

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY.

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I. THE PLACE OF CHRIST IN MODERN THEOLOGY.¹

THE aim of the large volume (556 pp.), which we shall review in the study of the theme which it presents, is the recovery of the historical Christ. Criticism, it is claimed, "has placed constructive thought in a more advantageous position than it has ever before occupied in the history of the Christian church. It has done this by making our knowledge more historical and real, and so bringing our thought face to face with fact. But, for the Christian theologian, the most significant and assured result of the critical process is, that he can now stand face to face with the historical Christ, and conceive God as he conceived him. What God signified to Jesus Christ he ought to signify to all Christian churches; and here all can find a point from which to study themselves and their systems." (*Preface*, p. 8.) The claim here advanced for criticism is certainly a very large and a very important one. If it is to be conceded, it must be admitted that, hitherto, the Christian theologian has never been brought fully and clearly face to face with the historical Christ. "The most significant and assured result of the critical process is, that he now sees the Christ of history as he has never before seen him, and through Christ, as thus unveiled, can see God as he has never before been in a position to conceive him." It is not claimed that the Christian theologian has not had hitherto a knowledge of the historical Christ. Even the most advanced critic would hardly put forward such a claim. The thing claimed for criticism is, that it effects a change in theology such as Copernicus

¹ *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology.* By A. M. Fairbairn, M. A., D. D., Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, etc., etc.

ered superior to refinement, sensibility, and purity. Progress will yet establish woman in her rightful place as the equal, if not the superior, of man. Election teaches that the sentence, "he shall rule over thee," was a part of the curse, which will continue in force until the dispensation of grace shall give place to the day of judgment. The family, and not the individual, is the unit in God's dealing with the race. Adam is the head of the race. Christ is the head of the church. The whole race fell in Adam. The whole church is redeemed in Christ. God has dealt with the race not as individuals but as in families; evolution tends to disintegrate the family, election tends to maintain its integrity.

Whatever may be the truth in the sidereal world, or in the vegetable and animal kingdom, the conclusion seems to be irresistible, that evolution in the spiritual world is essentially atheistic, and that election is God's eternal truth.

Huntsville, Texas.

N. SMYLLIE.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1894.

The Assembly in Macon, in May, 1893, departed from a custom venerable for age in electing a ruling elder instead of an ordained minister of the gospel for its presiding officer. This departure led to another. As the power to preach is not given to the ruling elder, the retiring Moderator called on one who had this power to take his place. This was the Rev. J. M. P. Otts, D. D., of Talladega, Alabama, who, it may be inferred, spoke the sentiments of the principal. His text was taken from Isaiah ii. 3, 4, and from Matthew xxviii. 18-20. The aim of his discourse was to show how the prediction of universal peace on earth by the prophet would be brought about through the agency of the church, under the headship and control of the Lord Jesus. In doing this he foreshadowed the right policy of the church touching organic union with the Northern Church, for which he was criticized by some of those whom he was leading in worship before the Godhead.

The Assembly was welcomed by a large congregation of the good people of Nashville, who, from first to last, evidently knew how

"To press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good."

It will not be beneath the dignity of a stately QUARTERLY to add that, if a new departure was made at Macon by calling an elder to the Moderator's chair, one not less agreeable or convenient was made at

Nashville by the ladies in dispensing hospitality, when they substituted a daily public lunch for an elaborate dinner. Not only did we thus gain, as the Moderator said in his farewell address, "an hour at least daily for work," but, when the afternoon session began, all came in promptly at once, so that business went on, apparently, without a break. The workers came in to their task well refreshed, but unoppressed. Moreover, it afforded a daily opportunity through two hours for that "flow of soul" after "the feast of reason," which brought the commissioners not only in sight of one another, but into warm, cordial relations, and made an "assembly acquaintance" a something to be carried in pleasing remembrance for many days to come. 'Tis the first time that the writer ever came from an Assembly or Synod feeling that he knew personally many of its members and many of the people whose guest he had been. This departure also gave the housekeepers time to attend the deliberations of their guests, which they did in large number, larger than we ever saw before anywhere, from first to last, and all the day long.

The *personnel* of the Assembly caught the observing eye at a glance. One hundred and sixty-four men, gathered from Maryland to western Texas, stood shoulder to shoulder. Nearly all of them had by years been "lifted to man's estate," and looked like men "on business bent." A few were there whose chins were not yet well used to the razor's edge, and a few whose "students' stoop" gave assurance of having bent before much midnight oil. But the great bulk were men who stood squarely on their feet, ready to take up the load and to bear it bravely, however large it might be. Chancellors of universities were there, and professors from colleges and theological seminaries in unusual numbers. Many visiting brethren also came in, not only from the vicinage of Nashville, but from considerable distances; for example, from Louisville, Selma, Columbia, Clarksville, and elsewhere. The Rev. Mr. Tron, a minister of the Waldensian Church in Italy, was present, and delivered a stirring and eloquent address about his people, their past history and present work. Two of our missionaries, Mr. Grinnan from Japan and Mr. Gammon from Brazil, entertained the Assembly and congregation with addresses at the missionary meeting, and deepened our interest in their work. The Rev. Dr. Alexander McLean, corresponding secretary of the American Bible Society, made an address, showing the successful work of his society in circulating the word of God. Rev. Mr. Saunders also was present to bring the Assembly's Home and School at Fredericksburg, Vir-

ginia, into notice. An evening was given for this purpose, during which addresses were made, showing the importance of this new enterprise as a factor in the work of the church.

The reading of the bills and overtures, together with the reports of the executive and *ad interim* committees, unloaded an enormous amount of work on the floor of the Assembly. The bills and overtures ran up above sixty; last year the full number was twenty-nine. The budget put into the hands of the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions, at the first glance seemed unmanageable. How could all of these great matters be thoroughly investigated and clearly decided on in the few days allowed, and the duties of members on the floor be discharged besides? This was the question that rose in the mind of some of that committee when they took their seats in the committee-room. Happily, it occurred to them that the committee might be sub-divided into five, and the business apportioned severally to them, and that the first ready report in order to the whole committee daily at a specified hour. This was agreed upon, and thus the work was done. The Committee of Bills and Overtures did likewise. So it seems true that there is a way to get out of any place that may be gotten into.

The past year, in spite of universal depression in business, has been one of great prosperity to our church. The Foreign Missionary Committee reports receipts for \$143,774.02, which is \$9,874.25 in excess of those of the year before. The missionary force has grown from 106 to 130. The force of native workers has grown from 87 to 165 in two years. The circulation of *The Missionary* touches 10,000 copies. And 600 heathen converts have been baptized within twelve months into the communion of our church. The contributions to the Home-Missionary work have been \$158,000. The committee aids 73 missionaries. The new plan works well. No debt has been incurred, and there has been advance along the line at many points. Our church has a surplus in both Foreign and Home Missionary Committee treasuries, while the Northern Presbyterian Church is loaded heavily. The Committee of Foreign Missions of the Southern Methodist Church, located at Nashville, are in debt, and wonder why we excel them so far in financiering.

These facts go to show that we have a right to live. We have a place and a work, and the good hand of the Lord our God is with us. Thirty-three years of history lie behind us, during which we have been kept free from entanglements with other churches and their blunders.

It is not offensive arrogance to say that we have realized our mission as a witness-bearer for the non-political character of the kingdom of God. During the sessions just closed, one of the first deliberate acts of the Assembly was to lay on the table a communication from "The National League for the Promotion of Social Purity," because it had a political bearing. Although this paper was afterwards called up by another, offered as a reply to it, yet this other was sent to the Committee on Bills and Overtures, where it was so modified that its adoption confirmed our antecedents and taught another wholesome lesson to those who are ignorant of the dignity of "the supreme judicatory of our church." The vote in favor of this reply, so modified, appeared to be unanimous.

ORGANIC UNION.

A special committee, of one from each Synod, was appointed, to which communications were referred on the subject of organic union with the Northern church, from the Presbyteries of North Alabama, Ebenezer and Holston, and one from the Assembly of that church then in session at Saratoga. The report of this committee recommended that we decline to reopen the question by appointing a committee of conference as requested by the Northern Assembly, and gave five reasons for so doing, viz.: The non-political character of the Christian church, on which subject the two churches differ in practice; the opposite policies of the two churches concerning their relations to the negro church in the land, which policies seem to be unchangeably fixed; the essential difference in the views of the two churches of the sphere and work of woman in church matters; the divisive tendency of the agitation of this question; the jeopardy to our property interests by any such union, growing out of the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the Walnut Street Church case, and other cases of the same kind since.

The committee of thirteen all signed the report with but one dissenting voice. Immediately upon its reading, two substitutes were offered, the latter of which was accepted by the author of the former as a substitute for his own. Thus the issue was joined by the friends of these two papers. The advocates of organic union urged from first to last, as their main reason, the discourtesy in refusing to appoint the committee of conference proposed by the Northern church. The opponents of organic union, while urging many insurmountable obstacles to the union, felt clear of any such allegation because of the following facts: (1.) This proposition was not spontaneous with the Northern Assembly. They say, in their communication, that they

were led to make it by learning that the matter would be before our General Assembly for consideration. This was throwing their influence on one side of a question about which our house was divided. (2.) As it was a matter of business, all that courtesy demanded was a courteous reply to their proposal. (3.) Feeling fully convinced that organic union, "upon the basis of our common standards," was out of all question by reason of insuperable difficulties (and it was just this about which they proposed to confer), it was the honorable, the fitting, and the just thing for us to deal plainly, and not encourage hopes that never could be realized. (4.) As tentative efforts had been made in vain so often—in 1870, 1874, 1876, 1877, 1882, 1883, and 1887, and as it had been formally declared by our Assembly in 1882 that it "is our high and grand duty to preserve our individuality as a church entire and intact, and to encourage no tendencies looking toward blending this body into any other"; and again, so late as 1888, "we continue established in the conviction that the cause of truth and righteousness, as well as the peace and prosperity of our beloved Zion, will be best promoted by remaining as we have been—a distinct member of that one body, the church, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme and ever-living head"; after all this, to press this matter upon us again is felt to be unkind and discourteous. This point was pressed in the debate. (5.) In 1870 the Northern Assembly proposed to us the appointment of a committee to meet a similar committee to be appointed by them to confer on this subject; *i. e.*, union "in one great organization that shall cover our whole land." We accepted their proposal and appointed the committee, instructing them, however, *viz*: "That the difficulties which lie in the way of cordial correspondence between the two bodies must be distinctly met and removed, which may be comprehensively stated in the following particulars." The difficulties were then plainly stated. When these facts were made known to that Assembly, they refused to appoint the committee to confer with ours already on their way, and all that our committee could do was to say to the next Assembly that they had not been met by any committee from the Northern church, which they did meekly and mildly, as became Christian gentlemen. Could we hazard a repetition of that same discourtesy?

(6.) The way in which this matter was worked up ought not to be overlooked. It did not come, as we like to see such matters come, before the Assembly, as by a power from above. It lacked the authenticating seal of the Holy Spirit. There was too much human

preconcert about it. Men who have been advocating the scheme for years, and who know perfectly well that the Assembly has by formal deliverances deprecated it for peace and righteousness' sake, had too much hand in it. It was not done in a corner. These good men honestly believe that the churches ought to unite. What they did was done in the interest of the kingdom of God, as they thought.

But we object to their way of doing good. The retiring Moderator of the Southern Assembly had been in correspondence with the retiring Moderator of the Northern Assembly on this subject. During the debate in Nashville he produced a letter from the retiring Moderator at Saratoga, speaking for the whole Northern church on the negro question—self-moved to do so. During recess others spoke without concealment of letters received from another ex-Moderator of the Northern Assembly trying to enlist them in the work of reunion. The opening sermon of our Assembly, as we have seen, commended it. That at Saratoga did likewise. A distinguished minister of our church, whose leaning has been known for years, visited the Saratoga Assembly, and, while addressing that body, spoke in a way to help on the work, and wrote a letter to Nashville with the same tendency, which was used in the same way.

Now all this is open and above board. But the writer is one of those who do not like such matters to be handled in this way. A new function will come by usage to the Moderator's office, and the constitution will need to be changed accordingly.

If one presbytery may be thus handled, so may another, and another, until our Assembly becomes a theatre for the operation of a machine whose output will be as inevitable as that of Tammany. How farcical, then, will be the prayers of all the ministers in their congregations, on the Sunday before the Assembly meets, for the Holy Spirit to preside, counsel, and lead to conclusions in accordance with the mind of God!

This is not the first time our Assembly has declined to appoint a committee for this purpose. It did so in 1883, in answer to an overture from a presbytery. And at the same meeting it said, "The question of organic union is not to be entertained as a subject before the church." In 1888, five years later, it said, "We are unable to discover that the obstacles to organic union . . . have, to any considerable extent, been removed." Since that time these obstacles have grown higher. The Northern church this year appropriated \$250,000 to carry out their policy respecting the negro church. In a most laud-

able effort to protect their young ministers against heretical teaching in theological seminaries, they so tightened their grasp on the property rights of these institutions that a majority in the united church would have absolute control of every dollar we have that is so invested. Walking in the light of these facts, reunion with them would be an act of self-effacement. Extinction without the negro, and submergence with, would be our fate. This was so plain to the Assembly that not one member of it said he was in favor of union now; and only four said they were for it conditionally in the future. There is less prospect for it now than ever before. If by machine work we could be compressed into unity, by internal dissensions we would soon fly apart. Peace if possible, self-preservation anyhow.

LICENSURE AND ORDINATION.

The prevalence of preaching by unlicensed men, in violation of the law of the church, and yet with the approval of many of the presbyteries, led the last Assembly to appoint a committee to take the matter in hand and report to this Assembly such change in our constitutional requirements as shall correct the irregularity.

The remedy proposed for the evil by the committee is to test all candidates, so soon as they are taken under the care of the presbyteries, as on probation for ordination as their objective all the way through their preparation; and, that their gifts in public speaking may be put on trial as well as their scholarship and good behavior, to license them to preach for a period of three years, under the direction of presbytery. At the expiration of this time the licensure may be renewed for the same term if thought advisable. This licensure is to be granted ordinarily only after the candidate has completed a college course, and has studied theology at least one year under an approved seminary or approved teacher. When licensed, the probationer shall be required to push straight on with his studies for ordination, except for extraordinary reasons. The committee also recommends that the term of preparatory study be changed from three years of eight months' sessions each, to four years of six months' sessions each. The object of this is to give the candidate more drill in active work. The plan lowers the standard for licensure, but keeps it up as at present for ordination.

The majority report recommended the approval of the plan, the sending it down to the presbyteries for adoption, and its publication in the Appendix to the Minutes. A minority report recommended the publication of the plan in the Appendix to the Minutes, and the dis-

charge of the committee, with commendation for their faithful work. The subject was earnestly argued *pro* and *con*. The evil was felt and acknowledged by a large majority, apparently. Our seminary students and self-appointed evangelists are out of order, and consequently doing mischief. The matter, therefore, must not be dismissed. Yet the constitutional changes proposed seem too extensive. It was forcibly argued, moreover, that the licensure of our candidates at so early a stage in their course would probably give rise to two classes of preachers in our church. The churches would insist on retaining a supply who pleased them, though unordained; and the probationer might make light of ordination and consent to be retained.

The Assembly evidently was not satisfied with either the majority or minority report, yet was unwilling to set both aside. The proposition to send the majority report to the presbyteries, and append to the Minutes, was objected to because the Assembly should not send down for adoption a report it did not itself approve. It was proposed to publish both reports in the Appendix to the Minutes, and docket the subject for the next Assembly. Although vigorously seconded by one who is accustomed to keep a docket in the civil courts, this motion was not put to the house because it was a novel mode of doing business in a church court, yet the completion of our action touching the appointment of delegates to the next council of the Presbyterian Alliance was referred to the next Assembly. So the Assembly adopted the majority report without really approving it, and sent it down to the presbyteries. Let the presbyteries bear this in mind when considering it, and not be misled into its hasty adoption. A vigorous protest was entered against this act of the Assembly.

The mind of the body was clearly and strongly opposed to preaching by the unlicensed, as appears from the adoption of a resolution, offered by Mr. Moore, instructing the presbyteries and church sessions not to call on unlicensed men to preach. This, we take it for granted, does not discourage exhortation and Bible-readings, with explanation, by earnest laymen in their own congregations, and with the approval of their own sessions, but irresponsible evangelism.

ORDINATION IN HEATHEN LANDS.

Overtures were received from the Presbyteries of Lexington and Roanoke, Virginia, praying that the deliverance of 1893 on this subject be rescinded, because unconstitutional. The action referred to reads thus: "It is lawful for the presbytery from whose bounds such a missionary has gone to the foreign field, after having complied as

nearly as possible with Paragraph 118, Form of Government, through correspondence, to authorize a sufficient number of ordained missionaries (ministers and elders) in the same field to constitute themselves a commission to complete the examination of the candidate and ordain him, if the way be clear. Such ordination should be reported to the home presbytery, and the name of the ordained man entered upon its roll. When this has been done, the commission is dissolved."

The Presbytery of Roanoke, in its overture, declared this action, according to our recollection, "altogether unconstitutional." This language is not extravagant. It is unconstitutional, because it "authorizes a sufficient number of ordained missionaries (ministers and elders) in the same field to constitute themselves a *commission*." A commission from what? These ministers and elders will probably belong to different presbyteries at home.—"A sufficient number of ordained missionaries (ministers and *elders*)." Do we send out elders as missionaries, unless a medical missionary happens to be one? And, if so, whom does he represent? An elder cannot rule except over people who have elected him.—It "authorizes a *sufficient* number of missionaries." What is a sufficient number? A commission must be a quorum of the court sending it.—This commission is to "complete the *examination* of the candidate." But the constitution says, Paragraph 93, "The presbytery itself shall conduct the previous examinations."—"When this has been done, the commission is *dissolved*." What power *ab extra* can dissolve a self-constituted commission?—And last, all this was done by act of Assembly at Macon, without referring the proposed change in the constitution to the presbyteries!

It was well, therefore, for the Nashville Assembly to rescind this action of its predecessor. But was the action substituted for it constitutional? This action reads thus: . . . "The only lawful method of ordination to the ministry is provided in Sections 6, 77, and 93 of the Book of Church Order.

"And in answer to the further request, in the same overture, that the Assembly take steps for amending the Form of Government so as to relieve the difficulties which now beset the ordination of evangelists in the foreign fields, your committee recommends that the Assembly send down to the presbyteries an overture recommending that Section 40 be amended by inserting the following words: 'And to ordain ministers in the foreign fields when ordination in the usual way is impracticable; said newly ordained minister to be reported and enrolled in the presbytery of the ordaining minister.'"

This overture confers the power of ordination in heathen lands upon an evangelist; and the only reason given for this change in our organic law was given orally in debate by the chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, that is, Titus i. 5: "Ordain elders in every city."

The question is, *How* was Titus, an evangelist, to ordain elders? In 1 Timothy iv. 13, Paul reminds this evangelist that he had been ordained by "the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." What presbytery did it? the local or the provincial, the session or the larger Presbytery? For all of our courts are presbyteries, rising in regular gradation from the session to the General Assembly, each one having plenary power until the larger is formed. "The power of the whole is in every part, and the power of the whole is over the *power* of every part." The power of the Presbyterian Church, South or North, is in the General Assembly, the Synod, the Presbytery, the session. What well-informed Presbyterian will challenge this saying? Again, it is a well-established and distinctive principle of Presbyterianism that the presbytery cannot confer the power *to confer the power* of ordination; it can only confer the power (*εξουσια*) to exercise the power (*δυναμις*) which the Spirit of God has manifestly conferred upon the candidate. It only inducts him to an office.

The apostle himself had plenary power to ordain because he was an apostle; and he did ordain by putting his hands on Timothy; as in 2 Timothy i. 6. Although, in this instance, no doubt he did it as a presbyter, conjointly with the presbyters of the local presbytery. But he had no power to confer apostolic power. This is prelacy. A prelate, deriving his power by succession from the apostles, can make and unmake, frock and unfrock. And this is the radical error of the act we now criticise. The modern notion among Presbyterians in the Southern church, that the evangelist has unlimited power as an extraordinary officer in the church, is a blunder of the first magnitude. It confesses Presbyterianism a failure except when existing as a settled church in a settled country. The radical idea of Presbyterianism conceives of it as a seminal principle, which, if planted in Central Africa, may grow *of itself* into a church as large as this planet of ours. Its expansive power is unlimited. This seminal principle was given by our Lord to his disciples when he said (Matt. xviii. 20), "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them"; (Luke xxiv. 49) "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high"; (John xx. 21, 22), "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this,

he breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." He is in the "two or three," and empowers them to do all that is necessary to perpetuate the existence of the kingdom of God in the earth. And as organization is necessary to this end, he empowers them to do this—to organize themselves to rule over themselves for God's glory and their own good. This is representative Republicanism as distinguished from Congregationalism on the one hand, which retains the power in the mass, and from prelacy on the other, which gives the power to one man, the prelate. All power of government in Presbyterianism is *joint* power; and no power of government can be conferred except by those over whom it is to be exercised. The essence of Presbyterianism consists not in joint power as opposed to several, but in this, that power (diacritic) can be exercised only over those who give it.

Therefore for this church in America to send an evangelist to China with power to rule over the Chinese is a most violent stretch of authority, one which the Chinese may well rebel against. Autonomy is born in men. When your evangelist, in heathen lands, converts a heathen, the convert has the inherent right to say who shall rule over him. He may choose the Church of Scotland, or England, or Rome, or he may say, I will join myself to "two or three" Chinese and ordain a power to suit myself, according to the word of God. Chinese, who are converted, are not thereby captured like wild horses on the prairie. They are born free-agents, and it is an act of degradation to choke them with a Presbyterian lasso and lead them into our ranks. Consistency, no less than the sacred Scriptures and the natural rights of man, opposes this action of the Nashville Assembly which sets up a second kind of power in our church, one which is contrary to all the governing power in the home church. Presbyterianism can never become prelacy by evolution, or involution, or convolution. To this end he who made it must unmake it and remake it.

That the Apostle Paul does not, in Titus i. 5, settle the manner of ordination, is obvious. On this point there seems to be general agreement. Even Neander says (in his *Church History*, Vol. I., p. 189, as quoted by Hackett on Acts xiv. 23): "When Paul empowers Titus to set presiding officers over the communities who possessed the requisite qualifications, this circumstance decides nothing as to the mode of choice, nor is choice by the community itself *thereby* necessarily excluded." When they have chosen representatives, if no authorized power, apostolic or otherwise, is at hand, they in whom the Holy

Spirit dwells should ordain. In our church, ruling elders are to be ordained by "the laying on of the hands of the session" after prayer by "the minister." This is because ruling elders are next to the people, and derive their power from the people. In 2 Corinthians viii. 19, the fact that a traveling companion for the Apostle Paul had been elected by the people, is cited as a sufficient reason for the confidence of the people in him as a money-carrier to the poor saints. The voice of the people, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, is entitled to much weight, as he thought. The people being the source of power, the rulers whom they choose and to whom they delegate authority (*exousia*) to rule over them, become their *immediate* representatives; and when these rulers elect commissioners to the General Assembly, these commissioners become their *remote* representatives. Therefore, this Assembly must send down its proposed changes in organic law to the immediate representatives of the people for their sanction before the change can be made. According to the distribution of the power derived from the people by the constitution of our church, the whole power of the church is in the session, as it is in the Presbytery and General Assembly, for the purposes for which that session exists. It is, therefore, entirely competent for the session to ordain elders and ministers where there is no other court to which this power is given by the constitution. This same session might ordain and send out missionaries under like circumstances.

One of the wisest sentences ever framed on this subject was framed by the St. Louis Assembly of 1887, when it adopted the following: "The inherent difficulty in the case lies in the attempt to rule the church across the sea. The solution is found in recognizing the autonomy of the church as a free-Christian commonwealth and investing it with the power of self-government as soon as it is organized." The only amendment we would make to this noble sentence would be to add these words, "as soon as it has organized itself by the selection and appointment of ruling elders."

A JUDICIAL CASE.

Miss Sadie Means, a young woman, a member of the Second Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, was exhorted by the session of the church to refrain from the habitual violation of the Sabbath-day by working in the central office of the telephone company in that city. She refused to do so. She was asked if she would not rather have a place in a store? This she declined. The pastor stated to the session that she had declined his offer to have her taught stenography

and type-writing at his expense. She was solemnly warned of the danger she was incurring in making her choice. But she still held on her way. For this she was suspended from the communion of the church until she repented. Friends appealed the case to the Presbytery, where the session was sustained. The appeal was taken to the Synod, where the decision of the Presbytery was reversed. Thence it was brought to the General Assembly and tried. The finding of the court as formulated and adopted reads as follows :

“The Assembly finds :

“1. That the record of the cause does not clearly show that the aforesaid Sadie Means came before the session of the Second Presbyterian Church of Columbia, South Carolina, to make known to the court, as provided in Paragraph 234, that she was guilty of violating the Sabbath by working in a telephone office on the Lord’s day, and, therefore, the record lacks the statement which authorizes a judgment without process.

“2. The decision of the session was reached without trial, as provided in Paragraph 174; and these two paragraphs, 234 and 174, limit the session’s power.

“3. The decision was made in undue haste, and at the first and only sitting of the court, so far as the records show.

“4. The sentence of suspension from the communion was of excessive severity.

“It is the judgment of the Assembly that the appeal be not sustained, and that the decision of the Synod of South Carolina be affirmed. In connection with this judgment, the Assembly deems it wise to reëfirm its immutable conviction as to the universal and perpetual obligation to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.”

The finding is in accordance with the law and the testimony, and so far attains the ends of truth and righteousness. But it does not go far enough. A judgment that does not uphold the law breaks it down. This young woman surely did break the fourth commandment. This was a work neither of necessity nor of mercy. Other ways to earn a livelihood were open to her, which she deliberately refused. Now she is reinstated in the church, and permitted to continue violating the law of God with impunity, and that by the court of last appeal in our church! The judgment ought to have gone further, and have upheld the law of God by remanding the case to the session, and ordering a new trial, to be conducted according to the forms provided in our constitution.

The world will surely make capital out of this judgment. So far as our church has influence, it will be felt as favorable to a lax interpretation of the sabbatic law. And this is not the time for toning down the public conscience on this commandment. The saving clause added to the finding will not save. It will be treated as a fillip to the public ear. If Miss Means really felt in her conscience that this was a work of necessity, especially after another had been offered to her, the Assembly should have said: Your conscience is at fault; your moral sense is seared; you ought not to have such a conscience.

The church also will be dissatisfied. God's people had hoped for a deliverance that would brace those who are working hard in support of the law of the Sabbath. The permanent committee of the Assembly on the Sabbath, in their report to this very body at Nashville, had said: "We need not remind you that the eyes of the whole church and country are turned to you. May wisdom be given you to decide aright; and may we be allowed to ask that you embrace the occasion so grandly given, to do something more than merely settle some question of constitutional law, to reassert the high position always held by the Presbyterian Church as taught in the word of God, touching the divine origin and eternal obligation of the fourth commandment."

The church will not soon break the force of this judgment against the decalogue. Of what avail is it to pass deliverances *in thesi*, if when an actual case brings conscience face to face with law, we give judgment that encourages the lawless? Preaching is easier than practicing, even by a General Assembly. The introductory chapter, on Preliminary Principles, to our old "Form of Government," says, "That all synods and councils may err, through the frailty inseparable from humanity." Pity 'tis that this grand chapter was not prefixed to our present book.

YOUNG PEOPLES' SOCIETIES.

The report on this subject by the *ad interim* committee was assailed from opposite directions immediately upon its being taken from the docket. The special committee appointed to consider the report and recommend what disposal should be made of it, offered a report criticizing it. The report of the *ad interim* committee was immediately offered as a substitute for that of the special committee. After a discussion of some length, indefinite postponement of the whole matter was proposed. This called many to their feet who insisted that the churches wanted instruction and were looking to this Assembly for it. The

only exhibition of temper made through the eleven days of debates was made at this point, and, for a little while, there was the smell as of sulphur in the air. But the Moderator's gavel and energetic rebuke brought a prompt quietus.

After one or two motions to amend, which were lost, the report of the *ad interim* committee was adopted, without any change, by an overwhelming majority. The report is conservative throughout.

If we mistake not, this Assembly appointed six *ad interim* committees for the ensuing year. No doubt this will make the treasurer draw a long breath. These *ad interims* are very expensive, and the church would do well to find some other way of disposing of unfinished business. The writer modestly suggests that in many cases twelve months' time, or the interval between Assemblies, would bring light enough to the minds of her commissioners. There is danger, we are aware, of a burdensome docket; but carefulness would avert this.

Many other matters were concluded at Nashville on which comment might be made for the benefit of those who were not there, particularly the disposal of our valuable property at Campinas, Brazil, valued at \$100,000; the authority to incorporate the Assembly's Committee on Foreign Missions; and the appointment of a committee to confer with a similar one from the Northern church on Home Missionary work on the border.

This was a notable Assembly, considering the number and importance of the matters handled.

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