

## FRATERNAL RELATIONS.<sup>1</sup>

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IF we are able to understand and appreciate the feeling to-day prevalent in our church, it is similar to our own, that the last Assembly has unintentionally managed to leave our relations with the "Omnibus" Presbyterian Church in a greater muddle than ever. Having watched this matter intelligently and earnestly from its inception, at our Louisville Assembly, in 1870, until now, we cannot but feel that our management of it has been blundering. It is not charged that any action of our side has been dishonest, unrighteous, or aggressive. The truth would sustain us in all of them. But they have often been inexpedient, and the result has been that we have continually been over-reached, or have over-reached ourselves. Consequently our interests in this matter have now drifted into an exceedingly untoward condition.

### HISTORICAL REVIEW.

A brief historical review of the diplomacy concerning "Fraternal Relations," "so-called," will be useful. We would refer to the statement of the original usurpations, which compelled us into an attitude of ecclesiastical independence, published by Dr. Dabney in the *Southern Presbyterian Review*, in May last. He has presented the case, as it lies before us, justly. Our first grievance, then, was this: that when a providential current of secular events had imposed on Southern Prebyterians the necessity of deciding, in the exercise of their own Christian liberty, a secular, legal, and political question, viz.: whether the Federal or State government had the prior claim to their civil allegiance; the Philadelphia Assembly, in 1861, did assume to decide that our deciding for the State was the "sin of rebellion" forbidden in the sacred Scriptures, and that thus the constitution of the church was outraged and a usurpation, prompted by

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factions, worldly motives, attempted over the consciences of God's people, of an essentially popish nature. And the cruel and monstrous tyranny was illustrated by this fact: that while the right of the Assembly to pass any such act depended solely upon its right and ability to entertain and decide the historical question, "Which was the prior allegiance, the State, or the Federal?" that Assembly did refuse to permit that foundation question to be entertained; and Southern members were estopped of their just right to have it entertained by the threatened penalty of being murdered by a Philadelphia mob! The usurpation was further illustrated by the temper and acts of subsequent Assemblies, New and Old School, annually repeating this tyrannical assumption over free consciences; first inventing and urging upon the civil authorities the theory not before assumed by political partisans, that "secession is treason," and thirstily clamoring for the blood of Southern patriots as "traitors." By their hounding on of the already frantic coercion party of the North to a more atrocious war, by their inciting the civil magistrate to that usurpation, the robbing us of the labor of and property in our servants, which had been declared by Mr. Lincoln, and the solemn joint resolution of his own Congress, to be beyond the constitutional power of the Federal government, either in peace or war. Such, we sorrowfully repeat, were the acts, not of Presbyterian persons only, infected with the popular madness, but of formal Assemblies, sitting as spiritual courts of the Prince of Peace, yet perverting his kingdom to ends unhal- lowed in temper and utterly unconstitutional in character. Then followed the famous acts of 1865-'6, declaring the doctrine of the Bible as established by their own predecessors in 1845, concerning the lawfulness of slaveholding, to be *heresy*, and denouncing us as "traitors," "rebels," "miserable sinners," and "blasphemers;" excommunicating us from the pale of the visible church catholic (for such was the obvious effect of their resolves discarding our denominational rights and existence, and providing, as the only mode, for our entering Christ's church by repentance and confession, like other profane persons), and punishing their equals, the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, for exercising their constitutional right of dissent and remonstrance. This review is absolutely necessary for the understanding of the remarks which are to follow.

Against these monstrous proceedings, Southern Presbyterians defended themselves in the only righteous way left them, by withdrawing and assuming their ecclesiastical independence. This they did with the utmost dignity and Christian forbearance. The Assemblies abstained from all denunciation and retaliation, and scrupulously allowed and respected all the church-rights of, and all the obligations of charity towards, their violent assailants and detractors.

#### THE LOUISVILLE ASSEMBLY.

Well, after the lapse of a few years, the Northern Assembly, moved by policy, and undeceived by the quiet firmness of the Southern people, retracted so much of their own action as had sought to exclude us from the pale of the catholic church, and made a grudging recognition of our denominational existence and church-rights. But they still practiced and encouraged all the annoyances they could, by grasping our church-property, dividing our congregations and egging on the minorities therein, usually contemptibly small, to seek to govern the majorities. It must also be remembered that the Assembly itself has since formally committed itself to the partisan, illegal and unconstitutional decision of a faction in the Supreme Court, designed to provide for the unlimited plunder of the weaker party.

But still, all the factions in the *omnibus* church eagerly craved to absorb or reconcile the Southern church. They all desired to *silence our testimony* against their usurpations. As the temper of the American people remained, after all the stimulants applied by clerical zealots, adverse to persecution and violent suppression, the only way to effect that end left them was to absorb us. The strict Old School men desired to gain the support of the Southern churches, known to be soundly orthodox, to their side in the coming doctrinal strife. The "progressives" longed to carry out their ambitious, carnal passion for an *e-pluribus-unum* church, "national" in its material grandeur, and yielding to them, the conscious majority, all its revenues of power, wealth and distinction, from all parts of the continent. This party, conscious of their irresistible ascendancy in the *omnibus* body, and of the timidity and real helplessness of the Old School party, and confident of their own ability to neutralize and silence our Old Schoolism, as they had

so thoroughly done that of the Northern orthodox, were not the least reluctant to see the latter receive the apparent accession of Southern Presbyterians known to be Old School. Then, there was a multitude of pious people carried away by the sentimental and *goodish* cry for "union of Christians." And last, there were doubtless some people who cherished an honest respect for us, and an honest desire to do us justice, and to have a more intimate Christian communion with us. This last class we gladly recognize; for we rejoice to believe that true piety is not extinct in those bodies, so unfortunately dominated by clerical radicals.

In 1870, the *omnibus* Assembly sent to our Assembly in Louisville an able and dignified committee, requesting that we should appoint a number of commissioners, to meet similar ones on their part, for the adjustment of grievances, in order to the resumption of seemly relations, not discreditable to Christian charity and the honor of Christ. The writer was a member of that Assembly, and thoroughly conversant with its feelings. The almost universal sentiment prevalent in our Assembly, as in our church, was this: that Southern Presbyterians did not desire amalgamation, or mixture with this *omnibus* church. There was an ocean of blood between them; and they and their country was (and is) still writhing and bleeding under wrongs of ingenious and exquisite cruelty, which were (and are) ardently abetted by the most of Northern Presbyterians. They had repudiated the noble doctrinal testimonies of 1837-'38; allowed themselves to be absorbed by the New School; to be abolitionized; to be made a "Broad-church." Their doctrinal and ecclesiastical tendencies were manifestly unsafe. Thus we felt that all entangling alliances with them would be as unwise and perilous as distasteful; and that, as we were entitled to protect our own self-respect and comfort, so we were solemnly bound to God to protect his truth, by maintaining our separation. But, then, it was felt that this move from the *omnibus* Assembly was most adroitly planned to put us seemingly in the wrong. They, although the real and only aggressors, designed still to appropriate the credit of taking the initiative step towards peace! They would have the *eclat* of tendering the olive branch! They fully "calculated" (to use the Yankee provincialism) that our feelings and principles would both compel us to decline it. And

then they could turn to the Christian world, and say, "See, now, these unchristian rebels, how they spurn even the olive branch!" We surmised correctly, that the ignorance and contempt of a prejudiced world, always misjudging Southern principles, would be sure to concur. The embarrassment imposed by this adroit measure was acutely felt by our Assembly. They saw the snare; they did not see very clearly how to escape it, and yet escape the designed *odium*.

At the first blush, many in the Assembly inclined to yield, though reluctantly, and appoint the commissioners requested. Another party, led by the manly and vigorous spirit of Dr. Palmer, inclined to refuse, and to re-assert the grounds of our independence boldly; that is, to "save our meat," and let the manners take care of themselves. As chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, he drew up his own views in writing, at the request of his committee, as a suggestion for their consideration. In this noble paper he roundly re-stated the grievances of Christ's cause, and told the *omnibus* Assembly that *there* was our ground for declining more intimate correspondence with them, until they undid their misdoings. But it was impossible to carry either his committee or the timid Assembly with him. The result was an awkward compromise, in which our Assembly agreed to send commissioners, and yet appended Dr. Palmer's statement of grievances, as published instructions to them what to demand of the other side. This compromise, like so many others, forfeited all the advantages, and incurred all the disadvantages. The *omnibus* Assembly had just what the "wire pullers" plotted for—a pretext to say, "Lo! these rebels spurn the olive branch." They cried out that we, while pretending a willingness to treat, had flung a new indictment in their faces—a calculated insult. So that our answer, while really sustained by truth and righteousness, pleased neither our own people nor our enemies. This was the beginning of our regular series of blunders, repeated ever since.

#### ANOTHER PLAN.

There was not wanting, in the Louisville Assembly, a clearer perception of the way "to save both our manners and our meat." The advocates of that way proposed it in conference, and even formulated it in writing; but, being insignificant in influence,

gained no effective hearing. Their plan would have expressed itself substantially thus, replying to the committee of the *omnibus* Assembly :

That an overture made professedly in the interests of peace, and in decent terms, should of course receive from us a consideration and reply thoroughly courteous. That, therefore, we now even allude to "grievances" only because the overture alludes to them, and only to the extent of the virtual inquiry raised by that reference of the other side. Now, therefore, whereas they invite us to send commissioners to discuss and settle those grievances, with a view to instituting closer relations, less discreditable to Christian charity than now prevail, we say that our view of those grievances is already stated, (see acts of the Southern Assembly, December, 1861, etc., etc.), as perspicuously as words of ours can state them. That we wish especially to say that we have no prosecution nor persecution to wage against their church for its past actions. That while we cannot but believe the amendment of whatever has been erroneous will do themselves much honor, we recognize in full the duties of Christian forgiveness and charity, and the wrongfulness of any *retaliatory measures* on our part. Hence we have no *demands* to make in order to the exercise of due Christian charity towards others. That the attitude we now hold, and purpose to hold, is best illustrated by *the facts* of our past, which facts are historically and literally these, viz.: that *we have all along been conceding and now concede to their churches everything which goes to make up real fraternal relations between the distinct branches* of the catholic body of Christ, without stopping to ask whether the like rights and courtesies have been equitably conceded to us, namely: Full recognition of their church-character as a part of the visible church; of their orders and sacraments; of their church rights, properties and endowments, in every congregation or school voluntarily adhering; the offer of ministerial and Christian communion to their individual ministers and members among us, according to the merits of each personal case, and last, the offices of hospitality and mercy to all persons of theirs who are in need or distress in our reach. So that we now and here do for them *more, and more liberally*, than they ask through their respected committee. Whereas, they ask us to extend these fraternal relations *on condition* of certain

difficult preliminaries, we say: "*You shall have them without any preliminary as in fact you have them, and have had them, on our part, all along.* That in view of all the above, and of the fact that attempted explanations often result in inflaming old differences, we, acting in the interests of peace as sincerely as they, deem it wholly unnecessary to send commissioners for the proposed debates, inasmuch as we have already all along granted what is proposed, so far as is consistent with our distinct independence as a denomination. For we must respectfully say, that this independent attitude, assumed under conscientious conviction, we propose to maintain from the same sacred motives. And any complimentary exchanges, other than those subsisting between us and all other branches of the true church, we shall continue to regard both as not convenient nor edifying to us, nor at all needful to the maintenance of substantial "fraternal relations." But we say in fine, that as their overture refers to the discredit done religion by our "going to law before the unbelievers," we do cheerfully agree to appoint commissioners to meet Northern commissioners, *for the express and single purpose of taking all such controversies* from those about a house or manse, up to those for a seminary-endowment, *out of court*; by referring them to impartial and Christian arbiters, binding ourselves irrevocably to stand by the award, provided the other side does the same.

This view, embodied in words as Dr. Palmer would have so well known how, would have been the best possible. So far as the Northern overture expresses real and honest Christian desires for charity, as it doubtless did on the part of some, it would have met them in the like spirit. And so far as this overture was the plan of diplomatists to put us seemingly in the wrong, it would have been perfectly "checkmated" by this answer. Without seeming to meet a pretended friendly advance with the language of accusation, it would have unmasked the fact, all-important to the question, that all the aggression was on their side. Their game of "making capital" would have been effectually spoiled; and that without our compromising our "manners" in the judgment of the most captious. The profession of a desire for just peace would have been brought to the touchstone, by proposing to settle all the property-claims justly: the very thing the plotters among them

never meant to do. Thus "the tables would have been turned." Last and chiefly, this answer would have been *strictly and historically true*; and would have set in a glorious light the wonderful forbearance, charity and justice maintained by our church under the fiercest provocations.

Our next blunder was to go into regular complimentary intercourse with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. And our next was the closer alliance with the Reformed (Dutch) Church. These annual interchanges are impractical, useless, fulsome, and often insincere, in bad taste, unnecessary to the real maintenance of Christian relations, and increasingly obnoxious to sober minds. But our special point is: that it was very rash in us to be thus needlessly complicating our external relations *with anybody*, when we had before us a dangerous and troublesome question of relations with our former associates. The next and worse blunder was the appointment of commissioners to the Baltimore Conference, as it was foreshadowed. Then, at least, we should have given the answer which we have described, and should have refused to send any commissioners, save for the purpose of taking all property-suits out of court. The worst blunder of all was the pledge given by our Assembly of 1875, at St Louis, that we would enter into the annual exchange of complimentary delegates with the *omnibus* Assembly as soon as they should do one thing—retract their libels on us as schismatics, heretics and blasphemers, in "a few plain words." This pledge our Assembly gave in sanctioning a statement to that amount, made by our commissioners at Baltimore. These had divided our *gravamina* against the *omnibus* body into two groups: the one containing all those terrible usurpations by which they had violated the constitution of Christ's church and crushed the liberty of conscience; the other containing all the insults and slanders heaped upon Southern Christians. Our commission argued that, were the question one of fusion, it would be necessary to require as a prerequisite the amendment of those usurpations; but while the question was one of fraternal correspondence, it was proper for us to require only the retraction of the slanders. This is a grave mistake. It appears thus from this thought: Historically, the meaning of this "fraternal correspondence" is to express a special harmony of doctrine and order, and a special confi-

dence and approval, singling out the beloved object even from among the rest of our brethren of the visible body of Christ. Now, then, this position of our commissioners places us in this most unhandsome attitude, viz.: that while a wrong done to our personal good name and feelings is an insuperable obstacle, the gravest wrongs done to the rights and honor of Jesus Christ our Lord are not regarded by us as any obstacle at all to our professing special harmony of sentiment, confidence and approbation for the doers. Let only the libel that galls us personally be withdrawn, and then we seem to have no objection to testify, by these historical, typical and solemn formalities, our especial love and approval for those who thus wound our Master, singling them out, even among the rest of his servants, thus to honor them while they dishonor their and our Lord! That is, we seem to care much for our own, little for Christ's, credit.

Secondly, We ought never to have made such a pledge, because common foresight would have taught us that it would be sure to be entangling. The past should have taught us what use our *omnibus* Presbyterians *would* make of it, just the use they *have* made of it. It was certain that they would pass some deceptive action, seeming to make us amends, and yet not doing it, which would "keep the word of promise to the ear, and break it to the hope." And thus it was certain that our discussion of vital principles would be degraded into pitiful logomachies and word-splittings, which would soon become sapless and void of interest to manly, serious minds among us, and would throw the apple of discord among ourselves. All this has been verified, and it shows that it was on an ill-starred day our Assembly made this conditional pledge.

But, thirdly, The main reason against it is this: *We ought to be withheld by solemn, conscientious obligations to Christ and his people, from going into any special correspondence with those Presbyterians, on any terms whatsoever, or at any time.* Hence we ought candidly to have told them so at first and ever after. But our third point is the one which will meet most dissent, and hence it must be fully sustained.

If we are not much mistaken, every intelligent Southern man secretly sympathizes with the sentiment we here candidly avow, that we ought to have as little as possible to do with Yankee Presbyterians, except rendering them good for evil in the offices

of mercy toward suffering. But many are still hag-ridden by the feeling that they cannot "save their manners and their meat." They feel that, somehow, Christian decencies must force them into this distasteful and perilous connection. They are timid, and afraid to "face the music" of a one-sided and arrogant opinion, in the unfriendly Christian world. Now, the drift of our argument shall be to re-assure and undeceive all such minds, and to lift this question up to the height of the grand moral obligations on which it should be decided.

Good men are deceiving themselves with this view: that past grievances ought not to prevent "fraternal relations" with those whom we recognize as, notwithstanding the wrongs they have done us, Christian brethren. This seems almost self-evident: that we should not be *unfraternal* towards admitted *fratres!* But we ask: What are "fraternal relations"? It is a singular fact, that in all this tedious debate, we have never had that question carefully answered; *fraternal relations have never been defined!* And here has been another of our blunders. We have allowed the Northern Presbyterians, without question, to beg the whole question; and to assume that "fraternal relations" are nothing else than a certain very questionable, useless and fulsome custom of interchanging annual compliments and flatteries by dignified delegates. Thus, we permit them to prepare the way for charging us with unchristian conduct, should our convenience, taste or safety prompt us to decline that ensnaring usage. It has been a shrewd trick on their part; and we have suffered it, with a simplicity singular to behold. The spectacle will appear the more amazing when it appears, as we shall show, that the true *fraternal relations have all along been maintained on our side*, and are already in full force on our side, notwithstanding intense provocations. The truly catholic doctrine concerning Christian unity and charity is this: that the catholic church of Christ exists in several denominations, necessitated by geographical, national, linguistic, and social distinctions, and the unavoidable infirmities of human thought; that no other general unity exists, or is possible, between these parts, than a spiritual unity of beliefs and sentiments and obedience to a common Head, Christ; that each denomination, while managing its own affairs independently, should respect

the rights of other denominations, and recognize their valid existence.

Hence, fraternal relations between distinct churches consist in this recognition ; in admitting the validity of each others' ordination, sacraments and disciplinary verdicts ; in respecting each others' church-rights, institutions, property, and enterprises for evangelizing the world ; in holding ministerial and Christian communion in individual cases, according to the individual merits thereof ; and in suitable acts of Christian hospitality and alms-giving, when needed by persons journeying from home, or destitute, or afflicted. THESE ARE FRATERNAL RELATIONS. When high prelatists scout our ordination as invalid ; when immersionists ignore our baptism and exclude us as unbaptized from the Lord's supper ; when either proselyte our members and treat our disciplinary acts against offenders as null and void, *they violate fraternal relations*. But that very questionable and sycophantic usage, the mutual interchange of compliments, *is not fraternal relations*. In importance, it does not bear a larger ratio to the real and the important fraternal relations than the paring of a man's finger-nail does to his living body. Now, the important fact is, that *we have maintained* these real fraternal relations (and are maintaining them now), towards the *omnibus* Presbyterian Church, during all the times when they were unchurching us, usurping our spiritual liberties, hounding on a civil faction to seek our blood, anathematizing us, arrogantly nullifying our church rights and existence, grasping our property, and dividing our congregations. And is it not a cool proceeding that they, the only parties who have ever interrupted fraternal relations at all, should, in the face of these facts, come to us and pertinaciously exact of us that *we shall restore* fraternal relations or else be charged as uncharitable? Verily, it is enough to take a plain man's breath away! And is it not a strange thing that we should have endured this with an amiable verdancy unsurpassed among victims? Verily it is a match for Ahab's coolness in charging that Elijah was "troubling Israel." It is high time for us to assert what is the truth, that we have done all, and more than all, which charity and fraternity require. It is high time we had the candor and clearness to say to our accusing woosers: "Amend your own aggressions, and then fraternal relations will be perfect, without *our* doing anything at all.

## DANGEROUS ALLIANCES.

Some brethren hoodwink themselves with this argument: "these Presbyterians were formerly our associates; they bear the same name with us; they profess to hold the same doctrines and constitution. Hence, as soon as they make the amends required by our self-respect, we shall be obliged, for decency's sake, to enter into relations or special intimacy with them.

The proper inference to be drawn from their premises is exactly the opposite. Because they do bear the same name, profess the same creed, and were lately our associates, therefore they are the very people whose intimacy would most endanger our doctrinal and moral purity; and for that very reason, we should have least to do with them. It is not from Yankee Congregationalism, or Methodism, or Immersionism, or even Northern Popery, that the present danger to our orthodoxy, moral purity, and Presbyterian order arises! How many of our members ever read their journals, or frequent their institutions of learning, or, indeed, hear or care anything special about those parties? No; the peril of having our principles sophisticated—an imminent peril—is from these former associates; and it is because of the former intimacy that the peril rises thence. A very plain parallel will evince this. A parent, returning from a journey, learns that small-pox is somewhat prevalent in his city. Where? Well, more in certain remote suburbs, where it is quite prevalent and deadly; but it has also infected the family of a near neighbor, equal and intimate. Does not this parent then say: "I do not regard the disease in those distant suburbs, for my children never frequent them; but the point of danger is this friend's family near me, because his children and mine have mixed so familiarly." As a sensible man, he says little or nothing about the distant infection, but he straitly charges his family to maintain an absolute non-intercourse with their late neighbor. Now let us suppose that this neighbor had lately outraged him by sundry gratuitous insults and injuries; and that this parent, therefore, begins to reason: "I profess to be a Christian. Christians ought to be forgiving. My late intimate, now my very uncharitable injurer, stands ready to brand me as being uncharitable, if I betray even a just resentment. Therefore it will be necessary for me to abstain from every appear-

ance of coolness towards him, and to have my children keep up all their former intimacies, even if they do catch the pestilence." Is this Christian charity, or quixotry?

For, in fact, Southern Christianity is in imminent peril from any and every association with this *omnibus* church. Again, we find ourselves under a necessity to make room for a fair hearing, by putting in a *caveat* against the quixotic charity, and fear of compromising our manners, in our own brethren. Some of them will recoil from the idea of grounding a line of policy on an assumed superiority of our own. They will ask, is not this too much like the Pharisee who says, "Stand by thyself; come not nigh me, for I am holier than thou?" Our reply shall be stubborn facts. We can easily hold our position, without arrogance. We may put the matter thus: we are a set of miserable sinners, we Southern Presbyterians, so that we have so many spiritual diseases and corruptions, that, for that very reason, we cannot stand the addition of the few others we shall imbibe from those excellent people, the *omnibus* Presbyterians. So leaky a ship as ours cannot afford to risk any more lading. But more seriously: if God, in his sovereign grace, and by means, in large part, profoundly afflictive and humbling, has indeed honored our unworthy church with a knowledge of and value for orthodoxy, scriptural church order, and moral purity, dare we proceed, under the pretence of a lazy, cowardly, sham humility, to compromise that sacred charge by groundless alliances with those who have betrayed those gifts and will corrupt them in us? We ask this question with a solemn emphasis; we lay it on our brethren's consciences. We challenge them as guardians of the "church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood," to gainsay or evade these facts: that Southern Presbyterianism, with all its faults (and they are many), yet has some things peculiar to it: a simpler and purer social morality, not yet so corrupted by enormous aggregations of commercial and manufacturing wealth; a secular periodical literature less tinctured with evolutionism, materialism, and atheism; a more scriptural and earnest style of preaching; a sounder orthodoxy, and a more Presbyterian church order; and that these things *are worth preserving*. That the whole drift and aim, intentional and unintentional, of Northern effort, is to *Yankeeize the South*; in which process, if effectual, the South, while it may gain

certain secular advantages of money-getting, must lose these religious blessings; and while we, as guardians of the church of Christ, have no business either with procuring or hindering these secular changes, it is our right and solemn duty to watch over and preserve these spiritual advantages. That since the overthrow of the States and their independence, there remains no other bulwark against the flood of Yankee innovations in religion and morals, save our ecclesiastical separation and independence. Hence it appears, that it is not a matter of privilege and preference, but a matter of solemn duty and responsibility, that we must preserve our separation and independence jealously, for Christ's sake, and especially against our former associates.

For, we repeat, it is in part the fact that they were our former associates which makes their intimacy especially dangerous to us. And now that we may know what sort of intimacy this would be, it becomes our positive duty to inquire dispassionately, but faithfully, into the present *status* and tendencies of this *omnibus* church. Let us "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." First, then, must be considered the attitude of the church as to its usurping, tyrannical and popish claims, from the "Spring resolutions" of 1861 onward, to legislate against the secular rights of opinion of its own members, and coërcé their consciences in matters not ordained of God. This resolution against Presbyterianism is to-day asserted and held by them, as witness their absolute refusal to disclaim it, their embodiment of the tyrannical decision of the supreme secular court in their Digest, and the declarations of all their leading men. Next comes the thorough abolitionizing of the whole body. It now stands, on this matter, precisely in that false doctrine which, in 1837, helped to decide our fathers and us to separate from them; and which, in 1858, constrained the "United Synod" (now a part of ourselves) to shake off the dust of their feet against them. This Abolitionism, born of French Jacobinism, Socinianism and infidelity, with its deadly consequences of denying the Mosaic inspiration and the integrity and morality of the apostles, the *omnibus* church has expressly made its own. Next came the reversal of all the glorious doctrinal testimonies of 1837-'38, and the embracing again of the New School errors, which our fathers then condemned

and cast out; by their unconditional fusion with the New School. The attempt is vainly made to cover this defection, by saying that they received the New School on precisely the same terms on which the Southern Assembly received the United Synod. But "circumstances alter cases." We did, indeed, receive the United Synod on "the Confession pure and simple;" but it was because, upon express examination and comparison of doctrinal views, it was ascertained that the United Synod and we understood the Confession in the same sense. The *omnibus* Assembly fused itself with the New School notwithstanding, although *it had made a similar comparison of doctrinal views, and had ascertained that the Confession was not held in the same sense.* We and the United Synod met on the old Confession, because we knew we were agreed; these parties did it when they knew they were not agreed. It was the New School Assembly, sitting at Harrisburg, Pa., which expressly triumphed, compelling the other to surrender its Old Schoolism in order to fusion. It was virtually stipulated *that every phase of doctrine which the New School had tolerated should be accredited in the omnibus church.* For instance, Dr. Hatfield loudly and ostentatiously announced this as the claim he meant to stand by, and the *omnibus* Assembly rewarded him by making him its stated clerk, as he to-day continues to be.

This fusion manifestly makes it a broad church. Let the following symptoms of a diffusive and all-penetrating license of doctrine be noted. A few years ago, Mr. H. W. Beecher, by invitation, delivered the commencement address to the divinity students of Princeton Seminary, at the close of which Dr. Charles Hodge extended to him a formal handshaking on the public *rostrum*. To understand the significance of this transaction, let it be set over against a previous one at the same place. In the *ante-bellum* days of old Dr. Alexander, when Princeton was still Princeton, the students proposed to extend an invitation to the Rev. George Bush, to deliver a similar address to them. He was an *alumnus* of Princeton, once a prime favorite and *protégé* of Dr. Alexander, and then tintured with some Swedenborgian crotchets about the resurrection and prophecy; but still a man of blameless sanctity, of a devout life, and of true erudition. But when Dr. Alexander heard of the proposal he sent for the students and forbade it, saying that the Seminary

was a church-school, and an exponent of her doctrinal purity; and he therefore could not permit such an honor to be paid to a man of defective theology, lest the reputation of the Seminary for orthodoxy should be tarnished. Let the two pictures be compared.

Another evidence of latitudinarianism is seen in the preaching of laymen and women in that communion. The performances of the Rev. Miss Smiley in the church of T. L. Cuyler will be recalled, and the great difficulty with which his presbytery partially restrained the innovation for a brief season. Since then we have seen the "church papers" ostentatiously parading appointments of women, including a negress, who aspired to be preachers. The public appearances of officers (females) in the women's mission societies tends in the same way. Of the extent to which the ministers of that church commit themselves to encouraging the innovation of lay-preaching, nothing need be said.

Another symptom may be found in the invitation of a Socinian, Dr. Peabody, to give formal instruction in a branch of theology to its students, by the Union Seminary in New York city. What else can any one expect but that every young minister of that church will feel himself authorized by that precedent to invite Socinians into his pulpit? It will be impossible for the authorities to object. Thus, the worst abuses of New England's looseness are transplanted into a church calling itself Presbyterian.

Another thing, which was not done in a corner, was the election of Dr. Patterson to a chair in their theological seminary near Chicago. In the famous "Swing trial," where an attempt was made to curb a heretic who audaciously flouted almost every characteristic of our creed, Dr. Patterson both spoke and voted for his acquittal. He was soon after promoted to the responsible post of an instructor of the future pastors of the church. It is said that when some Old School members of the *omnibus* body indicated a reluctance to confirm such an appointment, they were challenged by the latitudinarians in the Assembly to refuse, with the threat, that if they dared to withhold confirmation on this ground, it should be a *casus belli* in "the happy family;" whereupon the valiant defenders of orthodoxy recoiled, and availed themselves of an indirection to avoid

the collision. Dr. Patterson, the justifier of Swing, is now a teacher of the teachers of this church.

Once more, a Mr. McCune, near Cincinnati, in regular membership in that presbytery, took in hand to form a new, creedless, broad church, upon the precise theory of the great heresiarch, Alexander Campbell, leaving out the immersion. In organizing his project, he committed flagrant irregularities, actually enrolling in his unlawful assemblage members of the Presbyterian Churches of his own presbytery. At his instalment, Dr. Morris, professor of the Lane Seminary, and moderator of the *omnibus* Assembly, presided and preached the sermon, and bade good speed to the enterprise. He has never been called to account for this extraordinary act by the church. The attempt of Dr. Thomas Skinner, his co-presbyter, to do so, was rejected in a disorderly and tyrannical manner, and a storm of obloquy plucked down on the head of the defender of righteousness.

These things have been done in high places. Time would fail to tell of the unhealthy signs manifesting themselves in a multitude of churches of less note; of the flood of negative preaching in which the unpalatable, old fashioned truths of depravity, predestination, eternal punishments, are silently but systematically pretermitted; of ruling elders who never read the Confession they swore to uphold, and who flout its distinctive doctrines with disdain; of the torrent of worldly conformities, lascivious dances, theatre-goings, and often dissipation which have come into nominally Christian families.

The most ominous feature of that church is a general one; the fearful neutralizing and solvent power which its ecclesiastical radicalism has over the conservative men in it. They go in seemingly orthodox, Old School, staunch: they proclaim as they enter, that they are going in to combat for orthodoxy. But somehow, after a little, their orthodoxy is practically silenced, and their influence for truth somehow neutralized. This radical giant easily carries, in its all-digesting maw, the most solid and refractory lumps of Old-Schoolism, and goes gaily on its path of radicalism and innovation, with scarcely an intestinal qualm. It is evidently its consciousness of this well tried power which makes it so willing to swallow Southern orthodoxy also.

Now our point is, that such company is not safe for those

who love God's truth ; and that if we mean to be faithful to our charge, we must avoid entangling alliances with it.

#### THE REASON WHY.

Two cavils will be raised against this our statement. Nobody can gainsay the facts, any more than he can dispute their ominous gravity. But it will be said that it is uncharitable to parade the faults of our neighbor when he is making friendly overtures. We reply, that it is his indelicate forwardness in pressing those overtures which justifies and necessitates the statement. If he is exposed in a way he does not like, he has himself to blame for it. Let us suppose that there was a virtuous father of daughters, who had a very fussy and obtrusive neighbor of worse than doubtful morals. The father knows his discreditable antecedents, but, like a charitable Christian, covers them with the vail of silence. Meantime his neighbor frequently demands the privileges of a social intimate and equal in the father's house, and is met with a civil but firm reserve. At length the fellow has the folly to insist, in the presence of the neighborhood, on admission to intimacy, and to *demand the reason why* he is not entitled to it. Can he complain, then, if the father, thus driven to the wall, speaks in self-defence, and says, "I am justified in declining your intimacy, because I know your habits are vicious. That is my reason, if you will have it" ?

The other cavil will be this: Good brethren will say, "All these statements and charges would be very timely if we were proposing 'organic union' with Northern Presbyterians. But we only propose 'fraternal relations.'" To this, there are two crushing answers: this complimentary intercourse, erroneously named "fraternal relations," will lead to that calamitous fusion. It will be as distinct a complicity with the errors and corruptions charged, though not so criminal, as fusion itself. Let the latter proposition be illustrated first. The reader cannot be too often reminded of the historical significance of this usage in our church. It was a very emphatic type and pledge of an especial harmony of doctrinal and ecclesiastical views, of especial confidence, and especial affection. Thus, the Old Assembly never extended those compliments to any, however evangelical, except the orthodox Congregationalists, in a day when they were wholly

Calvinistic and semi-Presbyterian, and to the strict Presbyterian bodies, like the Associate Reformed and the Reformed Dutch. The Cumberland Presbyterians departed from our creed, retaining our government. The Old Assembly did not maintain this correspondence with them. The New School departed from us in 1838. The Old Assembly never consented to this species of intercourse. [And it is worthy of the most serious reflection that when it did begin, since the war, *fusion came close on its heels!*] Now, if we extend this complimentary intercourse to the *omnibus* Presbyterians, we shall be understood by the Christian world, by them, and by our own people, as professing just what the usage always meant—especial approbation, harmony of views and unity. Is it not obvious, then, that to enter into this relation will stultify our conscientious testimony against their errors, and involve us in a guilty complicity? It is proposed that we shall extend to these people a mark of intimacy which we do not extend to the Southern Methodist Church. Yet the latter has never bowed to Cæsar, nor defiled its records with murderous war—resolves aimed against our throats. It is in theory Arminian; and yet is there heard in its pulpits more gospel, and more distinctively sound doctrine, than is uttered by the effete Calvinism of the Northern Presbyterian body. And it is, finally, virtually Presbyterian in its present church order. Yet, by this fulsome intercourse with the *omnibus* Assembly, we should solemnly declare to all that we are in fuller harmony with its principles than with our Southern Methodist brethren, of whom so much good can be truthfully said.

And, second, because the former charge is true; therefore such an intercourse will be the harbinger and the sure means of our disastrous fusion with this corrupt body of nominal Presbyterians. It is sufficient proof that these intending allies and devourers are candid enough, for once, to tell us, "out aloud," *that they design to use the intercourse to effect a fusion*, and that this is the only use they have for it. Witness the declaration of Dr. Talmage: "We don't mean to stop at fraternal relations; we mean to have *conjugal relations*." Witness the testimony given in the *Southern Presbyterian* newspaper. Now, is it not almost fatuity, in view of this declared purpose, and of the endless pertinacity and obtrusiveness of the Yankee nature for a

Southern man, professing not to desire fusion, to crave this intercourse? Solomon said, "In vain is the net spread *in the sight of any bird.*" He also thought there was nothing new under the sun. But is not this a novel verdancy with which the Southern birds walk into the nets, while the very fowler shows them how he expects to snare them! And here, an independent mind cannot but see the indecency of this urgency for such intercourse on the part of Northern men, after we have told them, in solemn legislative acts, that we wish to preserve our independence. Still to press this intimacy, and to persist with the avowed design of undermining that independence which we have told them we cherish, comes very near to an affront. It does not mend matters that the pressure is veiled as a courtesy.

But these men are "wise in their generation;" they know how they expect this intimacy to work. First, they will perpetually ply the argument: "this fraternal intercourse is a confession of Southern Presbyterians that they are one with us in principles. So, then, there is nothing between us but a remnant of anger; and it is clearly the duty of Christians to quench that." This pretended argument will mislead thousands, and paralyze our defence. Second, these astute schemers know that the intercourse will work thus: on the one hand, it will gain, annually, for two or three of their most plausible men an excellent opening for a week's electioneering among the members of our Assemblies, which these commissioners will not fail to use diligently. And on the other hand, it will enable them annually to propitiate two or three leading Southern men attending their Assemblies, by glowing professions of love, hospitalities in their palatial mansions, nice hack-rides, sumptuous dinners with a temperate display of champagne, compliments, and gifts. These leading men will be expected to come back and work at home. But, third, the diplomatists "calculate" that each batch of delegates will, of course be restrained by the courtesies due to hosts, in their public addresses, to such topics and allusions as are complimentary. All differences and uncomplimentary charges must be sunk out of sight on such occasions: it is very bad manners for an invited guest to allude to his host's "skeleton in the closet" while sitting at his board. The annual speeches will be spread through the whole land in the papers. The consequence will be, that all our younger

members will be so fed on this flattering *pabulum* of mutual laudations, that in five years there will not be a suspicion among them that the Southern Assembly thinks any less of the *omnibus* Assembly's principles than it does of its own. For do not they meet, at considerable expense annually, for the express purpose of telling what exceedingly pretty fellows they think each other? How far off will fusion then be?

And let those who wish to tamper with these risks consider what this fusion will practically mean. Even though every darker trait of Northern doctrine and order be denied, and the poison of doctrinal and moral corruption which we fear be only a dream, yet every sober mind must know that fusion would mean this: the convulsing and rending of our churches upon the question of negro equality in our church courts—a question lately so critical among us, though now happily settled by us for ourselves—and by the *omnibus* Assembly in exactly an opposite perilous sense; the crippling of our periodicals by the intrusion of Northern religious papers, pressed by large capital, cheap prices, and all invading agents; supplanting our worthy editors among their own home patrons; the successful candidating of Northern ministers in all our lucrative and prominent congregations and professorships—successful, because our Southern people, in their generosity, are so prone to believe that other people's wares are better than the home article, because they come from afar, and supplanting our most promising men in their own legitimate career; the partial emptying and crippling of our seminaries and other schools, by the attractive offers of the Northern seminaries; the collapse of our publishing agency, with all the fruits of the money and toil expended to build it up; and the unchecked influx into our Sunday-schools and families of a semi-infidel, abolition, political literature, which will mingle insults of our dead patriots and our sainted fathers with pious platitudes; the crippling of our Mission and Sustentation works, now such a blessing to our Zion, by misconception, neglect and financial difficulties in Northern Boards, so that the fair, reviving, blossoming fields of our church, now so fast ripening to a glorious harvest, will shrivel again, as under a blighting frost. So far as human sagacity, reading the lessons of experience, can see, the Southern church, in compromising her independence now, would occasion the loss

of thousands of souls whom she may reasonably hope, while independent, to bring to Christ. We plead the cogent argument of facts. Her separation and independence have inspired her with new energy, purity, peace, and efficiency for good. Must not the sacrifice of that independence be at the cost of all this increase? If there be any who would tamper with this danger, we would solemnly lay upon their consciences the blood of all the souls, in all the succeeding generations, whom this collapse in our activities will cast out into Satan's empire.

#### SIGNIFICANCE.

"But if we stand out stiffly, the Christian world, and the world's world, and the secular editors, and the polite politicians, will revile us as uncharitable, and will say that we, pretended followers of the 'Prince of Peace,' persist in keeping strife alive after everybody else is reconciled. The commercial people are reconciled, and radicals and ex-Confederates traffic together. The very politicians are reconciled, and radical and conservative congressmen can take their juleps, and crack their jokes, and gamble together, with perfect harmony. All the fault-finders will cry shame upon us, for that we are the last to stand aloof." Such is the plea.

To this cowardly argument, one answer is to ask whether it becomes guardians of God's truth and of the interests of immortal souls to truckle to the clamors of an unfriendly or a sordid worldly opinion. Dare we sacrifice duty thus to timidity? And it does not much become us, who are contending for the sacred principle of the independence of Christ's spiritual kingdom, us who refused to let the legislation of that spiritual commonwealth be tampered with in the interests either of Federal Government or Confederacy, now to subordinate the purity and peace of Christ's church, and the safety of immortal souls, to the interests of a political combination. Christ's church has no mission to look to the making or unmaking of a president, or of a successful political combination; her business is to watch for souls.

Another answer is to point to the contrasted principles and aims of worldly associations and of spiritual communion. The objects of traders and politicians are selfish and sordid. They only ask, touching their commercial alliances, "Will it pay?"

Of proposed commercial allies they only ask, "Are they solvent? Are they in trading credit? Can money be made out of them?" If so, the ends of the alliance are gained. So, the only questions asked with a view to a political alliance are similar. But the meaning and end of church communion are wholly different. This spiritual alliance, if it is not an unholy hypocrisy, is a declaration of conscientious, moral unity and approbation in high and holy principles and character, and of a community of holy purpose to glorify God and bless souls, through the manifestation of these pure and sacred truths. It is, therefore, right and intelligible, and an imperative duty, that Christians shall refuse this pretended alliance of unity where the harmony of principles does not really exist; refuse it to the people to whom we extend Christian forbearance and charity. This result was predicted and justified at the beginning of the war, in a very apt illustration, by one who may possibly be loath now to hear his own argument repeated. In May, 1861, when the "Spring resolutions" had just been passed by the Northern Assembly, Dr. Nathan L. Rice, then pastor in New York, was talking with Dr. William J. Hoge, then also associate pastor with Dr. Spring in the Brick church. Both of them deplored the resolutions; and Dr. Rice lamented them especially, because he foresaw that they laid the foundation of a separation more permanent than the political disunion. "Nations," said he, "cannot fight always; this war must end, after some campaigns, either by some composition or the conquest of one party by the other. Then convenience, self-interest, will speedily bring the people of the belligerent sections into peaceable business relations. But this church division, so mischievously made by these resolutions, will continue because it will involve a question of unchangeable principle. It will be as when some earthquake has rent a yawning fissure across a tract of country, cleaving alike the soil of the meadow and the rocks of the hill. One of those geologic 'subsidences' then comes on of which scientific men tell us, and brings the edges of the chasm into contact again. The earth of the meadow easily adheres, and obliterates the cleft, because it is earth, dirt, yielding, unsteady, sordid. The granite of the hills cannot weld, even when the parts are brought together, because it is rock, solid, imperishable." The analogy is just. Traders, politicians and bankers can easily homologate

with the men who, a little while ago, were seeking their throats, because their motives are only selfish or sordid. All they want in the association is gain or serviceableness. No approbation or confidence is involved. The sordid, ductile mud can easily weld. But Christian unity and association must be founded in genuine confidence, moral approval, and a heartfelt sympathy in the same holy affections, and love for the same holy principles. If they are not thus founded, they are a hypocrisy, all the more odious to a God of truth, because they deceitfully ape affections so sacred and amiable.

If the actions of a part of the visible church catholic are such that we cannot justly feel this approval and moral confidence, what is our duty towards it? The scriptural reply is clear; *our duty is forbearance*; not an oily and odious pretence of affections which are neither real, nor possible, nor right, in the case. This duty, we firmly assert, the Southern church has been enabled to fulfil towards her persecutors and detractors to an admirable degree. To God's grace be all the praise! We have been graciously restrained from every act which overpassed "the judgment of charity"—from unchurching, anathematizing or assailing them—from invading their rights, intruding into their congregations, or grasping their property. We have not made any slimy pretence of unconscionness of the frightful wrongs we have had to endure—a pretence which usually betrays, not charity, but the intensest malice; but we have virtually said, like David to the persecuting Saul, "The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee; but my hand shall not be upon thee." We repeat, the duty of Christians towards grievous injuries is not an affectation of fellowship and confidence, but forbearance and forgiveness. The Scriptures, which usually give us both precepts and precedents exactly suited to every emergency, furnish us a guide here exactly fitted to our case. When the persecutor Saul of Tarsus, after his reported conversion, came to Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26-28), and assayed to join himself to the disciples, they strictly declined his communion. We do not read that they sought in any way to retaliate on him the blood he had shed. But they withheld their confidence. And it was not until his profession of repentance was attested by the good Barnabas that they received him into their fellowship. We do not read that the

widow of the murdered Stephen felt herself constrained by Christian charity to enter into "fraternal relations" with Saul the pharisee. Had she affected this, we surmise that the robust and healthy Christian conscience of that apostolic church would only have disapproved her deceit. Saul had professed repentance, however. But this did not satisfy the good sense of those primitive saints. They waited for evidence that Saul's profession was sincere. The *omnibus* Presbyterians have never even professed repentance. When they have done that, and have also evinced the sincerity of their repentance in a sufficient manner, it will be time enough to talk of "fraternal relations." We freely say that we are not concerned to be more charitable than Christ's inspired apostles and the flock they guided; their example is good enough for us.

#### SINCERITY.

This discussion cannot properly close without some notice of the unjust and sophistical and uncharitable charges which some among us have made against this righteous Christian sentiment in the Southern people. It has been most unjustly confounded with malice and revenge. Their steadfast attitude of disapprobation towards wrong has been set in an insulting contrast with the professed love of these gentlemen for our injurers—a profession which is an index either of a lack of candor, or of an immoral indifference to wrong-doing. They have declared that they have no patience with a church whose separated attitude "is founded only in spite." They represent the duties of charity are such as to require, because we happen to be the sufferers under enormous injuries, the stultification of our consciences, and the confounding of good and evil, light and darkness. They say that they should be ashamed of themselves if they could not concede to these Presbyterian destroyers of the South "as much sincerity in their political course as they claim for themselves in theirs." They so work on the generosity and susceptibility of Southern Christians as to produce almost the feeling that they must outrage every moral instinct of their hearts, to escape a petulant charge of "sore-headedness" from insolent oppressors. And by a climax of logical confusion, they would have us conclude that we must not estimate the greatest breaches of Christian obligation as reprehensible, because, forsooth, they

happen to have been perpetrated, in so large part, in the sphere of our political rights, lest we should be found guilty of departing from that "non-political character of the church" for which we contend so stoutly. These perversions cannot be tolerated.

As to the last point, we wonder whether these persons ever apprehended the difference between aggressive and defensive action? By this wondrous logic it may also be argued, that because it is unchristian to assail the life of a neighbor, therefore it is equally unchristian to make forcible resistance against that neighbor. And because it is very unclerical for one of those ministerial swindlers, with whom the North has been blessed, to steal our money from the bank, therefore it is un-ecclesiastical for us to pursue him at the law to get back our own. The boldest cheat put upon us by a professed brother in a horse-trade could not justify us, on this logic, in either withdrawing our Christian confidence, or bringing charges against him before his church-session, for horse-flesh is non-ecclesiastical. No rogue could ever be disciplined for theft, because a session is not a county court, unless he stole a pulpit Bible, or something of that sort! The answer to these absurdities is very easy. The church has no commission to make moral rules; but it is expressly her commission to administer the moral rules God has made, whether the breach of God's rule be in a matter ecclesiastical or secular. However secular the thing may be which was the subject of the transgression, the transgression itself is within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction if it breaks a law which God has enjoined on Christians. The horse-flesh was most thoroughly non-ecclesiastical, yet the discipline of a theft of horse-flesh is most thoroughly ecclesiastical, if the theft was committed by a church member. Had it been true that GOD *enacted* that the secession of a sovereign commonwealth from a confederation to which it had sovereignly acceded was the sin of rebellion, then, notwithstanding that confederations of commonwealths are secular things, it would have been competent to the Assembly of 1861 to declare us rebels. In short, this miserable sophism is precisely the counterpart of that by which papal Rome supported her licentious and wicked claim to exempt the clergy from civil jurisdiction, even when they broke civil laws.

Secondly, we expose the misrepresentation of Southern feeling by the practical question : What manner of Christians are those among us who feel these sentiments of moral disapprobation for our injurers most profoundly, and who are most reluctant to enter a fellowship which their consciences do not sustain? Are they the captious, the spiteful, the worldly? No; it is well known that these sentiments prevail most profoundly among our best Christians—our purest, most unselfish, most beneficent Christian women, whose lives are a ministration of self-denying love, and who have borne with angelic patience a long discipline of affliction and injury; among that home-eldership who are the true bulwark of our ecclesiastical structure; among the most steadfast and the least sophisticated of our people. We protest against the injustice which paints this righteous principle as mere spite and stubbornness. It is a libel against those of whom "the world is not worthy." In fact, the reason why this best class of our people feel these sentiments most strongly is this: that they have the firmest principles of right, the most honest consciences, and clear, healthy, moral discrimination, unsophisticated by worldly policy and latitudinarian indifference.

Is it said that our injurers were as sincere in their political course as we in ours, and therefore we should extend the same charity to them we claim for ourselves. The first answer is: that *we do not claim from them a charity which is to embrace us in "fraternal relations," they meantime "sincerely" believing us to be "rebels," "traitors," "miserable sinners," "heretics," and "blasphemers."* The claim would be preposterous. We want no such charity on such terms. The offer of it to us on such terms is an inevitable hypocrisy, or else a criminal indifferentism to truth and righteousness. Were the Northern Presbyterians *entitled to hold us as such*, it would be impudence in us to ask of them any other charity than forbearance and mercy.

Our memory goes back far enough to be aware what comes of this unnatural mingling of imputations of crime and professions of love in the same breath. Instead of seeming to us amiable, it has an air of ghastly unwholesomeness; it smells of blood. The old Assembly once sent a venerable minister from our Synod of Georgia upon one of these "fraternal" missions to the abolitionized Congregational Association of Vermont. He made it known that he held slaves. But the meeting still

rung with denunciations of slavery; and the favorite illustration of the orators was to equal it to the sin of polygamy, which, as they said, was also legalized by Moses. When our venerable brother was invited to speak he made this point, with the straightforwardness of a man of sense and honesty: "You say slaveholding is like the sin of polygamy. I told you that I hold five slaves. Yet me you call 'brother,' and you invite me into the bosom of your families, and you heap kindnesses upon me (for which I am very thankful.) Now, were I a Mormon missionary with *five wives* in Deseret, instead of five slaves in Georgia, you would not thus countenance me. Hence I am obliged to see that there is *insincerity*, either in your condemnations or in your civilities. The two contradict each other. And I beseech you, cease this language of extravagance before it results in mischief."

This plain dealing was very offensive. The clerical demagogues wished to ventilate their zeal in these fiery invectives; but were willing that our good brother should take it all in a "Pickwickian" sense on that occasion. The result of this nauseous compound of hypocritical love and hypocritical indignation we have seen in a sea of blood and woe. We have had enough of it! The "fraternal relations" so courteously maintained did not at all prevent the libels and slanders of abolitionists against their "very dear brethren" from educating a generation of invaders to cut our throats.

But the second answer is, that this sophism overlooks the fact that there are two kinds of sincerities. One is that of the murderer, Saul of Tarsus, when "he verily thought that he did God service" by persecuting his saints; the other is that of the Apostle Paul, who, enlightened and sanctified "as of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God," spake in Christ. We believe that the difference between "mercy, judgment and truth" on the one hand, and flagrant wrong, usurpation, cruelty, bad faith, on the other, is not ambiguous. We cannot so blaspheme that God, who wrote his law in men's hearts, in the form of conscience, as to admit that Christian men can innocently mistake the one for the other with God's Bible in their hands.

We shall be asked again: "What, then, is to be the end of this difference? Are Northern and Southern Christians to quarrel forever? We reply: first, the question implies *a libel*; for

in fact, *Southern Christians have not sought to quarrel for a day.* Had they been let alone, the "quarreling" would have been all on one side, and even the one-sided quarrel would have ended as soon as our oppressors satisfied their desires of usurpation. We should have suffered in silence. But, second, the honest attitude we recommend would lead at once, not to an endless quarrel, but to immediate *forbearance*, with separate independence; and this is the only righteous, and the least unseemly attitude possible where such differences exist and are irreconcilable. And, thirdly, if we have reason to suspect that we are the original criminals in this opposition, then the one and only way for us to end it is by repentance and public confession. But if we have no such reason, then the terminating of the difference is no concern of ours. That is God's prerogative. He must end it when and as he chooses; our part only is to see to it that we do not inflame it by "rendering evil for evil."

In conclusion, we assert, that our attitude of *forbearing separation*, instead of being unchristian or uncharitable, is precisely the one which the Christian sense of every good man, and every prudent church court, provides for the peace of the visible church, and the personal comfort and edification of injured Christians. Here, for instance, are two men, formerly Christian brethren, the one of whom is fixedly convinced that he has been cruelly injured by the other. Let us suppose that the session is either unable or unwilling to right the wrong effectually. Let us suppose, also, that the injured man is a thoroughly good, conscientious and charitable man. He will go to his pastor and speak substantially thus: "I feel that I am cruelly injured, and my injurer will give me no adequate redress. I do not desire to avenge myself. I have no wish to blazon his wrong-doing. But I cannot, without stultifying myself, feel or profess the former pleasing confidence. Now, then, I claim that the session should do one of two things—either right this wrong themselves, or else allow me to consult my own comfort, and the peace of the congregation, by giving me a letter of dismission to another Presbyterian church convenient to me, where I can worship God without this unpleasant contact with a man to whom it is impossible to exercise cordial confidence." We surmise that there is not a pastor, nor a session, nor a presbytery, in all the land, who would resist so reasonable and Chris-

tian a claim. *But this is just what we wish to do* as to our Presbyterian oppressors.

Returning now to the point from which we set out, we find that this desirable course is beset with entanglements, by means of the false moves already made by our own Assemblies. How may these mistakes be retrieved? This is a difficult question; for it is much easier to make blunders than to repair them. We seem to stand committed by the promise of our Baltimore Commissioners to send the complimentary delegates, provided the *omnibus* Assembly will retract their slanders. There is no likelihood that they will really retract them. But our peril is here: that they will make pretended amends, and thus introduce a quibbling, pettifogging contention into our own Assemblies; where some will contend that the amends proposed are virtually satisfying, and others will say that they are not; and the two parties will bandy verbal distinctions between each other. For our part, we stand prepared to assume the admitted Presbyterian position—that a mere administrative resolve of a previous Assembly does not bind a subsequent one. We would candidly say, next spring, that we have thought better of our position, and that *we withdraw the conditional promise made by the Assembly of 1875, especially as our overture was not frankly met by their cotemporaneous and their next Assembly.* This change should be explained as not implying any belligerent policy on our part, or any purpose to refuse a reasonable overture for adjustment of property questions, which are the only ones, after all, where any adjustment is, humanly speaking, likely to occur. We should accompany our change with the manly declaration that it infringes no vested right of anybody, and that we are entitled to consult our own peace, comfort and self-respect, by making it. Another legitimate policy would be quietly to abide the result of the pending overtures between the two Assemblies of 1876, and—if the *omnibus* Assembly does, in good faith, retract their accusations—appoint delegates to exchange salutations, and instruct them to require explicitly that the newly instituted fraternal intercourse shall at once be utilized to settle all property questions between the two denominations, and all their congregations and schools, by amicable reference. For it is these, and these alone, which really mar the Christian relations, and do discredit to religion. If they accede fairly, the

intercourse may be continued until all such adjustments are complete, and then terminate itself with mutual civilities, on the ground that all its practical ends are realized. If they refuse, the hollowness of their overtures will be manifest to all, and our emancipation from the whole entanglement easy and plain. There is a third solution, which would be eminently acceptable to us, and, we are persuaded, to many of our people. This would be courteously, but firmly, to *discontinue all our annual interchanges of delegates* with all other denominations, as a usage inconvenient, entangling, unnecessary to the maintenance of true fraternal relations, in bad taste, sycophantic and wholly fruitless of any useful results justifying the outlay of time and money. This is the solution we should altogether prefer. We should then await the result of pending overtures; and if they lead to a square retraction of the accusations against us, we should respond by sending, for the once, a single set of special commissioners, to attempt a settlement of the property questions. These adjusted, the intercourse should at once cease; and the fact that we had ceased to maintain it with any would take away the very pretext of offence.