

THE PAN-PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE.¹

THE writer once inquired of General R. E. Lee whether it was his purpose to attend the meeting of the Education Association of the Teachers of Virginia. He replied: "If I could see that they were going to effect anything except talk, I might think of attending." This seems, to the plain mind, the most obvious objection to the project of a Pan-Presbyterian Alliance. In order to avoid being dangerous, it finds itself compelled to limit its functions to "talk." Such pious reunions may be as pleasant as Dr. Robinson seems to have found the tentative meeting in London; but if this is all, evidently the churches have more urgent and useful applications to make of their time and money than to these ostentatious and costly prayer meetings.

But are there not more serious difficulties in the way of Southern Presbyterians mingling in these meetings? The writer cannot forget an event, of which present advocates of this Alliance seem strangely oblivious, that advances from us were, at a very recent date, repelled by the very people with whom we are now invited to associate ourselves. Do gentlemen recall the appointment of Drs. Palmer, Girardeau, and Hoge, by the Memphis Assembly, to go abroad as its commissioners, to explain the position of our church to the Presbyterians of Great Britain, and conciliate some moral support in the day of our need and insulation? But these commissioners, fortunately, were so discreet as to write letters of inquiry before they went, whether they would be received in a manner consistent with their self-respect. The answer they received was, *that they would not*. Because they were the representatives of a church which refused to array itself upon an anti-scriptural abolition ground, they were informed that they would not be received as equals; and they at once concluded that respect for themselves and the Assembly absolutely forbade their going. Like sensible men, they

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stayed at home. Have our brethren also forgotten that the "Evangelical Alliance," so called, also excluded ministers from the American Presbyterian Church, because it had not placed itself upon their abolition platform? But these are the churches on whose fraternal embraces we are now asked to throw ourselves! If the self-respect of Drs. Palmer, Girardeau, and Hoge forbade such an act then, why does it not forbid it now? Which of the parties has changed? Have the Southern Presbyterians at length adopted the infidel abolition creed? Or have the Northern and the European churches forsaken and repented it? It is very well understood that the latter are now more mad on this idol than at any previous time. It is equally well understood that the entrance of our church into their fraternity is permitted only as it is construed as a tacit surrender of our position, and a silent acceptance of theirs. The proof of this is very easy. Let our commissioners simply remind the next Assembly that we still stand immovably upon the position of our Assembly in 1845, and that if they embrace us, it must be on this express understanding. Candor will, indeed, requires no less of us. We shall see a tempest of fanatical excitement, which will effectually estop our entrance. Dr. McCosh is usually regarded as the author of this Pan-Presbyterian movement. Preaching in the Central Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, he said that Southern Christians, once justly excluded from the Evangelical Alliance for slave-holding, might now be admitted, because slavery had been removed by Providence! But has the question been settled? The institution has been unlawfully and violently overthrown. True. Does that remove the question from between honest men? An invitation to us to a fraternity from which we were once excluded for slave-holding, now tendered on this ground, can only mean one of two hypocrisies: either that we shall consent to be construed as forsaking and repenting and confessing acts which we have neither forsaken nor repented, or that Dr. McCosh shall feign satisfaction with sins in us unrepented, which his conscience abhors, because its overt perpetration is prevented by force. At neither of these hypocrisies can we connive. The pickpocket shall be held, forsooth, a very proper gentleman, not because he has repented his thefts, but because there are iron bars between his fingers and other people's pockets, and because he is sufficiently a sneak to be silent

now about his former exploits! If Dr. McCosh is satisfied with such a basis of fraternity, we presume Southern Presbyterians are not. We scarcely think they are ready to be construed into a desertion of the time-honored testimony of their fathers, and into the concession that these holy and venerated men were men-stealers.

But, proceeding in our inquiries, we ask—

1. Whether our representation in this Alliance will not be a step towards a dishonest compromise with the Northern Presbyterian Church? We have charged upon them that, in a critical time, they abandoned their covenanted constitution, and usurped popish powers of perverting the spiritual authority of the church to override the secular rights and liberties of its members; thus assisting to precipitate upon us and our neighbors the horrors of invasion, rapine, bloodshed, and subjugation. We have charged upon them a foul slander of our good name, which has been industriously published to the very churches with which we are asked to ally ourselves. If these charges are erroneous, we cannot too soon retract and repent them. If they are just, then we have done right in requiring the disavowal of the slanders, and a return to the sacred principles of the constitution, before we can, with any respect for truth or for ourselves, enter into fraternal relations with them. They will neither retract the slander, nor repair the disastrous usurpation. Meantime, it is now proposed that we shall meet them abroad, on the very footing on which we refused to meet them at home! If this is not a stultification of our testimony, it is hard to see what would be! We say to their glozing invitations: "No. We can wish you well; we can forbear retaliation; we can render, not railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; we can endeavor faithfully to exercise all the graces of Christian charity towards those who injure us; but with this slander and this usurpation unredressed, duty forbids us to meet you in fraternal correspondence." And then we go incontinently across the water, and *meet them in fraternal correspondence!* When we enter the assemblage of those whom they made the sympathising auditors of their burning slander against us, what do we see? The representatives of the slanderers sitting "in the chief seats of the synagogue," most numerous of any delegation, and most honored.

Let it be noted here, also, that the advocates of this measure among us greatly misrepresent the true position of our church. They now say that the popish usurpation and violation of the constitution committed by the Northern Church would be no just barrier to fraternal correspondence, if they would only retract their slander against us. *This is not what our Assembly of 1870 said.* That Assembly expressly declared that both wrongs must be amended before fraternal correspondence would be possible. It declared that while this fatal usurpation stood unconfessed, we could not break the force of our obligatory and righteous protest against it, by any fraternal correspondence. But now, these brethren would have us recede from half of our stronghold.

Is it not very clear to any plain mind, that this will soon lead to the betrayal of the other half? If we go into the fraternal correspondence across the water with the Northern Presbyterians, with whom we refuse to correspond on this side of it, will not the stultification of ourselves be so complete that the loss of our position must follow? In a few years the absurdity will become irksome to us, and we shall be betrayed into a dishonest compromise and a forsaking of the testimony which Providence has called us to bear. Dr. Girardeau foresaw this, and with his clear, honest, good sense, pointed it out to the last Assembly; but amidst the special pleadings which prevailed, he was unheeded.

But Dr. Robinson does not think that such will be the result. He thinks our position will be rather strengthened by meeting the representatives of our usurpers and slanderers on that common ground. It is hard for a plain man to see how we can strengthen our position by inconsistency, by "blowing hot and cold" on the same parties. He says that if a neighbor in a city has wronged a sensible man of business, he does not exclude himself from the bank or exchange to which his business and his rights lead him, because he meets the injurer there. This illustration presents a false analogy. The scenes to which our business and our duties call us are our own pulpits and charges. These are *our* banks and counting-houses. Well will it be for us if we stick to them. If the slanderer intrudes there, we will *meet and resist* him as we may. The just analogy to our position would be the case where a wealthy host invited us to a social

entertainment, such as a dinner-party, and also invited the man who had injured and slandered us ; to whom we had sent word that honor forbade our social recognition of him until he made amends. Now, could that invitation be accepted by an honorable man ? He would not seek to make a disagreeable parade of the unfortunate quarrel at the table of the host, who probably designed the invitation, however ill-considered, as a kindness. He would not endeavor to implicate the host or the other guests. He would keep his grievance to himself, with dignified quiet. But he would certainly not accept the invitation. He would feel that to accept it would be as senseless an outrage upon the host as upon his own self-respect, for he could not extend social recognition to that slanderer as he met him at the host's table without degrading and stultifying himself, and he could not refuse it without a discourtesy to the host and the other guests. So, if he were a man, he would politely, but firmly, decline the invitation. In the Assembly Dr. Robinson urged that, since we had the true Presbyterianism, we should go to the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance to proclaim it. The answer is, that this was the very place where he could not proclaim it. He found himself in the very position in which the injured citizen of the parable just drawn would have been, had he been so unwise as to accept the invitation to the feast. Dr. Robinson found himself an "invited guest" of European Presbyterianism. He also found present, as invited and especially honored guests, the very men whom our proclamation of our pure Presbyterianism would have assailed and indicted. Consequently his mouth was sealed. It was no place to bear his testimony, because the courtesies of the occasion forbade. *So it will ever be.*

2. It has been argued that, if we stay out of this Alliance, we shall be considered "sore-heads," "sulky," etc. All we can say to this plea is, that it seems to betray an astonishing oblivion of our true position as witnesses for righteous principles; and that if the argument should ever be verified by any act of the outside Christian world, the sensible Southern Presbyterian will regard it with the contempt due to a low insult. These terms, if they mean anything, suggest the idea of a wrong-headed person, sulking over an imaginary injury, or of a perverse school-boy, who has gotten a part of the drubbing which he deserved, and is still too insubordinate to submit to it. Do those who use this

argument intend to present this as the attitude of the Southern Presbyterian Church? Were our wrongs imaginary? Are we like the insolent boy who has only gotten a part of the drubbing he deserves, and whom the other part, soundly laid on, would probably bring to his good humor? If *this* is their appreciation of the position of the Southern Presbyterian Church, then we think their proper place is not only in the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance, but in the bosom of the radical church. If their estimate of our position were the just one, then the thing we ought to do is to confess our evil temper, and to ask pardon of those who have wronged and slandered us, before we presume to ask admission to the Presbyterian fraternity. To any one who has the head and heart to appreciate the height of the great argument to which God has been pleased to call the Southern church, this charge is unspeakably grovelling. Have these gentlemen no other conception of fidelity to right trampled down by unjust violence, than "sulking?" It is to be presumed that, in their eyes, the "witnesses for the truth" throughout the middle ages were but "sore-heads," because they stood aloof from the corrupt church whose errors they were called by God to oppose! Yea, the apostles were "sore-heads" when they separated themselves from the opposers of God's truth! In a day when truth has fallen in the streets, it becomes her friends to have *sore hearts*, which shall be too full of righteous grief for the wrongs done to her, to truckle and compromise.

3. It has been argued that we must go into this promiscuous Alliance in order to get out of our insulation, in order to be better understood and appreciated by Christians abroad. But suppose it should be that this insulation is the very position assigned us by the Head of the church, in which to perform the high duty laid on us. Then to get out of it is a sin. If he has assigned us a particular testimony, in which other churches will not join us, in respect of which they are misunderstanding and neglecting their duty, then a state of insulation is precisely the one we should occupy. There is something else far more essential than "appreciation" by foreigners, and this is the appreciation of our Almighty Head. But so far as we may legitimately desire just appreciation from others, the way to win is "to mind our own business." Let us preach a pure gospel, purify our own charges, extend the gospel with power, present the fruits of

righteousness; and then, if these outside Christians have anything of the mind of Christ, they will appreciate us as much as will be good for us.

4. We would also request brethren to consider whether another very serious objection to our entering this Alliance will not emerge from the nature of the representation which we shall unavoidably have in it. The meetings will usually be at a distance, and often across the ocean. Attendance must always be expensive, and often lavishly so. Such a journey to and from Europe as a delegate would wish to make must cost between \$700 and \$1,000. The Alliance proposes to allow us twenty-eight representatives. Has our Assembly between \$20,000 and \$28,000 to expend upon sending delegates to this useless convention? But it will be said, "All the twenty-eight need not go." We remark, first: Then what will our ratio of representation avail us? But second: If six or eight go, has the Assembly the \$7,000 to waste in this useless journey? Has it even \$2,000? Though it is obvious that the good sense of the Assembly will never consent to the abstraction of even this smaller sum from the urgent and sacred uses of our missions and other works for such a mere waste; and the church would cry shame upon the Assembly if it did commit the perversion. Then the commissioners will have to furnish their own expenses. But it is very well known that, to the great bulk of our ministers and elders, such an expense is about as much out of the question as a journey to the moon. The result, then, must be this: that when a selection of delegates is to be made, the Assembly, instead of electing the representative men of the church, the men who are worthy to be trusted with her honor, must appoint a committee who will seek out the men who have a trip to Europe in view on their own account, or who have private fortunes, or bad throats, coupled with rich and generous congregations. In other words, the selections will be determined, not by fitness, nor wisdom, nor experience, but by some mere irrelevant accident or advantage of money or leisure. This point alone is enough to betray the unsuitableness of the whole scheme for us and the impossibility of our deriving any good fruits from it.

5. Another fatal objection is, that this Alliance will only expose our church to additional peril from that which is the great evil of the times, the spread of a latitudinarian spirit. The

leading bodies with which we are invited to ally ourselves are *all tainted with broad-churchism*. That this charge is true as to the radical Presbyterian Church in America none among us can deny. The fusion of the two branches made it avowedly a broad church, as was demonstrated, not by our writers, but by the Rev. Drs. Hodge and Van Dyke and the Rev. Samuel Miller. As to another leading denomination represented in the Presbyterian Alliance, it was the fortune of the writer to hear the following sentiments publicly uttered by one of its prominent ministers, and applauded to the echo: "We have no right to require uniformity of doctrine or ritual within any of our own borders. We are bound to recognize *all the variety in our own church that we recognize in others*." That the same latitudinarian spirit is leavening the Presbyterian Churches of Great Britain is but too plain from their church journals. They no longer have the true ring of orthodoxy. The Presbyterian Church of France has lately been rent into two bodies. One is Rationalistic and Socinian; the other, the comparatively sound one, did not dare to readopt the Gallican Confession and enforce its teachings upon all its officers, but only adopted, in general terms, an evangelical creed. The broad-churchism of the Alliance itself is clearly disclosed by its ambiguous doctrinal basis. This is the "*consensus of the Reformed Churches*." Who shall state this *consensus*? Does it include the sense in which Drs. Beman and Barnes professed to hold the Westminster Confession? This is to be supposed. Again, according to the uniform classification of church history, the Congregational Churches of New England belong to the reformed branch of Protestant Christendom. Lately the highest convention known to this body of Christians formally cast away their doctrinal standards. Drs. N. Taylor and Bushnell are probably the accepted exponents of the larger part of their ministers. We presume that this *consensus* may embrace this type of the reformed theology also. We repeat, the associations into which this Alliance will introduce us will be found broad-church. Now, as long as the words of Scripture hold true, that "evil communications corrupt good manners," the association will inevitably be found unwholesome to our own soundness in the faith and doctrinal unity. But that watchman upon the walls of Zion, who "has knowledge of the times, to know what Israel ought to do," is aware that the peril

to truth and righteousness, from this latitudinarian spirit, is so fearful, that to expose our beloved church to it causelessly, is little short of madness.

Dr. Palmer, in his unanswerable argument at St. Louis, foreshadowed another influence which must make this Alliance a broad-church one. Its creed, as to doctrine and order, must be the result of concessions. Whatever is obnoxious to the convictions of any of the constituent bodies, must be eliminated from the common platform. One point must be conceded to one party, and another to another, until there is left, as the common doctrine taught by the Alliance, only the most emasculated Presbyterianism.

6. But there are more grave objections to this movement than those already unfolded. It contains the egg of a monster. The principle on which it is demanded is anti-Protestant and anti-Presbyterian. The first development may appear but harmless and trivial; indeed, the first organization is so trivial as to be nugatory and useless; but the principle which dictates the alliance will be sure to unfold itself with logical consistency, and the "King Log," which is now tendered to us silly frogs by this Jupiter Tonans of Nassau Hall, will in due time be replaced by the "King Stork." Dr. Blaikie, of Scotland, may be accepted as a good exponent of the movement. He tells us that the need of this Alliance is to supply a defect of Presbyterianism, which is an ecumenical presbyterial court at the *apex* of our constitutional system of Presbyteries and Synods. He declares that without such a visible centre of unity, our system is incomplete and weak; that Christ evidently did not design it to remain so; and that the true significance of this Alliance is, that it is the germ of that ecumenical court having supreme jurisdiction over all the churches in the earth. Do they propose to claim such jurisdiction for it? Oh! no; not now. This, says Dr. Blaikie, "would wreck the whole scheme." But yet he is discontented with the Evangelical Alliance, because its meetings "have avowedly been meetings, not of church representatives, but of individuals associated only in a private capacity." He desires that the delegates to the Pan-Presbyterian Council shall be representatives appointed by the Assemblies of the several churches, either directly or through committees. He says that we are as yet "unripe," indeed, for such a council as would have authori-

tative jurisdiction. "But the idea is of course not excluded." "Whether the council proposed will work towards such a result," is a question which he does not decide. But that it ought to work towards it, he very obviously believes and expects; since he declares it the "natural crown of an edifice which has never yet been brought to completion."

Such are the desires and theories which underlie and prompt this Alliance. *They involve one of the essential elements of popery.* The cardinal doctrine of the Reformers concerning the church was, that only the spiritual and invisible church could be catholic or ecumenical. They taught that the only unity designed by Christ among the several branches of his people on this earth was the spiritual unity. It was only on these premises that they were able to refute the pretensions of popery. If the edifice "is not brought to completion" until this visible ecumenical bond is provided, then it is still incomplete until a universal unity of the whole visible church, Reformed, Lutheran, and Episcopal, is formed; that is to say, a pope, either singular or plural. That such a papal head will need infallibility, and all other papal attributes, to decide correctly all the multifarious interests and differences of the Christian world, is very evident. Citations might easily be made from the soundest Reformed divines proving this point. Turretin denies that such an external unity in a visible centre is any mark of the true church. Principal Cunningham (*Hist. Theol.*, p. 24, of Vol. I.) says there is "no warrant in Scripture for alleging that the unity there predicated of the church of Christ necessarily implies that all the societies claiming to be regarded as churches of Christ must be included in one external visible communion, and subject to one external visible government." And in other places he intimates pretty clearly that this demand contains, in his view, the foundation principle of popery. Let the notions which the advocates of this Pan-Presbyterian Alliance desire, through it, to propagate, once become current, and we shall soon learn practically that there is little difference between a pope in the singular and in the plural number. The essential doctrines of popery will reappear: the necessity of outward uniformity; the damning nature of outward schism (so-called); the confounding of the attributes of the visible and invisible churches. Again, the same argument which demands that the

Presbyterian churches must be unified in a visible centre, will necessarily be extended to all others recognized as true churches, though non-Presbyterian—such as the Wesleyan, Lutheran, Congregational. Thus will come about a still wider confederation, not Pan-Presbyterian, but Pan-Protestant; and the necessary conditions of its existence will be precisely that combination of loose, unfaithful, *doctrinal* broad-churchism, with tyrannical enforcement of outward union and uniformity, which now characterizes popery. The Protestant world will be soon educated to set inordinate store by that of which God makes least account—formal union; *at the expense* of that which he regards as of supreme value—doctrinal fidelity. He who does not see that the Evangelical Alliance has already begun to produce this disastrous result must be blind indeed. It is obviously the “tidal wave” of modern sentiment, the “*zeit geist*” of our day, as truly as it was of the days of Leo the Great; and it is as vital to the life of Christianity now as it was then, that it be exposed and resisted.

The theory of real Presbyterianism is as plain as it is scriptural. It recognizes the subordination of courts and of a smaller part of one communion to the whole thereof (in the Lord), as represented in the higher or highest church court. It proposes to extend the communion thus united, *so far as hearty and thorough agreement upon the doctrines and church order extends, and no farther*. This subordination, affected beyond this, can lean only to tyranny or latitudinarianism, or both. Our fathers gave a notable illustration of this scriptural view in 1837. Finding under the nominal jurisdiction of our Assembly two schools of conviction as to both doctrine and order, they persistently destroyed the pretended unity and compelled a separation into two communions. Did they attempt to exclude the new school from the pale of the visible church catholic? Not at all. They continued to recognize their ordination, sacraments and church-rights. But they insisted that it must be a *separate church order*—so separate that they would not even enter into a “fraternal correspondence.” This was the Presbyterianism of the Bible—of the Reformers. Now, so far as a real and hearty unity of doctrinal belief and church order extends, so far may a supreme presbyterial court extend its common jurisdiction. Does such a real unity exist among the Presbyterian Churches of the

world? Will it ever exist this side the *millennium*? Differences of race, language, geographical position, national customs and interests will inevitably perpetuate such differences as will render it impossible to unite them all in one jurisdiction until "there shall be no more sea" and until the curse of Babel shall be repaired. Would the old Assembly, in the glorious days of 1845, have permitted the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland and Ireland, then so much sounder than they are now, to legislate for us, or even to claim the moral force of their recommendations over us? Nay, verily! Even to the latter our Assemblies sternly demurred—and rightly. They refused to allow the abolition diatribes of the Scotch and Irish to be obtruded on our people, knowing that the local and national differences of Great Britain disqualified them from understanding or handling our rights and duties in this matter. Our Assemblies did right. Slavery has been violently and wickedly abolished, partly through the mischievous influences of those very diatribes. *Have all the grounds of social and national difference in the future been abolished?* He must be a soft and childish Utopian indeed who flatters his hopes with this. "That which hath been is that which shall be." But men exclaim: Is not Christianity to make these things better? We reply: Yes; in that unknown future day when Christ shall, by his own secret power, by that kingdom which is within us, and not by men's exclaiming, "Lo here, and lo there," have made the churches "first pure, then peaceable." But the writer, for one, confesses that he fails to see a single hopeful sign that this blessing is to be brought to man by the hands of a generation of Christians who are now generally dominated by a truculent and infidel abolitionism; who confound with the Protestant theory of constitutional republican right the insane leveller's theory of the frantic Lilburn of Cromwell's day or the atheistic radicalism of the Reign of Terror, and impudently call them by the same name; who immerse modern society in the most lavish and luxurious sensuous indulgences ever known to any age; who revel everywhere in an atmosphere of ritualism and will-worship, and whose evangelical reign is signalized by this modern outbreak of social and political corruption, threatening, according to their own confession, to dissolve our social order in general moral putrescence.

7. The crowning objection to our representation in this Alli-

ance is, that our own constitution forbids it. We hold that, according to that constitution, our Assembly had precisely as much right to appoint commissioners to such a body as to appoint a Grand Lama for Thibet. "The Assembly only appointed a committee, with powers to appoint delegates." This evasion serves no purpose; for what the Assembly did by its committee, it virtually did *per se*; and if the connection between us and the Alliance is to subsist, future appointments must, of course, be made on the floor of the Assembly, or confirmed there. Now, either these councils are to be judicatories exercising church-power over the Assembly, or they are not. If they are, then representation in them is substantially a new feature, outside of our constitution. That instrument calls our Assembly our supreme court. In it all appeals and references stop; from it emanate the highest instructions, under Christ. But here is a higher court, and another source of authority. It is difficult to see how any moral truth can be plainer than this: that, if it is right for us to be represented in these councils, then the imperative step for us to take beforehand is to procure an amendment (or rather a revolution) in our own constitution, by an orderly reference to the Presbyteries. But gentlemen will take the other horn of the dilemma: they say the councils of this Alliance are not to be church courts. Very well; then they are private and voluntary meetings of Christians. From this point of view, the Assembly has neither power nor business touching an appointment to them. And precedents show that the Assembly has always understood its powers, as well as the proprieties of the matter, thus. The Assembly approves the Temperance cause. Has she ever condescended to appoint a commissioner to represent her in a Temperance convention? If such a thing were moved, any Assembly would rise up as one man and resist. But we have a case still more in point: The Assembly never consented by her authority to appoint a commissioner to the Evangelical Alliance. If any of her ministers went, they went on their own responsibility as private individuals. When the Alliance was about to meet in New York, and the Yankee heavens and earth were moved about it, our Assembly at Little Rock was not jostled from its course one minute—not a vote was cast in favor of its prostituting its authority to such an appointment. Now, this case is exactly parallel—this Presbyterian Alliance, according to

this second branch of the dilemma, is precisely an Evangelical Alliance of smaller extent.

We may be reminded of the clause in the Form of Government which clothes the Assembly with the power of "corresponding with foreign churches on such terms as may be agreed upon by the Assembly and the corresponding body," and of our Assembly delegates annually sent to the (Dutch) Reformed and the Associate Reformed Churches in America. We reply with the question: Is this Pan-Presbyterian Alliance a *church*? Has it ecclesiastical powers? If so, let it be spoken out. Again, the correspondence to be lawful must be between the Assembly and the *churches represented in the Alliance*. Is this so, or not? When Dr. Girardeau charged that our appearance in this Alliance brought us into correspondence with our detractors and injurers, the radical American Church, with whom we had so solemnly said we would not correspond, gentlemen said, Oh, no! Now, which is it? If we do not, in this Alliance, correspond with the churches represented in it, and that directly, including this one with which we refuse to correspond, this article gives our Assembly no right. Once more, the *terms* are to be arranged *between* the churches corresponding—not with a non-descript *tertium quid*. When Alexander of Macedon was asked to run a race at the Olympian games, he answered: "Yes, provided kings are my competitors." So, our Assembly deigns to treat, provided spiritual queens treat with her: she does not stoop to place herself on a level with any voluntary association of private persons which offers itself. Her acts are and must be authoritative and responsible. She demands a responsible party to treat with, and that not a superior, but an equal. Finally, who dreams that, under the modest word, "correspondence," the framers of our constitution ever designed to confer all these vague legislative powers? Their meaning in the constitution is the constitution. They doubtless chose the word correspondence, because *correspondence is not alliance*. My correspondent is not my business partner. The relation which our Assembly assigned to itself as to "foreign churches," was carefully chosen so as to repudiate that common visible centre of unity at which this Alliance aims, and to leave the manifestation of Christian unity, where the Bible leaves it, in community of principles, spirit, and affections.

It was with good reason, then, that Dr. Palmer warned Dr. Robinson, in the last Assembly, that in going into this Alliance he was launching into a disastrous revolution. The step which the Assembly has been betrayed into is but as "the letting out of waters." If the chasm be not speedily closed, we shall find ourselves upon a flood, which will strand us far from our proper moorings, and amidst the wreck of the precious interests which the Head of the Church has committed to our care.