereof for publication. Mr. Black complied.

Professor Wylie was called on the furnish a copy of the discourse on the duty of providing for the Church an able and learned ministry, which, on a former occasion, he was prevented by indisposition from delivery before this Court. The Professor is also enjoined to open the next meeting of Synod with a sermon on Evangelical Psalmody.

The Committee appointed to enquire whether the support of our ministers be adequate, made the following report, viz: that they had reduced their inquiries to three questions:

(1) What any congregation, according to the opinion of its pastor, is able in existing circumstances to give for the support of the gospel?

(2) What the pastor can comfortably live upon?

(3) What the congregation actually do give?

These questions were severally answered according to the list subjoined. The Synod then —

Resolved, 1. That this list shall remain on file.

2. That Synod enjoin on each congregation to pay their pastor according to the respective assessments hereunto annexed, and if there be found a deficit, the minister shall be at liberty to dispose of so much of his time, in whatever manner he may find convenient, as shall cover the deficit; and this shall be exclusion of the time he shall be obliged to spend in attending Church judicatories and Presbyterial appointments. 3. That the session of every settled congregation be furnished with an extract of this minute.

Report of the Board of Superintendents of the Theological Seminary.

The Superintendents report to the Synod that they have attended to the public exhibitions of the students respectively. And

that agreeably to the Constitution of the Seminary they have examined the students in the several classes upon the proper subjects of literature prescribed in this institution. That these students, without exception, have acquitted themselves to the satisfaction of the Board, and are referred to their respective classes in the Seminary, viz: William M. Engles and Robert Gibson to the second class for the next session; and Archibald Johnston, John Gibson and Samuel W. Crawford to the third class.

The Superintendents, moreover, recommend to Synod to pass an act whereby the Presbyteries shall be authorized to take under their immediate care, and to license for preaching in the vacancies, the students in the Seminary who have with approbation passed through the third session of the theological school, and employ them during the vacation, remanding them to their studies at the commencement of their last session. And that this plan shall be adopted in the future with all the students in the Seminary.

The Superintendents also recommend to the consideration of Synod, that they take measures for raising funds for the support of the Theological Seminary, and propose the following resolution:

Resolved, That the officers of each congregation in the communion of this Synod, be directed to raise in their respective congregations, a sum of money annually for the support of the theological school, which shall at least amount to as much as one dollar for every male member of the congregation; while it is confidently expected that those who find themselves in inability will exercise their Christian liberality in giving as much more as their circumstances will admit. And that a collection be raised for the aid of the Seminary on the Sabbath preceeding each minister's leaving home to attend Synod. The first payment of this money to be made by every congregation on or before the first day of December, 1816. The Synod unanimously adopt these resolutions.

At the request of the members who are to form the Western Presbytery, the Rev. William Gibson, of the Northern Presbytery, is appointed by Synod to assist in the carrying into execution the organization of that Presbytery.

Dr. McLeod and Mr. Black are appointed a Committee to publish such extracts of the Minutes of this and last Synod as to them may appear proper.

Adjourned till tomorrow at 9 o'clock A.M.

May 23d, 1816.

Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator Same members ut antea.

Resolved, That for the year 1816, five hundred dollars (\$500.) be appropriated for the Professor, as some compensation for his official services in the Seminary. The rest of the funds to be at the disposal of the Superintendents according to their own discretion.

The Committee appointed to publish extracts of the Minutes are hereby authorized, in connection with these Minutes, to publish all the Minutes that have been heretofore published. Copies of which shall be sent to the sister judicatories in Britain and Ireland.

It is ordered that all the sermons already preached at the opening of judicatories shall be printed as early as possible before the next meeting of Synod; and all such sermons, copies of which have not been furnished the Committee on revision and publication, shall be furnished with all convenient speed.

A Presbyterian report was received from the Reformed Presbytery of the Middle District. It was read and approved. It represented the pleasing intelligence of growth and increase within the bounds of that Presbytery, the organization of new congregations, the presentation of calls, and the acceptance of these calls in two congregations.

Resolved, That the Professor enter in an honorable manner, in a book for that purpose, the names of donors to the Theological Seminary, together with a statement of the

donations bestowed.

The Committee appointed to enquire whether there be any causes of thanksgiving and fasting, report that, in their opinion, there were causes for both. Their report is as follows: The Committee report, that this Synod have cause of thanksgiving for the common mercies of life, the increase of their Churches, the restoration of peace to our country, and the consequent restoration of our correspondence with our sister judicatories abroad.

Resolved, That the first Thursday of November be observed as a day of thanksgiving, and that the Synod's Clerk shall furnish the Clerk of each Presbytery with a copy of this act. Adopted unanimously by Synod.

In relation to the causes of fasting, the Committee report that the state of the moral world, the increasing power of the man of sin, the prevalence of irreligion in our country, and the remaining corruptions which retard the progress of personal religion, demand that attention be paid to the duty of fasting.

The Committee recommend accordingly that the first Thursday of February ensuing, be observed as a day of fasting; and that a copy of this act be transmitted to the Clerk of each Presbytery.

The Synod unanimously adopt and ratify the above report of this Committee.

No more business appearing before Synod, the Moderator concluded by prayer and the singing of a Psalm.

(Signed).

William Gibson, Moderator.

John Black, Clerk.