

Session VIII. — 1819.

Conococheague, Aug. 10, 1819.

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America met, agreeable to appointment, and was opened with a sermon by the Rev. James R. Willson from Rom. 5:18, "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

The service being finished, the Court adjourned till 3 o'clock P.M. The Moderator concluded by prayer.

3 o'clock P.M.

Synod met agreeable to adjournment. Rev. Thomas Donnelly was called to the Moderator's chair.

The Court proceeded to ascertain the members of the present Synod, when it appeared that there were present from the —

Northern Presbytery.		
Ministers.	Elders.	Congregations.
Alexander McLeod James R. Willson Gilbert McMaster James Milligan	- - - - - - - - James Young - - - -	New York. Coldenham. Duanesburgh. Ryegate.
Middle Presbytery.		
Samuel B. Wylie John Gibson Robert Lusk John Black - - - - John Cannon	- - - - - - - - John Thomson William Gormley Joseph Cowen - - - -	Philadelphia. Baltimore. Conococheague. Pittsburgh. " Greensburgh.
Western Presbytery.		
- - - - Samuel Wylie	William Mitchell - - - -	Massie's Creek. Bethel.
Southern Presbytery.		
Thomas Donnelly John Reilly	- - - - - - - -	Big Rocky Creek. Little Rocky Creek.

The Court then proceeded to the choice of a Moderator, and the Rev. John Cannon was called to the chair. The stated Clerk, the Rev. John Black, not being present, the Rev. Robert Lusk was appointed pro tempore.

1. After the reading of the Minutes of the constitution, Rev. Robert Lusk requested and obtained leave to read an extract from the minutes of a Committee of the Middle Presbytery, which stated that Mr. John Gibson, formerly a licentiate under the inspection of that Presbytery, had, on the 15th. of December, 1818, been ordained to the holy ministry and settled in the pastoral charge of a congregation in Baltimore. On motion, the Rev. John Gibson was called to a seat in Synod. He took his seat accordingly.

2. A letter from the session of the congregation of Baltimore was presented and read, stating that John Renfrew, ruling elder in the congregation of Conococheague, had been duly elected by that session to represent them in Synod. Whereupon Synod —

Resolved, That it is inconsistent with Presbyterian Church government for any Church judicatory to appoint as their representative to a superior judicatory and church officer who is not at the time of appointment a member of the Court which he represents. The principle on which this appointment was made was rejected.

3. Original papers were called for, but none being in a state of readiness to be presented, it was agreed that the Argumentative Part of the Testimony be called for and discussed. The Rev. James Milligan, to whom had been referred “The Whole Anti-Trinitarian Controversy” read an extract on that subject. After some animadversions on which, the Court adjourned till tomorrow at 9 o’clock A.M. Moderator concluded by prayer.

Wednesday, Aug. 11, 1819.

Eodem loco. The Court met pursuant to adjournment and was called to order by the Moderator.

Same members ut antea.

1. Rev. J. R. Willson read the piece he had prepared on the subject assigned him in the Argumentative Part of the Testimony, viz: "On the German, Lutheran and Calvinist Churches."

2. Agreed that the consideration of the Book of Discipline shall be the business of the afternoon.

3. A Committee was appointed to enquire whether there be any, and if any, what causes of thanksgiving and fasting call on this Synod to observe these duties. Revs. Thomas Donnelly and Samuel Wylie that Committee.

4. Reports of Presbyteries were called for.

5. The Northern Presbytery presented their report. In this report there is a reference to Synod respecting the societies of New Milford and vicinity, to determine whether they ought to be placed under the inspection of the Northern Presbytery, though within the bounds of the Middle Presbytery, as their local situation places them more convenient to the care of the Northern Presbytery. This report was accepted, and the Synod agree that for the present these societies be placed under the inspection of the Northern Presbytery.

6. The Western Presbytery presented their report. This report stated that Mr. Samuel Robinson had been by them ordained to the holy ministry; that, however, they had been obliged to suspend him on a fama clamosa of intemperance, until his case should be judicially cognized. The Presbytery requested supplies of probationers, and stated the conduct of a probationer within their bounds who did not hold himself amenable to them.

7. The request for probationers was referred, and a Committee was appointed to inquire into the conduct of the probationer mentioned in the above report, and also to inquire into the conduct of Presbytery in the ordination of Mr. Samuel Robinson.

Revs. J. R. Willson and Thomas Donnelly, with elders William Gormley and William Mitchell are that Committee.

Adjourned till half past 2 o'clock P.M.

Eodem die et loco. Half past 2 o'clock, P.M.

The Court met and was constituted. Same members ut supra.

1. The order of the day was the consideration of the Book of Discipline.
2. It was agreed that a whole section be read through, and afterwards paragraph by paragraph.
3. First section on "The Admission of Members" was thus read and passed.
4. The second section was read and considered, on which considerable discussion took place, until the Court adjourned to meet at 9 o'clock A.M. tomorrow.

Thursday, Aug. 12, 1819. Eodem loco.

The Court met agreeable to adjournment. Same members ut antea.

1. The Minutes of the last sederunt were read. Dr. S. B. Wylie and Rev. John Black appeared and took their seats.
 2. It was under consideration from the last sederunt whether the latter part of the second member of the first sentence be expunged or not? After much discussion it was agreed to expunge.
 3. The third section was read and approved.
 4. The Second Chapter was read, and with some amendments which were inserted, it was approved.
- Adjourned till half past 2 o'clock P.M.

Half past 2 o'clock P.M.

Synod met and were called to order by the Moderator. Same members ut supra.

The reading of the Book of Discipline resumed. Chapter Three was under consideration. Section One "Of Scandals." The third paragraph held in retentis. This Section was approved. Section Two "Of Process." This Section, with certain amendments which were inserted, were approved. Section Three "Of References." Approved. Section Four "Of Censures." Approved. Chapter Four. Section one — "Suspension." Section two — "Deposition." Section three — "Excommunication." An amendment

took place on the last, which was inserted, and then the whole chapter was approved. Chapter Five — “Re-Admission of Excluded Members.” This chapter, with amendments which were inserted, were approved.

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

Friday, Aug. 13, 1819.

The Court met agreeable to adjournment. Same members ut antea.

1. The Minutes of the former sederunt were read.
2. The Minutes of the last Synod were read.
3. The Clerk of this Synod is enjoined to write to the Treasurer of the Board of Deacons of the Coldenham congregation, intimating to them that their names are in the Synod's books for \$30. promised, but not paid, for the use of the Theological Seminary.
4. Dr. S. B. Wylie is continued as the writer on the refutation of Infidelity in the Argumentative Part of the Testimony.
5. The consideration of the remaining essays of the Argumentative Part of the Testimony is referred. The Overture for the Directory for Worship is also referred. The Form of Church Government is likewise referred.
6. The Address to our own connections is referred to Dr. McLeod.
7. Rev. J. R. Willson is requested to furnish the Committee on Revision with a copy of the sermon he delivered at the opening of Synod, as soon as convenient. With this request Mr. Willson complied.
8. The Synod agree that the publication of Synodical sermons be referred.
9. The consideration of the pecuniary concerns of Synod is also referred.
10. It is agreed that the report of the Committee on Missions be received and referred.
11. The Synod agree that a Committee be appointed to inquire into the state of the Southern Presbytery, and report thereon. Revs. J. R. Willson, Samuel Wylie and Elder John Thomson are that committee.

12. The report of the Committee to inquire into the conduct of the Western Presbytery in relation to the ordination of Mr. Samuel Robinson, and also into the conduct of Mr. Archibald Johnston, licentiate, was received and considered. Synod adopted the following resolution: —

Resolved, That this Court disapprove of the conduct of the Western Presbytery as highly imprudent in ordaining Mr. Samuel Robinson in opposition to the will of a number of the members, who understood that the ordination would be a violation of the order of Synod.

Adjourned till half past 2 o'clock P.M.

Half past 2 o'clock P.M.

The Court met and was called to order by the Moderator. Same members ut supra.

1. The remainder of the report of the Committee on the affairs of the Western Presbytery, in as far as it respects Mr. Archibald Johnston, under consideration. It is agreed that the recommendatory part of the report, as far as it respects Mr. Johnston, be stricken out, and that the report as amended be received.

2. The Committee on the affairs of the Southern Presbytery reported. They reported that the Presbytery is at present dissolved; that they have collected all the papers relative to the affairs of the Southern Presbytery, which they respectfully present to Synod without expressing any opinion thereon. This report was received, and the papers read and made the order of the day for tomorrow forenoon.

3. A letter from Mr. James Miller, from the neighborhood of Xenia, Ohio, praying for Synod's interference in relation to the Rev. Jonathan Gill's session, was received, read, and ordered to lie on the table.

4. The consideration of the Directory of Worship was taken up. Five Chapters, viz: First, Second Third, and Fourth, were read and adopted.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock A.M. tomorrow.

Comment [NJP1]: [sic] Nothing is said of the remaining chapter

Saturday, Aug. 14, 1819, 8 o'clock A.M.

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

1. The Clerk not being present, Rev. J. R. Willson read a report, and it was received for consideration. The roll was then called. Same members ut antea.

The order of the day was postponed until the completion of the Directory of Worship, the consideration of which was resumed, and continued until it was gone through. Some amendments were made on the Articles on "Baptism" and the "Lord's Supper," which were inserted in their proper places, and these Articles, thus amended, were approved. Some amendments were also made on Chapter Five on "Marriage," which were also inserted, and then approved.

Adjourned till half past 2 o'clock P.M.

Half past 2 o'clock P.M.

The court met according to adjournment and was opened with prayer by the Moderator. Same members ut supra.

1. The Southern Presbytery's business was taken up. After discussing all the papers, and hearing all the parties at length, the Synod came to the following resolutions:

(1) That the Synod see nothing improper in the deportment of the Rev. John Reilly as it respects being a ringleader and exciting disturbance to the injury of the Rev. Thomas Donnelly, as charged by Rev. Thomas Donnelly against the Rev. John Reilly.

(2) That nothing appears on the documents that justly charges the Rev. Thomas Donnelly with having violated any rule of Church order.

(3) That the consideration of this affair any farther be postponed indefinitely.

2. Revs. Black and McMaster are appointed a Committee to arrange, and present to Synod on Monday next, A.M., whatever business is yet lying before this Synod.

Adjourned till 8 o'clock, A.M. Monday.

Monday, Aug. 16, 1819, 8 o'clock A.M.

The court met and were called to order by the Moderator. Same members ut antea.

1. The Committee on Arrangements reported the arrangement of business yet lying before Synod, which was proceeded to.

2. The Synod agree to the following arrangement and disposition of Presbyteries: —

(1) That the boundaries of what is now designated the Middle and Western Presbyteries, shall hereafter be regulated by the following lines of division, and designated by the following names, viz : the part of said bounds lying to the east of the Allegheny Mountains shall be known by the name of the Presbytery of Philadelphia. That part west of the Allegheny Mountains and east of the eastern boundary of Indiana, shall be called the Presbytery of Pittsburgh. And all west of said line to the Pacific ocean shall be called the Western Presbytery.

(2) That all documents necessary to the conducting of business that may now fall under the power of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, or of the Western Presbytery, be delivered into the hands of each of them by the Clerk of the late Western Presbytery.

3. The requisition of a written request being necessary in order to accept an invitation to preach among the communities of professing Christians, is hereby repealed.

4. The consideration of the Directory of Worship and the Book of Discipline being closed, and the several amendments being inserted, previously to taking the question adopt or not adopt, a member was called on to pray for divine direction. After which the question was put in regard to each respectively, adopt or not adopt, and it was carried unanimously to adopt; and the Synod do hereby adopt these documents as The Subordinate Standards of this Church. A member was then called upon to return thanks to God for the divine goodness thereto vouchsafed to us.

5. The Synod then Resolved —

(1) That a Committee of four members be appointed

to publish an edition of the Testimony, to which shall be annexed the Directory for Worship and the Book of Discipline ; and that Drs. McLeod and Wylie, and Revs. Black and Willson be that Committee.

(2) That said Committee have full power to correct any incongruities and supply any obvious defects that may appear in these documents.

(3) That as soon as convenient they shall make a probable estimate of the expenses of the publication, and direct the funds be raised to liquidate such expenses.

(4) That this Synod enjoin it on its members to have the money raised in due time for that purpose.

6. The Synod appointed that the draft of the form of Church Government be delivered into the hands of the Committee appointed to publish the edition of the Testimony , and that said Committee shall publish it in the form of an Overture to be distributed to our sessions for examination, and also to be sent to our sister judicatories in Britain and Ireland for their remarks.

7. The Synod likewise order that the "Form of Process," etc., be prepared in time to deliver into the hands of the above Committee, who shall revise and publish it along with the Book of Discipline.

8. The Synod enjoin it on all the members who have not presented to Synod the parts formerly assigned to them on the Argumentative Part of the Testimony, that, without fail, they have them in readiness to present at the next meeting of Synod.

9. Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to address our sister Synods in Britain and Ireland, and propose to them the propriety of entering into a Solemn League and Covenant, mutually binding us to God and to each other in the support of the cause of the Reformation in which we are all engaged, and recognizing the obligation by which we are bound by the Covenants of our ancestors. This Committee to consist of Drs. Wylie, McLeod, and Rev. J. R. Willson.

Adjourned till 2 o'clock P.M.

2 o'clock P.M.

Court met and were called to order by the Moderator.
Same members ut supra.

1. The Synod agree that the suspension of the operations of the Theological Seminary be continued until the next meeting of Synod.

2. Whereas, the operations of the Theological Seminary of this Church is, for the time being, suspended, and the demand for ministerial labors is still increasing, the duty of providing an able as well as a pious ministry is urged by the sound policy of the Bible, by the opposition to our cause, and by the imposing exertions of other communities, therefore, Resolved—

(1) That the literary qualifications required by Synod in order to admission to the Seminary be still demanded by the Presbyteries of those whom they may recognize as students of divinity; and that to ascertain these qualifications, the applicant shall be examined by Presbytery.

(2) That the Presbytery under whose inspection such students may be shall, at each meeting, require them to deliver discourses and dissertations upon subjects previously appointed.

(3) That no candidate shall be licensed until he have devoted exclusively two years at least to the study of divinity and the literature usually taught in Theological Institutions, under the direction of some minister or ministers of our Church, whose certificate of the candidate having so done shall be required by the Presbytery that takes him on trial for licensure. And in no case shall any be licensed to preach who, upon examination in open Presbytery, is not approved of as to his attainments in divinity, didactic, polemical and practical, as well as in the original tongues of the Scriptures, etc., for which examination due time shall be appropriated.

(4) That Presbyteries shall particularly report to Synod on the premises.

3. The Synod enjoin each member to use his best endeavors to raise money for the use of the Seminary.

4. The report of the Middle Presbytery received, read, and accepted.

5. That the invitations, etc., received from Kaskaskia, Illinois, be referred to the Western Presbytery.

6. The Clerk of Synod is directed to forward a letter to the petitioners from Kaskaskia, informing them of Synod's attention to their papers.

7. Mr. Samuel M. Willson is appointed to spend his time within the bounds of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh until Nov. 1st, after which he shall be referred to the Northern Presbytery.

8. The next meeting of Synod is appointed to be held in Philadelphia, on the third Wednesday of October, 1821, to be opened by a sermon in Dr. Wylie's Church, on "The Substitutionary Nature of Christ's Sufferings," by Rev. Robert Lusk, at 7 o'clock P.M.

9. Samuel W. Crawford presented a petition to Synod praying that for reasons therein specified he be permitted to remain in Philadelphia. The Court agree that the prayer of this petition be granted ; but Mr. Crawford is directed that as soon as his circumstances will permit he shall receive appointments for preaching from the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

10. The Synod agree that Archibald Johnston shall be referred to the disposal of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh.

11. The Southern Presbytery are directed to resume their functions, and take on trial for licensure Messrs. Gavin and Hugh McMillan; and, if licensed, to send them to the Western Presbytery to spend as much time as possible.

12. The petition of James Miller is referred to the Presbytery of Pittsburgh, and Synod ~~ordered~~ appointed them to take order thereon.

13. The Committee to enquire respecting causes of thanksgiving and fasting report that there are causes of both. They presented drafts of these causes respectively, which were adopted. Synod appointed the second Thursday of November as the day of thanksgiving; and the first Thursday of Feb. 1820, as the day of fasting and humiliation.

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

(Signed.)

John Cannon, Moderator.

John Black, Synod Clerk.