

Session VI. — 1817.

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Coldenham, Sept. 3rd. 1817.

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church having met, the Rev. James Milligan (Dr. Wylie, who was to have preached on the occasion, not being present) opened the meeting by a sermon from Mal. 2:7, "For the priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts."

The Moderator of Synod not being present, the Rev. John Black, the senior minister, took the chair and by prayer constituted the Synod. Members present from the —

Northern Presbytery.		
Ministers.	Elders.	Congregations.
Alexander McLeod	John Agnew	New York.
"	Andrew Gifford	"
James R. Willson	Robert Beattie	Coldenham.
"	David Rainey	"
"	William C. Beattie	"
"	James Clark	"
James Milligan	— — — —	Ryegate.
Gilbert McMaster	— — — —	Duanesburgh.
Middle Presbytery.		
Robert Lusk	— — — —	Conococheague.
John Black	— — — —	Pittsburgh.
John Cannon	— — — —	Greensburgh.

John Agnew and Robert Beattie were the only ruling elders certified from the Northern Presbytery. There being no ruling elders qualified from the other churches, James Clark and Andrew Gifford were invited to take seats in Synod, which they did accordingly.

The Revs. Robert Lusk and John Cannon of the Middle Presbytery, being ordained since the last meeting, were introduced by Rev. John Black and accordingly recognized as members of Synod.

At the request of Rev. Robert Lusk, David Rainey was admitted to a seat as a ruling elder. At the request of Rev. John Cannon,

William Beattie took a seat in a similar character.

Rev. Robert Lusk was chosen Moderator, and Rev. Gilbert McMaster Clerk pro tem while the stated Clerk, Rev. John Black, occupied the chair.

The Minutes of the last meeting being read, it was moved and carried that the consideration of unfinished business be postponed until tomorrow.

Papers being called for, a letter, No. 1, from Rev. Dr. Wylie was presented and read, resigning the professorship in the Theological Seminary.

A letter from the Southern Presbytery, No. 2, was also presented and read.

Presbyterial reports being called for, the Northern Presbytery not being ready to report, the Middle Presbytery reported on their state. Their report, No. 3, was sustained.

After some remarks on the letter from the Southern Presbytery, it was ordered that the Clerk write to it an answer.

A Committee consisting of Revs. Gilbert McMaster and Robert Lusk were appointed to report whether any, and if any, what causes of fasting and thanksgiving exist in the bounds of this Synod.

The resignation of Dr. Wylie was referred to a Committee of Dr. McLeod and Mr. Black to report thereon with all convenient speed.

Moved to adjourn till tomorrow at 10 o'clock A.M. Carried.

Adjourned by prayer.

Sept. 4, 1817.

Synod met and was called to order by the Moderator.

Same members ut antea.

1. A remonstrance from a number of members in Coldenham was received and referred.

2. Rev. John Black was called on to say whether he had fulfilled his appointment in writing to the Reformed Synod in Ireland. He answered that he had written, and produced a duplicate which was read and approved.

3. The Committee appointed to prepare the Directories, draft of Covenant, etc., were called to state if they were in readiness to report. They declared they were not, and offered reasons

which were sustained.

4. Mr. Black was called on to state whether he had prepared the sermon for the press which he delivered at the opening of last Synod. He was not in readiness, and offered reasons which were sustained, and the appointment was continued.

5. A remonstrance was presented to Synod from some members in Coldenham praying that the act of Synod, usually called the Deficit Act, be repealed for reasons therein stated. Not granted.

6. On motion it was agreed that the above act, called the Deficit Act, be suspended in its operations until next meeting of Synod.

7. The several ministers of Synod were called to report respecting the fund for the support of the Theological Seminary. Something had been done. The further consideration of which was referred, together with the remaining minutes, until tomorrow.

8. Whereas, the importance of correct religious and moral principles is universally confessed by the friends of truth and evangelical order; and aware that the regular preaching of the Word of God is not the only means of leavening the public mind; and knowing the powerful tendency of small publications to influence general opinion among that class of the community whose time and business do not admit of extensive reading, therefore, Resolved, That a Committee of two be appointed to inquire into the expediency of raising a fund, and apply that fund in the publishing of tracts for distribution; and of the most proper course to be pursued to attain the object of this resolution; and that said Committee report with all convenient speed.

Resolved, Also that said Committee inquire into the expediency of making arrangements to carry more extensively through our country by missionaries the knowledge of our principles, and that they report accordingly. Revs. John Black and Gilbert McMaster are appointed that Committee.

9. Whereas, A judicial Testimony for truth and against errors and immoral practices, unaccompanied with an argumentative defence of the one and a refutation of the other, must be defective; and, as a promise has been given by the highest judicatory of this Church that such a defence and refu-

tation as a third part of our Testimony may be expected, therefore, Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the subject and report on the propriety of redeeming their pledge at this time, and to suggest the fittest mode for accomplishing that purpose.

Resolved, That this Committee consist of three members, viz: Revs. McLeod, Milligan and Lusk.

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

The Moderator concluded by prayer.

Coldenham, Sept. 5, 1817.

Agreeable to adjournment the Court met and was called to order by the Moderator.

1. The minutes of the last sederunt were read, and the unfinished business arising therefrom proceeded to.

2. The Committee to whom was referred the inquiry concerning the causes of fasting and thanksgiving report — That from the consideration of general tranquility, the sending of the Word of Life to the nations lying in darkness, and more particularly as it respects our own country; peace commensurate with her territory; the facilities for acquiring knowledge rapidly increasing; and the husbandman's toil amply repaid; all of which is calculated to excite grateful emotions in the Christian's heart, call for expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving to the living God.

But the Church is still in the wilderness. The witnesses are still prophesying in sackcloth. Vain, therefore, must be the hopes of her sons, and gloomy the prospects for a more glorious state of Zion's prosperity if causes of fasting and mourning do not still remain. The apathy that pervades the moral world in general; the unhallowed combinations of the old world; the loose and incorrect views of gospel doctrines, of vital godliness and of Christian deportment in our own country under the specious name of liberality and charity, too generally betray a spirit of lukewarmness and indifference to the institutions of the Redeemer. All of which loudly call for fasting, mourning and humiliation before God.

Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the first Thursday of November next be observed by this Synod, and all under their inspection, as a day of thanksgiving ; and the first Thursday of February, 1818, as a day of fasting and humiliation. This report was adopted by Synod.

3. Enquiry was made at the several ministers of Synod whether their congregations had complied with the act respecting funds for the Theological Seminary.

Mr. Black reported that the congregation of Pittsburgh had raised and sent with him to the Treasurer, \$42, but had not been able to comply with that part of the act which required the first payment to be made on or before the 1st of December, 1816.

Mr. Cannon reported that the congregation of Greensburgh had sent with him \$33 for the same purpose.

Mr. Lusk reported that the congregation of Conococheague had, according to his impressions, raised \$30. or thereabouts.

Dr. McLeod reported that for the congregation of New York he had placed at the disposal of the Treasurer \$100.

The congregations of Duanesburgh and Galway had previously transmitted to the treasury \$72.75.

Mr. Milligan reported that the congregation of Coldenham had raised \$30. which was ready to be sent to the Treasurer.

From the congregations of Ryegate, Cannonsburgh, Beaver, and those of the Western and Southern Presbyteries it did not appear that any remittances had been made.

Mr. J.R. Willson was called on to say whether he knew what had been done respecting the theological fund in Philadelphia. He stated that according to his impression there had been an order for \$100. placed under the control of the Treasurer. Mr. Willson afterward found that he had made an incorrect statement. The congregation of Philadelphia were willing and ready to do this, and did formally do so, after the meeting of Synod.

The whole amount collected appeared to be \$319.75, and with the addition from Coldenham, makes a total of \$335.00.

On motion it was agreed that the act of last Synod for raising funds for the Theological Seminary be so amended as to read as follows: —

Resolved, That the officers of each congregation be requested to make a collection in their respective bounds once in every year for the support of the Theological Seminary.

5. The members were called on to state whether they had observed in their respective congregations the days appointed by Synod for fasting and humiliation. These days had been observed.

6. The Committee to whom was referred the consideration of the Argumentative Part of the Testimony reported —

(1) That it would be desirable to have this part of the plan, long since postponed, carried into execution.

(2) They recommend the appointment, with all convenient speed, of several writers to the several subjects which this work contemplates, and that their writings be so extended as collectively to make a sufficient copy for three or four hundred pages, 12 mo, and that the following subjects be embraced: viz — Infidelity, Socinianism, Universalism, Arminianism, Hopkinsianism, Prelacy and Popery, Methodism, Independency, the Anabaptist controversy, Lutherans German Calvinists, Reformed Dutch Church, General Assembly Presbyterians, and the Secession controversy.

The Synod adopted this report and —

Resolved, That the apportioning of the several subjects, and the writers unto whom they are to be apportioned, shall be referred to the next meeting of Synod.

7. The Committee to whom was referred the resolutions on the formation of a Tract Society, reported —

(1) That it is expedient that such an institution be established.

(2) On the subject of Missions, the Committee respectfully recommended an immediate attention to this subject. It is confessedly important; much good can be done in sending out members who shall faithfully exhibit a correct view of evangelical truth and order.

The Committee recommended that voluntary contributions be solicited to enable Synod to carry this measure into effect. And that a Committee be appointed to receive such monies as may be collected, and to apply them in a manner they deem most efficient for the attainment of this object.

The Synod adopt this report, but agree that the opera-

tion of the article respecting Missionaries be postponed until the next meeting of Synod.

8. On motion it was agreed to reconsider the deed of Synod respecting the suspension of the Deficit Act until the next meeting of Synod. On reconsideration it was repealed; and, on motion, it was agreed that the Deficit Act be repealed.

Against this decision Dr. McLeod and Rev. John Black entered their protest, for reasons therein detailed, and which is kept on file.

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

The Moderator concluded by prayer.

Sept. 6, 1817.

The Court met and was called to order. Same members as before with the exception of Andrew Gifford.

1. The Superintendents of the Theological Seminary reported, That it was beyond the power of the majority of them to meet at the appointed time in Philadelphia in May last, that Dr. McLeod alone attended at that time, and that he and the Professor heard the public exercises of the students with great satisfaction, and gave them directions how to act until the next meeting of Synod. The three who finished their studies, Archibald Johnston, John Gibson and Samuel W. Crawford, and also Samuel Wylie, who had liberty of returning to attend another season at the Seminary, were disposed of as follows: — Johnston and Gibson to the Northern Presbytery. Crawford to the Middle Presbytery. Wylie to the Southern Presbytery.

There are now in the Seminary five alumni, viz: Charles B. McKee, Melancthon B. Williams and Samuel M. Willson, now admitted to the second class; and William M. Engles and Robert Gibson to the third class. The Synod approve of this report.

2. On motion it was agreed that James R. Willson, licentiate of the Middle Presbytery, be transferred by Synod to the Northern Presbytery, and likewise that they take steps for his ordination with all convenient speed.

3. The Committee to whom was referred the letter containing Dr. Wylie's resignation of the professorate, report:

Comment [NJP1]: This line is the normal size in the original, but it contains too much text to be able to be placed on one line in this digital document

That after mature deliberation they are constrained to recommend to this Synod —

(1) That Dr. Wylie's resignation be accepted.

(2) That the thanks of this Church be returned to the Rev. Professor for his great and faithful labors, and his excellent instructions during the continuance in that important office.

(3) That every exertion be used to pay with all convenient speed to Dr. Wylie the sum of \$500. allowed him by Synod for the last year.

(4) That the operation of the act establishing the Theological Seminary be suspended until the next meeting of Synod.

Comment [NJP2]: Triple underline in the original.

4. Synod appointed its next meeting at Pittsburgh, on the last Tuesday of May, 1818, at 3 o'clock P.M.

5. Messrs. Johnston, Gibson and Crawford are referred to the Middle Presbytery.

6. Whereas: The importance of a national recognition of the true religion is felt and confessed; and, the facilities at this time for introducing the subject before the public, are greater than they ever have been; and —

Whereas: It is the duty of this Church to employ all proper means in her power to obtain an assertion by the nations of the earth, and especially of our own country, of the claims of Messiah, therefore, as a previously necessary measure,

Resolved, That a Committee of three members be appointed to inquire what Amendments in the Constitution of the United States would be necessary to render it fit to be recognized as God's moral ordinance, and that said Committee report at the next meeting of Synod. Revs. Alexander McLeod, Samuel B. Wylie and Gilbert McMaster were appointed that Committee. On motion the Rev. John Black was added to the Committee.

Adjourned till tomorrow at 6 o'clock P.M.

At 6 o'clock no business appearing at present, the meeting is adjourned till tomorrow at 3 o'clock P.M.

The Synod met agreeably to adjournment. The Moderator, the Rev. Robert Lusk being absent without leave. Dr. McLeod was called to the chair.

1. The Rev. Mr. James R. Willson was introduced to Synod by Rev. Gilbert McMaster as a member of the Northern Presbytery. He was invited to a seat accordingly.

2. On motion the Rev. Thomas Donnelly was appointed to open the next meeting of Synod with a sermon on the doctrine of Imputed Righteousness, and he failing, the Rev. John Cannon is to be his substitute.

3. A Presbyterial report was received from the Northern Presbytery, and read. It reported the removal of the Rev. James Milligan from his charge at Coldenham, with an intention to fix him at Ryegate, Vermont; the ordination of Mr. James R. Willson, and his installment as pastor of the church in Coldenham, etc.

The report was accepted and adopted.

No more business appearing before Synod, the Moderator concluded by prayer, and singing the 133d. Psalm.

(Signed).

Alexander McLeod, Mod. pro tem.
John Black, Synod clerk.