

THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. BAPTISM UNDER THE TWO DISPENSATIONS.¹

OF the three definitions of baptism given in our Westminster Standards, the most complete is that found in the Larger Catechism. It constitutes the answer to Question 165, and is in these words: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption, and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's."

This definition has primary reference, of course, to ritual baptism, but it distinctly indicates that "the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," derives its significance from the fact that it has been appointed by Jesus Christ to symbolize the benefits that come through *real* baptism, which alone introduces to membership in the invisible church.

This real baptism is effected through that operation of the Holy Spirit by which the soul is united to Christ, and thus has secured to it remission of sins and adoption into the family of God; by which it is regenerated and its resurrection unto everlasting life realized. It is to this baptism that the apostle refers in 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are

¹ *The Great Baptizer.* A Bible History of Baptism. By Samuel J. Baird, D. D. 12mo, pp. 489. Philadelphia: James H. Baird. 1882.

VI. MISSIONARY SOCIETIES IN THE CHURCH.¹

THE Presbyterian Church in the Southern States, by her geographical position as well as by her traditions, is conservative. Lying off the great lines of travel and commerce which connect Europe and Asia with the United States, she is not the first to invent or to adopt such new methods of church work as the growing activities of the age may suggest. In this she has both an advantage and a disadvantage. When new measures for advancing the kingdom of Christ are introduced into the churches of Christendom, she has the opportunity to watch their tendencies and study their effects before she either rejects them or adopts them as her own. On the other hand, if the measure be well-devised and fruitful of good, she finds herself among the last to receive the benefits which it confers.

It is owing to these conservative elements of her life that our church now finds herself face to face with a question which, in almost any other evangelical denomination, would never in this day be raised for discussion. An overture, signed by four ministers and three ruling elders of Concord Presbytery, which suggests a thorough eradication of all missionary societies from the body of the church, has been sent down by the General Assembly to all the Presbyteries, "with the direction that they patiently consider the whole subject of societies within and without the church, . . . and return carefully formulated papers" upon this point "to the next Assembly." It is now almost a century since a foreign mis-

¹ "Voluntary and Missionary Societies," THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY, January, 1890. "Overture from Members of Concord Presbytery," *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 1889. "Societies, Unions and *The Missionary*," *Central Presbyterian*, November 20 and December 25, 1889, January 8, 1890.

The writer, before the last-named articles appeared in *The Central Presbyterian*, had accepted the invitation of THE PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY to prepare an article on "Voluntary and Missionary Societies" for this number of the QUARTERLY. The character of the article in *The Central Presbyterian* made it necessary for him to reply to it, and its similarity to the one in the January QUARTERLY will account for the similarity of his reply in the *Central* to the one here made.

sionary society, composed of devout men from various evangelical bodies, was organized in Great Britain. It is fully a half century since a woman's foreign missionary society, stretching out over all parts of the Established Church, was formed in England. In the years that have followed, missionary societies, and especially woman's foreign missionary societies, have been organized in almost all, if not all, the evangelical churches of the world. These societies by their zeal and good works have commended themselves to the conscience of well nigh the whole of Christendom. The General Assembly of our own church has year after year declared its approval of the societies formed within its bounds, and has urged the formation of such societies in every congregation. Year by year these societies have increased in number and in the value of the support they give to the missionary work of the church. It may seem, therefore, a little strange that at this day the General Assembly, "without expressing any opinion on the subject involved," should submit to the Presbyteries an overture which presents the question whether societies should be allowed among us at all.

The explanation of this matter may be found, we think, in two facts: First, the overture brings forward and urges the principle that the church, by her divine constitution, is "a missionary society, every member of which is bound by covenant obligation to seek the salvation of souls by personal efforts and oblations in his own appropriate sphere." This is a great truth, acknowledged by all Presbyterians; and it may be that the Assembly thought that the consideration of this principle by all the Presbyteries at this time would have a wholesome effect. But, the second, and as we take it, the more controlling consideration in this case was that in two or three of the Presbyteries a union had been formed of the ladies' missionary societies within the presbyterial bounds; and in *The Missionary*, the magazine edited by the Secretaries of Foreign Missions, the opinion had been expressed that such an enlarged organization would be of advantage to the church. The Assembly, it would seem, regarded this as an open question yet to be determined by our church; and so, without any expression of opinion on it, sent it down to the Presbyteries for their con-

sideration. The whole matter of "societies within and without the church" is therefore before the Presbyteries now for their judgment. Meanwhile, in the overture itself and in various published articles, we find arguments adduced to show that no societies of any kind should have a place in the church.

The overture, as has been stated, urges the truth that the church is "a missionary society." Had it stopped here, no one would dissent. But it goes further. It takes the ground (and we interpret it in the light of the commentaries on it written by its authors), that only in her organized unity must the church do the work of making known Christ to the world; that this alone is the scriptural model; that for individual Christians to associate themselves together in missionary societies is a departure from the model given in the Bible; that these missionary societies are merely "organizations of human devising," having no right to a place in the work of evangelizing the world, and, therefore, the true blessing of God cannot rest on them. Every missionary society, "within and without the church," has been a mistake, an evil.

To this there is a reply which must readily suggest itself to every student of the modern missionary enterprise. Had such a principle been allowed to govern in the last century, a large part of the noblest work that has been done for Christ on earth, would have been left undone. Who planted the martyr church of Madagascar? A society, a missionary society, made up of faithful Christians from the Independent, the Presbyterian, and the Established Churches of Great Britain—the London Missionary Society, organized in 1795. As the first century of its work draws to a close, do we see the blessing of God resting upon it? By its fruits let it be known. It sent Robert Moffatt and David Livingstone to Africa. It sent the first Protestant missionary, Dr. Morrison, to China. Its medical mission in Tientsin is under the patronage of the foremost statesman of China, Li Hung Chang. Its missionaries are far back in the interior of the empire, while some of them have crossed over the Great Wall, and are making known Christ to the Mongols. Its men have gone from island to island in the South Seas, and have changed the dark savagery of cannibal tribes into the light and peace of the gospel of Christ.

All this has been done by a missionary society under no ecclesiastical control.

When Stanley, a few months since, after his long and perilous journey through the dark continent, came in sight of the outposts of Christianity, when he espied a church at Usambiro, and knew, he says, that at last he had reached "blessed civilization," by whom had the church been planted? By a society—another missionary society—one that, amid the ritualism and the rationalism of the Church of England, took for its pure motto, "Spiritual men for spiritual work"; a society formed in 1800, and that spends now every year in the foreign work, \$1,200,000; the Church Missionary Society, whose missionaries are almost literally under every wind under heaven, and the blood of whose martyrs is still fresh on the shores of the Victoria Nyanza. Or, we turn to a society nearer to ourselves, The American Board, first organized in 1810, and which sixteen years later embraced the representatives of the Congregational, the Presbyterian, the Dutch Reformed, and the Associate Reformed Churches; a society which sent to Africa the beloved and honored Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, and whose annual meetings at home, as well as its work abroad, have been an inspiration to all the churches of America. So we might notice the work of the China Inland Mission, a society that presents itself as being not merely undenominational, but pan-denominational; that within the last twenty years has sent the gospel to nine out of the eleven provinces of China which were without a missionary, and that recently, in one year, added a hundred new missionaries to its force. And so we might name society after society, but time would fail. The truth is, that the greater part of the work that has carried the gospel to the benighted nations of the earth in this century has been accomplished by missionary societies. But if the principle asserted in the overture now before the Presbyteries were correct, not one of these societies could have had an existence. And yet the principle applies with much more force against the societies that have been named than against the societies that have been organized in our own church, whether congregational or presbyterial, all of which really nestle under the wing of a direct ecclesiastical control.

And why is it, we may ask, that so much of the great work for the heathen world has been done by missionary societies? The answer is plain. In all the churches of Christendom, which are organized units, there has been a large proportion of the membership utterly indifferent and faithless as regards the foreign mission work. The result has been that the faithful and zealous, under the guidance of God's Spirit, as we believe, not through mere "human devising," have come together and formed societies for the work. The days of the century now soon to close have not been as the days of Joshua, when all the tribes moved forward as one man to the conquest of the land. They have been as the days of Barak, of Gideon, of David in the early rising of his power. Reuben has abode among the sheepfolds; Dan has remained in ships; Asher has continued on the seashore; Meroz has come not up to the help of the Lord; but a part of the host has been in the field; the battle has been fought by bands. Whether we look at the whole of Christendom, or whether we look at individual congregations, such has been the history of the times. At the last meeting of the Synod of Virginia, Dr. Hoge declared that in some of the churches the fire on the altar of missionary zeal had been kindled and kept alive by a few devoted women organized as a missionary society. "They ceased in Israel until that I Deborah arose." In the broad work of Christendom men have been the leaders; but whether by men or by women, it is through their organization into missionary societies that many of the greatest victories of this century have been won.

And now let the tendency of these societies be clearly noted. It has ever been to infuse life and zeal into the whole church of God. In the day of Israel's wide-spread apathy and unbelief, it was the faithful deeds of the small bands that gave courage and faith to the whole host. The victory of Gideon and his three hundred brought Naphtali and Ephraim into the field. The success of David and his six hundred was an inspiration to every Israelite; and so the zeal for conquest was contagious, until at last all the tribes, as one man, swept forward, and the land was won from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Just so with the missionary societies. "Within and without the

church" they have studied the plan for the conquest of the world, they have prayed for it, they have worked for it, and their zeal and success have been gradually awakening the whole church. Take as an example the Presbyterian bodies in the United States. In 1817 they first undertook a distinctive foreign mission work. They began with a society—"The United Foreign Missionary Society"—a society made up of representatives from the Presbyterian, the Dutch Reformed and the Associate Reformed Churches. In 1826 this society made over all its missions and property to the American Board. As a union society, the American Board received money and men from all denominations, and for some years it was almost the National Foreign Mission Society of America. Its work in India, in the Sandwich Islands and in Western Asia, increased the missionary interest in the Presbyterian churches. As a result, the Synod of Pittsburgh formed itself into another society, called "The Western Foreign Missionary Society," whose object was to rally Presbyterians to a distinctive church work in the foreign field. This society, like the American Board, had marked success, and its missions were planted in India, Africa, Smyrna and China. The result strengthened the hands of those in the church who desired a denominational agency, and in 1837 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church organized its Board of Foreign Missions, to which the Western Society transferred its whole work. The New School branch of the church continued to send its contributions of men and money to the American Board until 1854, when it appointed its own Committee of Missions; and in 1869, on the reünion of the Old and New School branches, the reünited church received from the American Board a number of mission stations that previously it had maintained. The American Board itself is now chiefly supported by the Congregationalists, though there are Presbyterians still in its corporate membership, and its work is far in advance of what it was at the time the Presbyterians took up an independent work. Meanwhile, in all these denominational bodies, missionary societies have been organized in many of the congregations, and the effect on the congregations has been precisely that which the inter-denominational missionary societies produced on the denomi-

nations. There has been through them an increase of missionary knowledge and zeal.

Our own branch of the church, we have seen, has for years given her warm approval to the missionary societies organized within her bounds. In this she has done wisely. These societies, rightly conducted, are schools for the study of the wonderful work of God in making known the gospel of his dear Son in the world; they are channels through which a continuous flow of beneficence may go out by the church to the nations; they are centres of influence to which the careless and indifferent of the church may be attracted, and in which their sympathies are awakened for those who have not so much as heard the Redeemer's name. Every pastor who has fostered these societies has known the value of their aid. In a few of our churches missionary societies have been organized among the ladies, among the men, among the children. If the questions be asked, Why separate the people into societies?—why not have them all together? the answer is plain. There is a method of studying this work which is adapted to children, and should be provided for them. There are matters connected with woman's missionary work in heathen lands which appeal especially to the sympathetic aid of woman in the home church. It is well for our ladies to have some direct communication with their sisters who have gone to the mission fields. And so there are many practical matters of great importance which demand the broad, comprehensive grasp of men of business. These should be studied by the men of the church. It is a significant fact, that in almost every large denomination of Christians in this day we see three missionary magazines published—one for children, one for women, one for men. Do these things mean that there is any lack of unity in the church? Not at all. The beloved disciple certainly did not regard it as any breach of unity when he addressed the church by classes, "I write unto you, fathers, . . . I write unto you, young men, . . . I write unto you, little children." Let the training be in men's societies, in ladies' societies, in children's societies. Then, when the pastor meets the whole congregation in the interest of the foreign mission work, whether at the times of the annual collections, whether

at the monthly concert of prayer, he will find among them a sympathetic intelligence, a noble purpose of endeavor, a true unity of spirit, such as will make glad his heart.

The overture from the members of Concord Presbytery, while it grants that the General Assembly has commended the formation of missionary societies, regards this action of the Assembly as inconsistent with a principle which was declared by the Assembly of 1866. The overture says, "In the year 1866, our General Assembly affirmed as follows: 'The doctrine that the church, in its organized capacity, with its officers and courts, is the sole agency which Christ hath ordained for its own edification and government, and for the propagation of the faith and the evangelization of the world,' as set forth in that formulary (*i. e.*, Form of Government), clearly teaches that the church is God's Bible and missionary society." If the church, in its organized capacity, with its officers and courts, is the sole agency for the evangelization of the world, then the missionary societies, according to the overture, are unauthorized intruders, and the General Assembly, when it commended the societies, violated the principle embodied in its own Form of Government.

The error which lies in this argument of the overture has been pointed out by the Rev. Dr. G. D. Armstrong, in the *Central Presbyterian*. As there will be some, doubtless, among the readers of these lines, who have not had the opportunity of reading Dr. Armstrong's article, we will state briefly the facts which he has brought out. In the overture, the declaration, "the doctrine that the church, *in its organized capacity*, with its officers and courts, is the *sole agency* which Christ has ordained," etc., appears as a quotation from the Form of Government. The Form of Government of our church never contained such a statement. The statement did appear in the revised Form of Government as it was proposed, and was before the church for review in 1866. But the church saw that the statement was not supported by the Scriptures, and changed it before the revised form was adopted. In our present Form of Government it reads, "The church, with its ordinances, officers, and courts, is the agency which Christ has ordained," etc. The words, "*in its organized capacity*," and "*sole*

agency," were stricken out. Had they been allowed to remain, we have no idea that the church would ever have construed them as directed against the missionary societies within the church. But their removal shows the broad and scriptural view which our church has taken of the work of Christ in the world, and it leaves the argument of the overture, as far as this point is concerned, without any scantling of support.

As the church had given her cordial sanction to the missionary societies, it was to extend and foster them that the Presbyterian Unions were formed. In some quarters an erroneous impression has existed as to the circumstances which led to the organization of these unions, and it may be well, therefore, to give briefly their history. In December, 1887, two ladies of the church, who have been conspicuous for their intelligent and efficient service in the foreign mission cause, wrote to the author of this article, the Secretary of Foreign Missions, calling attention to the vast amount of unused power among their sisters in the church. The number of ladies' missionary societies in the church was only about four hundred. There were, therefore, about eighteen hundred churches in which no society existed. It was evident that a large majority of the women of the church were doing little or nothing to send the gospel to their sisters in heathen lands. To evoke the power which thus lay dormant, and to enlist all the women of the church in the work of Christ for the world, the letter to the secretary proposed enlarged organization—presbyterial, synodical and general—for the ladies' missionary societies. This letter the secretary submitted to the Executive Committee, stating at the same time his own views of the matter. The Executive Committee, after carefully considering the case, instructed the secretary to draw up a paper embodying his views. This he did in the form of a letter addressed to the two ladies. In it he said:

"It is understood in this whole matter that the Executive Committee in Baltimore has no power to authorize the ladies to effect any organization. This they must do of themselves, and as all the work of our church is under the care and control of the proper church court, so it must be here. The Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society of a church falls under the jurisdiction of the Session; so the Woman's Foreign Missionary Presbyterian Committee would be under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery; and so on upwards." He also said: "As to the objects

of the women's committees, presbyterial, etc., they are: 1, To plant a Woman's Foreign Missionary Society in every church where there is not one now; 2, To increase the interest and promote the growth of the Women's Foreign Missionary Societies already organized; 3, To aid the Executive Committee in Baltimore in selecting and sending to the field suitable lady missionaries; 4, To support and cheer our lady missionaries in the field.

"In promoting these objects the Woman's Foreign Missionary Committees would engage, 1st, To forward the contributions of the Women's Foreign Missionary Societies to the Executive Committee in Baltimore, to be disbursed under the Executive Committee's direction. When the societies work for 'special objects,' the objects shall be those approved by the Executive Committee. 2d, The Woman's Committees shall not have power to designate or appoint missionaries. This belongs only to the General Assembly's Executive Committee. But they may at any time, after diligent and careful inquiry into the qualifications of a woman for the foreign mission work, make any suggestion or recommendation in her case to the Executive Committee which they may judge proper."

This letter the secretary submitted to the Executive Committee, and afterwards, in communicating the result to the ladies, he said, "I laid before the Committee the letter I had written you, and, though no formal action was taken, the members of the Committee present expressed their approval of it." The two ladies accepted the conditions of the letter. One of them, it is true, thought at first that the secretary had drawn the limitations of the enlarged organizations with too strict a hand, and he himself was inclined to think that a little more liberality on one or two points might have been safely allowed; but, after some correspondence, the final result was a full acceptance of the conditions stated. The whole correspondence was read before the Executive Committee. On the minutes of the Committee, December 13, December 20, 1887, and January 10, 1888, note was made of this correspondence "in regard to the formation of presbyterial, synodical and general committees of the ladies' foreign missionary societies of the church," and the record, after having been "carefully examined," was approved by the next General Assembly.

On the conditions that have been named, the Presbyterial Union of the Ladies' Missionary Societies of East Hanover Presbytery was organized. The ladies first submitted the constitution of the Union to the Presbytery. The Presbytery approved it, and the Union was formed. In much the same manner the Unions of Mecklenburg, Wilmington and Fayetteville Presby-

teries were formed. During the short time these organizations have been in existence we have heard but one testimony in regard to them; they have done good. We were told in Mecklenburg Presbytery that the meeting of the Union had encouraged the smaller missionary societies, and had led to the organization of societies in some churches in which there had been none. In East Hanover Presbytery the Union, according to the statement of "An Elect Lady" in *The Central Presbyterian*, "has been guided and approved by some of the wisest and best of that body." "We have done a little," she adds, "without organization; we hope to accomplish far more by that coöperation which can only thus be secured. Already the ladies of our country churches say that they are more interested, and their contributions are larger than before the formation of the Union."

Of the Union in Wilmington Presbytery, "P. H. H.," the pastor of the largest church in the Presbytery, writes in *The Central Presbyterian*:

"The Union was endorsed by Synod in 1888, and again in 1889, and by Presbytery in the report of the Agent of Foreign Missions last spring. . . . Having thus watched it from its beginnings, and seen the manifest tokens of God's blessing upon it, I feel that it would be an irreparable injury for the church to decide against this movement. There can be no objection against the *principle* of the thing, for it is simply bringing together the members of our churches, that intelligence may be diffused, enthusiasm aroused, and that the strong may help and encourage the weak. It puts woman in no unbecoming position (for all their transactions are without the presence of a man); they assume no ecclesiastical powers, and the whole control is in the hands of Presbytery. If the dangers exist that are alleged, it is all the more reason that the church should take hold of the movement, and organize and direct it. For the movement is the expression of an imperative need, and is the working of a power that cannot be cried down or throttled. The church tried that with Carey, and the result was irresponsible societies. Then she had to confess her sin and shame, and retrace her steps. Let her not make another mistake, but let her study this movement, nurse it tenderly and guide it wisely. 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it.'"

We have noticed the theoretical objection made to the presbyterial unions as to all societies in the church; we come now to consider the practical objections which have been urged against them. Some objections of this class have been so extreme in their character that they are not likely to exert much influence in the church, and it is not considered necessary to deal with them here.

The two principal ones have been referred to in the quotation just made from "P. H. H.," and they have been tersely stated by one of the opponents of the unions in a single phrase, "Woman control and woman preaching." It is alleged that the tendency of the presbyterial unions is to bring woman forward into a position inconsistent with "the modest sphere to which God has assigned her;" to put her on the platform or in the pulpit as a teacher in the church; and to give her a power which will not submit to the ecclesiastical authority under which she has been placed by the Divine hand. These are grave considerations certainly, and it is well for us to examine carefully the basis on which they rest.

Two writers in our church have in recent days undertaken to define the true sphere of woman. One of them was objecting to single women being sent as missionaries to the foreign field; the other was objecting to all women being allowed to take part in the presbyterial unions. They both fixed on the same text as supporting their views. It is the words found in 1 Timothy v. 14, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." The first writer construed this as teaching that an unmarried woman, not advanced in years, should not go as a missionary; she had better marry. The other writer construed it as teaching that the "appointed sphere" of woman was only in the duties of domestic life and maternity. His emphatic words were, "*Here* let her abide." It may be that there are others in the church who, in a vague way, have supposed that the text does discourage women from attending a presbyterial union or going abroad to do missionary work. It may be well, therefore, to examine it for a moment.

If any one will turn to the passage in First Timothy, beginning with the third verse of the fifth chapter, he will see that the subject which the apostle is discussing is the provision to be made for the support of widows. The inspired writer points out first, that if a widow have children or nephews, it is their duty to support her. But there may be widows without children or nephews. If such a widow be sixty years of age, and be well reported for good works, let her be taken into the permanent support of the church.

But the younger widows are not so to be taken. The judgment of the apostle is that the younger widows had best marry, bear children, and guide the house. Though, he adds, every man or woman in the church who has a widowed relative should contribute to her relief, that the church be not charged. Such is the instruction of this passage. The text which has been quoted is correctly given in the Revised Version; "I desire, therefore, that the younger widows marry," etc. These words, like all other counsel given in the Bible, have their special value, yet it would not be safe to infer the whole duty of woman from a text which relates to the maintenance of young widows.

The domestic life of the married woman is a crown of honor to her, as she walks in the ways of God; but in the church, among women as well as among men, there are "diversities of gifts." Her "appointed sphere" is not circumscribed. On the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, fitting them for the great work of evangelizing the world, the gift of power came to women as well as to men; and Peter, as he explained the marvellous phenomenon to the assembled thousands, declared that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel: "And on my handmaidens will I pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy;" that is, speak for God under the limitations of his word. The apostle who wrote the words of counsel that the younger widows marry, taught also that it was by no means best that all women should be bound by domestic cares (1 Cor. vii.). He praised the "unmarried woman" who "careth for the things of the Lord." "He that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." In his missionary labors he had associated with him Euodias and Syntyche, Priscilla and the beloved Persis. By women married and unmarried was the work helped. And so to this day, wherever the Holy Spirit has been given richly to the church, woman has been found taking an active and important part in the missionary work for the world.

Shall not our own branch of the church, then, give thanks, not only for what her pious women have done in the missionary societies and in the mission field, but for what they propose still

further to do? Shall we fear to see the missionary societies send their representatives—women who are free to leave home for a time—to attend a presbyterial union, where plans for work and missionary tidings and prayer and praise fill up a few inspiring days? An English clergyman, who has had a wide experience in the “county unions” of the Church Missionary Society, justly remarks: “Every one knows how delightful it is to meet with others who are in hearty sympathy with one’s self on the questions which lie nearest the heart. One need not weigh one’s words; one is sure not to be misunderstood. It is pleasant to find others doing, and doing better than one’s self, the same sort of work. It is such a help to hear their hearty words, to see their zeal beaming in their faces. The very differences of temperament, of ideas, of methods, which are sure to be found where a number of persons meet together, add charms to the society where there is full accord on essential points. It is at once restful and stimulating to meet with those who are working for the same ends with hearty sympathy as to the main lines on which work is to be done. Those who live much alone, as do many of the friends of the Church Missionary Society, find such opportunities for meeting very helpful.”

But, it may be asked, when the women of the church come together in a presbyterial union, may they not be led to do something inconsistent with that meek and quiet spirit which is woman’s true grace? May they not be tempted in some way to speak in public, or even to preach? Has not “woman-preaching” been an outgrowth of woman’s missionary organizations, and shall our church do anything to encourage this?

In reply to these questions, we would say at the outset, that we regard it as of the first importance in this day that every one should understand clearly what things it is lawful for a woman to do in the work of the church, and what things it is not lawful for her to do. To us the teaching of the Scripture on this subject is not uncertain. The sphere to which God has assigned woman in the church, is one of subordination. “The head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man.” It is her honor to observe this subordination. As it is the dignity of a true citizen to be subordinate to the civil magistrate, as it is the pleasure

of a dutiful son to be subordinate to his father, as it is the grace of a church member to be in subordination to those who are over him in the Lord, so it is the honor of a woman to be in subjection to the man. For the man was she created, and she is the weaker vessel. In every Christian land the chivalrous consideration, the tender regard which man delights to show to woman, is linked with the appreciation of her comparative weakness, and of the beauty of that meekness which leads her to accept the place of subjection.

Because she is in subordination to man, there are some things which it is not lawful for her to do. In the assemblies of the church, where men and women are present, she is not to undertake to teach. For her to make an exhortation in a prayer-meeting, is to usurp authority over the man. Nor must she lead in prayer. The man is her head, and for her to lead him in prayer is to dishonor her head. In any church in which woman teaches or prays in public, the manhood of the man is lowered, and the refined grace of the woman is tarnished. And, as is well known, these evils are widespread now.

Do the presbyterial unions tend to create these evils? To us there seems something almost absurd in the question. The presbyterial unions, like the congregational missionary societies, are composed of ladies who meet without a man being present. If the man is not there, how can she usurp authority over him? If her head is absent, how can she dishonor her head? It was not through the woman's missionary societies that "woman-preaching" entered the church. It was through the social prayer-meeting that this evil came. The church that guards its prayer meetings at this point need have no fear. If at any foreign missionary meeting women have overstepped the boundaries of that "modest sphere to which God has assigned them," it will be found, we think, that they had first learned to do this in other assemblies of the church.

The writer mentioned not long since, in another periodical, his observations of a woman's synodical foreign missionary meeting in Baltimore. These ladies of the Presbyterian Church, North, met in the lecture room of one of the largest churches in the city.

They spent two days in listening to the reading of papers and addresses by ladies from the mission field, in discussions on methods of work, in prayer, and praise. Some of the ladies of our own church who attended the meetings, said that it was good to be there. No gentleman was present. A minister in the city, not knowing the character of the meeting, went to the church, but was stopped at the door and informed that it was a meeting for ladies only. On the evening of the second day, a public meeting was held in the main audience-room of the church. No lady appeared on the platform. The speaking was all done by men, one of the Secretaries of Foreign Missions, with a returned missionary and others, taking part. It was an excellent meeting. In all this was there anything to condemn? Was there not much to approve? Would any one object to our ladies doing the same?

We come now to the last class of objections made against the unions. They may all be summed up in one sentence. It is feared that the unions will engross too much power. The apprehension is expressed that they will practically control the Executive Committee and the church, especially in the important matters of appointing missionaries and disbursing funds. To this whole class of objections only a brief reply is needed. If any one has to deal with the ladies of our church in missionary matters as the writer has had to deal with them, he will find that they possess in an eminent degree two qualities of that wisdom which is from above. They are gentle and easy to be entreated. When mistakes have been made by them in missionary affairs, the error has generally been caused by the isolation of the worker. Some good lady has thought that some special object in the mission work should be at once set on its feet, and, without consulting the Executive Committee, has committed herself and others to the enterprise. The Presbyterian Union would tend to prevent this evil. The societies entering the union are pledged to consult with the Executive Committee before a special object is taken up by them, and the union would bring the influence of the Executive Committee to bear on all the ladies of the church, as it does not bear now.

In the selection of lady missionaries by the Executive Committee, the influence of the unions would in general be for good. They

would aid in promoting a wise choice. The Executive Committee regards the whole church as an advisory body in such cases. They seek the judgment of pastors, elders, ladies; of every one in fact who is competent to give an opinion, as far as may be necessary. There have been cases in which a single church has nominated a lady missionary to the Committee, and has offered to support her in the field. In these cases the Executive Committee has satisfied itself that the nomination was a good one, and has made the appointment. But it is easy to see that there is more danger of a mistake arising from a local partiality in a single church than from the general *consensus* of ladies who belong to a number of churches. And then, finally, the ladies who undertook to form these unions, and the church alike, are agreed that the responsibility of appointing missionaries, as well as of disbursing money, is vested with the Executive Committee, and it is to be hoped that in any case the fear of man, including woman, which bringeth a snare, will not prevent the Committee from doing what is right.

The resources of our church for the foreign mission work have as yet only begun to be developed. Not only are there one thousand eight hundred churches without a missionary society; there are eight hundred and fifty churches that last year contributed not a cent to this cause. In not a few quarters the ignorance that prevails in regard to this glorious work of the Redeemer is simply dense. In some of these churches, perhaps many, there are godly women who are longing and praying for a better state of things, and they need the sympathy, the counsel, the aid which a Presbyterian Union could afford. Or, if there be churches in which no interest whatever exists, the Presbyterian Union might do much to awake women to their responsibilities. In many ways these unions, wisely administered, may promote the Master's work in the world; and, after weighing as carefully as we are able all the objections that have been urged against them, we feel bound to state it as our own judgment that, if the church should forbid presbyterial unions, she would reject a very important and valuable element of power.

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