

Reformed Presbyterian Church has been, since its organization, a mighty power in the world. It stands among all other Christian denominations like a gnarled oak in a forest of dwarfed undergrowth.” They again renewed the Covenants at Crawford-John, in 1745. THE ACT, DECLARATION AND TESTIMONY was adopted at Ploughlandhead in 1761, and soon afterwards published. The societies in Ireland, which, after the death of the Rev. David Houston, in 1696, were left without a minister, and only occasionally visited by the Rev. John McMillan. The societies in Ireland were placed under the care of the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland until the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland was erected in August, 1763. The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland was constituted at Cullybackey, May 1, 1811. The Church now regularly constituted in both Scotland and Ireland continues almost uninterruptedly to exist as a distinct denomination until the present time. The history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church is now transferred to America, and, after a brief statement of her beliefs and position, the organic history of the Church in this country will be recorded.

POSITION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA

In her testimony the Reformed Presbyterian Church embraces the plain and cardinal truths of the Bible and brings them to bear practically upon the lives of her members.* From the following “Terms of Communion” and a brief statement of the distinct principles of the Church, her true position may be learned:

TERMS OF COMMUNION.

1. An acknowledgement of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners.
2. An acknowledgement that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. An acknowledgement of the divine right of one unalterable form of Church Government and manner of worship—and that these are, for substance, justly exhibited in that form of Church Government and the Directory for Worship agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they were received by the Church of Scotland.
4. An acknowledgement of public covenanting as an ordinance of God to be observed by churches and nations; and of the perpetual obligation of public covenants; and of the obligation upon this Church of the Covenant entered into in 1871, in which are embodied the engagements of the National Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, so far as applicable in this land.
5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of

*See Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Jesus, and of the present Reformed Covenanted Churches in Britain and Ireland, against Paganism, Popery, and Prelacy, and against immoral constitutions of civil government, together with all Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils, which may exist in the corrupt constitutions of either Church or State.

6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These, together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union.

From this clear and concise declaration and testimony it is learned that the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America is, and always has been, one of practical dissent from the Constitution of the United States. In this the practice of the Church has been uniform. The Constitution is radically and wilfully defective in that it does not recognize the existence of God, the supremacy of Christ the King of Nations, and the Word of God as the supreme law. On account of these radical defects, and the many immoralities which naturally flow from them, Reformed Presbyterians cannot recognize it as a scripturally constituted civil government, nor swear allegiance to it, however much they may admire its many excellencies.

The relation of Christ to the nation is that of a Sovereign to a moral subject—a moral person, upon whom the law of His Kingdom is binding.* While

*Lectures of Dr. J. R. W. Sloane.

civil society is founded in nature, it is one of the “all things” that are put under Christ as Mediator, and the nation flourishes or decays as it is obedient or disobedient to His law. Now as our highest allegiance is due not to the state, but to Christ, it is the duty of every Christian to stand aloof from such a government and refuse to incorporate with the political society which refuses or neglects to acknowledge the authority of Christ and His word in its fundamental law. The document reads: “We, the people of the United States *
* * do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” This declaration is historically, philosophically and scripturally untrue. The Constitution in all its essential elements was in existence before the document thus called was penned; constitutions are not ordained of men, but grow; and the Scripture affirms that the powers that are legitimate powers at all, are ordained of God. These glaring defects, with the denial of any religious qualification, the absence of the name of God from the oath, and the license of immorality and crime upon which it sets its official seal, give the document, called the Constitution, such a character of infidelity and irreligion that no true Christian ought to give it his full sanction. For these reasons, Reformed Presbyterians have never voted at any of the elections, nor held office under the government. They have never refused, however, to recognize the authority of the government in things lawful, and its right to legislate for the well being of men. They pay their taxes cheerfully as a lawful obligation; bear

arms heroically in its defence and for the protection of their rights; and give it their moral support in every way that does not involve them in its evil. They heartily aid the government in all that is right and true. They enter the role of defenders and not traitors; reformers and not revolutionists. Theirs is the highest kind of patriotism. Theirs is a love of country which would lead them to make any sacrifice to bring it into the enjoyment of the blessedness of that nation whose God is the Lord.

Reformed Presbyterians hold that the Church and State are two divine institutions, supreme in their own spheres, yet touching at so many points that they cannot be entirely separated. The one should not arrogate to itself the powers of the other, for under Christ the one is His spiritual kingdom, and the other His moral dominion. They should, however, assist each other in dangerous emergencies, and in the universal spread of the gospel.

The National Reform Association, organized with the hearty support and indorsement of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in 1863, has for its object "the maintenance of the existing Christian features in the American government; the promotion of needed reforms in the action of the government touching the Sabbath, the institution of the family, the religious element in education, the oath, and public morality as affected by the liquor traffic, and other kindred evils; and to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will declare the nation's allegiance to Jesus Christ, and its acceptance of the moral laws

of the Christian religion; and so indicate that this is a Christian nation and place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our government upon an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land." This Association has drawn to its support many of the most learned theologians and able jurist in the country, and all true Christian patriots are falling into line with this theory of civil government as the only safe and true course for the preservation of America. It is often asked, Is the Reformed Presbyterian Church a necessity? This question is answered in the affirmative. It is the only distinct religious body in America that is bringing its principles to bear on the government for its reformation, and has the grandest object for which to live and labor. A *practical* protest against evil is the only testimony that is weighty. The intelligent reader can understand the necessity and attitude of this Church, and that it is not for a trifling reason that Reformed Presbyterians forego priviledges dear to every freeman, and subject themselves to the reproach of men.

As it is not the province of the historian to discuss theological differences between Christians, an elaborate argumentation of the distinctive principles of the Church will neither be expected by the readers, nor required by the author to carry out the design of this book. The distinctive principles will be briefly stated. Reformed Presbyterians hold that social religious Covenanting is an ordinance of God to be entered into by the individual, the church, and the nation. They acknowledge the perpetual obligation of the National and

Solemn League and Covenant entered into by their fathers in Scotland, so far as they are applicable in this land, and until all the objects therein specified are accomplished. While they acknowledge that many of the objects for which those precious documents were sworn have been accomplished, yet they are binding upon the present Covenanting Church in America until Papacy is removed from our land, and this Man of Sin recognizes the prerogatives of Christ. In 1871, they entered anew into Covenant with God, the bond of which will be found on another page. There is no doctrine of the Bible more clearly revealed than the descending obligation of Covenants. We recognize the principle every day in our commercial and national life, and it is alike applicable in our spiritual life. Because Reformed Presbyterians hold tenaciously to former Covenants of the Church and conscientiously display the principle, they are rightly called *Covenanters*.

Reformed Presbyterians exclude from their communion all members of secret oath-bound societies. They regard all such associations as the creatures of the Prince of darkness. The example and the spirit of the religion of Christ condemn such societies, for He said nothing in secret, and His acts of charity were done towards those very characters which are excluded from secret societies. Did Christ not minister to *woman* in all her needs? Did He not minister to the *maimed*, the *halt* and the *blind*? And yet these special objects of Christ's love and charity are the very ones secrecy excludes from any benefit. Charity towards the rich, the famed, and the healthy, is not *charity*, but rather

selfishness and malevolence. Secrecy is held up in a very unfavorable manner in the Eighth Chapter of Ezekiel. Neither the Church nor the State has ever delegated to any association of men the power to administer the horrible oaths that are administered to the unfortunate candidates of secrecy, and who are in the dark as to what they are swearing to perform. On account of their blasphemous oaths, irreverent use of God's titles and attributes, banding together for selfish and wicked purposes, Christless Scriptures which are used to accommodate all classes of persons and beliefs, and the tyrannical measures and dreadful penalties for revealing their benevolent (?) work, Reformed Presbyterians forbid their members to join or to belong to associations of this character.

Reformed Presbyterians do not use hymns of human composition in the service of divine worship. They believe that God has given to His Church the matter of praise in the Book of Psalms, and has never delegated to any uninspired man the authority to substitute human for divine matter of praise. The Psalms of the Bible were used in the temple and synagogue worship and it would have been considered a corruption of the worship to substitute any thing else. Christ and the Apostles used the Psalms in divine worship under the present dispensation, and on the night of the institution of the eucharistic feast they sang a part of the Great Hallel, *i. e.*, a portion of the six Psalms from the one hundred and thirteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth, inclusive. Hymns, or human compositions, were unknown in the Christian Church until several centuries

after Christ. It is a remarkable fact that the periods in which Hymns were introduced were generally those characterized by defection and spiritual ignorance. The Presbyterian Church never introduced human compositions into worship until she made defection from the attainments of the Second Reformation, and in some parts of the world this Church still clings to the Songs of Zion. For the reasons that God has not delegated to an uninspired person the right to introduced into His worship that which is already provided; that Christ and the New Testament Church sanction the use of the songs of the Bible; that many of the hymns are untrue, frivolous and sectarian, the Reformed Presbyterian Church use exclusively the one hundred and fifty Psalms of the Bible in divine worship, and they have always found them beautifully adapted and truly comforting in all the circumstances of the Church, and preeminently so because they are the words of God to all His people.

Another peculiarity of the Reformed Presbyterian Church is that no instruments of music are used in divine worship. They believe that instruments were used in the tabernacle and temple worship by the Levites, and at the time of the offering up of sacrifices by the priests. As these services were wholly typical and were done away with at the coming of Christ, so also all the accompaniments and material supports of that service. At the advent of Christ the building was completed and the scaffolding was taken down. Christ and the Apostles never used an instrument of music in the synagogue worship, although they

used the Psalms. If instruments had been necessary to acceptable worship, the example or direction of Christ in this matter would have been given. Christ requires a spiritual service—the melody of the heart with the fruit of the lips. The leading writers and fathers of the Church give instruments no place in the worship. They were introduced by Pope Vitalian, in A. D., 660, to “augment the *eclat* of religious ceremonies.” Being of Romish origin, all true Protestants should look upon the innovation with suspicion. The true principle of Christian worship is “What has the Lord required,” and not what He has not forbidden. All Presbyterians recognize the Westminster standards, and the Confession of Faith says we are to “sing *Psalms* with grace in the heart,” and “the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and is so limited by His own revealed will that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men.” It is an admitted fact that instruments and operatic choirs destroy congregational singing, and substitute a meaningless service for that which every heart should render unto God. Instruments are used for the express purpose of making the service attractive, and the praise offering is often rendered for the worshippers by those whose lips and hearts have never been touched by the love of God. When the worship is thus rendered by machinery, God is robbed of that heart service and spiritual communion which each worshipper should have with Him in the ordinances of grace.

Among the forms still retained in the Church are the distribution of tokens at the communion season,

the “fencing of the tables” with table addresses, and an explanation of a portion of a Psalm each Sabbath morning. They are opposed to any change with reference to the doctrines and practice of the house of God. Their services are plain and simple, and aim at the purity rather than the attractiveness of divine worship. While many of their doctrines and practices are unpopular, Reformed Presbyterians choose to bear the criticism, and even the reproach, of men, if they can only please God and bring glory upon His name. They desire to be approved of God in the maintenance of a purely scriptural Church, and to bring prominently before the world the sacrificial and mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ. While often despised of men for their exclusiveness, they do not expect their reward for their accommodations to the likes of sinful men, but for their fidelity to Christ and His truth, and whose angel speaks to them as to the Church of Smyrna, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” They plead the promise to the Apostles, “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” They maintain these doctrines and principles in the spirit of love and charity for all men and Christians, and with the sanguine belief that their principles will ultimately prevail and fill the whole earth with liberty and happiness.

ORGANIC HISTORY OF THE REFORMED PRES-
BYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

During the persecution in Scotland, members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church were banished, or voluntarily found an asylum, in America. They mostly settled in Eastern Pennsylvania, New York and South Carolina; and where two or three families were located in the same community, they organized themselves into a society upon the basis of the Reformation, and kept themselves distinct from other denominations. The majority of the Covenanters previous to 1750, were settled in Eastern Pennsylvania. Those residing in the vicinity of Octorara were joined by the Rev. Alexander Craighead of the Presbyterian Church, who espoused their principles in 1743, lead them in Covenanting, and dispensed the ordinances to them for several years. A session was constituted, and among the first elders were Robert Laughhead and Josiah Kerr. The congregation was often called the "Craighead Society." In maintaining the principles of the Covenanters, Mr. Craighead aroused the displeasure of his former brethren and the civil society. He published a pamphlet of a political nature, in which he set forth his peculiar views on civil government which were offensive to the Presbyterian Church because it was loyal to the Crown. After co-operating with the Covenanters for

several years, and failing to obtain help for them from the mother country, he abandoned the society, returned to the Presbyterian Church, and removed to North Carolina.

The societies were again left destitute of a minister, and made urgent applications to the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland for help. The first Covenanter minister who came to America was the Rev. John Cuthbertson, from Scotland, who arrived in August, 1751. He continued to visit the scattered societies of Covenanters throughout Pennsylvania, New York, and other States, for a period of twenty-two years. He made his home at Little Octorara, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where the chief society was located. A few rude log houses of worship were erected, but the preaching services were held either in the open air in some pleasant grove, or in private houses and barns, and his travelling was wholly done on horseback. The amount of travel, and the hardships endured by this pioneer missionary are perfectly marvelous, and almost incredible to those enjoying the accommodations and luxuries of this age.

In 1759, the Rev. Alexander McDowell left the Presbyterian Church, and espoused the cause of the Covenanters. He ministered principally to the societies in Connecticut and Massachusetts, but assisted Mr. Cuthbertson in Eastern Pennsylvania. He was called to the congregation of Rock Creek (Gettysburgh), but declined, and in a few years returned to New England, and was lost to the Church. In 1766, the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland sent out the Rev. Daniel

McClelland, who ministered to the societies in Connecticut and Eastern Pennsylvania for a few years, but neither of these ministers was of any material assistance to the cause. Mr. Cuthbertson had a great deal to contend with in several ways. He suffered many annoyances from the British government, which was doing all in its power to subject the struggling colonist to carry the doubly grievous yoke of tyranny and Episcopacy. He encouraged the societies to assert their rights as freemen and to fight for the defence of their country. He inspired them to perseverance and the hope the God would vindicate the cause of the oppressed and give them civil and religious liberty. In 1772, the Rev. William Martin came out from Ireland with a colony of his people and settled along Rocky Creek, in South Carolina.

In the Spring of 1773, a Commissioner was sent to Ireland from Paxtang society, Pennsylvania, to secure one or two ministers to come to the assistance of Mr. Cuthbertson. He was successful in his mission, and the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland sent out the Revs. Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin, who landed in Philadelphia, December 13, 1773, where they were met by Mr. Cuthbertson and conducted to his home. Revs. John Cuthbertson, Matthew Linn and Alexander Dobbin constituted the first REFORMED PRESBYTERY IN AMERICA, at Paxtang, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, March 10, 1774. At this time each of these ministers was assigned to his respective field of labor in Eastern Pennsylvania, and with Mr. Martin in South Carolina, these four ministers held forth the cause of the Reformation in the new world.

The country was now thrown into the excitement and turmoil of the Revolutionary war, and every colonist who loved civil and religious liberty was called upon to defend his country and his rights. To a man the Covenanters were Whigs. An unsound Whig made a poor Covenanter, and a good Covenanter made a loyal Whig. The colonists declared themselves independent of Great Britain, July 4, 1776, at Philadelphia, and a five years' war ensued. North and South the Covenanters went hand and heart into the struggle for independence. When the Rev. Alexander Craighead removed to North Carolina he was thoroughly imbued with the principles of the Covenanter Church, and disseminated them among the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of that community. The consequence was the First Declaration of Independence was emitted by his followers in May, 1775, a year or more previous to the National Declaration. From reliable histories a few interesting facts are gleaned. Mr. Bancroft says: "The first public voice in America for dissolving all connection with Great Britain came not from the Puritans of New England, the Dutch of New York, nor the Planters of Virginia, but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the Carolinas." He evidently refers to the influence of Rev. Alexander Craighead and the Mecklenberg Declaration; and this influence was due to the meeting of the Covenanters of Octorara, where in 1743, they denounced in a public manner the policy of George the Second, renewed the Covenants, and swore with uplifted swords that they would defend their lives and their property against all attack and confis-

cation, and their consciences should be kept free from the tyrannical burden of Episcopacy. Here was the fountain of Southern patriotism, and the Octorara meeting was the original germ of American independence which was transplanted in Charlotte and then in Philadelphia. More than this, Thomas Jefferson says in his autobiography, that when he was engaged in preparing the National Declaration that he and his colleagues searched everywhere for formulas, and that the printed proceedings of Octorara were before him, and he used freely the ideas in the Mecklenberg Declaration.* No doubt this accounts for the similarity of expressions in the two documents. Sometimes it does happen that the discoverer or the inventor does not enjoy the right which should be bestowed upon him

A writer in the *New York Review*, reviewing the "Life of Thomas Jefferson," by Tucker, clearly shows that the Preamble to the Bill of Rights, the Mecklenberg Declaration, and the Virginia Bill of Rights contain nearly everything of importance in the Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776, upon which rests so much of Mr. Jefferson's fame.† Of this latter instrument, and the Mecklenberg Declaration, Judge Tucker, says: (Vol. II., p. 627.) "Every one must be persuaded, at least all who have been minute observers of style, that *one* of these papers had borrowed from the other." (See also the observations in the writings of Thomas Jefferson, by H. Lee, Philadelphia, 1839).

*Wheeler's Reminiscences, p. 278, in Congressional Library.

†Wheeler's Reminiscences, p. 278.

The spirit which moved Rev. Alexander Craighead to the use of expressions frequent in documents prepared and used on similar occasions in Scottish history, evidently influenced the mind of Thomas Jefferson, when he indited the National Declaration of Independence. The printed proceedings of Octorara and Mecklenberg were both in circulation in Philadelphia at that time, and account for kindred expressions.

It is now difficult to tell whether Donald Cargill, Hezekiah Balch or Thomas Jefferson wrote the National Declaration of American Independence, for in sentiment it is the same as the "Queensferry Paper" and the Mecklenberg Declaration.

The "rash" declaration of Rev. Donald Cargill, the Covenanter, was, "We do declare that we shall set up over ourselves and over what God shall give us power over, government and governors according to the Word of God; that we shall no more commit the government of ourselves and the making of laws for us to any one single person, this kind of government being most liable to inconveniences and aptest to degenerate into tyranny." This sentiment of thorough Republican independence was in circulation long before Balch or Jefferson was born, and the proceedings of Octorara preceded those of Charlotte or Philadelphia fully a third of a century. "Honor to whom honor is due." To stigmatize Covenanters as "anti-government people" is unjust and untrue, and they are only objects of derision because their accusers are totally ignorant of their principles. They are heartily in favor of *government*, and the *republican form of government*,

and only object to the Constitution for its *omission to acknowledge the source* from which all government comes, and a practical application of that doctrine.

These humble and sincere followers of Jesus, who would conscientiously desire to erect a church and government after God's pattern, have been the truest and best friends the American government has ever possessed, and to a man they have been faithful to their country and to their God in every national struggle. To them, more than to any other people, the American government is indebted for liberty, and they demonstrated to the world that "there can be a church without a bishop and a government without a king."

At the house of Captain Paxton, in Eastern Pennsylvania, July 2, 1777, after a patriotic and powerful sermon, the Rev. John Cuthbertson, and many of the Covenanters, swore fidelity to the cause of the Colonists. They took no immoral oath to an immoral constitution, for there was none in existence; they simply said they were heartily in favor the Revolution, and would be faithful to its cause. It was a similar act to that of Rev. Alexander Craighead and the Covenanters in 1743. In South Carolina, the old Covenanter minister, William Martin, than whom no man in the South was better known, was doing all in his power for the cause of the Whigs. He preached rebellion against an unlawful and tyrannical King, and incited the people to rise up in arms against British oppression. For the expression of his sentiments he was apprehended by the Tories, and lay in the prison-house at Rocky Mount

and Camden for over six months. When he was brought before Lord Cornwallis at Winnsboro, he made no retraction of his sentiments, and said he might do with him as he pleased. The Covenanters went heartily into the bloody conflict, and the battles of Frigus Fort and Eutaw Springs were so fierce and hotly contested, that their guns came to a blue heat in the conflict.* Such bravery in battle as was displayed by William Anderson, John Smith, John Faris, Thomas McClurkin, Thomas Neil, and other Covenanters, deserves record. Wherever Covenanters and staunch Presbyterians were settled, there were the strongholds of the cause of American independence.

While the colonists had a right and just reason to declare their independence of Great Britain in 1776, they had not a right nor a just reason for declaring their independence of the God of battles in 1789. The Declaration of Independence was right, but the Constitution of the United States was wrong. The spirit of liberty that animated the Revolutionary patriot was the same spirit that beat in the true heart and unyielding courage of the Scotch Covenanters, although many of the heroes and patriots of the struggle were irreligious men. The trouble was, French infidelity mingled with American patriotism at the helm of the State, and was the cause of the perversion of loyalty to the Divine Being in the instrument of the newly erected government.

During this excitement of war, and the disturbed state of the country, there was a slight change going

*Rev. D. S. Faris, in R. P. & C., 1876, p. 56.

on in the minds of some of the Covenanters in Eastern Pennsylvania. The religious element in this country at that time was in a chaotic state. It was a new country being settled up by emigrants from the old. There, they were trammelled with tyrannical measures in church and state; here, they were free to assert their independence of thought and action, and they were not as cautious as they should have been. Covenanters enthusiastically threw themselves into the struggle without immorality, thinking for aught they knew the Constitution when framed would be of the nature and make the acknowledgments which they desired. In this state of things Covenanters freely mingled with other Christians without respect to national or denominational peculiarities. The Covenanters hailed with joy the destruction in America of the government that had oppressed and persecuted them to the death in Scotland. Besides this, another branch of the Scottish Church was taking root in the same community, which had originally been of the same stock and race in Britain, and now contemporaneously planted in America. These circumstances all pointed to the practicability of seeking a union of the Covenanters and the Associate Church. Churches ought to unite and cause the body of Christ to become one when there is no immorality or departure from principles demanded. So far as the practical application of this movement at that special period was concerned it was a good move, but theoretically it was a bad movement. When the union was effected there was no Constitution, moral or immoral, but the Seceders held

the *principle* that we are bound to recognize as the ordinance of God *any government* that may be set up without respect to qualifications, and here the Seceders showed their inconsistency. They bitterly opposed the Covenanters in Scotland and America for disowning the British government as an ordinance of God, and now they turn around and do all they can to overthrow that very government which they declared was an ordinance of God. Under the same government they were loyal in Scotland and disloyal in America, and seek union with a body that was always opposed to an unscriptural, tyrannical and oppressive government. The Seceders declared at the Revolutionary war that the doctrine of passive obedience, which they had cherished with seeming sincerity, was simply absurd; and that the principles of the Covenanters, and those upon which the colonists acted, were true, and that “we are not bound to own as God’s ordinance every one, without exception, who may providentially have power in his hands.”

In the coalescence, the Covenanter ministers never thought of giving up their principles, but they should have known the dangers of a compromise of principle. No sooner had the fair building of Covenanterism been erected in America upon Reformation principles, than the builders began to hew down the carved palace by affiliating with men who were opposed to the design of the structure. And this thing was not done hastily. They had been deliberately agitating the question for at least five years, and consummated it in the erection of the Associate Reformed Church, November 1, 1782.

They called the new organization by both names, although it was practically an Associate Church still. As soon as the Constitution was framed a few years later, they all came under it as the Associate Church had done in Britain; they swore allegiance to it as the ordinance of God, although God, or Christ, or the Bible, is not recognized in it. If not in 1782, certainly in 1789, it became an Associate Church, and we are not surprised to learn that some of the Covenanter ministers hung their heads in shame and regretted the step they had taken.

The Reformed Presbytery lost its name and organization in America. No doubt Matthew Linn was the best Covenanter among them. In all the conferences, the minutes of which are published in "Miller's Sketches," hot debates were prevalent, and all the differences between the two bodies were discussed with marked ability. Upon one occasion the blood of the old Covenanter Matthew Linn became stirred, and he concluded an able and eloquent address upon a proposition in these words: "You may agree to what propositions you please, but we Covenanters will agree to none but with this interpretation, that all power and ability civil rulers have are from Christ the Prophet of the Covenant; and all the food and raiment mankind enjoy are from Christ the Priest of the Covenant." And if he and his colleagues had added that no government is lawfully constituted without the acknowledgment that Christ is the King of nations, and clung to these sentiments, there would have been no dis-

asterous union. The following is the basis of union finally agreed upon and adopted.:

1. That Jesus Christ died for the elect only.
2. That there is an appropriation in the nature of faith.
3. That the Gospel is indiscriminately addressed to sinners of mankind.
4. That the righteousness of Christ is the alone proper condition of the Covenant of grace.
5. That civil power originates from God the Creator, and not from Christ the Mediator.
6. That the administration of the kingdom of Providence is committed to Jesus Christ the Mediator; and magistracy, the ordinance appointed by the moral Governor of the world to be the pillar or prop of civil order among men, as well as other things, is rendered subservient by the Mediator to the welfare of His spiritual kingdom, the Church, and beside the Church has the sanctified use of that and every common benefit, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.
7. That the law of nature and the moral law revealed in Scripture are substantially the same, although the latter expresses the will of God more evidently and clearly than the former; and therefore magistrates among Christians ought to be regulated by the general directory of the Word as to the execution of their offices in faithfulness and righteousness.
8. That the qualifications of justice, veracity, &c., required in the law of nature for the being of a magistrate, are also more clearly and explicitly revealed as necessary in Scripture. But a religious test any farther than an oath of fidelity can never be essentially necessary to the being of a magistrate, except when the people make it a condition of government; then it may be among that people necessary by their own voluntary deed.
9. That both parties, when united, shall adhere to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms Larger and Shorter, Directory for Worship, and Propositions concerning Church Government.
10. That they shall claim the full exercise of church discipline without dependence on foreign judicatories.

The union was consummated at the house of William Richards, in the city of Philadelphia, November 1,

1782, at which time and place the Synod of the Associate Reformed Church was constituted, with the Rev. John Mason, Moderator. The following members composed the new body as then organized:

Associates: Revs. James Proudfit, Matthew Henderson, John Mason, Robert Annan, John Smith, John Rodgers, Thomas Clark, William Logan, John Murray and David Annan. Elders—Joseph Miller, Thomas Douglas and William McKinley.

Covenanters: Revs. John Cuthbertson, Matthew Linn, Alexander Dobbin and David Telfair. Elders—James Bell, John Cochran and Dr. Robert Patterson.

The great majority of the Covenanters in the North followed their misguided pastors into the union. Rev. William Martin, in South Carolina, was the only Covenanter minister left in America, and no doubt he would have gone in too if he had been in good standing and had had the opportunity. The Covenanters in the South were little effected by the union. While in the ten articles of agreement there are many concessions to the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, yet there are some radical departures. To the concessions all the Seceders did not agree, and to the departures all the Covenanters did not agree. The consequence was, three bodies were formed instead of one. While it is said “in union there is strength,” it depends largely upon the basis of that union. The moral strength of the Church depends upon purity of doctrine and not upon the mass of individuals. The sparkling rill from the mountain side is smaller and purer than the large turbid river that flows through

the valley. Two ministers of the Associate Church did not go into the union, and this Church was re-organized and grew rapidly.

In an edition of their Testimony, emitted about fifty years after the union, we read: "Nearly fifty years have now elapsed since the organization of the Associate Reformed Church; and the correctness of the [former] remarks on her Constitution, has been clearly exhibited. For some time she continued to observe the usages of the Associate Church from which she separated. But becoming numerous and popular some of her ministers began to manifest symptoms of dissatisfaction with many of these usages, acted contrary to them, wrote against them, and attempted their abolition." Among their divisive courses enumerated were the doing away with days of fasting and preparation before communion, holding open communion, singing hymns, freely exchanging pulpits with all denominations, and agitating a union with the Presbyterian Church. The history of the Associate Reformed Church was marked with so much declension, that the body divided into three distinct Synods in the North, South and West.

The Covenanters were worse off than the remnant of the Associate Church, for they had no minister. But God graciously preserved the germs of Covenanterism, and the few faithful ones rallied around the old flag. With the heroism of their martyred ancestry, they clung to their blood-bought principles and gathered themselves again into the praying societies. The Covenanter Church has a mission to fill and a grand

object for which to live, or God would not have so tenderly and marvelously preserved her from total extinction both in Scotland and America. Nearly every, if not every, other denomination has either departed from some of her principles or become thoroughly Americanized; but the old Covenanter Church retains her ancient principles intact, with her rugged Scottish forms of worship, and has successfully weathered every storm of innovation.

The scattered societies of Covenanters now called loudly for help from Scotland and Ireland. They waited patiently seven years before their request could be granted. In the summer of 1789, the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland sent out the Rev. James Reid to examine into the condition and needs of the societies. He made an investigating tour among all the societies from New York to South Carolina; preached and held communions, organized new societies and congregations, and returned to Scotland in a little less than a year. Doubtless in his elaborate report to the Scottish Presbytery, Mr. Reid showed the need of immediate action and the pressing claims of the American Covenanters. His visit led the Churches in Europe to take immediate steps for sending ministerial help to this country. The Rev. James McGarragh was first sent out by the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland, and he arrived in South Carolina in the Spring of 1791. Rev. William King was also commissioned by the Reformed Presbytery of Scotland, and arrived in South Carolina in the Fall of 1792. Revs. McGarragh and King were now directed to act as a Committee

of the Scottish Presbytery and to judiciously manage the affairs of the Church; they restored the Rev. William Martin, and he was added to the Committee. In the Spring of 1793, the Rev. James McKinney came out from Ireland as an exile for liberty, and preached throughout the Northeastern States and cities with great power and success. He also was connected with the work of the Committee, which now acted as a regularly constituted Presbytery in subordination to the Reformed Presbytery beyond the ocean. In August, 1795, Mr. McGarragh was suspended on account of intemperate habits, and Mr. Martin was silenced for the same reason, thus leaving Mr. King alone in the South to manage the affairs of the Church. Mr. McKinney held that it was not satisfactory to judiciously manage the affairs of the Church in America by a Committee from Scotland; but to understand and judiciously apply the provisions for the needs of the societies, the Church here should have a separate and distinct Presbytery. This was necessary on account of the vast number of emigrants which were arriving, and efforts were made to carry this idea into execution.

The Reformed Presbytery of Ireland was placed in a critical position with reference to the Irish insurrection, and their troubles proved advantageous to the Church in America in the way of receiving ministers and members. For many years the Covenanters in Ireland were the sole advocates of liberty from the Crown. While they deeply sympathized with the cause of the oppressed, they could not join the society of

United Irishmen, but disapproved of their proceedings. This society was organized at Belfast by Theobald Wolfe Tone. In a document published in 1796, entitled "A Seasonable and Necessary Information," the Reformed Presbytery of Ireland vindicated its character in relation to this society known as the United Irishmen, by declaring its "highest abhorrence of all such tumultuous meetings and disorderly societies," and signified its disapproval of "anything said or done prejudicial to the peace, safety and property of any individual or society." This document was published in the *Northern Star*, October 3, 1796, and was done in the name of the Covenanter Church in the counties of Antrim and Down.* Being thoroughly in sympathy with the cause that might overthrow monarchy and prelacy, Covenanters were suspected by the government of being in connection with this society, and were often so regarded. They did sympathize with, but not adopt the methods of, this society, and many of them fled to America for safety and peace. Among those coming in the Fall of 1797, were the Rev. William Gibson, with John Black and Samuel B. Wylie, students of theology. Revs. King, McKinney and Gibson now made arrangements to constitute a Presbytery in America, but Mr. King died before it was effected. Revs. Gibson and McKinney, with ruling elders, constituted the REFORMED PRESBYTERY OF AMERICA, at Philadelphia, in May, 1798, which had been dissolved since the coalescence of 1782. This court was fully recognized by the Presbyteries in Ireland and Scotland, and

*Reid's History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

a friendly correspondence was established with them. They were not placed under the same circumstances as the brethren in 1774, and the objectional features of the Constitution of the United States were clearly pointed out and testified against. Its wilful omission of all reference to God the Author, Christ the King, and the Word of God as the Supreme Law of nations and civil government; its sanction and protection of human slavery, and other permissions of evil, excluded all conscientious Covenanters from swearing allegiance to it. The position of the Church was then, as it is now, one of practical dissent from the Constitution for these just and good reasons, and so it remains without change either in the testimony or in the practical application of these principles.

Among the first judicial acts of the Reformed Presbytery worthy of special notice, was the deliverance of this body, in 1800, on the subject of human slavery. They had always held this system to be a sin, and previous to 1798, the ministers in South Carolina had warned members against it. The matter was brought before them by Rev. Alexander McLeod refusing to accept a call to Coldenham, New York, because there were some members who owned slaves. The Presbytery enacted, without a dissenting voice, that "no slaveholder should be allowed the communion of the Church." They also appointed a Committee, consisting of Revs. James McKinney and Samuel B. Wylie, to repair to South Carolina with the message of this court that the Covenanters there must either emancipate their slaves or be refused the communion

of the Church. "The Committee were no less surprised than delighted to find with what alacrity those concerned came forward and complied with the decree of Presbytery. In one day, in the small community of Covenanters at Rocky Creek, not less than three thousand guineas were sacrificed upon the altar of principle," and the Church then and forever cleansed her hands from the guilt of human slavery. Covenanters were far in advance of other denominations in this matter. The Associate Reformed Synods of the North and West gave a very mild deliverance in 1826, but the Synod of the South never made a deliverance upon the subject. Previous to the Revolutionary war there were few negroes in the South, but the traffic in human souls began immediately afterwards and the nefarious business became a great trade and industry. With the annual growth of slavery the annual emigration of Covenanters increased. They were thorough-going abolitionists, and established "underground railways" from the South into Canada.

In 1802, the Rev. Samuel B. Wylie was sent as a commissioner to the sister judicatories of Europe, with the instructions of the Reformed Presbytery that he shall "give them a just representation of our present situation as a church in North America, to intimate our unfeigned wish for a friendly connection and express our sorrow that the court had so long neglected making intimation to this effect; and to endeavor to procure as many ministerial laborers as could be conveniently obtained." Although the Presbytery had been constituted four years, the fact had not

been officially announced to the Presbytery under whose care they had been. This state of affairs would seem to indicate the necessity of a common judicatory or supreme court under which Covenanters in all lands could be united. Mr. Wylie was received with cordiality everywhere, and all the objects of his mission were obtained so far as practicable.

The next important item in the organic history was the provision made for the emission of the Testimony. While they went upon the principle that truth is not local, and they desired a testimony that would be applicable in all lands, yet they felt the need of a testimony to apply to the Church in America in contending for all truth and testifying against local evils. A committee was appointed in 1802, to draught such a system and ask the co-operation and assistance of all the ministers in America and the Presbyteries in Scotland and Ireland. Rev. Alexander McLeod was the chairman of the committee, and different departments were assigned to different ministers.

In 1804, the Reformed Dissenting Presbytery proposed a union with the Covenanters, but they could not be admitted upon their basis, and the matter was dropped. In May, 1806, the "Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America" was unanimously adopted and ordered to be published with all convenient speed. At this meeting it was also enacted that "sitting on juries in the civil courts of the United States, or in any State, is inconsistent with the Testimony;" and "an oath may be made before the constituted authorities provided such magistrates

understand that the person doing so does not recognize thereby his official right to administer it, but the individual makes the oath voluntarily to the Supreme Being." In 1807, a committee was appointed to make a draught of a covenant, "embracing the spirit and design of the vows entered into by our fathers in the Reformation." This work was never attended to, and not until sixty-five years thereafter was the original purpose carried out. The "Terms of Communion" now in use were prepared, and the fourth term was changed in 1878 to apply to the renovation of the Covenants in 1871. At the same time the "Directory for Worship" was prepared by Rev. John Black, and the "Book of Discipline" by Rev. Alexander McLeod. They were both adopted in 1819; but it seems the "Book of Discipline" was rewritten, several years spent in making amendments, and it was not authoritatively published as the law of the Church until 1863. The Presbytery also decided to establish a Theological Seminary, and it was opened in Philadelphia, May, 1810, with the Rev. Samuel B. Wylie as the professor.

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America was constituted at Philadelphia, May 24, 1809, which court ratified all the deeds of the Reformed Presbytery and changed the three Committees into Presbyteries.

The next national struggle was what is known as the "War of 1812." On account of "the impressment of American seamen, depredations on commerce and attacks upon armed vessels, the United States Congress declared war against Great Britain." The major-

Resolved, "That this Committee consist of three members, viz: Revs. McLeod, Milligan, and Lusk." The Synod also made arrangements for a more hearty and systematic support of the Seminary.

At the meeting of Synod in 1818, the following distribution of articles for the Testimony was made: "The Directories" to Rev. John Black; the "Book of Discipline" and "Form of Covenanting" to Rev. Alex. McLeod; "Form of Church Government" to Rev. J. R. Willson; "Forms of Process" to Rev. Gilbert McMaster; and an "Address" to accompany the Covenant to Rev. Thomas Donnelly. These were to be ready by the next meeting. The most of the sessions of 1819 were consumed in considering the "Book of Discipline" and the "Directory for Worship." The tasks assigned at the previous meeting were not completed and the writers were continued. A Committee consisting of Revs. S. B. Wylie, Alex. McLeod and J. R. Willson was appointed to "address the sister Synods in Britain and Ireland and propose to them the propriety of entering into a Solemn League and Covenant, mutually binding us to God and to each other in the support of the cause of the Reformation in which we are all engaged; and recognizing the obligation by which we are bound by the Covenants of our ancestors."

At the meeting of Synod in 1821, a paper was received from Mr. James Willson, of Kaskaskia, Illinois, asking for information with respect to the law of the Church in civil affairs, and especially on the subject of sitting on juries. The Synod stated "that no connection with the laws, the offices, or the order of the

State is prohibited by the Church, except what truly involves immorality.” This action of Synod has frequently been used as an excuse and apology by those who subsequently became citizens. Now it is clear that there is no surrender of the position of the Church in this act, for the Testimony of the Church has declared over and over again that there was “immorality interwoven with the general and state’s Constitutions,” and members uniformly dissented from them. Until the Church published her Testimony it passed an act prohibiting members from sitting on juries, for jurors are executive officers created by the Constitution and represent the Nation in giving a verdict according to the law and testimony. The Synod gave no new deliverance on the question in 1821, and if Mr. James Willson had read the authorized Testimony he would have found that the law of the Church, as made in the meeting of Presbytery in 1806, was that “sitting on juries in the civil courts of the United States, or in any State, is inconsistent with the Testimony.” This law never was repealed and it was not disannulled by the act of 1821. Although this act unsettled the minds of some who were anxious to lay down the Testimony, and lead to complaints from others who thought the Church was laying down her principles, the Synod in 1825, gave this clear and definite deliverance which forever after should have closed the mouths of latitudinarians: “Some misunderstanding having occurred relating to the meaning of the act passed at our last session respecting serving on juries, the Synod passed the following resolution:

Resolved: That this Synod never understood any act of theirs relative to their members sitting on juries as contrary to the old common law of the Church on these subject.” The “old common law” was prohibitory and did hold sway, but there was a disposition on the part of some leading members of Synod to change the position of the Church as dissenting from the government, which lead to the formation of the party which abandoned this distinctive position in 1833.

In 1823, the constitution of the supreme judicatory was changed into a General Synod by the following action:

Resolved: That a General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, to meet bi-ennially, be formed by delegates from the several Presbyteries; that each Presbytery shall have the right of sending two ministers and as many ruling elders, and that the ratio of increase of the number of delegates be, until further order be taken on the subject, two ministers and as many ruling elders, for every three ministers of which the Presbytery consists.

By many this change was regarded as uncalled for and the means by which power was acquired to effect a change in the relation of the Church to the government. History confirms the fact that these suspicions were well-grounded. At this meeting also they reiterated the law of the Church that “no slaveholder can be held in the communion of the Church,” and the Committee appointed to act on cases of discipline recommended Synod “to insert under the Chapter of Oaths, a new article to testify against the oaths taken by free-masons.”

In 1825, the General Assembly Presbyterian Church proposed a plan of correspondence, and delegates were

appointed from the Reformed Presbyterian Church. They framed a treaty which was ratified by the General Assembly, but rejected by the Synod of our Church. This was not satisfactory to those who were imbued with the spirit of the treaty and who manifested a disposition to not heed the decisions of Synod. Thus began a discord, and the peace and harmony of the Church were again disturbed. Those who began to maintain these principles of latitudinarianism, and consider the testimony and decisions of the Church as of no force, are responsible for the disruption that soon followed. In 1827, the Synod was called upon to vindicate its course in criticizing the position of the Associate Church, and, as this body had begun a correspondence with Synod upon the subject of union, after a free and full discussion of the principles of each body, the Synod, in 1828, declared that it would be useless to endeavor to effect a union with them, and the matter was dropped.

In 1830, the Committee previously appointed to “report concerning the propriety of making application to the several civil authorities of our common country respecting the existing relations of this community to the Commonwealth,” reported in an able and earnest paper that “there could be no change in the existing relations of the Church to the Nation in consistency with her testimony as witnessing for the authority of Christ as King of nations.” This faithful report was galling to some who desired to modify the position of the Church, and, after a good deal of discussion, it was finally agreed to commit it to the examination of

a Committee of four, and if they saw fit, to publish it as an overture before the next meeting of Synod. The Committee framing the paper, and that to examine it, were made one, and it was hoped that the valuable part of it would be preserved and the position of the Church maintained. The following is the action of the Synod of 1831, with reference to it:

The object of appointing a committee on the civil relations, is to inquire into the propriety of making application to the civil authorities respecting the relations in which the members of this Church stand to them. The said committee accordingly submit to Synod a resolution in these words:

That an application be made to the Congress of the United States, when it shall have been ascertained from influential statesmen that such application shall probably prove successful, for a grant of the rights of citizenship to the members of this Church, not otherwise recognized as citizens, on other terms than swearing an oath of allegiance to the existing civil institutions of the land

Your committee are of opinion that influential statesmen have not, as yet, opened the door for a successful application to Congress, and therefore deem it most prudent to recommend to Synod a postponement of the subject.

While this report fails to accomplish the design for which the Committee was appointed, it certainly exalts the position and authority of the Synod in forbidding her members to swear allegiance to the government. A "rising party" was not yet satisfied because the iron laws of the Church held them down to a submission to her Testimony. They wanted to breathe more freely, and so, at the same meeting of 1831, it was "resolved that this Synod recommend that the points of difference on the application of our principles to the civil institutions of the United States be dis-

cussed through the medium of the *American Christian Expositor*, under the head of “Free Discussions,” and that every member have full liberty to avail himself of this vehicle.

Now the law of the Church and the acquiescence of members to the report both plainly declared that members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church could not, consistent with their position of dissent, swear allegiance to the government. As upon this vital question there was no difference of opinion, how could it be a matter of discussion? It was simply an occasion to repeal the action of Synod prohibiting incorporation with the government. The consequence was the pulpit and the press now became vehicles for the dissemination of doctrines subversive to the position of the Church. Some of the learned doctors, who had grown weary of testimony-bearing, wrote articles to show how easily Covenanters, in consistency with their principles, could incorporate with the government and not be charged with complicity in the sins of the nation. This was “new light” to those who had thought and held that the Constitution was defective and licensed immorality, and those who swore allegiance to it were justly implicated in the evil. Some of the leading men, who had spent their best days in upholding the principles of the Church and emitting publications in her defense, now “changed their minds” and repudiated the sentiments held when they were “beardless boys.”

We have now come to a period in the history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church when those errors,

which were given too much countenance at first, developed into open rebellion against the true and historic position of the Church. It is now fifty-five years since the unpleasant controversy and division of the Church; and, while we have no desire to revive the trouble, we have an earnest desire to vindicate the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. It is granted that mistakes and bad temper were displayed upon both sides; that the war of words and pamphlets aggravated the controversy and widened the separation; but back of all this debris there was a righteous position to be held and a Bible principle to be maintained. Neither the righteousness of the cause nor the validity of the course consisted in which side had the learned doctors, the most worldly ambition, held the most property, exerted the most influence in society, or held or withdrew from material buildings. All this is simply *dust*. The question is, Which side held the true Bible theory of civil government, and which departed from the recognized position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America?

Now the trend of Scottish history, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church officially adopted in 1806, testify to the fact that Covenanters are dissenters from immoral Constitutions of Church and State. No candid and intelligent reader can deny this fact. No one thoroughly acquainted with the godly instruction of Covenanters and the true character of the American government could be mistaken as to the attitude of Reformed Presbyterians. Hear the Testimony of 1806:

Since the adoption of the Constitution in 1789, the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church have maintained a constant testimony against these evils. They have refused to serve in any office which implies an approbation of the Constitution, or which is placed under the direction of an immoral law. They have abstained from giving their votes at elections for legislators or officers, who must be qualified to act by an oath of allegiance to this immoral system. They could not themselves consistently swear allegiance to that Government, in the Constitution or which there is contained so much immorality. In all these instances their practice has been uniform.

And who wrote these sentiments? A man who was now repudiating them! And not only in the "Historical Part" of the Testimony, but in the "Doctrinal Part," which was adopted at the same time, the holding up of the United States government as an ordinance of God was an error to be condemned and testified against. The sessional records all over the country reveal the fact, that, previous to the "new light" which dawned upon the Church in 1833, members who sat on juries or voted at any elections were *centured*, and they either confessed their sin or left the Church.

Without fear of contradiction it is affirmed, and synodical reports corroborate the statement, that it was the settled policy and position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America to refuse allegiance to the United States government on account of its defects and immoralities. The constitutional law of the Church has always been that members are absolutely prohibited from affiliating with the government in any way that would involve them in its evil or give sanction to it as the ordinance of God.* The act of Synod in 1831, by which

*This position of the Church is admitted in the *Reformed Presbyterian Advocate*, the organ of the New School Church, January, 1888.

members were given the privilege of free discussion, in no way gave them the liberty to *change the constitutional law* of the Church. The law on this subject was fixed, and it never was repealed, and stands to-day to the condemnation of those who departed from it.

At the meeting of the Eastern Subordinate Synod, held in New York, April 25, 1832, a paper, which was designed to be a pastoral letter to the Churches, was drawn up by the Chairman of a Committee appointed for that purpose. This paper embodied high encomiums and commendations of the United States government, which government was the same as it had been when the same gentleman had previously condemned it for its immoralities, and denounced those who were faithfully maintaining the Church's Testimony. This paper was adopted, after many malicious paragraphs were expunged because they were directly subversive to the principles of the Church and highly abusive of some of the members of Synod. Contrary to the decision of Synod, and in insubordination to the highest judicatory of the Church, the Chairman of this Committee, and a minority of the members of the court, gathered together and made arrangements for publishing the whole document with explanatory notes, and they spread the dangerous publication all over the Church. As a point of law, it is now whether the standards of the Church are correct or whether the pastoral letter taught doctrines contrary to them; but, those who held these views, most either *clear themselves according to the constitutional law of the Church, or abandon her position*. The existing law of the Church, however, condemned the

expunged paragraphs and the sentiments of those who sympathized with them, and they were compelled to do the other thing—*leave the Church*. If men do not believe the principles of the Church they are at liberty to step down and out. But many of these misguided brethren, by their writings and speeches, would condemn the standards and justify their opinions.

In this state of things it was necessary to stay the progress of defection. The only and the proper thing to do, was to call a meeting of the court to which those who were departing from the principles were amenable. This was done. The Moderator of the Eastern Subordinate Synod, on the requisition of two Presbyteries, called a *pro re nata* meeting which was held in New York, November 25, 1832. The Synod was regularly constituted by prayer and the object of the meeting sustained. As might be expected, protests came in from six ministers upon whose conduct the meeting was to act. The Clerk refused to produce the minutes of the court, and, after three regular citations to do so, was suspended for insubordination. The meeting then proceeded to examine the “original draft of a pastoral letter” and the paragraphs which had been expunged, and a libel was founded thereon against those who signed it. The counts in the libel were five in number, viz: 1. Following divisive courses. 2. Contempt of the authority of Synod. 3. Error in Doctrine. 4. Abandonment of the Testimony of the Church. 5. Slandering Synod and its members. Copies of the libel were sent to all those to whom it applied,

and they were cited to appear before the regular meeting of Synod, April 9, 1833, and answer to the charges in the libel.

The pastor of the First congregation of New York paid no attention to the act of Synod, and introduced the suspended Clerk of Synod into the pulpit to the discomfiture of the majority of the members. These members who would be law-abiding and recognize the validity of the court of God's house, were excluded from church privileges without charge, citation or trial, because they would not hear a suspended minister. In order to evade censure by the Presbytery for this conduct, the pastor of the First congregation applied to the Philadelphia Presbytery to be taken under its care, with the congregation, for there were sympathizers with this divisive course in that city. Now everybody knows that such conduct as that would not be tolerated by any orderly body; and besides this matter of order, the Synod had fixed the bounds of the Presbyteries, and neither congregations nor Presbyteries had the power to alter them. The Philadelphia Presbytery, or some members of it, now installed the suspended minister over the Congregation in New York. The congregation was placed under the Philadelphia Presbytery, a call moderated, the pastor settled, and one hundred and forty members expelled in less than three days. Certainly the "King's business required haste." And one at all acquainted with the rules and usage of the Presbyterian Church law at once will say that such transactions were unlawful and un-presbyterial.

At the meeting of the Eastern Subordinate Synod,

April 9, 1833, the court was regularly opened with a sermon and constituted by prayer by the Moderator. The suspended Clerk attempted to force himself upon the court, but was checked by a motion to appoint a Clerk *pro tem*. When this point of order was settled, the leader of the parties against whom the libel was framed, called upon his colleagues and they withdrew to another house without any officers. Here they set up an independent Synod, which they styled the "Eastern Subordinate Synod." They felt sure the regular court would sustain the libels, and they sought this mode of contending for the rights of the suspended Clerk in order to escape the application of discipline. Though these offenders had withdrawn, the Synod agreed that they were not free from their jurisdiction, and they proceeded with the citations to appear and answer the libels. After citing them three times to appear, and notifying them if they did not, they would be proceeded against as if they were present, the Synod, after patient waiting, proceeded to examine the conduct of those libeled. The Synod resolved that the parties were guilty of the five counts in the libel, and were thereupon suspended from the exercise of the ministry and priviledges in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The five suspended ministers were duly notified of the action of the Eastern Subordinate Synod.

The General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church met in Philadelphia, August 7, 1833. The former Moderator of this Synod was among those suspended, and for this reason was disqualified for taking his position until his case was adjudicated and he

restored. The Synod, and the people whom they represented, were not willing to trust their interests to those who had no regard for the high position of the Church as a witness for Jesus, and who trampled all Presbyterian law and order under their feet. They must make amends or be self-excluded from participation in the transactions of the court. Supposing the proceedings of the Eastern Subordinate Synod were held by some to be invalid or unjust, the General Synod could neither disannul nor act upon them, until it was constituted and the matter came regularly before it. The Moderator's alternate was then called upon to open the Synod by a sermon. At this juncture a disturbance was created; and, as the church in which the Synod met was in possession of the party against whom the charges were made, and because they had invoked the aid of the police in case of a disturbance, for the sake of peace, the majority, who held the testimony intact, withdrew from the house, and met in another place where the sermon was preached and the Synod regularly constituted. It is not customary for majorities to secede, especially when they are in the right, but because of the peculiar circumstances of this case, and for the sake of peace, the majority manifested the Christian spirit and withdrew from the brethren who were walking disorderly. While those who abandoned the principles of the Church were ministerially in the minority, the membership throughout the Church was about equally divided. The misguided brethren set up an independent Synod and styled it that of the "Reformed Presbyterian Church." Since

that day the two denominations have been known as the “Old Light” and “New Light,” because the one adheres strenuously to the distinctive principles of the Church as they had always been held, and the other abandoned them in 1833.

Now in order to show which party adheres to the true position of the Church, and is thereby entitled to the name, a comparison of the “Terms of Communion” may be helpful.

TERMS OF 1806.

1. An acknowledgement of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God.
2. An acknowledgement that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.
3. An acknowledgement of the divine right of one unalterable form of Church Government and manner of worship—and that these are, for substance, justly exhibited in that form of Church Government and Directory for Worship agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they were received by the Church of Scotland.
4. An acknowledgement that Public Covenanting is an ordinance of God, to be observed by Churches and Nations under the New Testament Dispensation—and that these Vows, namely, that which was entered into by the Church and Kingdom of Scotland, called the NATIONAL COVENANT, and that which was afterwards entered into by the three Kingdoms, Scotland, England, and Ireland, and by the Reformed Churches in those Kingdoms, usually called the Solemn League and Covenant, were entered into in the true spirit of that institution—and that the obligation of these Covenants extends to those who were represented in the taking of them, although removed to this or any other part of the world, in so far as they bind to duties not peculiar to the Church in the British Isles, but applicable in all lands.
5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, and of the present Reformed Covenanted Churches in Britain and Ireland, against Paganism, Popery and Prelacy, and against immoral

Constitutions of civil government, together with all Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt Constitutions of either Church or State.

6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth and in opposition to error.

These together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority of the Reformed Presbytery in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union.

Those were the Terms in use by the whole body previous to 1833. Now we will place side by side the Terms of each body at the present time for comparison with those of 1806:

Present Terms of Old School Body.

1. An acknowledgement of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners.

2. An acknowledgement that the whole doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, are agreeable unto, and founded upon, the Scriptures.

3. An acknowledgement of the divine right of one unalterable

Present Terms of New School Body.

1. An acknowledgement of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God.

2. An acknowledgement of the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechisms, Larger and Shorter, and Reformation Principles Exhibited, the Testimony of the Church—as embodying, according to the Word of God, the great principles of the Covenanted Presbyterian Reformation, to the maintenance of which this Church is obliged by solemn Covenant engagements.

3. An acknowledgement that the Lord Jesus Christ, the only

form of Church Government and manner of worship—and that these are, for substance, justly exhibited in that form of Church Government and Directory for Worship agreed upon by the assembly of divines at Westminster, as they were received by the Church of Scotland.

4. An acknowledgement of public covenanting as an ordinance of God to be observed by Churches and Nations; and of the perpetual obligation of public covenants; and of the obligation upon this Church of the Covenant entered into in 1871, in which are embodied the engagements of the National Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant, so far as applicable in this land.

5. An approbation of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, and of the present Reformed Covenanted Churches in Britain and Ireland, against Paganism, Popery, and Prelacy, and against immoral Constitutions of civil government, together with all Erastian tolerations and persecutions which flow therefrom, as containing a noble example for us and our posterity to follow in contending for all divine truth, and in testifying against all contrary evils which may exist in the corrupt Constitutions of either Church or State.

Redeemer and Head of His Church, has appointed one permanent form of ecclesiastical government; and that this form is, by divine right, Presbyterian.

4. An acknowledgement that public, social covenanting, upon proper occasions, is an ordinance of God, and that such moral deeds as respect the future, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are of continued obligation, as well as upon those represented in the taking of them as upon those who actually covenant, until the ends of them be effected.

5. An acknowledgement of the faithful contendings of the martyrs of Jesus, and a recognition of all as brethren, in every land, who maintain a Scriptural Testimony in behalf of the attainments and cause of the Reformation, against all that is contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness.

6. An approbation of the doctrines contained in the Declaration and Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, in defence of truth, and in opposition to error.

These, together with due subordination in the Lord to the authority to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, and a regular life and conversation, form the bonds of our ecclesiastical union.

6. A practical adorning of the doctrine of God our Saviour, by a life and conversation becoming the gospel, together with due subordination in the Lord, to the authority of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

According to the spirit of the doctrines and history of the Covenanter Church, the Old School body renewed the Covenants in 1871, after the example of their ancestors, and their fourth term of communion was changed in 1878, to embrace this step, and embodies in it all that is implied in the term of 1806. Previous to 1878, the term was precisely the same as that of 1806. At a glance, and with a clear perception of truth, the candid reader can see that the New School brethren have cast out of their terms the peculiar and distinctive profession of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. In the second term they slyly drop out the word "whole" from the Westminster standards in order to make them more palatable to the tastes of those bodies with which they hoped to unite. In the third term they make no reference whatever to the document which is the standard of the Church, and they have cut out all that refers to a form of worship, in order to leave matters open for the reception of innovations in the future. In the