

MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL SYNOD

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

NORTH AMERICA.

SESSION XVI.

Philadelphia, August, 1833.

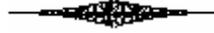


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1833.

MINUTES, &c.



*Philadelphia, Cherry Street Church,
August 7th, 1833.*

AGREEABLY to adjournment, the Members of the General Synod convened. Rev. Samuel W. Crawford, the former Moderator, having been suspended from the exercise of the office of the holy ministry, Rev. Moses Roney, his Alternate, after a sermon on the subject assigned, from Isaiah 8:12, "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy," proceeded to constitute the Court, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his Church.

The evening being far spent when divine service was concluded, Court adjourned, by prayer, to meet here to-morrow, at nine o'clock, *a. m.*

Same place, August 8th, nine o'clock, a. m.

Synod met, and was constituted by prayer. Rev. David Steele was called upon to act as clerk *pro tem.*

The Members of the present Synod were ascertained, when it appeared, that from the

Western Presbytery of the Western Synod there was no representation.

Ohio Presbytery.—Rev. Messrs. Charles B. M'Kee, David Steele, John Wallace, and Messrs. Nathaniel Kirkpatrick and Samuel Hyndman, Ruling Elders.

Pittsburgh Presbytery.—Rev. Robert Wallace, Rev. John Cannon, Rev. William Sloan, Rev. James Blackwood, Rev. John Crozier, and Rev. Thomas Sproull; Messrs. Thomas Willson, Joseph M'Elroy, Robert Gray, Nathan Johnston, Robert Brown, James Cooke, and Samuel Wylie, Ruling Elders.

Philadelphia Presbytery.—No representation.

Southern Presbytery of Eastern Subordinate Synod.—Rev. James Chrystie, Rev. Robert Gibson, Rev. Moses Roney, and Rev. David Scott; Messrs. William Acheson, John Houston, David T. Cavin, and David M'Burney, Ruling Elders.

Northern Presbytery of E. S. Synod.—Rev. Dr. Willson,

Rev. James Milligan, and Rev. Samuel M. Willson; Messrs. Samuel S. Barnum, Michael J. Johnston, and William M'Cune, Ruling Elders.

Western Presbytery of E. S. Synod.—Rev. William L. Roberts, and Rev. John Fisher; Messrs. Alexander M'Crea, and James Guthrie, Jun. Ruling Elders.

Moved and seconded, That Mr. Patrick Dickey, of Baltimore congregation, and Mr. John Renfrew, Jun. of Conecochegue congregation, both Ruling Elders, be admitted to seats in this Court.

After some remarks by several of the members, Court agreed to defer the decision of this question.*

Synod proceeded to the election of officers. Rev. John Cannon was chosen Moderator, and Rev. David Steele Stated Clerk. Rev. James Chrystie was appointed Assistant Clerk.

Adjourned, by prayer, till three o'clock, *p. m.*

Same place, three o'clock, p. m.

Court met, and was constituted by prayer. The roll was called, and members answered to their names—all present.

The Minutes of Synod in 1831 were read. The Moderator appointed the following committees:—

1. On Unfinished Business.—Messrs. Roberts, Sproull, and Houston.

2. On S. and Presbyterial Reports.—Messrs. S. M. Willson, Sloan, Gibson, and Wylie.

3. On the Signs of the Times.—Messrs. Willson, D. D. Blackwood, and N. Johnston.

4. On Discipline.—Messrs. Chrystie, Wallace, Sen., and M'Crea.

5. On Foreign Correspondence.—Messrs. Blackwood, Scott, and Brown.

6. On Finance.—Messrs. Brown, Barnum, and Fisher.

7. On the Theological Seminary.—Messrs. Steele, Roney, and Acheson.

Resolved, That the Committee of Bills be stricken off the list of standing committees. Carried.

*The consideration of this motion was not afterwards resumed. The Court saw the necessity of abiding by the Law of General Synod, declaring, That no minister or ruling elder can occupy a seat in Court, who is not regularly certified, *as a delegate*, from the *presbytery* to which he belongs. They were sensible that it is inconsistent with all order to legislate, and, as occasion requires, to serve a purpose, proceed to the *open violation* of laws *enacted by themselves*. For an exemplification of such disorder, and violation of the laws of General Synod, the candid reader is referred to the published "Minutes" of an association in 11th Street Church. Philadelphia, August, 1833, page 3d, note.—*D. Steele*.

Papers were called for, and numbered as follows:—

No. 1. A Memorial from the Congregation of Bethel, Illinois, declaring their adherence to the distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and their well-known application. The Memorial is as follows:—

To the Rev. Moderator and remnant Members of the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to meet in Philadelphia, on the first Wednesday of August, 1833:

REV. FATHERS,

At all times it is a duty incumbent on the children of Zion, to use much importunity at the throne of grace, in behalf of their mother. And it sometimes falls out, in the course of providence, that they are called upon to expostulate and plead with her. From this distant branch of God's heritage, the subscribers of this memorial cry to you—"Watchmen, what of the night?—Watchmen, what of the night?" Would to God you could, upon solid ground, answer—"The morning cometh." Your memorialists have, for years by-gone, beheld with deep concern, the progress of that state of things which is now rapidly advancing to a crisis. It is well known that the Reformed-Church did, from her first organization, dissent from the civil establishments in these United States, on account of the immoralities involved in their radical principles of government. Thus it is asserted in the Testimony, page 136—"There are moral evils, essential to the constitution of the United States, which render it necessary to refuse allegiance to the whole system," &c. &c. The application of these principles of dissent was plain and simple, as of right it should be. Church members were restricted in nothing but such services as were peculiar to citizens, or such as implied that relation. Yet, plain and appropriate as that application was, various objections were made against it; without, however, bringing forward the design of withdrawing the dissent from the civil establishment. But at this eventful period, it appears beyond all doubt that there is, in the Reformed Church, a strong effort in operation, to have that dissent withdrawn, and thus to impress the minds of the people with the idea, either that they had been in an error in declaring such dissent at first; or, that such a reform has since taken place as would render its continuance unjustifiable. Rev. Fathers and Brethren, as your memorialists did not take up their principles without examination at the first;

so they have no intention to yield them implicitly. And they have the comfort of knowing that such a thing will not be expected. In expressing their sentiments on this interesting subject, your memorialists hope, that it will not be improper to give a brief view of the arguments which set their own minds at rest upon the question now in dispute. It seems to be an undeniable maxim, that when any portion of human beings enter into the civil compact, and assume a national organization, the corporation thus formed becomes a moral person, and is therefore bound to yield obedience to God's law, in all points in which it acts on them; in the same manner as that law binds an individual person. Or, in other words—every nation, as such, is bound to profess homage to God, in conformity to that light which he has afforded it; and that profession of homage must keep pace with such future communications of his will, as he may see meet to make them. If civil government is God's ordinance, and civil rulers his deputies—how should it come to pass, that in placing men in a capacity to act under this deputation, no attention should be paid by the people to the friendly or unfriendly disposition of the person deputized? Amongst all the transactions of men in similar cases, there is nothing analogous to such conduct. But the Scriptures put this point beyond all doubt, as it respects the Almighty Ruler of the nations. There, professed fear of his name, is described as an indispensable qualification in those who shall represent him in bearing rule amongst men. But, notwithstanding this plain declaration of Jehovah's will, this qualification is left out of the Constitution of these United States; and that, not inadvertently, but, with a declaration that "no religious test shall ever be required of those who hold office under it." The idea of securing such qualifications in popular elections, is quite deceptive. The nation knew this; and therefore they described, in the fundamental instrument, all the qualifications which they held to be essential. It may in some cases, be difficult to determine, how far the civil magistrate ought to interfere in behalf of religion. But in a nation where the Scriptures are generally diffused, there is surely some medium between persecution for conscience sake, and absolute neutrality between Christ and antichrist. There is a promise in the Scriptures, that at some period of the militant state of the church, "Kings should be her nursing fathers," &c. If that time is now come, then this, and all such promises, may as readily be claimed by antichrist, and every class of his brood, as by the church of the living God, which he has purchased with his blood. For it

is undeniable that this republic cherishes, with equal assiduity, the several nurseries of Papists, and of Quakers, and of Shakers, &c. as she does the genuine nurseries of God's children. Where a system of civil government is based upon the law of God, so as to afford a prospect that he will unite his friendly influences with the national operation; that relation must surely be indicated by something better than far-fetched inferences, from vague and dubious principles; when, at the same time, the existence of those principles is denied by the highest grades of authority in the nation. Much has been said with respect to the principle of progressive improvement contained in the institutions of the government. On this article your memorialists have only to remark—that the chief value of this principle depends upon the adoption of some infallible criterion of action. Where the salutary restrictions of God's law are neglected, and the corrupt and fluctuating will of the people is made the standard, the motion is more likely to be retrograde than forward in her movements. To incorporate with the national society upon the strength of this principle, while there are immoralities essential to the system, would be like regulating an important branch of human conduct by a law that has no existence, except in the breast of the sovereign; and which may or may not be revealed, just as the legislator may see cause. In some of the public writings of the day, it is argued, that the United States government, in its radical principles, possesses all the essential properties of legitimacy, in a moral point of view. But, in addition to the objections already advanced against this position, on the ground of delinquency with respect to the rights of God; your memorialists are unable to reconcile it with the rueful spectacle of millions of innocent human beings, in a state of the most abject slavery. Any person of common understanding would know, that such a horrid state of things could not exist without the sanction of law. But they, who are acquainted with the history of that hideous system, know that it is, to a great extent, the offspring of the national Constitution. It is true, indeed, that this disgraceful traffic commenced during the colonial state of this country; but it is as true, that when the supreme power of the nation, in convention, gave permission to any of the States which they represented, to carry on that piratical business for the space of twenty years; they thereby adopted the whole system, and thus involved the nation in the responsibility. Your memorialists have no time to comment on this iniquitous deed; nor is it needful. It is well known that these

wretched victims are degraded and demoralized to the lowest degree, and that amongst them, every relation which God has instituted for his glory, and the comfort and advantage of human beings, is completely violated. Thus with respect to their prospects for themselves and their posterity, they are placed, as it were, “in the shadow of death.” Nor is this all—for they are shut up from the means of instruction—of salvation—and in this point of view they are fixed, (so to speak,) in the very “antechamber of hell.” In reviewing this transaction, so abhorrent to humanity and justice, (besides the fact of its being a gross violation of an essential principle of government,) your memorialists cannot find one of the circumstances, which, in some cases, go to refer a sinful deed to the score of infirmity. Here was no excusable ignorance, for abundances of light had been shed upon that subject from various sources before that period. Nor was there any want of time to deliberate, for the question was long discussed. By what has been said above, you will easily see, Rev. Fathers, that your memorialists do not embrace the doctrine of State sovereignty, to the extent in which it is held by some modern writers on the subject. They know that the United States, as such, have instituted every organ which goes to constitute a national regimen. They know that to them, as possessing the sovereignty, the allegiance of the citizens is engaged. They know that the fundamental instrument provides—that the constitutional deeds of any one of the States, shall be respected by every other State in the Union. Hence it comes to pass, that he who is a citizen in any one of the States, is to be recognized as such in every other State, because it is the will of the nation, by whose law he became a citizen, that it should be so. Hence, also, it comes to pass—that whosoever is, by law, held as a slave in any one of the States, must be recognized in all the other States, in the condition of a slave, or a “person held to labour”—because it is the will of the nation, (by whose deliberate permission he was a made a slave,) that it should be so. It would seem, then, that these United States, by first giving their sanction to this nefarious traffic, and, all along recognizing and perpetuating, (in a certain sense,) the existence of this horrible system—are to be considered as the authors of that mighty ruin which has already arisen, and which is yet to arise, from this flagitious violation of God’s law. Supposing, for a moment, that the United States, after they had prohibited the importation of the Africans, under the appropriate appellation of piracy, had no more power over the

practice of slavery—how then? Does that fact diminish the criminality of the States, or render legitimate the system of institutions, under the authority of which the series of outrages were committed, while, at the same time, those very institutions lend their influence to the prolongation of the miseries inflicted on the victims which have already fallen into the dreadful snare. Independently of the express stipulations in the civil compact, on the article now under consideration, it would appear, from the nature of the Union itself, that the criminality of the slave business is not confined to the States, where the system confessedly exists. If the nation be a unit, as every nation is, then the deeds which go to determine the moral character of the corporation, must, it would seem, have the same manner of influence upon the character of the component parts. Nor will it give any relief, to view the States as so many nations in confederacy. It is well known that when the convention was in session, some of the candidates for membership in the nation, or confederacy, (call it which you will,) held it out, as a condition of their accession, that they should be permitted to commit depredations on a distant and unoffending nation for the space of twenty years. That condition thus proposed on the one side, and accepted on the other, became an article of confederation. In the next place, it became necessary, in order to perpetuate the relation, to bind all the confederates to recognize as slaves, all such persons as should, by the laws of any of the sister confederates, be held in that condition. Hence, in the States called free, there is a grievous restraint on the liberties of the citizen. For no person can, without incurring a heavy penalty, afford a morsel of bread, or a temporary shelter to a starving African, who is endeavoring to escape from bondage and from misery. And yet every man of reflection, knows that God will hold him guilty for violating the laws of hospitality. It is true, indeed, that the success of the man, in making his escape, is very doubtful, but, while he commits no outrage upon the rights of others, that circumstance must remain with his God. Upon the whole, it would seem that a confederacy, in order to be permanent, must rest upon some definite articles. If any of those articles be sinful, then that criminality must be universal in the compact, as connected with the fundamental principles. Your memorialists, however, believe that the United States, as already said, have assumed such powers as are competent only to consolidated, or national governments. Upon the most mature examination of this important subject, your memorialists are unable to see, that the

government of these United States, in its radical principles, is accordant with the laws of God, revealed in the book of nature, and more fully developed in the Scriptures. They, therefore, humbly declare to your Rev. Body, that they cannot relinquish the distinctive principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to which they have given their adherence; nor yet the application of those principles, as heretofore directed by the statutes of our church to the constituted authorities of this republic. You know, Rev. Fathers, that by some, it is proposed to make the application of these distinctive points matter of mutual forbearance. Your memorialists would, however, sorely regret that state of things. Their minds are by no means prepared for that measure of catholic fellowship. In conclusion, they ask you to redeem your promises of publishing the argumentative part of the Testimony, and the warning against serving on juries. It is requested, too, that the statutes applicatory of the principles, may be bound up with the Testimony, in some convenient place: and your memorialists will only add their hearty desire, that truth and peace may be promoted by your synodical deliberations.

Randolph Co., Illinois, June 7th, 1833.

Accepted, and referred to a special committee of three, viz. two ministers and one ruling elder. Messrs. Gibson, Blackwood, and M'Crea, were that committee.

No. 2. A petition from Argyle, New York. Referred to the Committee on Discipline.

No. 3. A similar document from the congregation of Brush Creek, Adams county, Ohio. The Memorial is as follows:—

To the Rev. Moderator and other Members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to meet in Philadelphia, on the first Wednesday of August, A. D. 1833.

The memorial of the United Congregation, of Brushcreek, Adams County, Ohio, *humbly sheweth,*

That by the providence of God, we have been placed under the care and direction of the ministers of the gospel, belonging to said Reformed Church, who have taught to following doctrines and principles, which we believe to be truth, and founded on the word of God, and the practice of his people has been agreeable thereunto, viz: We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice. We believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as received by the church of Scotland, to be founded on the Word of God; and

acknowledge it to be the confession of our faith; and that the covenants, national and solemn league were entered into in the true spirit of covenanting, and that these solemn deeds are binding upon us, their posterity,—with the difference of our local situation. We likewise believe the doctrines and principles contained in, and exhibited by, the Act and Testimony of the Reformed P. Church, of North America, to be founded upon and contained in the scriptures. According to the above principles we cannot render a conscientious obedience to the Constitution of these United States, as God's ordinance, for the following reasons, viz: Because it does not recognize the existence of God. It gives a legal security and establishment to gross heresy, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, and idolatry; which is contrary to the command of God and our covenant engagements; whereby we are bound to destroy every vestige of idolatry out of the land. According to our Act and Testimony, we cannot yield obedience to a constitution that is pregnant with moral evils; which deprives unoffending men of liberty and property, and authorises the purchase and sale of any of the human family. We further object to the civil government of this country, because its officers are sworn, by necessary implication, to support what God Almighty forbids; as appears from their oath of office. Therefore to incorporate with the national society, which we consider in a state of national rebellion against God, is too daring a crime. These, and many other objections, may be brought, which we think ought to deter any of the members of the Reformed P. Church, from incorporating with the national society. We cannot conclude our memorial, without presenting for your cognizance some publications, now in circulation, that would not be worthy of your consideration, were it not on account of the fountain from which they emanated. These writings owe their celebrity to the high standing and offices, which their authors occupy in the Reformed P. Church. The first of these is the American Christian Expositor, a periodical, under the patronage and inspection of your venerable body; the professed design of which, (if we believe the publisher,) is to “promote the influence of sound principles and social order.” But instead of this, we find it becoming the vehicle of corruption, and its columns filled with slander, invective, and abuse: from which the most upright conduct cannot shield the devoted victims. But their personal infirmities are held up to public ridicule, and the whole of the ministers of the Reformed P. Church slandered, by representing them as imposing on their congregations and

people their own garbled sentiments and notions, as Acts of the Supreme Judicatories of the Church. The other publications alluded to are, Dr. M'Master's Four Letters, on our political relations to the government of the United States. We pass over (though not unworthy of notice,) his nullifying and disorganizing political principles. But his religious sentiments (if we may call them by that name,) are truly deistical, as far as we can form any opinion of them. The "Inquiry into our civil Relations," written by the same author, seems to us to imitate too much the spirit of the "Free Inquirer," a paper published in New Harmony, some time since: of which Robert D. Owen and Fanny Wright were the Editors. The aforesaid Letters and Inquiry only tending to disturb, distract, and divide the Church of God,—both ministers and people, and to promote a total direliction of our covenant engagements. Inculcating error and pleading for the omission of duty, appear to us to be the prominent features of these publications. We therefore pray, that your venerable body will take these matters into due consideration—there being members of the Reformed P. Church, both preaching and writing in favor of such an unhallowed union; and that you will restrain them from corrupting the principles and practices of the members of our church, in any way your wisdom and prudence may devise, and we in duty bound, shall ever pray, &c.—*Signed by Fifty-six Members.*

MAY 10, 1833.

Referred to the Committee on Discipline.

Adjourned to meet here to-morrow, nine o'clock, *a. m.*

Same place, August 9th, nine o'clock, a. m.

Synod convened, and was constituted by prayer. The roll was called. Absent, Messrs. Acheson, M'Burney, Cooke, and Wylie.

The Minutes of last sitting were read and corrected.

Resolved, That the delegates who bring contributions for the travelling expenses be directed to transfer the same to the Committee on Finance immediately on adjournment.

A committee of three, consisting of one minister and two ruling elders, were appointed to demand of the former Stated Clerk all the Minutes and documents belonging to this Court. Rev. C. B. M'Kee, and Messrs. N. Johnston and Guthrie, Jun., were that committee.

M'Cune and Cooke appeared in Court.

The Committee on Unfinished Business reported in part.

The Report of the Special Committee on the Memorial from

Bethel, Illinois, was presented; and after the adoption of the preamble and first resolution, the whole Report was re-committed, with instructions to prepare and report a letter to the memorialists.

That part of the Report of the Committee on Unfinished Business prepared was taken up, and considered article by article.

On motion, the preamble and enumeration of articles of business were adopted.

Appeared in Court, Messrs. Acheson and Wylie.

With reference to the first article of the Report on unfinished business, the Moderator inquired of all the ministers present whether the days of thanksgiving and fasting, appointed by the last Synod, had been observed. The answers were satisfactory.

A similar inquiry was made of the ruling elders not represented by pastors. They also answered satisfactorily.

The second article of unfinished business was referred to the Committee on the Draft of a Covenant. The members who formerly composed that committee not being present, the Moderator appointed, as a substitute, Rev. Messrs. Chrystie, Willson, D. D., and M'Kee. Messrs. M'Crea and Wylie, ruling elders, were added by special vote.

Adjourned, by prayer, till three o'clock, *p. m.*

Same place, 3 o'clock, p. m.

Court met and was called to order by the Moderator. The roll being called, all the members answered to their names-

Moved, that Mr. Robert Orr, the former Treasurer of this court, be called upon to report on the state of the Synod's finances. Resolved, That the consideration of this motion be deferred.

Hearing Synodical and Presbyterial Reports, was made the order of the day for to-morrow.

The Committee on unfinished business reported in full. Their report was accepted. In relation to the third article, it was resolved, That the specifications therein be considered separately.

The first specification, requiring that the members of the Board of Missions present, be called upon to give a statement of their missionary operations, was adopted.

With regard to the fourth article, referring to the Book of Discipline—it was directed that it be published as an overture in the Albany Quarterly.

Respecting the fifth article, referring to the Committee on

Civil Relations—it was resolved, that this Committee be revived; and that they report during the present sessions. Dr. Willson, Rev. Robert Wallace, and Mr. M’Crea were that Committee.

Adjourned, by prayer, till 9 o’clock to-morrow, *a. m.*

Same place, August 10th, nine o’clock, a. m.

Synod met pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted by prayer. Roll was called. Absent, Gibson, and Acheson.

The Moderator called for the order of the day, which was hearing Synodical and Presbyterial Reports. Appeared in Court, Rev. Robert Gibson and Mr. Acheson.

The Eastern Subordinate Synod Reported. Accepted, and referred to the Committee on Synodical and Presbyterial reports. The document is as follows:

The Eastern Sub. Synod beg leave respectfully to present the following Report to the General Synod:

Agreeably to your direction, all the ministers within our prescribed bounds except three, met in the city of New York, on the 24th of April, 1832, and with the ruling elders present, as delegates from their respective sessions, organized the court. The Rev. William Gibson presided in the constitution, and has since been continued our Moderator. The number of our clerical members has been diminished by the death of the late Dr. Alexander M’Leod, by suspending from the exercise of their office, six of our brethren, the particulars of which will be found below, and by the departure of one, who has since acceded to the communion of the General Assembly. Our present number of ministers is 12. In consequence of this reduction, one of our presbyteries has become extinct, as to pastoral rulers. This portion of the church, is particularly recommended to your consideration.

At our fist meeting, little of general interest transpired, except the proceedings had, in relation to a Pastoral Address. In framing such address, considerable parts of a draft which had been presented, were expunged, as containing sentiments contrary to the standards of our church; abusive of ministerial character, and calculated, (should they receive Synodical sanction,) to induce the people under our charge to follow divisive courses. With this expunction, a minority expressed themselves dissatisfied—met at the call of one of their number for consultation, and, soon after the adjournment of Synod, published the entire draft, with notes appended.

Finding this publication, in its printed form, chargeable in a still higher degree than formerly, with the objections made to the expunged parts, and feeling much aggrieved at the disrespect shown to the court, and the spirit of insubordination manifested; the members of the Northern and Southern Presbyteries united in requesting the Moderator to call a meeting *pro re nata*, of the Eastern Sub. Synod. Agreeably to the call, Synod met in New York, on the 21st November. A large *majority* of the *members of the former court* were present. The call of the Moderator was *sustained*; and Synod proceeded to the business for which it had assembled. The clerk, Rev. John N. M'Leod, refused to act, and he also withheld from the court its minutes, then in his possession. As these minutes were the property of the court, and as to them it was, in the prosecution of business, deemed proper to refer, a formal demand was made upon Mr. M'Leod for their surrender. He refused—pronouncing the Synod in his reply, “an illegal assembly.” For this contempt of court, and for his unjustly withholding its records, he was *regularly cited three several times* to appear and answer. To each citation, he returned answer, *confirmatory of his former contempt*. After mature deliberation and solemn prayer before the throne of grace, he was *suspended* from the exercise of the office of the holy ministry.

Synod proceeded to take order in the case of *fama clamor*, against certain ministers and ruling elders, for publishing the erroneous and *condemned* parts of the draft above referred to, with notes accompanying. This resulted in finding a libel against the Rev. Samuel B. Wylie, D. D., Gilbert M'Master, D. D., Samuel W. Crawford, John N. M'Leod, John M'Master and William Willson, ministers; and also against five ruling elders associated with them. The libel charges them with—“1st. Following divisive courses. 2d. Contempt of the authority of Synod. 3d. Error in doctrine. 4th. Abandonment of the Testimony. 5th. The slandering of Synod and its ministers.”

At our stated meeting in April last, an ever memorable and highly important event took place, when entering on the threshold of business. The majority of the members of the court could not admit Mr. M'Leod, while suspended from the exercise of the office of the ministry, to officiate as clerk. After considerable discussion, accompanied with much warmth of feeling, and the use of a good deal of invective, on the part of some of the minority, who seemed determined

to thrust Mr. M'Leod upon us, at all hazards; a member of the court assumed the *Moderator's power*, and *ordered* Mr. M'Leod to officiate. This was resisted by Synod, in the appointment of a clerk, *pro tempore*. Immediately upon the announcement of this appointment by the Moderator—the Rev. Drs. Wylie and M'Masters, John Gibson, S. W. Crawford, John M'Master and William Willson, accompanied by the Rev. James W. Stewart, who having been put on trial by his presbytery, was forbidden to exercise his office, and some ruling elders, who adhered to the above mentioned ministers, withdrew from Synod. It was afterwards ascertained that they met after their secession, and sat in another place. Synod, thus left by those who “went out from us,” proceeded to business. Among other proceedings, the ministers libelled, as above mentioned; were respectively cited, the regular number of times, to appear and answer to the libels formerly served upon them severally. Failing or refusing to appear, the court investigated the case as though they had been present. The charges were unanimously sustained as substantiated. On these charges, and for contempt of court, they were, after mature deliberation, and invocation of the throne of grace, suspended from the exercise of the holy ministry and the privileges of the church. The libels against the ruling elders charged with them, as *particeps criminis*, were referred to the inferior judicatories for investigation. The result we cannot yet report.

The Southern Presbytery within our bounds, referred to our consideration certain conduct of the Philadelphia Presbytery, assisted by certain elders, deacons and others, in the Chamber Street congregation, New York; in attempting to withdraw from under their jurisdiction the said congregation, and settle over it, by the power of the civil arm, and contrary to the well known wish of the majority of the people, a colleague and successor to their paster. The elders of that congregation, implicated in the transaction, were suspended from the exercise of their office, for their unlawful and schismatical conduct in obtaining the interference of a foreign Presbytery, for the purpose of irregularly and violently pretending to instal a man, (he too being suspended,) over the congregation, in direct opposition to the expressed will of a majority of its members, as well as without the knowledge of the Southern Presbytery or the consent of the superior judicatories. The conduct of the Presbytery so interfering, is respectfully referred to your Rev. Body to take such order

therein, as to you may seem most advisable. A statement of the transaction, with documentary evidence accompanying, will be laid before you.

From these circumstances, extremely painful in their nature, and equally so in their narration, we turn with grateful emotions, to others of a far different character.

With the exception of the state of things almost naturally growing out of the abandonment of the church's Testimony by men, some of whom have heretofore had great influence, we have to report a favorable and interesting aspect of affairs within our bounds. The great body of the people, in a large majority of our congregations, continue to hold fast the "faith once delivered to the saints;" to abide by the doctrines, order, long established and well known usages of the church, and to refuse to "say A confederacy," to any who do not own Jesus Christ as Prince of the kings of the earth; while in the comparatively few congregations that have been more distracted, a goodly number continue to abide by the rule of their former attainments, and to mourn over, and testify against defection.

Our congregations are multiplying and strengthening, by regular accessions to their numbers. Our vacancies are increasing and ripening for settlement. The field of labor is large and yearly enlarging. In your disposition of the aid at your disposal, we earnestly and respectfully solicit as large a share as the circumstances of other parts of our church will admit.

In conclusion—we take great pleasure in stating, that there is ample evidence to show, that the church's glorious Head, who has all things under his control, has so directed the commotions which have agitated Zion, as to stir up in a laudable and encouraging manner, all *right hearted men*, to maintain more strenuously, and investigate more strictly the distinctive standing of our church. This we fondly hope, has, in connexion with other things, tended greatly to increase the knowledge of truth and the progress of piety.

Respectfully submitted.

JAMES CHRYSTIE,
Clerk of E. S. S.

No report being presented by the Western Synod, the Moderator called for the report of the Northern Presbytery. Accepted, and referred to the committee on S. and P. Reports. It is as follows:—

REPORT OF THE NORTHERN PRESBYTERY.

In making our first report to your Rev. Body, we have much that is painful to lay before you, and abundant reason, at the same time, to thank God for his goodness.

There are among ourselves, and the people over whom we bear rule, many sins to bewail. The officers of the sanctuary do not give such evidence as we ought, that we are "men full of the Holy Ghost,"—in the holy tenor of our social intercourse, in our ministrations of the Gospel, and in the faithful exercise of discipline. "In many things we all offend." Among the people, there is a spirit of grasping after the world, in the mere amassment of property, and in vain show, in carnal accommodation to the world; in some—neglect of fellowship-meeting, and in barrenness under the preaching of the gospel. The spirit of brotherly love is not manifested, as being so fervently exercised as we could wish. Some manifest a spirit of insubordination to the judicatories of the Lord's house. There are a few who desire a less faithful testimony to be borne, in the preaching of the gospel, than fidelity to the Lord, and to the souls of men, imperiously requires. The Rev. Jas. W. Stewart has been put on trial for error and immorality.

On the other hand, we have reason to bless our Master that he has not utterly forsaken us for these sins. We have four ministers in settled charges: one in Kraftsbury, one in Rye-gate, one in Troy, and one in Albany. In Topsham there is a vacant congregation, and another in Argyle, both of which had formerly settled pastors. At Henryville and Nassau we have people, to whom supplies of preaching have been granted by Presbytery.

Two young men have been licensed to preach the gospel: Mr. Samuel M'Kinney, who was reported to Synod at its last sessions, by the Philadelphia Presbytery, as one of its students of theology, and Mr. Francis Gailey, who studied divinity in our theological seminary, and who is ordered to re-return and prosecute his studies during the next winter sessions. On our list of divinity students, we have Mr. John Holmes, Mr. James M'Leod Willson, who is in his fifth year of study, since he was graduated in Union College, and Mr. Robert Trumbull, who received the first degree in the arts about a year ago, in Burlington University.

There are several lads engaged in the study of classical and scientific learning, in the grammar schools and colleges.

As directed by the S. Synod, we have furnished, at their request, supplies of preaching to Duanesburgh and Schenec-

tady congregations; and to the United Congregations of Galway and Broad Albin.

Prayer meetings are generally attended, and family worship observed, evening and morning, in all, or nearly all our families. Our members all abstain, so far as we know, from voting, and from sitting on juries, not only out of obedience to the law of the church, but from a conscientious determination to avoid partaking in other men's sins. A great body of our people abstain from "hearing the instructions that cause to err from the words of knowledge." In all our congregations there is peace and harmony, except in Albany and Argyle, where great efforts have been made by the emissaries of evil to lead away the people from the testimony of Jesus. The congregations are all steadily increasing, except Argyle. Two new houses of worship have been erected since the last synod; one in Barnet, and one in Albany. We trust, also, that all our congregations are improving in knowledge and in godliness. The late discussions on the distinctive doctrines of the church have done much good. Many thinking people around us, in other denominations, begin to scruple the propriety of the statute oaths, and of voting. Without the church, heresies and immoralities are greatly increasing, while few testify against them. Most professors around us seem to be in a deep sleep. Cholera, and other judgments, have hardened them.

We have no licentiates, and beg Synod to aid us with as much help as they may be able to furnish to that portion of the church under our care.

All which is respectfully submitted.

Albany, July 31st, 1833.

JAS. R. WILLSON.

The W. Presbytery of E. S. Synod was called to report. Not in readiness.

The Southern Presbytery of E. S. Synod reported. This Report had been presented to the E. S. Synod, and by them transferred to General Synod. Court referred it to a committee of five, to be nominated from the W. Synod, viz. three ministers and two ruling elders, with power to call for persons and papers. Messrs. Wallace, Sen., Steele, Crozier, N. Johnston, and Wylie, were that committee. The document is as follows:—

The Southern Presbytery beg leave to lay the following Report before the Eastern Sub. Synod:—

During the past year occurrences of an unusual interest

have taken place within the bounds of the Presbytery, which will be briefly stated.

In the course of that period the attention of Presbytery had been called to the course unhappily pursued, in some respects, by the American Christian Expositor, published under the authority of an act of General Synod, at its last session; a course which Presbytery considered, and still considers, inconsistent with the original design of General Synod in the establishment of that publication. As an expression of their disapprobation, the Presbytery, at its meeting in Newburgh, in October last, adopted several resolutions; against the adoption of which the Rev. Dr. M'Leod and Mr. A. Gifford protested, and appealed to Synod. The Resolutions themselves were so drawn as of necessity to be laid before the Superior Courts of the Church. But as the highly talented and respectable editor, who it was even then believed could have been able to give, for some time previous to the period at which our complaints were excited, but little attention to his editorial duties, is now no more in this world, and the authority of the General Synod, in regard of that publication, may be deemed to have come to a close, the Presbytery have declined bringing forward these Resolutions, and now advert to them principally to meet the above protest, which, it is supposed, the surviving appellant will bring before your Rev. Body.

Some time subsequent to the above, several transactions occurring in the church of Chamber Street, made it requisite to hold a *pro re nata* meeting of Presbytery, by the application of a great number of the members of that church, and the request of two ministers. The Court convened on the 16th of January, 1833, at the call of the Moderator; and on their opening received a communication from the Rev. Dr. M'Leod, informing Presbytery that he had placed himself, session, and congregation, under the jurisdiction of the Philadelphia Presbytery. As this step had no sanction from Synod, nor concurrence, nor even previous knowledge of this Presbytery, we had no authority to admit the dissolution of a connexion established by Synod, and therefore still hold that congregation subject to our jurisdiction, and refer to your Rev. Body to take such order as the conduct of the elders, deacons, and others of that congregation concerned in that transaction, together with the Philadelphia Presbytery, as you may judge proper; expressing, at the same time, our own conviction that the transaction itself bears on its face the evidence of an entire violation of presbyterial order.

This deed was immediately followed by the installation, by

the Presbytery of Philadelphia, of the Rev. John N. M'Leod, as assistant pastor, and successor of the Rev. Dr. M'Leod, in the Chamber Street congregation, by means unknown in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. A majority of the church members having been expelled the congregation, and deprived of their vote by ecclesiastical censures, and civil process, to put it into the power of a minority to perpetrate this deed of violence, the conduct of the parties concerned herein is also referred to your Rev. Body for investigation, and such order as the case may require. Details and documents will be furnished, at the direction of Synod. After a long examination by Presbytery at its *pro re nata*, it appeared an act of duty and justice forthwith to liberate from church censure three elders and three deacons, together with a great number of private members, amounting, in the first instance, to about one hundred, under the general name of adherents, but afterwards greatly increased—all of whom had been suspended from church privileges, or cut off from office and fellowship, for refusing to acknowledge the ministration of John N. M'Leod, suspended from the exercise of the office of the holy ministry by your Rev. Body, at the *pro re nata* meeting in November last. There remain now in regular standing in the Church, besides the above elders and deacons, about one hundred and forty private members, constituting the Chamber St. congregation, and retaining their adherence to the Southern Presbytery.

Whilst we record, with unfeigned regret, these circumstances of strife and discord, and grieve that we should be under the necessity of laying them before you, there are others, of a different character, to which we turn with different emotions.

The wants of our vacant congregations and societies made it requisite to send among them an ordained minister, who could labour for a considerable period without the interruption incident to occasional supplies. For this purpose, Mr. David Scott, who has been received a member of your Rev. Body at its *pro re nata* meeting, was, after due trials, ordained to the office of the holy ministry, at Newburgh, early in November last, and received appointments to meet the applications which had been made by our vacancies. He has passed the greater part of the last winter at White Lake and Terry Town, Penn. At the latter place he organized a congregation, under the care of this Presbytery, now known by the name of the "Wyalusing Reformed Presbyterian Congregation." These two congregations, together with that at Coldenham, and the congregation of Chamber Street, New York, vacated by the

decease of the Rev. D. M'Leod, make four vacant congregations in the bounds of this Presbytery.

Of this event, the death of the Rev. D. M'Leod, constituting, as it does, a severe bereavement to a family deeply afflicted, and a mournful privation to numerous christian friends, bound to him by the ties of christian fellowship and friendship in a long period of earthly toil—we need no more than make mention. His life identified extensively with the history of the church in this country: his character, high for literature, theology, and distinguished public labours, need not the humble meed of our praise. That in some things he should have erred, is no more than human; and we are willing, over whatever imperfections, supposed or real, we have seen, to draw the mantle of oblivion.

From three of our vacant congregations we have applications for the administration of the Lord's supper; and from all, for frequent supplies of preaching. These, we trust, we shall be able to afford, and hope the divine blessing will carry forward their spiritual improvement, under the administration of the instituted means of grace.

It gives us pleasure to add, that amid all the troubles to which our part of Zion has been exposed, we remain in our church, courts, and in our congregations, with such exceptions as unavoidably pertain to present imperfections, in the enjoyment of a large share of harmony, tranquillity, and comfort. We fondly hope that, with one heart and one mind, we are disposed to strive together for the faith of the gospel, and to walk in the comely order of the house of our God.

New York, 9th April, 1833.

JAS. CHRYSTIE,
Clerk of Presbytery.

Synod proceeded with the order of the day.

From the Philadelphia Presbytery, the W. Presbytery of the W. Synod, and the Ohio Presbytery—no reports.

The Pittsburgh Presbytery presented their report. Accepted, and referred to the Committee on S. & P. Reports; except so much as refers to the case of Mr. John Armstrong, New Athens, Ohio, which was referred to the Committee on Discipline. The Report is as follows:—

Report of the Reformed Presbytery of Pittsburgh, to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, to meet in Philadelphia, August 7th, 1833.

Rev. Fathers and Brethren—Since the last occasion of our addressing your Rev. Body, we have had some addition to our official members. On the 18th of January, 1832, Mr.

Andrew W. Black, one of our licentiates, was ordained to the holy ministry, and installed pastor of the United Congregations of Shenango, Mercer, and Nishanock. On the 4th of April, 1832, Presbytery licensed to preach the Everlasting Gospel, Messrs. John Wallace and Thomas Sproull, and on the 3d of October, 1832, Mr. John B. Johnston. Mr. Wallace has been certified and dismissed to the Ohio Presbytery.

We have now two vacancies under our inspection. They are small, and none of them probably quite ripe for settlement. Our settled congregations are rather on the increase. There is an unabated attachment to gospel ordinances manifested in all our congregations, both settled and vacant. Practical and vital godliness, as far as to us is known, is cultivated by our members to the rejoicing of our hearts. By the different communions surrounding us, there are great exertions generally made to propagate their peculiar systems. Sound doctrine and practical godliness, we believe, are rather on the increase. At the same time, it is not to be concealed that impiety and ungodliness much abound among non-professors, and even amongst some who desire to be called christians. On the 4th of April, 1833, Presbytery ordained to the office of the holy ministry Messrs. John Crozier and Thomas Sproull, as Missionaries. We have now no probationers for the holy ministry under our care. Presbytery consists of eleven ministers. Eight are fixed pastors, and three without pastoral charges, viz—Rev James Blackwood, Rev. John Crozier and Rev. Thomas Sproull. Of these eleven ministers, the following are appointed delegates to your Rev. Body, viz:—Rev. Dr. Black, Rev. Messrs. John Cannon, Robert Wallace, Jonathan Gill, William Sloan, James Blackwood, Thomas Sproull, and John Crozier, together with Ruling Elders, Robert Brown, (Thomas Gemmel, his alternate,) Robert Gray, (James Stitt his alternate,) Samuel Wylie, Nathan Johnston, James Cook, (John Young, his alternate,) Thomas Willson, James M'Ilroy, and James Gormley.

GEO. SCOTT, *P. C.*

The Committee on S. of Times, reported in part. Recommended, with the animadversions of the members of the court.

Synod adjourned by prayer, to meet here on Monday, 12th inst. at 9 o'clock, a. m.

Same place, August 12th, 9 o'clock, a. m.

Synod convened and constituted by prayer. The roll was called. Absent, Rev. Robert Gibson.

The Committee on S. of Times reported in full. Accepted, and after mature deliberation and some amendments, the document was unanimously adopted, and directed to be published in the Albany Quarterly.

Adjourned by prayer till 3 o'clock, *p. m.*

Same place, 3 o'clock, p. m.

Court met, and was called to order by the Moderator. The roll being called, there were absent, Messrs. Barnum, Gibson, Houston and Sproull.

Synod directed that the first Thursday of November, 1833, be observed as a day of Thanksgiving, and the first Thursday of March, 1834, as a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, by all the members under their care.

Resolved, That the argumentative part of our Testimony be distributed among the members of Synod, that an argument may be prepared and submitted to Synod at its next stated meeting. To make such distribution, a committee was nominated by the Moderator, consisting of Messrs Blackwood, Drs. Willson and Crozier, and directed to report as early as possible.

In relation to the Act of Free Discussions of 1831, Synod passed the following resolutions.

1. *Resolved*, That this Synod never did understand that Act as giving license to the ministers or members of the Reformed P. Church to publish, either by pamphlet or otherwise, doctrines opposite to those of our communion.

2. That this liberty was limited to the pages of the A. C. Expositor, under a head of "Free Discussion:" and that each writer was required to give his name, and was understood to be responsible for the doctrines he maintained.

The Committee on the Theological Seminary reported. Accepted and adopted.

A Committee was appointed to devise means for the education of theological students, consisting of two ministers and one ruling elder. Rev. Messrs. Roney and M'Kee, with Mr. Acheson, were that Committee.

Reports of Committees were made the order of the day for to-morrow.

Adjourned by prayer till to-morrow, at 9 o'clock, *a. m.*

Same place, August 13th, 1833, 9 o'clock, a. m.

Court convened and constituted by prayer. The roll was called. Absent, Guthrie, Jun., Roney, and N. Johnston.

Reports of Committees were called for by the Moderator.

The Committee appointed to demand from the former Clerk the minutes and documents belonging to this court reported. Their report was accepted, and ordered to lie on the table.

A petition from the Congregation of Cincinnati was presented—praying that this Court adopt measures to prevent the settlement among them of the Rev. James W. Stewart.

Referred to the Committee on Discipline.

The Committee on the Memorial from Bethel, Illinois, reported. Accepted, and laid on the table.*

Committee on Discipline reported. Accepted, and ordered to lie on the table.

Committee on S. and P. Reports reported. Accepted, and laid on the table.

Appeared in Court, Messrs. Roney, Guthrie and N. Johnston.

Committee on F. Correspondence reported. Accepted, and laid on the table.

Committee on the Statement from E. S. Synod, with power to call for persons and papers, reported. Accepted and laid on the table.

Committee on Draft of Covenant reported. Accepted, and laid on the table.

The W. Presbytery of E. S. Synod reported. Accepted, and referred. It is as follows:—

The Western Presbytery of the East. Sub. Synod, report—That there are but two ministerial members in the Presbytery, owing to the suspension, by the E. S. Synod, of the Rev. Dr. M'Master, John M'Master, and John N. M'Leod. There are under our care five congregations, three of which are destitute of a regular ministry. Our Presbytery has been the head quarters of the heresy which has divided the church. Notwithstanding, there is a prospect of success in the extension of the knowledge and influence of a covenanted reformation. The congregations under the superintendence of regular pastors, though young, are flourishing. They are sound in the faith, and zealous for the promotion of the glory of the Redeemer's crown; and are steadily increasing in numbers and piety. We need labourers in our portion of the vineyard, and look to Synod for a share of the ministerial help which it may have at its disposal. All which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN FISHER, *Clerk*.

York, July 30, 1833.

* The consideration of this Report was not afterwards resumed, the same ground being substantially covered in the Report of the Committee on Discipline, to which the reader is referred.—D. S.

The Committee appointed to devise means for the education of theological students reported. Accepted, and laid on the table.

Report of the Committee on Discipline was taken up, and considered article by article. The hour for adjournment having arrived, the farther consideration of this report was suspended; and the court adjourned to meet here at 3 o'clock, *p. m.*

Same place, 3 o'clock, p. m.

Synod met, and was constituted by prayer. The roll was called. Absent, Mr. Cavin.

The consideration of the Report of the Committee on Discipline was postponed. Mr. Cavin appeared in court.

The Report of the Committee on S. and P. Reports, was taken up and considered. It was, with some amendments, adopted, and is as follows:—

The Committee to which has been referred the Synodical and Presbyterial Reports, beg leave to present the following Report:—

It appears by these documents, that some of our congregations have become vacant, by the suspension of their pastors from the exercise of the office of the holy ministry, and from the privileges of the church. Your Committee would recommend that Eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and the counties Schenectady, Saratoga, Albany, Columbia, and Greene, in the State of New York, be, for the present, annexed to the Southern Presbytery.

In the distribution of the unsettled ministers and licentiates under our charge, the Committee would recommend the following distribution of their labours: That Messrs. Blackwood, Crozier and Sproull, be continued in the Presbytery of Pittsburgh; Mr. John Wallace in the Ohio Presbytery; Messrs. Chrystie and Scott in the Southern Presbytery. That Mr. Walkinshaw and Mr. Gailey be put under the care of the Northern Presbytery, and Mr. M'Kinney under the direction of the Ohio Presbytery; and by it to be transferred to that of Pittsburgh.

On taking a general view of the state of the church, as presented by the papers submitted to our inspection your Committee would remark, that they exhibit, on the whole, a healthy condition. It appears that a very great majority of the rulers in Israel, and of the private members, continue to walk by the rule of our former attainments. It ought not,

however, to be disguised, that some parts of our church have latterly experienced considerable agitation. This was to be anticipated from the general complexion of those prophetic declarations, which induce us to believe that the “time of the end” is approaching. It is much to be lamented that the allurements presented in the condition of society around us have been so successful, in causing so many to become offended, and to walk no longer with us. It is matter of thanksgiving to the Lord our God, that he has been pleased to continue the city of our solemnities in the possession of such a measure of power, that she has been enabled to apply, with efficiency, the remedy in such case provided. The efforts which she has put forth, are crowned with success. By the good hand of her Redeemer she has cast from her the burden under which, for some time past, she has laboured. Much good has unquestionably resulted from these agitations. The attention of our own members has been directed to the reinvestigation of our peculiar and distinctive principles. From this examination, they have arisen with renewed assurance of their being “agreeable unto, and founded upon the word of God.” And we have reason to hope, that in proportion as they are imbued with these blessed and glorious doctrines, the more will their energies be exerted in their defence and maintenance. These discussions, too, have been overruled, in the good providence of him who governs all things, for the promotion of his own glory and his church’s good. They have been the occasion of presenting our views, on many important subjects, before the christian community. They have been called distinctly before many men, who occupy a distinguished place in society. The public mind is becoming leavened with our principles; and we have good reason to believe that all intelligent men, in the various departments, will eventually place themselves upon the side of sound principles and correct order. Thus God in his providence “brings good out of evil, light out of darkness, and order out of confusion.” “He maketh the *wrath* of man to praise him, and the remnant of wrath he will restrain.”

It is pleasant, also, for us to behold, as represented by these papers, that our people, in some good degree, exemplify the excellency of our holy religion, by the regularity with which they generally attend upon the means of grace.

In conclusion, we would recommend to all the people under our care, that they live by faith upon the promises of the Redeemer; that they be much engaged in prayer, at the throne of grace, for the influence of the Holy Spirit, to di-

rect them “in a plain path because of their enemies;” and that the mighty Lord would speedily arise and plead his own cause, for “the tumult of those that rise up against him increaseth continually.”

All which is respectfully submitted.

S. M. WILLSON, *Ch’n.*

Philadelphia, 13th August, 1833.

The report of the special Committee on the Statement by the E. S. Synod, &c. was, on motion, adopted. The Report is as follows:—

Your Committee, to whom was referred the Statement of the E. S. Synod, accompanying the Report of the Southern Presbytery of said Synod, beg leave to report—

That on examination of said Statement, together with the statements of individuals, and documents bearing on the cases stated by Synod—it appears—

That by the disorderly proceedings of the session of the Chamber street congregation, some of the elders of that session were disabled from acting in concert with their brethren, in orderly bringing before the Southern Presbytery the distracted situation of the congregation; whereupon, these disqualified elders laid before two ministers of the Southern Presbytery, the distracted state of the Chamber street congregation, praying that the Southern Presbytery, under whose inspection the said congregation was, should call a meeting, and take order in the case. With this request the Presbytery complied; the Moderator, agreeably to Presbyterian order, at the request of two ministers, calling a meeting, *pro re nata*, of the Presbytery.

It appears, farther, that during the time intervening between the presentation of grievances by the aforesaid elders to the S. Presbytery, and the meeting of said Presbytery, the remnant elders of the Chamber street congregation had, contrary to established Presbyterian order, laid the case of the congregation before the Presbytery of Philadelphia, who proceeded, forthwith, to transfer, surreptitiously, the Chamber street congregation within the limits of its jurisdiction, sustaining the deed of Chamber street session, by which several ruling elders and many members had been suspended, and installing a minister over the minority of said congregation, contrary to the will of the majority.

It also appears that the deed of the Philadelphia Presbytery, transferring the congregation, and confirming the deeds

of session, were, by the S. Presbytery, declared invalid, and the elders and others in the Chamber street congregation, under suspension, were restored—referring the whole of their proceedings to the E. S. Synod.

It farther appears that all the deeds of the Southern Presbytery were sustained by the E. S. Synod, and the ruling elders, concerned in the lamentable disorders of the Chamber street congregation, suspended from the exercise of their office.

From a review of all the circumstances connected with this unpleasant affair, so far as they have come under our cognizance, your Committee would, with deference, submit to this Synod, the following resolutions for adoption:

1. *Resolved*, That this Court confirm the deed of the E. S. Synod sustaining the deed of the S. Presbytery, by which the proceedings of the Philadelphia Presbytery, relative to the Chamber street congregation, New York, were declared invalid, and the elders of said congregation, acting in concert with the Philadelphia Presbytery, were suspended.

2. *Resolved*, That this Synod view with decided disapprobation the conduct of the Philadelphia Presbytery, and consider their proceedings in the premises a shameless outrage against the good order of the church of God.

All which is respectfully submitted.

ROBERT WALLACE, *Ch'n.*

Philadelphia, 13th August, 1833.

The Report of the Committee on Discipline was again taken up, and, on motion, adopted. It is as follows:—

The Committee on Discipline have carefully considered the several papers referred, and beg leave to present the following Report, attending to these papers in the order in which they were received:—

I. A Remonstrance and Petition from certain Members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Argyle (25 in number,) a congregation in the bounds of the Northern Presbytery of the E. Sub. Synod. This document states the lamentable fact, of which we have too clear and abundant evidence, that many are, in the present day, abandoning the cause which they formerly supported; and exhibits, in detail, some of the troubles to which the petitioners have been exposed in consequence of such defection on the part of some, once in regular standing in our church. It appears that ministers, one under libel,

and another under suspension for heresy, in relation to the doctrines of our church, and for attempting to disturb its order respecting the civil constitutions of the land, have made use of their official authority to distract the congregation, to divide its members, to set aside the discipline exercised by our judicatories in that part of the church, and to withdraw the people of that congregation from the care and authority of the Northern Presbytery, with which it was connected by the act of General Synod, at its meeting in 1831. In order to restore tranquillity to the people at Argyle, and to prevent a recurrence of similar circumstances of disorder in any part of our church, ministers, or others already under suspension, and such as are associated with them, interfering with our inferior judicatories, or with our people, your Committee recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:—

1. *Resolved*, That the Congregation in Argyle remain as they now are, in connexion with the Northern Presbytery of the E. S. Synod; and that the remnant elders, deacons, and people of the congregation, be, and hereby are, directed to submit themselves to that judicatory.

2. *Resolved*, That the members of our subordinate and inferior judicatories, and all our people, be, and hereby are, warned not to recognize the authority, or admit the interference of such ministers as have been suspended for the maintaining of principles opposed to the standards of our Church on the subject of civil government; as likewise of all such ministers, and others who may be confederated with them, in corrupting the doctrine, contemning the authority, and violating the order of the Church; inasmuch as these last, as well as the first, are, and hereby are declared to be, from the nature of the opinions they maintain, and the divisive course they pursue, prohibited from holding a seat in our court, or exercising authority, or any way interfering in the judicatories or congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, while maintaining such principles, and pursuing such practices; and that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to every Synod and Presbytery under our care.

3. *Resolved*, That a copy of these Resolutions be transmitted to the Northern Presbytery, to be by them communicated to the Congregation at Argyle.

II. A Memorial from the United Congregation of Brush Creek, Adams County, Ohio. This paper exhibits a pleasing representation of the union, harmony, and order of the people in the faith and order of the Church. The memorialists bear an explicit testimony against the immorality and impiety of the civil

constitutions of this land. They also earnestly assert the principles of our covenanted reformation, and the obligations by which we, as a church, and as professing christians, are bound to abstain from confederating with constitutions in which such immorality and impiety exist, by swearing oaths of allegiance, or holding office. And they do also, with great concern, refer to the conduct of several ministers, and others of our Church, who have been maintaining principles, and pursuing courses, inconsistent with the established doctrine and order of the Church; on these important subjects, and to several publications, in which our acknowledged principles and ecclesiastical laws have been impugned, praying our explicit and prompt interference; calling our attention to the fact that there are members of the Reformed Church both preaching and writing in favor of an unhallowed union with corrupt civil constitutions, and calling upon us to restrain these from corrupting the principles and practices of the members of our Church. The publications named in this memorial are, the *Christian Expositor*, and the “Four Letters,” and “Inquiry into our Civil Relations,” by Dr. M’Masters. The persons referred to are, we presume, those ministers, and others in the eastern boundaries of our Church, who have been propagating error, and aiming at the subversion or division of our judicatories by their divisive and disorderly courses. As it appears that the censures of the Church have already been exercised upon several ministers, viz. the Rev. Dr. Wylie, and Mr. M’Masters, the Rev. Mr. Crawford, Mr. M’Masters, and Mr. Wm. Wilson, for abandoning the testimony of the churches, and other collateral offences, by the deed of the E. S. Synod, it is deemed unnecessary to institute further proceedings in the case; and your Committee therefore recommend the following resolutions:—

1. *Resolved*, That as it has always been in the proceedings and history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, both in the land of our forefathers and in this land, a great and leading object to bear an explicit and practical testimony to the truth, respecting civil government as the ordinance of God, and the subjection of the nations to Messiah; so it is utterly inconsistent with our doctrinal standards and judicial acts for any member of this Church to sit on juries, to hold offices, or swear allegiance to the Constitution of the United States.

2. *Resolved*, That the *American Christian Expositor*, a publication which having in its prominent features lamentably failed in the objects contemplated in its original appointment,

and falling into the hands of a party no longer with us, become the vehicle of error in doctrine and personal abuse—is disowned and disapproved by this Synod.

3. *Resolved*, That our people be, and hereby are, warned against the publication of Dr. M'Masters, commonly called the "Four Letters," and "Inquiry into our Civil Relations," as inconsistent with the doctrine of our Church, and calculated to mislead the unwary—together with all similar works proceeding from that writer, and others confederated with him.

4. *Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted in a letter to the members of the Brush Creek congregation by the Clerk of Synod.

III. That part of the Report of the Presbytery of Pittsburgh relating to the case of Mr. John Armstrong, having connected with it a copy of Minutes of the Greenfield Session, and his protest. It appears that Mr. Armstrong had been charged with accepting the office of post-master in an adjoining village; that he had been summoned by the session to answer to the charge of this violation of the order of the Church; and having acknowledged before the Court the charge, and that he had taken the oath of office required by the law, had been suspended from the privileges of the Church. From this decision Mr. Armstrong appealed to the Pittsburgh Presbytery; and owing to some alledged informality in the proceedings, the Presbytery reversed the decision of Session, with a view of bringing the whole case for the final revision and determination of General Synod. Your Committee, on an examination of the documents before them, do not see any circumstances of informality, even as exhibited in the highly coloured protest of Mr. Armstrong, to vitiate the proceedings, and annul the decision of Session. It appears that the fact with which he was chargeable was stated in the summons, that he complied with the summons, pleaded to the charge, and acknowledged the whole facts in this case before the Court. The immorality is sufficiently plain in the nature of oaths of office, and the liability of his act to censure is obvious in the doctrinal principles and judicial acts of our Church. However, therefore, we respect the jealousy and prudence manifested by Presbytery in attending to the forms of process, we do not see sufficient cause to justify their decision, reversing that of the Greenfield Session in the case, and recommend the following Resolutions:—

1. *Resolved*, By the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in session in the city of Philadelphia, that the decision of the Pittsburgh Presbytery on the protest and

appeal of Mr. John Armstrong be, and hereby is reversed, and the decision of the Greenfield session be and hereby is sustained and approved.

2. *Resolved*, That the Clerk of General Synod transmit a certified copy of this decision to the Pittsburgh Presbytery, to be by them communicated to the Greenfield Session.

The Committee on Discipline, to whom was referred the petition of the Members of the Cincinnati Congregation, respectfully report:—

The petitioners inform your Rev. Body that there is a party in that congregation who are endeavouring to obtain the settlement of the Rev. J. W. Stewart as pastor over the people; a minister now under libel in one of our inferior courts. It appears, also, that the petitioners, 21 in number, are, by the testimony of a ruling elder, and the former pastor of that congregation, before your Court, all in regular standing as church members, of respectable character, and that they now constitute a large majority. They declare, in the paper before us, that the party who are seeking the settlement of Mr. Stewart are guilty of employing the names of those who are opposed to it; affixing their names to a letter, in which it is declared to be the unanimous desire of the congregation that he be settled among them. Your petitioners further declare their adherence to the standards and doctrines of our Church as they have heretofore been received, and are desirous of preventing the settlement among them of a man who advocates what are called “new views.” As it is known that Mr. Stewart is now acting in concert with several ministers under censure, and others associated with them in opposition to the authority of this Synod, and as we have before us a painful instance of the settlement of a pastor by the judicial exclusion of a majority of a congregation, your Committee recommend, as a general provision, the following Resolutions:—

1. *Resolved*, That all ecclesiastical decisions and judicial acts emanating from any court now assumed to be constituted, or hereafter constituted, by the party who have withdrawn from the authority of this Synod, be, and are hereby declared to be, null and void, and of no obligation in the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

2. *Resolved*, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted forthwith to the congregation of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAS. CHRYSTIE.

Chairman of the Com. on Disc.

Philadelphia, 14th August, 1833.

Synod adopted the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That a Committee of three be appointed to prepare a paper, stating the differences between this Synod, and the published sentiments of those who have gone out from us.

2. *Resolved*, That the Clerks be instructed to prepare our Minutes as speedily as possible, and that a Committee of publication be appointed to carry the same into immediate effect: and that statements of the reasons of not uniting with the brethren in 11th street church, and of the standing of the persons constituting that association, be published in connexion with the Minutes. This Committee consisted of Rev. Messrs. Blackwood, Milligan and Roberts.*

The Committee on Civil Relations were discharged, at their own request; as also the Committee on the Bethel Memorial.

Court adjourned by prayer, till to-morrow at 9 o'clock, *a. m.*

Same place, August 14th, 9 o'clock, a. m.

Court convened and constituted by prayer. The roll was called. Absent, Acheson, Cavin, Gibson, Hyndman, Kirkpatrick and Sloan.

A Committee was appointed to publish, forthwith, the Report of the Committee on Discipline. Dr. Willson, and Rev. C. B. M'Kee were that Committee.

The Report of the Committee to devise means for the education of theological students was adopted, as follows:—

The Committee appointed to devise means for furnishing facilities to young men, preparing for the ministry, to prosecute their theological studies, respectfully present the following Report, viz.—

In the judgment of your Committee, it is the duty of our Church to keep the subject of theological schools steadily in view; and to take such steps as may, at an early date, secure their establishment. For the accomplishment of these ends, we recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That a Committee of two teaching and three ruling elders, viz. Rev. Messrs. Cannon and Chrystie and

*It is matter of regret that this Committee did not meet before the close of Synod. The christian community in general, and Reformed Presbyterians in particular, will anxiously await, and confidently expect a fuller detail of the late transactions in Philadelphia. However industriously and unblushingly the idea may be impressed upon the public mind, by a misguided and reckless faction, that the sole cause of separation was a diversity of views as to a *point of ecclesiastical order*, many, who are now misled, may yet live to be convinced of the contrary.—D. S.

Robert Brown, N. Johnston, and Acheson, ruling elders) be appointed as a Board of Finance, whose duty it shall be to devise a plan for raising funds, to be laid before Synod at its next meeting; and to receive all moneys that may be remitted to, or deposited with them, for the creation of a theological fund.

2. *Resolved*, That in the mean time theological students shall pursue their studies, according to the direction of the several Presbyteries under whose care they may see proper to place themselves respectively.

3. *Resolved*, That all the congregations under our care be directed to raise, before next meeting of Synod, what money they can, by collection or otherwise, to be paid over to the Board of Finance, for the commencement of a permanent fund, to be employed in aiding such theological schools as may hereafter be decreed by this court.

Respectfully submitted.

M. RONEY,
Ch'n. of Com.

Philadelphia, 14th August, 1833.

Resolved, That the Committee report at the next meeting of General Synod.

Appeared in court, Gibson, Acheson, Hyndman, Sloan and Cavin.

The Report of the Committee on the Draft of a Covenant was taken up, and, after due consideration, was adopted, as follows:—

The Special Committee, to whom was referred that part of the Report of the Committee on Unfinished Business, relating to the Draft of a Covenant, for some time past before General Synod, respectfully report:—

That upon mature consideration of the events which have lately transpired within the bounds of our Church, of the deepest interest; and likewise upon careful examination of the subject referred—they apprehend there are principles in this Draft of a Covenant requiring further reflection; or, that it may be in some important respects defective, and not calculated to answer the ends originally contemplated. But as it appears that this document has passed in review before our sister judicatories in Scotland and Ireland, we forbear any expression of opinion on its merits, until we have obtained from our much respected and beloved brethren in foreign churches a further judgment on this important subject. We

therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution:—

Resolved, That the Committee on Correspondence be directed to prepare an dsubmit to this Court, a letter to be transmitted to the sister judicatories of Scotland and Ireland, together with a copy of our Minutes.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES R. WILLSON, *Ch'n.*

Philadelphia, August 13, 1833.

The Committee on the Distribution of the Argumentative part of the Testimony reported. The Report was accepted and adopted, as follows:—

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE
ARGUMENTATIVE PART OF OUR TESTIMONY

Whereas the people under our care are in need of instruction on the great points of our testimony; and

Whereas, by petitions and otherwise, we have learned that our people are desirous to be supplied with aid from this Court, in guarding them from temptation, and in defence of those glorious covenanted gospel truths, to which we are all pledged by the most solemn vows; and

Whereas this Court, when Reformation Principles were published, gave to the Church a promise to carry forward the argumentative part of the Testimony; and

Whereas this Synod passed a resolution, at its sessions in Coldenham, 1817, to distribute among some of its members the work of writing out arguments on the distinctive doctrines of the church; therefore

Resolved, That writing the Defence of the Jury Act be committed to the Rev. David Scott; that the Refutation of the Hopkinsian Errors be referred to the Rev. Charles B. M'Kee; and that the Enforcement of the Doctrine of the Church relative to the Civil Magistrates' Power, *circa sacra*, be assigned to the Rev. Wm. Sloan; with instructions to have those documents prepared to be laid before Synod at its next Sessions.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES BLACKWOOD.

Philadelphia, Aug. 14th, 1833.

Mr. Walter Bradford, Ruling Elder, of Philadelphia, was chosen Treasurer of Synod.

Resolved, That General Synod hold its next stated meeting

in Pittsburgh, on the second *Wednesday* of October, 1834, at seven o'clock, *p. m.*

Resolved, that the Moderator open next stated meeting of General Synod with a sermon on subjection to magistrates, from Rom. 13:1.—Rev. Samuel M. Willson his substitute.

Adjourned by prayer till 6 o'clock, *p. m.*

Same place, 6 o'clock, p. m.

Synod convened, and was constituted by prayer. The roll was called. Absent, Blackwood, M'Cune, Cavin, Fisher, Guthrie, Hyndman, Kirkpatrick, Scott, Wallace, sen., and Willson.

The Committee on Foreign Correspondence reported a draft of two letters, to be transmitted to the sister judicatories in Scotland and Ireland; which, on motion, were adopted.

Blackwood, M'Cune, Cavin, Fisher, Guthrie, Hyndman, Scott, Wallace, sen., and Willson, appeared in court.

The Report of the Committee on F. Correspondence, irrespective of the two letters above mentioned, is as follows:—

The Committee on Foreign Correspondence report:—

The present period is one of vast importance; as the events which have recently taken place in the church may affect the relations of this judicatory, as it respects the judicatories of the church in Scotland and Ireland, as well as in other things.

At the distance of three thousand miles, it is not wonderful that very imperfect and inaccurate views should be given of the opinions which have divided the church; and false statements be given as to matters of fact, which have unhappily transpired, since our last communications with these courts. And

Whereas the maintenance of harmony and mutual intercourse between the different parts of the church is a matter of great importance, not only to the comfort of the members of the church, but also to the preservation and support of the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, by his faithful witnesses:—And

Whereas there is danger of this harmony and intercourse being affected by the painful occurrences which have recently distressed the church, therefore

Your Committee recommend that a committee, or committees, be appointed to prepare a letter for each of the transatlantic Synods, that thus they may be furnished with an accu-

rate and authenticated account of the real state of things within your jurisdiction.

All which is respectfully submitted.

JAMES BLACKWOOD, *Ch'n.*

A libel was presented against the Rev. Dr. Black, and referred to the W. Synod.

The Committee on Travelling Expenses reported. Accepted and adopted.

Resolved, That the "Publication Society of the first Reformed P. Congregation, in the city of New York," be recommended to the patronage of our people.

Mr. N. Johnston laid on the table a resolution respecting occasional hearing; the consideration of which was deferred till next meeting of Synod.

Resolved, That ministers and other members of the church, be directed to raise contributions for the support of ministers, and transmit them to Mr. Walter Bradford, Philadelphia, Synod's Treasurer.

The Minutes being read—on motion, court adjourned by prayer and singing the 133d Psalm, to meet as above appointed.

Attest, DAVID STEELE, S. C.

Philadelphia, August 14th, 1833.

 Persons who have not subscribed, and to whose agencies, for distribution, packages are directed, will please remit the proceeds, *post paid*, to Mr. ANDREW GORMLY, Pittsburgh. Also, persons wishing to have copies, will forward, *post paid*, the price of the numbers of copies required, at 12½ cents per copy, with the name of the Post Office.