

PRESBYTERIANISM.

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into a combination binding themselves by the well-known "Solemn League and Covenant" to exterminate prelacy, and lent their full influence to the carrying out of those measures which resulted in the death of Charles I. Upon the restoration of the Commonwealth, upon the establishment of Charles II as king, and upon the re-establishment of the episcopacy in Scotland, the Presbyterians still resolutely adhered to their principles, and upon the abdication of James II they confidently anticipated the triumph of their cause. Though William III was bent on preserving the same form of ecclesiastical government both in England and Scotland, the bishops refused to transfer their allegiance to him, and by this means the way was opened for that establishment of Presbytery which had been urged upon him by some of his most zealous adherents, and which was ratified by an act of Parliament in 1690. Scotland and England having been separate kingdoms at the time of the Reformation, a difference of circumstances in the two countries ultimately led to different religious establishments. When the treaty of union was formed in 1707, it was agreed by both kingdoms that Episcopacy should continue in England, and that Presbyterians should be the only religious system recognized by the State in Scotland. The only confession of faith legally established before the Revolution of 1688 is that which is attributed to John Knox. It consists of twenty-five articles, and was the confession as well of the Episcopal as of the Presbyterian Church, though the Covenants during the Commonwealth adopted the Westminster Confession. At the Revolution the Confession was received as the standard of the national faith, and it was ordained by the same acts of Parliament which settled Presbyterian church government in Scotland "that no person be admitted or continued hereafter to be a minister or preacher within this Church unless he subscribe the (that is, the Westminster) Confession of faith, declaring the same to be the confession of his faith."

**The Presbyterian Church in the United States.** In the year 1684 Francis Makemie, a Presbyterian clergyman, who came to this country from Ireland, organized a church at Snow Hill, Maryland. From this beginning has sprung a religious denomination which at the present day is divided into about a dozen branches, each with a distinct and independent organization, including in their ranks 7934 clergymen and a membership, according to the latest statistics, of 955,716. At various times divisions occurred in the denomination, the most important of them being that which separated the largest branch of the Church into what has heretofore been generally termed the "Old School" and the "New School" sections.

The first and largest churches were established in Pennsylvania and Maryland, two colonies distinguished from the earliest times for their just notions of religious liberty. The Puritan element early found its way into the body from New England. In New England itself some of the early settlers were Presbyterians.

**Its Early History.** But it was for the most part where the Church was not overshadowed or tyrannically patronized by the State, that Presbyterianism first effectively took root. On the banks of Elizabeth river, in Virginia, and on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the earliest Presbyterian Churches were gathered. The earliest representative of the denomination of whom we have any trace was Matthew Hill, one of the English Non-Comformists of 1663, who lost his few worldly goods in the great fire of London (1666), and subscribing his letter, *Sine re, sine spe, tantum non sine se*, determined to find in the New World a sphere of labor denied him in the Old. In 1669 he located in Charles county, Md., where he labored for a time with encouraging prospects of success. Josiah Mackie must soon after have commenced his labors in Eastern Virginia, and with no long interval, the man who has with more reason been denominated the founder of the Presbyterian Church in this country—Francis Makemie—found a call for his labors in Maryland. The graduate of a Scotch University, the licentiate of an Irish Presbytery, and sent forth as a missionary to his transatlantic field by the liberality of English dissenting ministers, he fully represented that denomination of composite elements with which his name thenceforth was associated. He observed the wants of his extensive field, and performed for it the work of a primitive bishop. He sought colporters far and near, crossed the ocean, as well as visited New England, to procure them, and manifested his own co-operative spirit by his correspondence with Cotton Mather.

Thus the Church was composed of such varied elements as to forbid it to be classed as English, Welsh, Scotch, or Irish, for, combining all these elements, it constituted a new body, fully entitled the American Presbyterian Church. Its early growth was rapid. Immigrants from various quarters, but very largely from Ireland, added to its numbers. In about ten years the single Presbytery had grown to the dimensions of a Synod with three Presbyteries. For ten years more its prosperity, under all the difficulties which with it was forced to struggle, continued uninterrupted.

**The First Synod** was organized in 1716. At this time the heterogeneous character of the Church became so marked that the harmony of its opinions and of its operations was proportionally decreased. The points on which the conflicts of opinion were most strongly marked were the examination of candidates for the ministry on experimental religion, the strict adherence to Presbyterian order, and the requisite amount of learning in those who sought the ministerial office. In the several Presbyteries these points were discussed with great zeal. Two distinct parties were formed known as the old and new sides. This, be it remembered, was more than a century before the days of the Old and New School division.

**Passage of the "Adopting Act."** In 1729 the Synod passed what is known in the history of the Church as the Adopting act. All competent students of its history are agreed that this was a liberal measure, indicative of a disposition to harmonize scrupulous consciences on doubtful points, or on such as did not affect the doctrinal integrity of the standards. The act passed, not without opposition, but it harmonized the different sections represented by men as diverse in views as John Thomson, inclined to rigid subscription, and Jonathan Dickinson, just as orthodox, but a life-long enemy to anything which assumed authority for human impositions.

The act consisted of a public authoritative adoption of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, and made it imperative that not only every candidate but every actual minister should subscribe or otherwise, in the

presence of the Presbytery, acknowledge these instruments respectively as their confession of faith. This, however, was not the end of the issue. Various questions were discussed, particularly those bearing upon experimental piety in the candidates, and various measures were taken in the years 1734 and 1738 which eventually caused much trouble and an estrangement of the two parties of the Church for a time.

**The Division of the Synod in 1741.** In 1741 occurred the division of the Synod. Various causes contributed to it. The wave of revival, in connection with the labors of Gilbert Tennent and the celebrated Whitfield, swept over the land, carrying with it in many cases confusion and disorganization. Two parties were formed, the "New Side," represented by the more ardent revivalists, and the "Old Side," represented by those who regarded it as largely an outburst of fanaticism. The last, by the necessity of their position, were the advocates and champions of order. They denounced itinerants intruding uninvited into their congregations, and when the "New Lights" contemned their opposition, they invoked a stricter application of Synodical discipline, and a more rigid application of the Adopting act, while they attempted to throw upon the other party the odium of violating their stipulated obligation to conform to the standards.

The evil at last provoked a protest which divided the Synod and led to the organization, four years later, of the Synod of New York. The latter increased rapidly, while the "Old Side" Synod of Philadelphia could barely make good the number lost by removal or death. In 18 years from the time that the New York Synod was organized it outnumbered the other by three to one. Most of its members had joined it subsequent to the division, while the "Old Side" Synod itself had greatly decreased.

**United Again in 1758.** But by this time the old issues were obsolete, and the old antagonisms had died out. In 1758, after some years of mutual correspondence and repeated Committees of Conference, the reunion was effected. The "New Side" insisted on the Adopting act, as it stood, as substantially the basis of the united body, and although this was not all which the "Old Side" desired, they showed themselves disposed to make sacrifices to promote an object which was essential to the harmony and efficiency of the Presbyterian Church.

**A Season of Prosperity.** The years that intervened between the reunion of 1758 and the Revolutionary War were years of prosperity and rapid growth. Missionary efforts were nobly put forth. Men like Duffield and Beatty penetrated into Western Pennsylvania with the view of opening an Indian mission field. Men like McWhorter, of Newark, and Spencer, of Elizabethtown, visited the Southern field, and explored destitutions in Virginia and the Carolinas. In Virginia, under the labors of the gifted, eloquent, and earnest Davies, afterwards President of Princeton College, and his successors, Presbyterianism extended itself in the region of Hanover and in the Valley of the Shenandoah. Indeed the Church has, perhaps, during no other period of her history developed a higher degree of energy or attained a more gratifying success.

**The Church During the Revolutionary War.** The progress of the Church was seriously interrupted by the Revolutionary War, but at this trying period Presbyterianism made a record in which Presbyterians may well take pride. There were few Tories among the congregations of the Church, and none in the ranks of her ministry, with a possible single exception. Many of her ministers served in the army as chaplains, and some of them did not restrict themselves to the use of spiritual weapons, holding that the cause of civil liberty was for the time identified with that of religious liberty, and that the overthrow of kings would aid the overthrow of bishops and prevent the setting up of an Established Church, supported by the State.

The Synod of New York and Philadelphia met at the latter place on May 17, 1775, just four weeks after the first blood was shed in the conflict at Lexington. The Synod, in view of the alarming state of public affairs, appointed a day of "solemn fasting, humiliation, and prayer," to be "carefully and religiously observed." This corresponded with an appointment, for the same purpose, by the Continental Congress. A pastoral letter was also addressed to the churches, to express the views of the Synod, which they declare they "do not wish to conceal, as men and citizens." In this letter the people were most earnestly exhorted to the cultivation and practice of piety, and also to discharge faithfully the duties they owed the country, in the common danger.

Many of the leading Presbyterian divines of the day figured prominently in the struggle for independence. The Rev. John Witherspoon, D. D., then President of Princeton College, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a member of the Continental Congress for six years, and drew up many of the most important papers which emanated from that body in that time. John Carmichael, of Lancaster, was a bold advocate of American rights; and Miller, of Delaware, was equal in patriotic ardor. Robert Davidson, then the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, at the very commencement of the war took decided ground against the mother country. Of John Craighead, pastor of Rocky Spring Church, Pennsylvania, it is said that "he fought and prayed alternately," and he raised a company from the members of his charge, with which he joined Washington's army in New Jersey.

This zealous devotion to the cause of the country was maintained to the close of the struggle, and the first General Assembly of the Church, which met in 1789, framed an address to General Washington, lately elected President, pledging its support to his administration.

**The Church After the Revolution.** Years elapsed after the close of the Revolutionary War before the Church entirely recovered from its effects. There were numerous vacant pulpits and ruined church buildings. The latter had to be rebuilt, the former to be filled, and all her energies were required to accomplish this task. A reorganization of her government was the first important step towards furthering these objects, and this was inaugurated about 1785. The sixteen presbyteries were distributed among four synods into which the old synod was divided, and the General Assembly, with paramount jurisdiction over all, was established, the new system being perfected about the same time that the political system of the country was reorganized by the ratification of the Federal Constitution. The task of reorganization was completed in 1788, at which date the denomination embraced 184 ministers and 435 churches, and in 1789 the first General Assembly met in Philadelphia. From this time forward for many years the Assembly continued almost invariably to meet in this city, convening elsewhere, previous to the split in 1838, only five times, and of these five only once outside of Pennsylvania.

But there were other things of vast importance to be done. The machinery for publication, for missionary and educational enterprises, and for the building up of feeble churches, was all to be organized. The only college under the care of the Church was the one at Princeton, and there was not a single theological seminary for the education of her ministers. Within a generation, however, the seminary at Princeton was established, and preparations for another in Virginia were under way. Missionary, tract, and Bible societies were formed, numerous prominent clergymen of the East forsook their old fields of labor for the more inviting ones of Central and Western New York—then little less than a wilderness—and gradually the whole energy of the Church was enlisted in the cause of evangelization.

**Whole-sale Accessions and Elements of Discord** were also made to the Church meanwhile. Men like Jonathan Edwards and Dr. Eliphalet Nott, the former then President of Union College, the latter soon to succeed him as such, appreciated the desirability of harmonizing with the Presbyterian organization the large Congregational element which, about the opening of the present century, emigrated from New England in search of a wider and more promising field of labor. By their influence what was known as a "Plan of Union" was recommended, by which Congregationalists might retain for their churches their peculiar organization, and still be represented in the councils of the Church. The plan was accepted by the General Assembly and by the General Association of the State of Connecticut, and went into operation in the year 1801. There was no warrant for it in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church; but it was devised to meet a pressing emergency, and for a time appeared to work well, the newly-organized churches swelling the list on the roll of the Assembly, and the necessities of evangelization, which fully taxed the efforts of both Presbyterians and Congregationalists, repressing sectarian jealousies. But, despite the influence of such prominent Congregational divines with Presbyterian predilections as Asael Backus, the first President of Hamilton College, Dr. Strong, of Hartford, and President Dwight, of Yale College, the rising ministers belonging to the new element were not without their New England peculiarities, and controversies soon arose from the jealousy with which they were regarded.

These had scarcely time to subside, before another element was introduced by the accession, in 1823, of the Associate Reformed Presbyterians, who, as a body, were more strict and rigid in their Presbyterianism than that to which they were united. Among their leaders were some who afterwards distinguished themselves for "Old School" zeal, notably Dr. Junkin, the relentless persecutor of Albert Barnes.

**Premunitions of a Schism.** The occasion for an open manifestation of the antagonism of the different elements of the Church was soon presented. The New England churches systematically threw all their energies into the channel of voluntary benevolent societies. They organized Education, Home Missionary, Foreign Missionary, and Tract Societies; they poured their charities and energies into the bounds of the Presbyterian Church, without regard to the organizations that they contributed to establish, and anxious only to retain the faith of the stern old New England fathers. It was inevitable that these operations should sometimes interfere with the plans of the General Assembly, and draw under the control of many voluntary associations the means which the Presbyterian Church might claim as her own and properly subject to her own disposal. The popularity of these societies, which owned no accountability, and showed little respect to the General Assembly, was well sustained by reports which manifested their remarkable success and their extended usefulness. Their policy was shaped by managers who, in some instances, were not connected with the Presbyterian Church, or had little sympathy with its forms, and had preferences for a theology which was perhaps as much of an "improvement" upon that of the younger Edwards as that of the younger Edwards was upon that of his predecessors.

**The Volunteer Societies Monopolize the Resources and Labors of the Church.** By these volunteer and irresponsible societies the true work of the Presbyterian Church was assumed and almost monopolized. They educated its ministers, established its churches, and even, through the agency of volunteer councils ready to follow their behests, ordained to the ministry the men who were sent forth to labor within the bounds of the Church, to sit in its synods, and vote in its General Assemblies. Weak at first, and dependent wholly upon charitable donations for their support, they rapidly increased, till it seemed to some that the only business of the General Assembly was to register and heed their decrees. Hundreds of missionaries and students drew their support from their funds, and when the choice was to be made between allegiance to them or to the General Assembly, none could doubt the result. The managers of the societies naturally were disposed to magnify their own organizations. They were not favorably disposed towards ecclesiastical methods of evangelization. Hundreds of Presbyterian ministers sympathized with them, and in repeated instances the missionaries of the American Home Missionary Society held the balance of power in the Assembly. Intent rather on building up churches than on giving them any ecclesiastical organization, they regarded as selfish and sectarian the policy which would make the Assembly the guardian of the interests of the Church and the sole manager of its missionary operations.

Within six or seven years from its organization the American Home Missionary Society had increased its missionaries four or five fold, while its funds were multiplied in a corresponding proportion. The seat of the Education Society had been transferred from Boston to New York, that it might more readily and extensively operate within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church. The Union Missionary Society, located at the latter place, and which though a voluntary society was mainly a Presbyterian organization, inviting the special sympathy and aid of Presbyterian churches, was transferred with all its missions to the American Board, located at Boston. It became evident that a very large number, and a number which threatened to increase with the large accessions to the Presbyterian ministry which were sent out from New England, was resolved to favor voluntary societies, to the exclusion of all the proper agencies of the General Assembly.

**The Antagonistic Element Developed.** Such had become the threatening state of affairs about 1830. But there was still in the Church a large element whose adherents, while they were unwilling to offer any direct opposition to proper agencies for spreading the Gospel and building up Christian institutions, believed the Presbyterian Church, through her regularly organized councils, fully competent to dispose

of her own funds, organize her own churches, and educate and ordain her own ministers. But they unhappily found themselves almost powerless in the General Assembly, which met usually in this city, and was made up far more largely of ministers and elders who resided this side of the Alleghenies than of those beyond, or from the South. On any emergency these might be relied on as favorable to the voluntary societies, and they constituted a majority which could not easily be overcome.

**The Esterting Wedge.** Thus everything was ready for a determined struggle, and the issue was soon joined. In 1835 Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, at the head of the Theological Seminary there, where quite a number of Presbyterian ministers had been educated, gave utterance to sentiments which even many New England ministers professed to be shocked, and which gave distinct shape and name to some of the peculiarities of New Haven theology. It was well known that many Presbyterian ministers regarded these sentiments with no disfavor, and that some were even their zealous advocates.

**The Case of Albert Barnes.** The Rev. Albert Barnes, who has for so many years stood at the head of the Protestant clergy of this city, proved to be among the number of the latter. Born at Rome, New York, in December, 1798, and educated at Hamilton College, where he graduated in 1820, he began life, as he has himself said, "a skeptic in religion, and had early fortified and poisoned his mind by reading all the books to which he could find access that were adapted to foster and sustain his native skepticism." By reading in the "Edinburgh Encyclopedia," then in course of publication, an article on "Christianity" by Dr. Chalmers, his attention was fixed, and he was convinced intellectually of its divine origin. He then resolved to frame his future life on what he understood to be the character and views of Dr. Franklin, to lead henceforth a strictly moral life; to say nothing against religion; not to be found on any occasion among its opposers; but to yield to its claims no farther. But a year later than this period, which was before his graduation, there was a revival of religion in the college, and the simple statement by a converted classmate of his feelings on the subject of religion, his description of the change which had been wrought in his heart, led him to reflect on his own condition, and was providentially the means of effecting a similar change in himself. The whole current of his life was thus changed. He entered upon the study of theology at Princeton immediately after his graduation, was licensed to preach in April, 1824, and was ordained and installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Morristown, N. J., in February, 1825.

Mr. Barnes remained at Morristown for five years, signaling the close of his pastorate, in the spring of 1830, by the delivery and publication of a sermon on "The Way of Salvation," which at once drew to him the attention of the whole Presbyterian denomination, and was made the basis for an ecclesiastical persecution of its author, which was conducted with great earnestness for six years, until its object obtained a complete triumph over all its adversaries.

He was called to the First Church of this city in 1830, as the colleague of the Rev. Dr. J. P. Wilson, with the hearty concurrence of the latter, there being but one vote adverse to his settlement in fifty-four which were cast upon the question. Having signified his acceptance, the congregation asked leave of the Presbytery of Philadelphia to prosecute the call. The motion was prolonged through four days, several prominent members of the Presbytery declaring that Mr. Barnes' sermon on "The Way of Salvation" contained fundamental errors in doctrine, and asserting their unwillingness to countenance any innovation by his reception. Leave to prosecute his call was finally granted, by a vote of 31 to 12, it being understood that, as soon as Mr. Barnes was received into the Presbytery he should be placed upon trial for heresy; and on the 18th of June, 1830, he presented his certificate of dismissal and recommendation from the Presbytery of Elizabethtown. A fierce opposition was again arrayed against his reception, but it finally prevailed by a vote of thirty to sixteen. An attempt was then made to arrest his formal installation, by the presentation against him of charges of unsoundness in doctrine; and in November, 1830, by express command of the synod, these charges were heard by the Presbytery, but in a manner which, according to the claims of Mr. Barnes and his friends, was entirely unconstitutional. The matter was finally taken before the General Assembly of 1831, which decided that there was "a number of unguarded and objectionable passages" in Mr. Barnes' sermon; but ordered the Presbytery to suspend further proceedings in the case, and recommended such a division of that body as would promote peace and harmony in the Church. This compromise was stoutly opposed by the adversaries of Mr. Barnes, and the recommendation of the Assembly was not fully and satisfactorily carried out until the year 1836.

**Other "Old School" Persecutions.** Meanwhile the "Old School" party diverted part of their attention to other advocates of the new doctrines. The Rev. Dr. Duffield, who was at that time settled at Carlisle, in this State, had published a ponderous work on regeneration, which his Presbytery arraigned and condemned. Dr. Lyman Beecher, recently called to the Professorship of Theology in Lane Seminary, was charged by the Rev. Dr. Wilson, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, with holding heretical views, and put on trial before his Presbytery. These proceedings naturally provoked the indignation of the "New School" party, by whom the objects of persecution on the part of the "Old School" faction were regarded as representative men. The case of Dr. Beecher, which had fairly divided the attention of the Church with that of Mr. Barnes, was carried up on appeal to the General Assembly, but was there left in abeyance, awaiting the result of the fresh assault upon the orthodoxy of Mr. Barnes which grew out of his publication of a volume of "Notes on the Epistle to the Romans."

**The Persecution of Mr. Barnes Renewed.** This book was published in 1835, and some of the doctrinal views expressed in it were regarded as especially objectionable by the "Old School" party. The precise dogmatical points which entered into the dispute it is not our purpose to dilate upon. A simple outline of the struggle to which they gave rise is both easier to handle and more edifying to the general reader. Hitherto the antagonism to Mr. Barnes had been of a desultory character, without system and lacking a determined and responsible leader. But the "Notes on Romans" brought both to the surface, the latter in the person of the Rev. Dr. Junkin, at that time the President of Lafayette College, at Easton, in this State. Dr. Junkin

became the accuser, although he was at the time a member of another Presbytery, and not even connected with the same Synod. He presented formal charges against Mr. Barnes, in which he studiously avoided the use of the objectionable word heresy, as ambiguous and calculated to prejudice him in public opinion. In these accusations Mr. Barnes was charged with holding that sin consists in voluntary action; that Adam, both before and after the fall, was ignorant of the fact that the consequences of his sin would extend beyond a natural death; that unregenerate men are enabled to keep the commandments and convert themselves to God; and that faith is an act of the mind, and not a principle, and is itself imputed for righteousness. The charges of Dr. Junkin also maintained that the author had denied the covenant with Adam, and the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity; that mankind are liable to punishment by reason of Adam's transgression; that Christ suffered the proper penalty of the law as the vicarious substitute of His people, and thus legally took away their sins and purchased pardon; the imputation of Christ's active righteousness; and that justification was other than simple pardon.

**Mr. Barnes' Second Triumph.** The Presbytery gave a patient hearing to the case, which resulted in the justification of Mr. Barnes. The Presbytery pronounced the evidence submitted in support of the charges to be mere "inferences drawn from Mr. Barnes' language," which were not legitimate, and which, even if they were legitimate, could not be used to convict of heresy or dangerous error, according to a decision of the Assembly of 1834. Mr. Barnes was therefore triumphantly acquitted of having promulgated "any dangerous errors or heresies, contrary to the word of God and the standards" of the Church.

This decision was unsatisfactory to Dr. Junkin, and the latter appealed from the Presbytery to the Synod. The Presbytery refused to give up to the Synod its record of the trial, and Mr. Barnes put in a plea to the jurisdiction of the latter body, declining to stand his trial before it. The Synod thereupon decided that the Presbytery had acted disorderly in this refusal, and merited a censure. Dr. Junkin was then given a full hearing before the Synod, and as Mr. Barnes refused to appear and argue his case, he was convicted of holding fundamental errors, and by a vote of one hundred and sixteen to thirty-one, a motion to refer the whole matter to the General Assembly having been previously voted down, was "suspended from the exercise of all the functions proper to the Gospel ministry" until such time as he should retract his errors and "give satisfactory evidence of repentance." Mr. Barnes acquiesced in the suspension, abandoning his pulpit for the time being, and gave notice of an appeal to the General Assembly.

An effort was then made by the adversaries of Mr. Barnes to reconstruct the Presbyteries so that he should fall to the lot of one which would be able to manage him. One divine declared that the only true course was the extinction of the obnoxious Presbytery, "root and branch." Others were in favor of distributing the members of the Presbytery; but this was opposed on the ground that it would be "like spreading poison," and result in the contamination of the whole Synod. Still another advocated the exclusion of the Synod, hoping thus effectually to free it from "wolves in sheep's clothing." The dissolution of the Presbytery was finally agreed upon, its members being ordered within six months to seek admission into other Presbyteries, falling in which they were declared to be *ipso facto* cut off from the communion of the Presbyterian Church. The members of the Presbytery which it was thus attempted to dissolve appealed to the General Assembly of 1836, which met at Pittsburgh. A week was devoted to hearing the appeals of the Presbytery and of Mr. Barnes, and both were sustained, the latter by a vote of one hundred and thirty-four to ninety-six. His suspension from the exercise of his pastoral duties was reversed by a vote of one hundred and forty-five to seventy-eight, and he again appeared in his pulpit, to the great rejoicing of his people.

**Indiscretion of the Victorious "New School" Party.** The "New School" party was exultant over this acquittal of Mr. Barnes, effected through the influence of the moderate party, which held the balance of power in the General Assembly of 1836, and, taking sides with neither extreme, preserved the unity of the Church intact. But, in the belief that they had secured a permanent ascendancy, the "New School" party were disposed to make their power felt. They therefore assumed the aggressive, and by their zeal brought about a reaction, of which their opponents were not slow to take advantage.

The Pittsburgh Synod—after the transfer of the United Missionary Society to the American Board—under the conviction that the Presbyterian Church should, as a body, engage in the work of Foreign Missions, and after a vain attempt to induce the General Assembly to initiate a policy with this object in view, had resolved itself into a missionary society, and after the adjournment of the General Assembly of 1835, in which their friends had a majority, appeared to have succeeded in transferring the society to the care of the General Assembly, and in transforming it into a Board of Missions. But the Assembly of 1836, where the friends of Mr. Barnes and Dr. Beecher were in the majority, refused to ratify the arrangement which had been made by the sanction of the preceding Assembly, and through the action of its committee.

**The "Old School" Party Exasperated.** In this way the "New School" party succeeded in disappointing the hopes and exasperating the feelings of the "Old School" by what the latter regarded as a gross violation of express stipulations and implied obligations.

The pending difficulty was aggravated by doctrinal dissensions, the extreme party of the "Old School" condemning not only the party in sympathy with Mr. Barnes, but the Moderates—"the Princeton gentlemen"—who were not disposed to sanction the measures of either party. In short, a crisis had been reached when the "Moderates" could be no longer tolerated. A division of the Church was declared to be inevitable by some of the "Old School" men, and they announced their intention to effect it at all hazards. If the tyranny of the "New School" party was to be perpetuated by a majority in the General Assembly, they were ready to abandon the organization, and, in the interest of what they accounted essential to the purity and efficiency of the Church, set up an independent Assembly uncontaminated by Congregational usages or New England theological speculations.

**The General Assembly of 1837.** Affairs were in this critical state when the General Assembly of 1837 met. The "Old School" found themselves in the majority, and deemed it expedient to follow the example of their op-

ponents and exert their power, without risking their future supremacy. The two factions being thus confronted, both parties exerted themselves to effect a peaceful separation. But the committee appointed to arrange the separation could agree upon no plan, and the Assembly was unable to divide itself. Then the old issues were raised up and the "Old School" party, tracing back their difficulties to the introduction of incongruous elements by the "Plan of Union" of 1801, effected its repeal. No more Congregational churches were to be formed within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church to dictate its policy, and monopolize both its resources and its presbytery labors.

**The "Abscinding Acts."** The committees failing to agree upon a plan of separation, and the "Plan of Union" of 1801 having been abrogated, by a vote of 143 yeas to 110 nays, the "Old School" majority proceeded to fortify their position by eliminating the Congregational element. This was effected by the passage of what have been termed the "Abscinding Acts." The Assembly first resolved:—

"That by the operation of the abrogation of the Plan of Union of 1801, the Synod of the Western Reserve is, and is hereby declared to be, no longer a part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

It was stated on the floor of the Assembly that less than one in four of the churches in the Synod of the Western Reserve was Presbyterian, and the resolution just given therefore commanded a decided majority. But there were three other Synods in which there was a large Congregational element, and the work of partition was not regarded as complete until they were disposed of. Some of the leading men who voted in favor of abrogating the "Plan of Union" of 1801, and of casting out the Synod of the Western Reserve, opposed the taking of similar action with the three Synods which were suspected of being unsound, but their counsels did not prevail, and the passage of the following resolution was effected:—

"That in consequence of the abrogation by this Assembly of the Plan of Union of 1801, between it and the General Association of Connecticut, as utterly unconstitutional, and therefore null and void from the beginning, the Synods of Utica, Geneva, and Seneca, which were formed and attached to this body, under and in execution of the said Plan of Union, be, and are hereby declared to be, out of the ecclesiastical connection of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, and that they are not in form or in fact an integral portion of said Church."

Thus some 60,000 members, and several hundred ministers of the Church, without direct accusation or trial, were cut off from the communion, and before the Assembly closed its session the comparatively feeble majority of the "Old School" had become decided and overwhelming.

**The General Assembly of 1838.** The action of the Assembly of 1837 naturally aroused the indignation of the "New School" party, who, conscious that remonstrance, if postponed, would be in vain, joined issue on the absorbing question at the very opening of the Assembly of 1838. This body met on the 17th of May of that year, at the Seventh Presbyterian Church in this city, which then stood on Ransstead place, Fourth street, above Chesnut.

**The Schism Completed.** The Rev. Dr. Elliott, the moderator of the previous Assembly, preached the usual opening sermon, and soon after it was finished a "New School" leader arose, holding in his hand a paper containing the names of delegates from the excommunicated Synods. The moderator refused to receive the names, and the contest for moderator and other officers commenced. Amidst great confusion each party selected its own moderator, and then the "New School" withdrew, and subsequently met in the First Presbyterian Church, on Washington Square. Thus the schism in the Church was consummated. Two distinct and independent General Assemblies came into existence, and the Church which had labored so earnestly and successfully as a unit for more than thirty years was divided thenceforth into two branches, which at once entered with the same zeal and promise of success upon their distinct and independent careers.

**The "Old School" and the "New School."** From the 17th of May, 1838, to the 12th of November, 1869, the two branches of the Church labored apart, but it is not necessary to go into the details of their different policies and movements. A few facts, however, deserve to be glanced at:—

The question of slavery, which was instrumental in effecting a division in so many of the Protestant denominations, was not without its influence upon the separation of the Presbyterian Church. Although the "New School" party were not a unit in their anti-slavery views, their New England associations and traditions rendered them obnoxious to the more zealous friends of the "peculiar institution" included within the pale of the Church. The "New School" branch retained a weak following at the South, from which they parted with willingness at the General Assembly held in Cleveland in 1857. But with the "Old School" branch a large number of Southern Presbyteries remained connected until the Secession movement created the necessity for decisive steps towards a separation, and the list of Southern churches finally disappeared almost entirely from the minutes of the "Old School" also. From the firing upon Fort Sumter to the close of the war, both branches of the Church in the North were as heartily enlisted in the cause of the Union as had been the Presbyterian Church in the struggle for independence, while the Southern Presbyterians, like the Southern Methodists, were as zealous in their support of the Rebellion. Drs. Thornwell and Adger of South Carolina, and Palmer of Louisiana, rendered themselves especially obnoxious to the Northern Churches by their frantic zeal in the cause of secession.

When left to themselves, the "New School" branch clung as long as possible to the system of voluntary and irresponsible societies, which had contributed so much to the schism. But they gradually discovered that the work of evangelization could not be left with safety entirely to these societies, and eventually they were driven by necessity, and not by choice, to the same policy that the "Old School" had advocated and pursued from the first. The connection with the Education Society was first surrendered, and finally even the Home Missionary Society, to which they had clung so affectionately and tenaciously, was given up, and all the resources of the Church were concentrated in the missionary work and expended under her own direct supervision. Just previous to the reunion, the zeal of the "New School" branch in this department had so greatly increased as even to exceed that of the "Old School" in proportion to the numbers of both.

**Preparing the Way for Reunion.** So intense was the bitterness evoked by the struggle which culminated in separation that a quarter of a century elapsed before the subject of a reunion was discussed as anything more than visionary and impracticable. But gradually and almost imperceptibly the way was paved for