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New Brunswick

A

HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

PREPARED FOR THE
SEMI-CENTENARY SABBATH,
AND
DELIVERED ON THAT DAY

AT THE REQUEST
OF THE
SESSION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

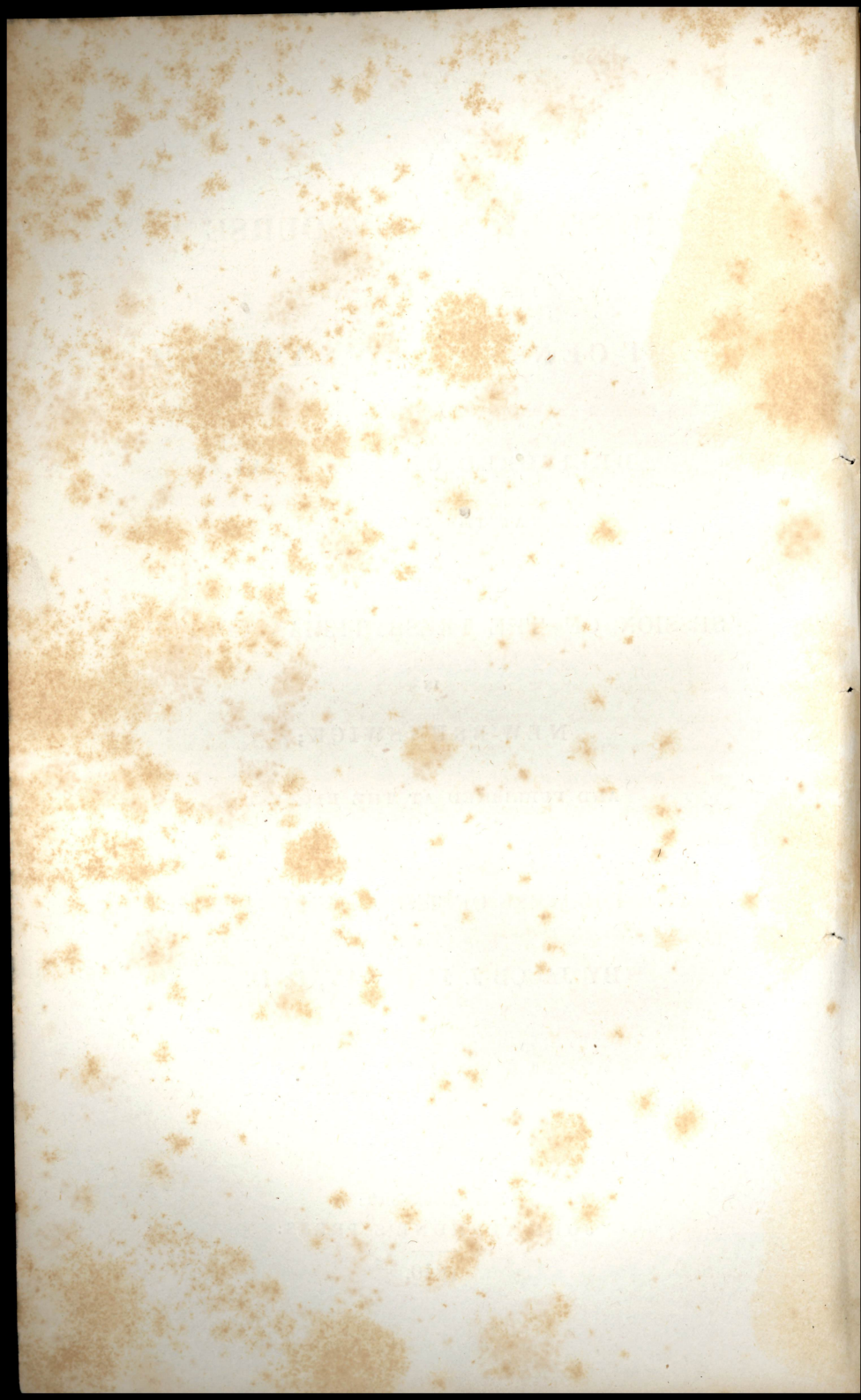
IN
NEW-BRUNSWICK;

AND PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST
OF
THE TRUSTEES OF THE CONGREGATION:

BY JACOB J. JANEWAY, D. D.

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1840.



The Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Congregation of the city of New-Brunswick, considering the annexed Sermon, preached by the Rev. Jacob J. Janeway, D. D., on the Semi-Centenary Celebration of the organization of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church a valuable document, and worthy of general circulation; and believing that it might be read with profit by those who heard it delivered, and that the succeeding generation may be in possession of the history of the Church, from the year 1789 until the present day; did, at their late meeting, direct the undersigned, to request a copy for publication.

The occasion, with the solemn and spirited manner of delivery, produced a strong and pleasing impression, which we trust will not easily be forgotten. Although the weather was inauspicious, yet a large audience listened with great attention and retired with their minds instructed, and gave testimony by the collection, which succeeded, that they held the truths expressed by the author in high estimation.

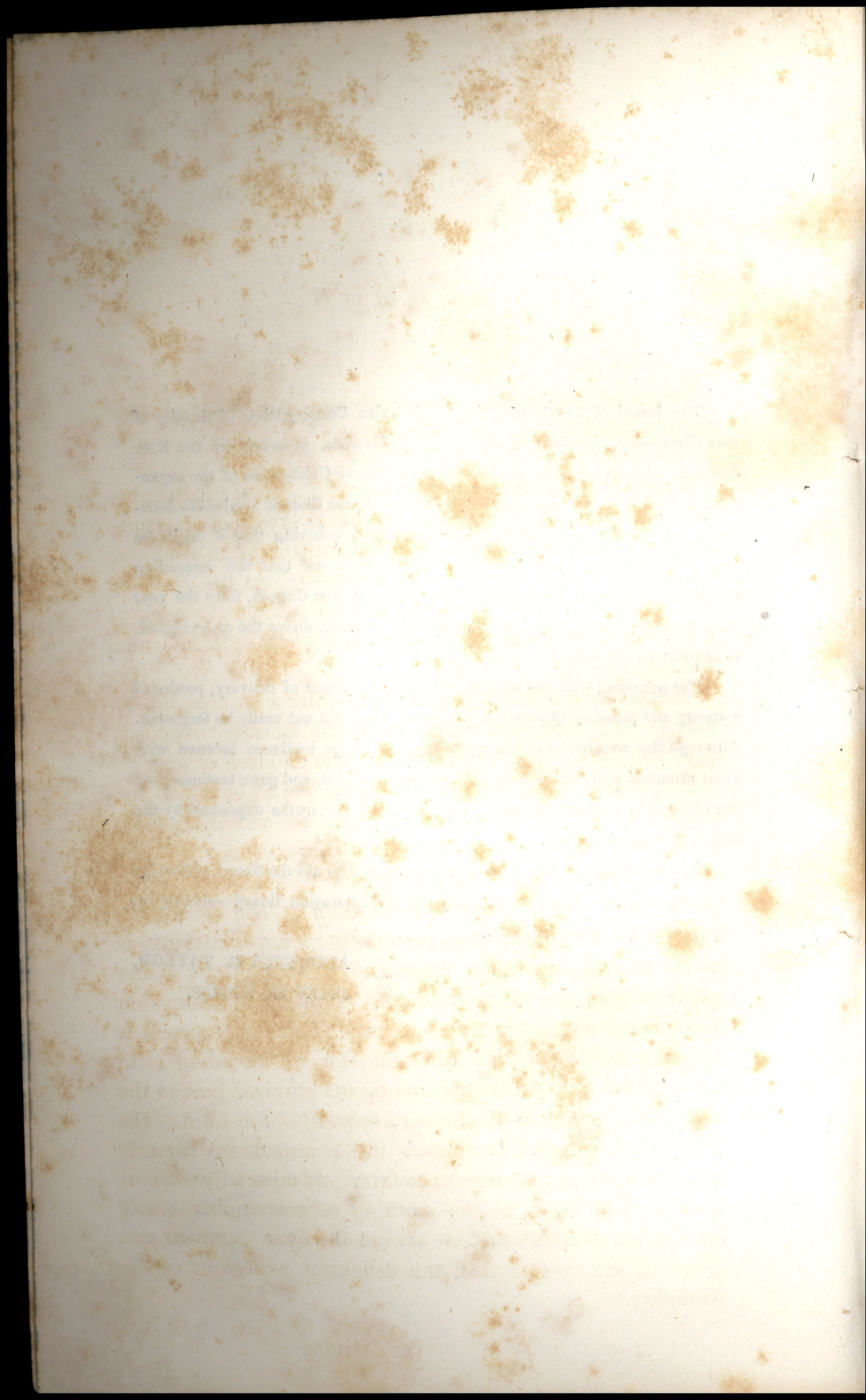
Two hundred and fifty dollars were collected to aid the Board of Foreign Missions, and two hundred and fifty for the Education Board—making an aggregate of five hundred dollars.

AUGUSTUS R. TAYLOR,
JOHN W. STOUT.

J285

J336

VAULT



A S E R M O N .

PSALM CVII. 43. Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

This psalm, closed by my text, contains a beautiful, delightful, and animating meditation on divine providence. Sundry particular dispensations of it towards the human family, are selected by the sacred poet for review. At the close of each, he expresses the warm and devout feelings of his heart, in the language of holy admiration, and lively gratitude and praise.

Calling on his fellow creatures to unite with him, he exclaims: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Providence is one of those wonderful works, by which our Creator is constantly exhibiting to us his adorable perfections; and as we are endowed with faculties for the purpose, it is certainly our duty to employ them in their appropriate work, by attentively and carefully considering its various dispensations; whether marked by displays of justice in the punishment of sin, or marked by exhibitions of his goodness and mercy in conferring unmerited blessings on dependant and unworthy creatures. This employment is not only obligatory, but profitable; for, by attending to it, we shall not fail, we are assured by the inspired poet in the text, to learn from it the loving kindness of the Lord. His loving kindness God has shown in his providence towards us as individuals, towards our country, and especially towards his Church. Were we this morning to contemplate either class of his dispensations, we should discover abundant evidence of the operations of this delightful perfection of the Almighty.

The present occasion claims our attention to the providence of God in reference to that particular part of his Church to which we belong. *Fifty* years have now elapsed since the *first* General Assembly of our Church met in Philadelphia: and as the interposition of divine providence was, the last year, propitious in a high degree, the General Assembly, meeting in such peculiar circumstances, felt it to be their duty, in imitation of a divinely instituted custom among the Jews, to recommend the observance of this sacred day, as a Jubilee; to express, in the review of the divine dealings towards our Church, characterized as they have been by goodness and mercy and loving kindness, our feelings of gratitude and joy, of praise and benevolence.

Requested by the Session of this Church to deliver, this morning a historical discourse, I invite your attention to the rapid progress of our Church, during the last fifty years,—to its character—to the dangers that lately threatened its safety,—and to the merciful deliverance which divine providence was graciously pleased to grant.

I. *The rapid progress and increase of our Church during the last fifty years, will claim your attention.*

Previously, however, it will not be improper just to glance at the origin of our Church. In presenting their first fruits, the Jewish people were required to recollect and acknowledge before God their mean and humble origin: "A Syrian ready to perish was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there with a few, and he became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous,"* The founders of our Church were few in number. They had emigrated to this country to escape persecution, and to enjoy, with greater freedom, their religious privileges. The first Presbyterian Church was formed in Maryland, by the Rev. Nath. Taylor, in 1690. The number of churches increasing, the First Presbytery, denominated the Presbytery of Philadelphia, was formed about the year 1704. Subsequently our

* Deut. 36, 5.

churches so augmented in thirteen years, that the Synod of Philadelphia was constituted in 1717. Unhappily a schism occurred in 1741 : the Synod became divided into two ; one retaining the old name, the Synod of Philadelphia, the other assuming the style of the Synod of New-York. This division was produced, not by difference in doctrinal views, but by other causes. Providentially these Synods, after a separation of seventeen years, became reconciled and re-united, in 1758, under the style of The Synod of New-York and Philadelphia.

In 1788* this Synod divided itself into four Synods, for the purpose of forming the General Assembly, by a proportional delegation from all the Presbyteries, to constitute the highest Judicature of our Church. At that time there were in our connexion 4 Synods, 16 Presbyteries, about 100 Ministers and 419 Churches.

Ten years afterwards, in 1798, one year before the speaker came into the Presbyterian Church, by becoming associate pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, there were in our connexion 4 Synods, 16 Presbyteries, 177 Ministers, and 450 Churches : but, when he left the Presbyterian Church, and became connected with the Reformed Dutch Church in the year 1830, thirty-two years afterwards, so rapid had been the increase of the former Church, that it comprehended 20 Synods, 98 Presbyteries, 1491 Ministers, and 2158 Churches ; spreading over twenty States, from Massachusetts to Georgia, and from the Lakes on the North, to the Gulf of Mexico on the South. In the seven succeeding years the Synods, and Presbyteries, and Ministers, and Congregations became still more numerous.

But in 1837, by the Acts of the General Assembly, 4 Synods, 28 Presbyteries, 450 Ministers, and 522 Churches, were declared not to be constituent parts of the Presbyterian Church ; and, by the secession that occurred the next year,

*This year was selected because the condition of the church in 1789 could not be ascertained ; nor could its condition in 1798.

the number of Synods, Presbyteries, Ministers and Churches, separated from the Presbyterian Church, became more numerous. Still, however, there remain in our connexion 17 Synods, 96 Presbyteries, 1243 Ministers, 1823 Churches, and 152, 451 Communicants.* The condition of our Church at present, compared with its condition *fifty* years ago, shows an increase of Synods more than *fourfold*—of Presbyteries *sixfold*—of Ministers *more than sevenfold*—and of churches *more than fourfold*. The rate of increase in regard to Communicants cannot be ascertained. Taking the number of ministers as the *test* of its growth, it appears, that our Church has advanced, so as to double the number of its ministers every *seventeen* years. The next year we shall probably have nearly eight times as many ministers, as we had fifty years ago; so that the increase of our church has more than kept pace with the increase of the population of this country; which is supposed to double itself every *twenty-five* years.

So great and rapid has been the growth of the Presbyterian Church. It is natural to inquire what were the causes of this remarkable increase? The speaker assigns the following:

The great and efficient cause doubtless was, the blessing of God on the labors of his ministering servants. To his blessing it becomes us to ascribe the prosperity and spread of our Church, and never to forget the dependence of all ministers on Him for success. "Paul may plant and Apollos water; but God giveth the increase." But, while we devoutly honor, as we ever should, the Great First Cause, we may inquire after second causes, and look at the human instrumentality which God was pleased to use in extending the limits of our Church.

The first worthy of notice is, the piety, ability, and faithfulness of our ministers.

No church in this country, it is believed, has been favored

*See Min. for 1839.

with a superior ministry; and to say that, in respect to all the qualifications pertaining to preachers and pastors, they were not surpassed by those of other churches, is attributing to them no more praise than they deserve. Among their number have been, and still are, some distinguished divines.

A second cause that has contributed to enlarge and extend our Church, is, *the peculiar form of its government and the scriptural doctrines embraced in its Creed.*

I am well aware that some of the doctrines of Calvinism are peculiarly obnoxious to unrenewed men, from which they are inclined to turn away with disgust. But the taste of the carnal mind is no test of truth. These doctrines so revolting to those who oppose the sovereignty of God, form a part of revealed truth, and are essentially connected with the gospel; and when faithfully preached will not fail to be accompanied with the divine blessing. The Westminster Confession of Faith is one of the best compends of divine truth ever composed by uninspired men; and it most correctly states the doctrines of the sacred scriptures. They are the doctrines of grace; the great doctrines of the Reformation, which, at that blessed period, achieved such glorious victories over papal error and superstition, and emancipated nations from servitude to priestly domination; doctrines, which, in every age, God has accompanied with his effectual grace, and owned as his power to salvation.

Such is the government of our Church, that while it accurately accords with the principles laid down in the sacred scriptures, it is recommended to the people of this country by the great representative principle which pervades all its judicatures, and by the close analogy it bears to that form of civil government which they have adopted, as the best security to their liberties, and as the best pledge for their welfare and prosperity. It were easy to show the close analogy between the government of our Church and the government of our Country. But my time will allow me merely to hint at this interesting topic.

A *third cause* of the increase of the Presbyterian Church, is, the *missionary spirit* that has prevailed in her judicatories.

From the earliest period she has been characterized by a laudable zeal for missionary enterprize. The records of the old Synod bear testimony to this fact. At the very first meeting of the General Assembly, "they directed the four Synods, then under their care, to recommend each two missionaries to the next Assembly; and that funds might be prepared to meet the expense expected to be incurred, it was enjoined on all the Presbyteries, to take measures for raising collections in all the congregations within their bounds."*

In 1802 the missionary business had so increased, that the General Assembly could not find time to attend to all its details, at their annual sessions. They were constrained to appoint a *standing Committee of Missions*, to take the management of this interesting concern, and annually to make report of their proceedings. This Committee was, in 1816, constituted a Board of Missions, with enlarged powers; and the same year the General Assembly adopted measures for giving existence to the *United Foreign Missionary Society*. Speaking of the Committee of Missions, the Digest says, "Enlarging, from year to year, as their funds increased, and a supply of Missionaries could be obtained, the field of labor, rapidly widened, till it has reached destitute places, from the northwestern extremity of New-York to Natchez and New-Orleans, and from the eastern shores of the Atlantic to the western banks of the Mississippi."

The Board of Missions prosecuted Missionary operations with similar success. In their report to the General Assembly of 1826, reviewing the effects of the benevolent efforts of our Church to extend the blessings of the gospel, they say, "By the labors of their missionaries, sent out from year to year, the most beneficial effects have been produced; churches have been organized, and ministers settled; sinners

*Digest p. 368.

have been converted, and the pious edified and confirmed in the faith; religion preserved from entire extinction among a sparse population on our frontiers, till by an increase of inhabitants, the gospel and its ordinances were established and supported among a people, who, had it not been for the occasional preaching of missionaries, might have sunk into utter forgetfulness of religious privileges."

In 1827 the Board of Missions was reorganized; and it has since become much more efficient in its operations. Furnished with far more ample funds, its missionary appointments have been greatly increased; and if our churches shall continue to enlarge their contributions, inestimable benefits may be expected from the labors of missionaries, attended with the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit. The field is now ripe for the harvest.

The attention paid by our Churches to the education of our ministry and the means adopted to draw forth a larger number of candidates for the gospel ministry, I notice as a fourth and powerful cause of its prosperity and increase.

Long before the period under review, the Presbyterian Church had regarded a regular supply of ministers as a matter demanding their serious and deep consideration; and they employed such means as the state of our country admitted. In 1805 the attention of our churches was greatly awakened to this most interesting concern, by an overture sent down to all the Presbyteries by the General Assembly. The next year it was adopted as a rule, that all the Presbyteries should annually report what they had done for increasing the number of candidates for the gospel ministry, and for raising funds for the support of the indigent among them. To stimulate the Presbyteries in the discharge of their duty in this matter, and to increase their feeling of responsibility, the General Assembly, after reading their reports, decided, in each successive year, "by vote whether the Presbyteries severally should be considered as having discharged, or neglected their duty in this important business."*

* Digest pp. 222, 224.

In 1809 different plans for establishing a Theological School or Schools, were sent down to all the Presbyteries; and the next year, on receiving their reports, the General Assembly appointed a committee to draught a plan for a Seminary; which, in 1812, was located at Princeton. With the character, reputation, and usefulness of this beloved institution of our Church, you are all well acquainted.

Impressed with a conviction of the necessity of "increasing zeal and energy in training young men for the ministry of the gospel," to supply the destitute portions of our country, the General Assembly, with a view "to systematize and unite the efforts" that were making within their bounds in this all important concern, constituted their *Board of Education*;* which has, from that time, been prosecuting the great work, and is now become an efficient Board, having under its care more than three hundred and thirty-eight beneficiaries in different stages of their education..

Such were the causes which, under the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, have produced so rapid an increase and extension to the Presbyterian Church. Other causes, it is admitted, co-operated in its enlargement; but as they diminished its strength, while they augmented its numbers, detracted from its beauty and order, while they enlarged its borders, and especially as they were of a foreign kind, it is not necessary to notice them.

II. *The character of our Church will now claim your attention.*

From the beginning, it has been truly a *Presbyterian Church*; and as such it has been, and still is, distinguished from her sister churches of other denominations in our country. During the period subsequent to the glorious Reformation from Papal errors and superstition, the Presbyterian Church has, at different times, and in different degrees, flourished in Geneva and Switzerland, in France, Holland, and England; and especially in Scotland, Ireland, and this

*Digest p. 226.

country. This Church is distinguished from all others by its peculiar and scriptural form of government; administered by ministers and elders; convened in Sessions or Consistories, in Presbyteries or Classes, in Synods, and in General Synods, or General Assemblies.

Our Church, formed after the model of the Church of Scotland, has, from its first establishment, adhered strictly to the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, with one exception, as its Creed, and to the Presbyterian form of government. In regard to its form of government the fact is so notorious as to require no argument. All acknowledge that, in this respect, it has been strictly Presbyterian. But it has been urged, during the unhappy contests that lately disturbed the harmony and peace of our Church, that the founders of it adopted the Confession of Faith in a *modified* form, allowing to ministers and elders a latitude of interpretation. This allegation we deny; and offer the following proofs in refutation, to show how utterly destitute it is of any foundation.

1. The *character of the founders* of the Presbyterian Church in this country.

They were emigrants from Scotland and Ireland. They were Presbyterians in their native land; and they received, as the records of the Church prove, the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms in their plain and obvious sense. Now, it is highly improbable that such men would be in favor of allowing a latitude of interpretation to a Creed to which they were warmly attached; a latitude going to pervert the very design of its adoption, as a bond of union in the Church. That some of its early ministers came from New-England is admitted; but they were too few to influence the other ministers in their attachment to the standards of doctrine. Besides, those who lay stress on this circumstance have to prove that the ministers from New-England dissented from any part of that form of sound words. New-England then was not what it is now, in regard to its prevailing religious doctrines. Presbyterianism, let it be remembered,

once pervaded England. The Confession of Faith was formed by its divines and others, who had been appointed by Parliament for the purpose. Many of the descendants of the ancient Puritans, who emigrated to New-England, were sound Presbyterians.*

2. *The adopting act of the old Synod.*

The Confession of Faith was, in 1729, adopted by them; and they required all candidates for the gospel ministry to express their assent to it. This is another proof that the latitude of interpretation contended for, was not allowed in the Presbyterian Church. That an ambiguity of expression was found in this Act is admitted. It created dissatisfaction and called for explanation. An explanation was given by the Synod, first in 1830, and then in 1836.* Thus the fears that had been excited by particular expressions in that Act were allayed; and the manner in which the Confession of Faith was to be applied, as a test of orthodoxy, became distinctly understood.

In proof of this take the following example. In the year 1765 the Rev. Jonathan Leavit of New-Hampshire, New-England, applied to be received as a member of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia. How was he received? Merely on producing a certificate of his regular standing in the Gospel ministry? Were the Synod satisfied with a profession of his receiving the Confession of Faith *for substance*, in a modified form? By no means. The record states that before he was received as a member of Synod, he "adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith *as the confession of his faith*, and promised to conform himself to the Westminster Directory *for Worship and Government.*"†

3. *The recorded testimony of many witnesses*, whose competency cannot be disputed, may be adduced as another proof.

We have the unanimous testimony of the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia; when, under this denomination, the

*Dr. Hodge's Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church.

†Digest p. 65.

Synod of New-York and the Synod of Philadelphia, became re-united into one Synod. One hundred and seventy-seven members being present, they *unanimously* approved of a plan, which contains this declaration: "Both Synods, having *always* approved and received the Westminster Confession of Faith, larger and shorter Catechisms, as an orthodox and excellent system of christian doctrine, founded on the word of God; we do *still* receive the same as the confession of our faith;—strictly enjoining it on all our members and probationers for the ministry, that they preach and teach according to the *Form of sound words in said Confession and Catechisms, and that they avoid and oppose all errors contrary thereto.*" This declaration was made in 1758, just *twenty-two* years after the last explanation given by the first Synod of their adopting act. These men, some of whom had been members of that Synod, knew what they testified. Their testimony is conclusive. They further add, "That no Presbytery shall license or ordain to the work of the ministry any candidate until he * * declare his acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, *as the confession of his faith.*"* How decisive the testimony! Here is no appearance of a latitude of interpretation being allowed.

4. In confirmation of all this, and as another proof of our position, we present *the testimony of such distinguished men as Drs. Witherspoon, Rodgers, M^r Whother, Smith, and others.*

These distinguished divines, in 1786, less than thirty years after the union of the two synods into one, were appointed a Committee of Synod to meet in a Convention composed of committees from Synods of three different denominations. In that convention they made this solemn declaration: "The Synod of New-York and Philadelphia adopt, according to the *known and established meaning of the terms*, the Westminster Confession of Faith, *as the Confession of their Faith*; save that every candi-

*Digest pp. 118, 119.

date for the gospel ministry is permitted to except against so much of the *twenty-third* chapter, as gives authority to the civil magistrate in matters of religion,"* What clearer and more decided testimony can be desired than this, coming from such intelligent divines of our Church.

5. The last proof we offer is this: *the Confession of Faith is a part of our Constitution.*

When the General Assembly was constituted, the Synod, having altered what related to the authority of the civil magistrate in religious matters, incorporated the whole of the Confession of Faith into the Constitution of our Church, as an integral and essential part; and all candidates, ministers and elders are required to receive and adopt it as containing that system of doctrine which is contained in the Holy Scriptures.† Now, is it not an unheard of thing that any should be allowed to accept of a constitution, under a construction that may accommodate its provisions to his liking or to his convenience? Must not every constitution be interpreted according to the known and obvious meaning of the terms in which it is expressed?

So abundant is the evidence that bears on the true interpretation of the Confession of Faith. The character of the founders of our Church;—the adopting act of the Synod in 1729, subsequently explained;—the unanimous testimony of two Synods, when united into one Synod, in 1758,—the solemn testimony of our most distinguished divines, in 1786,—and the incorporation of the Confession of Faith into the Constitution of our Church; all combine to prove, beyond reasonable doubt, that the latitude of construction pleaded for by many, is utterly irreconcilable with the uniform spirit and constant practice of our Church.

III. *Let us now look at the dangers to which our beloved Church has been exposed.*

Here a wide field opens to view, in which we might expatiate at great length; but my time will allow me only to

*Digest p. 119. †Digest pp. 122, 123.

glance at this interesting topic. Let it be observed, then, in regard to our Church, that the purity of her faith was defiled by the prevalence of great and destructive errors, which, in her better days, would have met with severe rebuke and merited chastisement;—that her discipline was obstructed, restrained, and neglected in her judicatures;—that her government was, in some places, commingled with congregationalism;—that congregational ministers were permitted not only to deliberate but to vote in our highest judicature, and on subjects of the gravest importance;—that irresponsible men, not subject to her government, found their way, in the guise of ruling elders, with commissions in their hands which imparted to them a character, which did not belong to them, into the General Assembly, from year to year. They were mere *committee men*, but styled Ruling Elders in their commissions.

Besides all this, the friends of a foreign voluntary society endeavoured earnestly and perseveringly to transfer from the General Assembly to this society the supervision and conducting of all foreign missions; thus leading our Church into dereliction of a great and manifest duty. Their object would have been gained, if the General Assembly had approved of the terms on which was proposed the amalgamation of the U. F. M. Society with the A. B. C. F. M. But happily for the honor and integrity of our Church, these terms were rejected, by a formal vote of the Assembly; who merely *consented* to the amalgamation. Thus, by the good providence of God, the Church was saved from consequences that might have resulted from the adoption of those terms; saved from being placed, in the humble attitude of an auxiliary to a voluntary society in no way amenable to her authority.

By the friends of another voluntary society, the operations of our own Board of Domestic Missions were obstructed; and when the re-organization of this Board was proposed to the General Assembly, in 1826, a Committee from the Home

Missionary Society appeared on the floor of the Assembly to prevent it. They failed to accomplish their design; but the society did not cease their efforts to wrest the missionary field from our own Board, and to render the Board subordinate to their control, if not to destroy it.

Once more; let it be remarked that another foreign voluntary society sought, with persevering diligence, to take the education of our youth for the gospel ministry under their supervision and control; and that too when the General Assembly had constituted their own Board of Education, to superintend and provide for the support and education of the children of the Church.*

Had the General Assembly yielded the management of Foreign Missions to one society,—the control of Domestic Missions to another,—and the education of our youth for the ministry to a third; (all independent of her authority;) what would, at this day, have been the condition of our

*In the fall of 1828, the Rev. Mr. Hamilton, of Newark, visited Pittsburgh, as an agent of the *Presbyterian Branch* of the American Education Society. He knew that the Synod of Pittsburgh was to meet at that time, in that city. He deemed it a favorable opportunity to promote the influence of his society, in the western part of the Presbyterian Church. Aware of his design, a few of the members of the Synod met a day or two previous to the meeting of Synod, and prepared an overture for the formation of a Board of Education auxiliary to the General Assembly's Board of Education. The overture was early brought into the Synod; when a member requested the Synod to allow Mr. Hamilton to address them. The Synod heard him. When he had finished his address, the author, who was present, and had been invited to sit in Synod as a corresponding member, aware of the wrong impression that was likely to be produced by the name of his society, *Presbyterian Branch*, and desirous of bringing the truth to light, proposed a question. "Mr. H. your society is called *Presbyterian*; is it designed merely for the education of young men belonging to the Presbyterian Church as its name seems to indicate? or, while it has assumed an exclusive name, are its operations as general as those of the parent society? does it educate young men belonging to any church? He hesitated. "Mr. H. I do not wish to propose an improper question; but if the one I have asked be a proper one, you will please to answer it." He replied, "Our operations are general; the name of the society is a *MISNOMER*." The reply was candid; but it defeated his design, and arrested his progress in the West.

Church? how shorn of her honors! how crippled in her strength! how deformed in her appearances! how stained with guilt!

Did time permit, all these evils might be traced to an *unconstitutional* mode of intercourse with the different associations of New-England;—to that *unconstitutional plan of union* between Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the new settlements, the provisions of which were so grossly perverted;—and to the negligence of the Presbyteries in guarding the purity of the Church, and maintaining in active operation the distinctive principles of its ecclesiastical polity.

When the friends of our Church, in view of the dangers by which she was environed, engaged earnestly in their endeavors to recover her purity, to assert her rights, and to stimulate her to her duty in regard to foreign missions, what was the result? Her peace was broken, by the opposition they met with, while fulfilling their sacred engagements and covenanted vows. Her name was disgraced by the unholy feelings and unchristian strife, displayed in her highest judicature. The cry of many was, "Presbyterianism is a failure."

A party had long existed in the Church, who did not believe all the doctrines in the Confession of Faith; and, therefore pleaded for a latitude of construction, and wished it to be established as a principle, that it was to be received only as a *whole, for substance, as substantially* true. Such a principle would have opened wide indeed the door of admission into our Church; and errorists of all description might, without much difficulty, have come into ministerial fellowship with us. By accessions from Congregationalists this party was increasing from year to year. Their existence was long known; but it was difficult to awaken the Church to a sense of danger. United in their views they were steadily advancing to the accomplishment of their purpose. What that was may be learnt from their movements, and especially from the disclosures made by them, in 1836; when they had gained a temporary ascendancy in the Gen-

eral Assembly. Under their control, our Church would have been kept back from her duty of conducting foreign missions, in her ecclesiastical character; and the management of this important concern, would have been entrusted to the hands of men who do not belong to our Church. The Board of Domestic Missions would have been arrested in its career of increasing usefulness, and compelled to bow to the domination of the A. H. M. Society. The Board of Education, and the training of our youth for the gospel ministry, would have passed into other hands, than those of true Presbyterians. The Theological Seminary at Princeton would have received new professors, and been converted into a school for new divinity. In fine, the Presbyterian Church would have been completely revolutionized; its faith, corrupted, and its glory, departed.

IV. We are now to contemplate *the deliverance which God, in his providence, has most mercifully granted to our Church.*

The Church has been saved. God was pleased to impart to her true friends the courage, the constancy, the union, the perseverance, that were necessary to do the work to which they were called. By the operations of the principles of her government, the party, by whose influence, talents and devices, she was threatened with so many evils, have been separated from her official communion, to which they had never been fairly entitled.

The deliverance has been granted in a way that is calculated to enhance its value, and render us the more grateful for it. It was not obtained without much labor, toil, and prayer. It demanded a conflict. The conflict was long; occupying *nine* tedious years. It was painful; accompanied with many circumstances trying to the faith, patience, and perseverance of the friends of truth. Their motives were impugned, their characters traduced, and their designs misrepresented. The conflict elicited feelings, aroused passions, and drew forth hard speeches, that should never accom-

pany religious controversy between christian brethren. On this account, it is to be deplored. In the conflicts that occurred, from year to year, on the floor of the General Assembly, religion certainly suffered. She was wounded in the house of her friends. Let us weep over the infirmities of christians.

The struggle, however, was necessary; it was for the truth once delivered unto the saints; for which we are exhorted by an inspired writer to contend earnestly. And if any of its friends, as well as their opponents, betrayed feelings, gave way to passions, and uttered speeches that did not become hearts renewed by divine grace, and lips that should be always governed by the law of kindness, let them bewail the remains of a depraved nature, from which they are not yet freed.

The issue of the contest, while going on, was not certain. The strength of the conflicting parties seemed for a while nearly equal. There were times when the friends of the truth, owing to the timidity of some, and the holding back of others, apprehended their opponents might have the majority, and they be constrained to leave the inheritance of their fathers. But, in 1837, having a decided majority in the General Assembly, they were enabled to adopt measures for asserting the rights, and securing the safety of the Church, which the necessity of the case demended.

The next year they had again in the General Assembly a clear majority of the whole Church, including even the disowned Presbyteries, that saved them from the designs of their opponents.

Dragged into a civil court, to be tried by a *common* jury, selected from the *general mass* of citizens, how painful and humiliating was the condition of our brethren! How much to be regretted that the opposite party chose to appeal to a civil tribunal to give them a name they could not fairly claim, and to put them in possession of funds which did not belong to them, and to which they had made such trifling

contributions.* And when the Judge decided adversely to the rights of our Church, how dark the hour ! what a gloom overshadowed her interests ! Yet she had grace to be faithful. Determined to meet the consequences of an unrighteous decision, that *aimed a stroke at the liberty of every church in our country*, and to abandon all her funds, rather than surrender the truth, she waited quietly the final result. The Almighty saw her affliction ; He pitied her ; He heard her supplications ; He granted her deliverance. The Court in Bank, after hearing a long and solemn argument, reversed the decision of the single Judge, and laid down the law in such a manner, as has settled the question, and left no ground for the New School brethren to hope for success, by renewing the controversy in the civil court.

The Church may be considered as safe. She retains, by the judgment of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania the *name*, the *rights*, the *privileges*, and the *funds*, to which she is justly entitled. Her Boards of Missions, Domestic and Foreign, her Board of Education, and her Theological Seminaries are all safe, in the hands of men who love the Church. They can now work freely without embarrassment from an influence within her limits, adverse to their prosperity. Nothing now is necessary for their increasing success, but a higher tone of piety in our Church, more fervent prayers, and greater liberality. Let the Church do her duty, and her glorious Head will not fail to bless her faithful efforts, in diffusing abroad the light of the gospel, both at home and in foreign lands.

In reviewing this discussion the following reflections arise.

1. How much reason has our Church *for gratitude, joy, and humiliation !*

We have seen the kindness which the Lord has shown to her, and how He has guarded her interest, when exposed to danger. He has given to us a goodly heritage. We have enjoyed the preaching of the gospel in its purity ; and the

*See Appendix.

ministry has been attended with the quickening and renewing influences on the Holy Spirit. Sinners have been converted; saints edified and built up in their most Holy Faith; the heirs of heaven prepared for their glorious inheritance. Our limits have, in the course of the last fifty years, been greatly extended; our congregations greatly multiplied, and supplied with educated, pious, and faithful ministers. And, in addition to all these blessings, the Lord has mercifully granted to our Church a signal deliverance from the incursions of error and heresy, that threatened to lay our fair heritage waste. This deliverance was given in a way which, while it tried the faith and constancy of his people, most effectually tended to purify the Church; for had the first decision of the Court been favorable to us, and then been confirmed by the Court in Bank, a large number might have remained with us, whose connexion was neither desirable nor profitable. But, the first decision being unfavorable, this class of members departed from us, and thus left the Church in a state of greater purity in the faith, and more free from elements of future discord. This occurrence claims particular consideration.

Now, my christian brethren, can we look at all these mercies, and not feel grateful? Do they not call for our devout thanksgiving and fervent praise? Let each member of the Church stir himself up to this delightful service, and say, in the language of the inspired writer, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

And with our gratitude, let us mingle emotions of *joy*. Emotions of joy are excited by the possession or expectation of good. And have we not reason, on both these grounds, to rejoice? Is not this day a Jubilee? do we not possess much good from the hands of the Lord? Has he not preserved and favored our Church these fifty years past? Do we not enjoy the inheritance which our fathers left us? Is not our Church now, by the merciful interposition of her glorious

Head, brought into a very desirable and promising state. And may we not indulge the pleasing expectation of the continued smiles of Him who has done so much for us in times past? Will he not enlarge our borders? Will he not bless our Church, and make her a blessing? Let us, then, rejoice in the Lord; rejoice in what he has done for us, and in what we hope he will do for us. But let it be a holy joy; unmingled with any proud feelings of self-exultation, or any disposition to glory over others.

For such feelings we have no cause, but much for *humiliation*. Our Church has not improved her advantages as she ought. Had she been as watchful and zealous for the truth as duty demanded, her pulpits would not have been so dishonored by the promulgation of dangerous errors; her harmony and peace would not have been so disturbed as they have been; nor would her judicatories have exhibited scenes of such lamentable discord, strife, and division. She has failed in doing her part, in her ecclesiastical capacity, for the conversion of the world, and suffered a society no way responsible to her authority, to employ funds and ministers in the foreign field, that should, and would, have been under her control had she done her duty. We have, then, much reason for humiliation, as well as for thanksgiving and joy. Let us humble ourselves, then, before God on account of past neglect, and ask for grace to be found faithful in time to come.

2. How carefully should we hereafter *guard our doctrinal standards!*

They were designed for the purpose of preserving the purity and the peace of the Church; and had they, in the admission of her officers, been duly regarded, her peace and harmony would have been maintained. Doubtless it is our duty, to *acknowledge* and *love* as christians all "who hold the Head," and believe the essential doctrines of the gospel. But such is the infirmity of human nature, that more than agreement in the essentials of the gospel, is requisite to the

to the peace of a Church. Of this fact the experience of ten years past has furnish abundant evidence. If ministers of the gospel could dwell together in peace, while differing on material points, it would not be for edification to bring them together into our denomination; because the different instructions that would, in that case, be delivered from the same pulpits and to the same audiences, would prove distracting to the people. Let us, then, adhere to our doctrinal standards, and to carry out into practice the principles of our ecclesiastical polity. In doing this we shall "study the things that make for peace."

3. Finally, we ought as a Church, to *seek a higher tone of religious feeling, and cultivate a nobler spirit of benevolence and of missions.*

Our Church has been blest with purity of doctrine, with a scriptural form of government, and with a learned and pious ministry. So highly favored, how should the churches have grown in knowledge, in grace, and devotedness to God. But how manifest is it that they have not profited by the means of grace as they ought! How much have professors of religion been infected with a worldly spirit, and been smitten with that passion that has so pervaded the nation, the inordinate desire of being rich. This desire has engrossed too much their thoughts, their time, and their labors. Duties have been omitted, the closet neglected, and the interest of religion too little regarded. How much money has been expended in rich and splendid furniture, in the erection of spacious mansions, and in a fashionable style of living! But how small a portion of their income have professors devoted to charity, to missions, to the promotion of our blessed Saviour's cause in the world! Oh! how greatly is needed, in all our churches, a higher tone of religious feeling; such a feeling as would dispose christians to regard themselves and all they possessed as belonging to Christ, and ready for his service. Then would they lay by, as the Lord had prospered them, a portion of their gains for the cause of religion

at home and abroad. Then how nobly would our Boards of education, of missions, and of publication be sustained! Then should we do our part in evangelizing the world, and act up to the solemn responsibility arising from the great things God has done for us.

Let us, then, seek such a high tone of religious feeling, such a lovely spirit of benevolence and of missions. Let ministers aim at awakening in their people such a noble spirit, and of raising them to such elevated piety. And that they may succeed in this good work, let them seek, through the pervading influence of divine grace, in their own hearts, a high tone of pious feeling; that they may be examples to their flocks "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, and in purity." And now may the God of mercy bless his word, and shed down upon us and all our Churches a spirit of wisdom, and love, and fervent piety. Amen.

A P P E N D I X .

In the commencement of the trial, the Attorney for the New School, read from the Appendix to the Assembly's Minutes, statements of the very large contributions made by several Presbyteries, in the four disowned Synods, to "the *Church funds*" in 1837. These statements appeared in the public prints. To do away the wrong impression likely to be made, Mr. Hubbell offered testimony, by way of explanation, and to show how little of these contributions had been paid to the Assembly's fund; but Judge Rogers refused to admit the testimony.

Observing these statements, and aware of the unjust impressions that would be produced, the writer had recourse to a Report from the Board of Missions, which he had penned and read before the General Assembly in 1827. In that report is found the following paragraph:

"It will be recollected that, on fields now covered with flourishing churches

under the care of the Synods of Geneva and Genesee, *more missionary money* and missionary labor have been expended, than in any other region; and yet *not a cent* was paid into the missionary treasury of the Assembly, the last year, by the *eleven Presbyteries* under the jurisdiction of those Synods. True it appears from the Appendix to your minutes, that they raised money for missionary purposes; but they gave *nothing* to your funds. In the opinion of this Board, congregations that have been watered by streams flowing from your bounty, ought now that they have acquired strength and wealth, to send, in grateful return, streams to that fountain at which they have drunk, that it may pour forth its healing and refreshing waters upon the parched regions of the southern and western wilderness. Can the Assembly devise no means for securing due regard to their recommendations? An important rule seems to have been over-looked. It is this: That the Presbyteries be, and they are hereby, informed, that they are not to consider the formation of auxiliary societies as exempting them from the duty of taking up collections for the Assembly's Missionary Fund." p. 156.

Those *eleven Presbyteries* contributed to the Assembly's Missionary Fund in *eleven years*, from 1812 to 1823, \$134,34! This has been ascertained from the Appendix to the Assembly's printed minutes.

The Assembly's PERMANENT FUND, amounting to about \$20,000 was formed ten years before the constitution of either of the four disowned Synods.

THE COMMISSIONERS' FUND is spent from year to year.

In regard to THE EDUCATION FUND the Corresponding Secretary of the Board of Education has furnished this statement:

Statement of monies received from the Synods of Utica, Geneva, Genesee and Western Reserve by the Board of Education of the General Assembly for the years reported in May 1835, 1836 and 1837 respectively: Viz.

From May 14th 1834 to May 16th 1835 - - - - - \$859 84
of this sum \$100 from the Western Reserve Synod.

(Total receipts by Bd. of Ed'n. same year \$37,038,49)

From May 16th 1835 to May 14th 1836 - - - - - 1381 06
(Total received by the Bd. same year \$49,350,72.)

From Western Reserve for this year \$6.50.

From May 14th 1836 to May 29th 1837 - - - - - 712 50
(Total received by Bd. Ed'n. same year \$41,858,45.)

Total receipts of Bd. of Ed'n for these years . - - - 128,247 66

Of which sum there was received from the four Synods for the

same years a total of - - - - - 2,953 40

No report of monies received was published by the General Assembly in 1835.

In 1836 the four Synods reported monies collected for Education 7,743 64

Of which the Bd. of Education received only - - - - 1,381 06

They reported for the same in 1837 - - - - - 10,812 35

Of which the Bd. of Education received only - - - - 712 50

I did not extend my investigation to other years. Mr. Mitchell, our Treasurer, extended it through the whole of his accounts, and it swelled the amount received from the four Synods but very little. I selected those years, because they were more favorable to the four Synods than any others; indeed very little was received from them but during those years.

It was not so easy to ascertain the precise amount expended on account of those Synods during those years.

The whole amount expended by the Board of Education, in aiding indigent young men in their preparation for the Gospel Ministry, who were taken up within the bounds of the four Synods, or who prosecuted their studies at Institutions within their bounds, from the year 1829 to the time of the trial at Nisiprius, was \$21,096,17.

These facts are at your disposal.

In regard to the number of candidates under the care of the Board and its Auxiliaries last year, you will learn from the report that in consequence of the illness of Mr. Peabody, who had always attended to that part of the business of the office, full reports from the Auxiliaries were not received.

The whole number of names was 338.

Very respectfully yours &c.

FRANCIS Mc FARLAND.

Philadelphia, December 25th, 1839.

During the progress of the late trial a conversation took place, in the Court room, between a minister of the *Old School* and two members of the *New School*; one a trustee elected by the New Assembly, the other a conspicuous leader and minister of that Assembly. It was long and pleasant.

In that conversation the brother of the Old School said, "Now, brethren, let this cause be decided as it may, injustice will be done. If we gain it, some little injustice will be done to you; you will lose all the funds. But, if it be decided in your favor, what monstrous injustice will be done to us! we shall lose large funds which belong to us, and you will gain funds which do not belong to you." To which the Trustee elect replied. You have known me, Mr. — long enough to know that I do not take money which does not belong to me; and if we gain the suit, I for one will never consent to take Princeton or the funds from the Old School. *They do not belong to us.*" To this the other brother, the Rev. Dr. — assented very fully; adding "as Princeton was always cherished and supported by the Old School, it belongs to them of right, and we do not want it."

ERRATUM: p. 7, in the note at the bottom, for 1798 read 1799.