

Messenger

OF THE

GERMAN REFORMED CHURCH.

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for the Board of Missions of the G. R. Church
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opposite the Bank.

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Communications.

CONVENTION

Held in Harrisburg, on the 1st Monday in December, A. D. 1834.

Agreeably to a resolution passed by Synod at Pittsburg, a general Synod of the German Reformed Church convened at Harrisburg Pa. on the first Monday in December, A. D. 1834, at 2 o'clock, P. M., in the German Reformed church. The Rev. Martin Bruner was appointed chairman, pro. tem. and the Rev. J. C. Bucher, Secretary.

The meeting was then opened with religious exercises.

The names of the ministers & elders present were as follows:

Rev'd Charles Helfenstine, Samuel Gutelius, Daniel Ziegler, David Bossler, Elias Heiner, Robert Douglass, John B. Rebough, Martin Bruner, Henry L. Rice, J. Casper Bucher, Daniel Zacharias, Jacob F. Dissenbacher, Benjamin S. Schneck, Henry Kroh, John Cares, Jesse B. Knipe, William A. Good, Daniel G. Bragonier, John W. Hoffmeier.

Elders.—Henry Wirt, Adam Babin, George King, Jacob Heyser, John C. Bucher, Peter Hammond, Jacob Weaver, John Knode.

Synod now proceeded to the election of officers, whereupon

The Rev'd Martin Bruner was elected President, and the Rev'd William A. Good, Secretary.

The Rev. Mr. E. Keller and Rev. Mr. Bernheim of the Lutheran church were received as advisory members.

The object of the meeting of Synod was then stated. Adjourned till to-morrow at 9 o'clock, A. M. Closed with religious exercises.

In the evening, the secretary preached on Prov. 4: 18, 19.

TUESDAY—9 o'clock, A. M.

Opened with singing and prayer.

The Rev'd R. A. Fisher, Henry D. Schaeffer and his elder Adam Kindigh appeared and took their seats. The Rev'd Augustus Lochman of the Lutheran church was received as an advisory member.

Resolved, that Synod proceed to the transaction of business.

Proposals for the permanent location of the Theological Seminary and Classical School were then presented from Mercersburg and Chambersburg, Franklin county, Pa.

These proposals and accompanying documents were referred to a committee, consisting of the Rev'd Messrs. H. B. Schaffner, D. Zeiger, R. A. Fisher, J. B. Kueip and D. G. Bragonier, and elders J. C. Bucher, J. Weaver and J. Knode.

Resolved, that all papers on this subject be referred the aforesaid committee and that said committee be clothed with discretionary authority to receive such persons and papers as they may deem proper.

The Rev'd Mr. De Witt of the Presbyterian church was received as an advisory member.

The report of the Treasurer being laid before Synod, it was

Resolved, that the report of the Treasurer and the accounts and explanations of the Board of directors be entered upon the minutes of Synod and be published.

Whereas the Board of Trustees have been under the necessity of advancing from the uninvested money contributed for the professor's funds to meet the necessary expenses, therefore Resolved, that a transfer of Synod's stock to the amount of \$2000 be made to the professor's funds and the Treasurer be and he is hereby instructed to make the transfer.

Resolved, that the officers of Synod inform the Treasurer of the aforesaid resolution.

The Hymn-book concern of the German Reformed church was called up, and, on motion, was referred to a committee, consisting of the Rev'd S. Gutelius, D. Bossler, E. Heiner and elders J. Heyser and A. Kindigh. Adjourned to meet at 6 o'clock, P. M. Closed with religious exercises.

Evening Session.—6 o'clock.

Opened with prayer.

The Rev. Isaac Gerhard and Jacob Scholl appeared and took their seats.

Resolved that the present secretary be requested to forward the minutes of this convention prepared for the press to the Rev'd B. Wolf, Corresponding Secretary of the Synod held last at Pittsburg and that the Rev'd B.

Wolf be requested to receive the same, attend to their publication, and have them bound up with the minutes of the late synod held at Pittsburg.

The committee to whom the subject of the location of the Seminary and Classical school was referred made the following report, which report was adopted:

The committee to whom was referred the consideration of the subject of the permanent location of the Seminary and Classical School of the G. R. church, having had submitted to their consideration, very favorable propositions from the citizens of Mercersburg and Chambersburg, in Franklin county, also certain propositions from the towns of York and Lancaster, deeming the subject of vital importance to the best interests of society, and to our church especially, they do not consider that sufficient time and opportunity has been had, to make a final and determined conclusion of this matter. But they recommend to Synod, to appoint a committee of five persons, 3 clergymen and 2 lay members, to be clothed with full power to visit each of the aforementioned places, and all others that may be incited to offer in competition, to examine the properties proposed to be given by the donors, the situation of the places, and their respective advantages, with all other offers that may be made, and make a report of the whole matter referred to them, at the next meeting of the Synod, to be held in Chambersburg, in September next.

DANIEL ZEIGLER
JOHN C. BUCHER,
HENRY B. SHAFFNER,
JOHN KNODE,
DANIEL G. BRAGONIER,
RICHARD A. FISHER,
JESSE B. KNIFE,
JACOB WEAVER.

The committee consists of the Rev'd B. S. Schneck, J. Geiger, and J. C. Bucher, and elders J. C. Bucher and Joshua Mutter.

Resolved, that the committee request all those places in the G. R. church, who wish the location of her institutions, to make their proposals in regular form of writing, accompanied with sufficient responsibility.

Resolved, that the Rev'd Mr. Bacon, agent for the A. S. School Union, be permitted to lay the claims of said Union before Synod, on to-morrow at 10 o'clock, A. M.

Rev. C. Helfenstine obtained leave of absence.

The documents of the Board of Missions were referred to a committee consisting of the Rev'd

J. Gerhard, J. F. Dillenbacher and John Cares, J. C. Bucher, and J. P. King.

Rev'd P. Kroh obtained leave of absence.

The committee appointed on the subject by the Synod at Pittsburg, reported as follows, which report was received :

Rules and Regulations of the Board of Education of the German Reformed church of North America.

According to a resolution of the Synod of the German Reformed church, the Board of Visitors of the Theological Seminary and Classical Institution, is constituted a *Board of Education*. The object of this Board shall be to assist indigent and pious young men in prosecuting their classical and theological studies for the Gospel Ministry in the Institutions established by the Synod. In their proceedings the Board shall be governed by the following *Rules and Regulations*.

I. The officers of the Board shall be a President, Secretary, and Treasurer, who shall be chosen annually by the Board.

II. The Professor of the Theological Seminary, and the Principal of the Classical institution shall constitute an *Examining Committee*, together with such number of other persons as the Board may deem proper to appoint from year to year. Three of whom when regularly convened shall constitute a quorum. It shall be the duty of this committee to consider all applications, to judge of the talents, the moral and religious character of all candidates for patronage, and especially of their views in regard to the gospel ministry. And if thought worthy of aid, the committee shall in writing recommend them to the *Financial Committee* for patronage.

III. A committee of five shall be annually appointed, three of whom shall form a quorum to do business, who shall be called the *Financial Committee*. This committee shall adopt measures to raise funds, and shall make all appropriations of money, only however for the benefit of those beneficiaries who are recommended by the Committee of Examination. And before a new appropriation is made the beneficiary shall give a satisfactory account of the manner in which the previous appropriation has been expended.

The committee shall form a permanent fund of such donations and bequests as shall be appropriated by the donors for this purpose, and of such other property as the Board may possess, in such way as may seem best calculated to promote the designs of the Board. And every donation or legacy for the endowment of a scholarship shall be funded by the committee for that purpose, and shall be known by the name of the donor or testator, or by such other name as may be designated by the donor. The committee shall keep an accurate account of all their proceedings, and report the same at each stated meeting of the Board.

IV. Every beneficiary shall give his note to the Treasurer to refund without interest as soon as shall be in his power all moneys received by him. And if any beneficiary shall abandon the gospel ministry, or connect himself with any other denomination, he shall immediately refund all that he shall have received with interest, or

shall give to the Treasurer his note payable on demand for the whole amount.

V. If any beneficiary shall be placed on the funds of the Board, and it shall be ascertained after thorough trial, that he does not possess the requisite qualifications, it shall be the duty of the Examining Committee as soon as practicable to report his case to the Board, who shall determine whether he be worthy of further patronage or not.

VI. Every beneficiary who shall apply to the Board at the end of any session, for an appropriation for the next succeeding session, shall exhibit to them a certificate from the Professors under whose instruction he has been, of his diligence and progress in studies, and of his good deportment.

VII. The Treasurer shall take charge of the funds, notes, &c. of the Board, and shall make to the Board an annual report of the same. And in the payment of money he must always have a written order from the *Financial Committee*.

VIII. It is recommended that every Classis in the German Reformed church form itself into an auxiliary society. And all auxiliaries who transmit their moneys to the Treasurer of the Board shall enjoy the privilege of designating the beneficiaries to whom they wish their funds to be appropriated. And every auxiliary society shall pay over its surplus funds to this Board, and shall transmit an annual report of all their proceedings to the Secretary of the Board at least one month previous to the annual meeting of the Board, so that the Secretary may embody their report in the general annual report of the Board.

IX. It shall be the duty of the Board through its Treasurer to make an accurate report of all its proceedings to the Synod at its regular annual meetings.

X. The Board shall meet at the close of each session of the theological seminary, and classical institution at the place where these institutions are located; and special meetings may be called by the President at the written request of any three members of the Board.

LEWIS MAYER.

F. A. RAUCH.

HENRY L. RICE.

BENJ. S. SCHNECK.

Committee.

On motion, every article was taken up separately.

Resolved, that the Secretary transmit to the President of each Classis, a copy of the eighth article of the above rules and regulations requesting him to lay the same before Classis at their next annual meeting; for them to take such order on the subject as they may deem proper.

The report was then adopted.

WEDNESDAY—9 o'clock.

Opened with religious exercises.

John C. Bucher, Esq. and Rev. D. Zacharias were appointed a committee to borrow the sum of \$800 for the purpose of liquidating a debt due for the printing of the hymn book; in relation to which it was

Resolved, that the faith of the Synod stands pledged to indemnify the committee, viz: Rev.

D. Zacharias and elder J. C. Bucher, from any possible loss or responsibility in their individual capacity, in the loan they have been just authorized to negotiate, to liquidate the aforesaid debt.

On motion, Resolved that the committee on the publication of the hymn book be authorized to procure the publication of a third edition of the smaller size of the hymn book, if they deem it expedient.

The Rev. Mr. Bacon, agent for the A. S. S. Union, was then permitted to lay the claims of said Union before Synod.

Resolved, that Synod has heard with the highest satisfaction the statement made by the Rev. Mr. Bacon, and that they feel disposed to do all in their power to advance the interest of the Sunday School cause.

On motion, a committee was appointed to confer with the Rev. Mr. Bacon on the subject of Sabbath schools. The committee consists of the Rev. J. C. Bucher, H. L. Rice, Benj. S. Schneck, and elders H. Wirt and J. Knode.

The Rev'd J. Gerhard obtained leave of absence.

Adjourned to meet at 2 o'clock, P. M. Closed with prayer.

AFTERNOON.

Opened with religious exercises.

The Rev. H. Aurand appeared and took his seat.

The committee appointed by Synod to confer with Rev. Mr. Bacon, in relation to the claims of the American Sunday School Union, beg leave to report:

That they have attended to the duties assigned them, and recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. Resolved, that a committee be appointed to draft a constitution for an association to be called "The Sunday School Union of the German Reformed church of the United States, auxiliary to the American Sunday School Union;" and that the said committee report the same at the next annual meeting of Synod.

2. Resolved, that the said committee shall embody in their constitution, the following article, viz: A committee of publication shall be annually appointed by Synod, who shall select and publish such Sunday School books in the German and English languages, as may be best calculated to promote evangelical truth in the bounds of the German Reformed church; and that all the Sunday Schools in the bounds of the church be advised to procure their books from the Depository of the said committee.

3. Resolved that the secretary transmit a copy of the above resolutions to the President of each classis; requesting him to lay the same before classis at its next annual meeting, recommending to them the organization of a classical union, auxiliary to the Synod's Sunday School Union, and to report their action on the same at the next annual meeting of Synod.

Respectfully,

J. C. BUCHER,

HENRY L. RICE,

BENJ. S. SCHNECK,

HENRY WIRT,

JOHN KNODE.

Which report was adopted.

Resolved that the secretary furnish the agent with a copy of this report.

The committee to draft a constitution consists of the Rev. H. L. Rice and B. S. Schneek.

Resolved, that a special committee be now appointed to serve till the next annual meeting of Synod the object of which shall be to select and publish in the German and English languages such Sunday School books as may be best calculated to promote the cause of S. School instruction.

The committee consists of L. Mayer, D. D. and F. A. Rauch, D. P.

Resolved that a committee be appointed to procure a Sunday School agent to labor within the bounds of the G. Reformed church, whose duty it shall be to give him all the necessary explanation and instruction.

The Committee consists of the Rev. L. Mayer, D. D. and J. Cares.

Resolved, that the thanks of this Synod be returned to the American Sunday School Union for the books presented by their agent, the Rev. Mr. Bacon.

The committee to whom the proposition of the Board of Missions of the Ger. Reformed Synod in relation to the proposition made them by the Am. Home Missionary Society was referred, made a report, which report was received. Adjourned to meet at 6 o'clock.

EVENING—6 o'clock.

Opened with prayer.

The report of the committee to whom the proposition of the Board of Missions of the Ger. Reformed Synod, in relation to the proposals made to them by the American Home Missionary Society was referred, was called up. Which report, after due deliberation, was not adopted.

Resolved that seven hundred copies of these minutes be published, 400 in the German and 300 in the English language.

Resolved, that the third edition of Smith's church harmony be recommended by this Synod to the church in general.

The Convention adjourned sine die.

Closed with religious exercises.

The foregoing is a correct copy of the original.

WILLIAM A. GOOD, Secretary.

For the Messenger.

MR. EDITOR,

Upon the first perusal of the disingenuous production of the writer under the signature of "York," I had concluded to let them pass with that silence which such productions merit. But upon a re-perusal I have thought it might not be amiss, for the last time, to say something in reply to several items contained in their last piece.

As an evidence, sir, of a sinking cause, they have turned aside from the original proposition, relative to the permanent location of the Theological and Classical Institutions of the German Reformed Church, and have become altogether personal in their remarks.

It is not my intention, sir, to follow the writers through the many windings and distortions, into which an evidently inflamed imagination has led them. This would be profitable to

neither party, nor would it be edifying to the reader of a religious periodical, but might be destructive to the interest they would be thought to advocate.

Discretion, sir, is a jewel, which shines but dimly in the productions of "York." Quixotic vapouring, seems to characterize their whole productions.

An intimation is made respecting certain transactions that transpired before a committee of the convention at Harrisburg, in reference to the location of the institutions in question. It seems the gentleman's perceptions "of the deep and hidden meaning of that innuendo" (as he is pleased to call it,) and which so much "troubled their spirits," was until then completely mystified. I am glad, sir, that the cobwebs were brushed from his memory and that he was made to understand its meaning fully. Doubtless the statements which were there exhibited, were not quite so pleasing to him as was Allen's exhibition. But while that gentleman was so faithful upon his return home, in narrating and detailing a part of what transpired, he ought to have been equally faithful in detailing the whole. I do assure that gentleman if he had, that his situation before the church and synod, would be quite unenviable, and his memory be very treacherous, he will doubtless recollect, when interrogated by me as to the truth of the statements then made, that he himself admitted their truth. So far then as regards the "mystery then revealed," it did not altogether "vanish into thin air."

An intimation was also made that "Chambersburg would be an unsuitable location," because, (forsooth) "Chambersburg was addicted to manufactures," therefore did not "turn their attention to literature." I merely stated, sir, that as regarded a taste for literature, &c. York could not boast a great advance (not abundance) and I have yet to learn, that York has ever ranked high in the scale of learning, or that it ever obtained celebrity for its teachers. Although Prof. Adrain and other worthy gentlemen may have made it their temporary residence. If they have been the means of bringing young men to York, it argues much for the gentlemen themselves, but nothing for York, and goes far to prove the doctrine of predilection.

Much stress is laid upon the predilection which Chambersburg has evinced for the institutions at York. But, sir, when we take into view the facilities which are presented to the two places, viz: York and Chambersburg—comparatively, Chambersburg has evinced much the greatest. York sends, (as I am informed) to an institution at her own door, four or five students, and including the county about ten: Chambersburg sends four, a distance of fifty miles. Query? If York sends to an institution at her own door, four or five students, how many would they send fifty miles from home?

As to the history of what transpired at the Synod at Lebanon, the "writer" is I think not mistaken. If so, that gentleman who represented the interests of York, at the late convention at Harrisburg, must also have been greatly in error, for he did most distinctly state before that committee, that York had given a pledge that they would

at least raise as much money as would pay for the ground and buildings purchased, and that a part had been collected, but owing to some local difficulty arising, they were unable to collect the balance. If I am not mistaken, the original design in the purchase of that property was, that it should suit the purposes of the seminary. It would be impossible here to narrate all the private conversations which took place at that time, they are however still fresh in my memory, and I feel glad that I have the corroboration of one of the writers himself. No doubt, many others who were present at that session of synod will recollect matters as they transpired.

As to Chambersburg not wanting it, (in its represented fatherless condition) is not the fact, they would have received it as "York" alleges they did, without stipulation. I remember distinctly of being asked what Chambersburg would do; my reply was, that I did not feel authorized to make any proposition, not having an expression of the sentiments of its citizens. But I know that I should have been safe in saying, bring it to Chambersburg, provided you ask us not to do any thing by way of contribution.

I never, sir, for one moment supposed that the Synod of the G. R. church designed their classical institution as a mere receptacle to teach children to read and write, but for instruction in the higher branches, and have always been under the impression that its teachers were mainly supported by the amount of tuition funds received, and that Synod incurred no great additional expense in providing for their support.

It is not a fact that there has "seldom been a school in the academy in Chambersburg." On the contrary, there have always been two. And I speak confidently, when I state, that there are a number who are waiting to enter our classical school, provided synod locate it here, and that too without synod's building up their establishment upon the "ruins" of any other. Chambersburg is perhaps as well supplied with common schools as any other town of its size and population in the state.

"The procurement of the present principal," (whom Chambersburg justly lauds)—"not by the voice of Chambersburg, though that was not unheard on the occasion." It is true, sir, that the voice of Chambersburg was not unheard on that occasion, as was that of others who have an eye to the best interests of the church. But it was not raised in opposition to that gentleman who now stands at the head of the classical institution, on account of either character or qualification. But it was solely in opposition to the loose mode that was about to be adopted for filling one of the most prominent and important stations in the gift of the synod. It was a mode at which that gentleman himself would have spurned. And I have reason to believe that the gentleman in question was rather pleased than otherwise with the proceedings in relation to himself.

"York" should have acted more prudently than to have even alluded to this matter in so public a manner. And the only reason that I can assign for so doing is, that they wish to pre-

judice his mind against Chambersburg. But, sir, I rest satisfied that that gentleman's good sense and discrimination will enable him to put a proper estimate upon my motives on that occasion.

The writers have attempted to ward off the odium which they have justly drawn down upon themselves, by placing me forth as the champion of Synod. I thank the gentlemen for the honor they have done me, in making me the advocate of so respectable a body. I should always, sir, rather be found in the ranks of those who sustain her, than in the ranks of disorganizers. But I would apprise the gentlemen, that synod is fully able to manage its own concerns, and that it has in its own bosom faithful men well able to advocate its cause, and I have no doubt will show by their decision, the just estimate they place upon the threats which "York" so injudiciously and foolishly held forth.

The G. R. Synod, I trust, possesses too much, dignity of character, to become the dupe, or suffer itself to be overawed by such fulsome trash as is contained in some of the productions of "York."

Your literary patrons must feel greatly indebted to "York" for their united and mighty effort, indeed the gentlemen have quite surpassed themselves. No doubt, sir, their effort has afforded them much amusement; well it might, for, for chasteness of style, elevated sentiment and intrinsic worth, it deserves to be ranked with the best literary productions of the present age.

There are other items, which I deem too unimportant to notice, and shall therefore close this communication as well as this subject. I shall however be glad to see the gentlemen in Chambersburg at the next session of synod, where the question which has so much agitated them will be determined, when I promise to give them a patient hearing, and if synod determine for York, I shall yield a perfect acquiescence.

CHAMBERSBURG.

Correspondence.

Shenandoah co. Va., Jan 12, 1835.

MR. EDITOR, DEAR SIR:

I herewith send you two new subscribers for the Messenger of our church. I am sorry that it is out of my power to send you a greater number, and that I have as yet been able to do so little compared with what my brethren have done in this important matter. I say important; for unless this paper, or some other of the kind, can meet with a free and general circulation throughout our church, we shall remain where we now are, in ignorance and obscurity. That is our own people. And while we are sensible too, that the enemies of all good are making every effort in their power, methodizing and maturing their designs, with a comprehension of plan, wholly inexplicable on the supposition of accidental coincidence, that seems to be threatening utter destruction to the church in this part of the country; and not only here, but every where else; while the professors of Christianity are at ease in Zion. Ought we not, who are

the professed followers of Jesus Christ, in like manner, to adopt measures that will and must accomplish the object in view, viz: the salvation of souls and the glory of God. Sir, I hold that it is our duty to make use of every fair and honorable means within our power, for the advancement of the cause of true religion in the world, as stewards of the manifold grace of God, who must give a strict account to the Judge of quick and dead, at the consummation of all things. This section of the church has been awfully neglected; and, what is worse, so far as I can at present see, there seems to be no disposition on the part of the brethren to treat it any better in future; for while the cry comes from seven counties, and a proportionate number of congregations, "Come and break to us the bread of life," there is none to respond to their petitions; none will come over and help them. Can the church for a moment suppose, that four of her ministers are able to comply with all these calls as they ought?

Why, sir, it is out of the question. My own range at this time from congregation to congregation is a compass of about a hundred miles; and the incessant cry, "If you can do no more, pay us a visit occasionally," is continually ringing in my ears, particularly from Pendleton county, where there are nine congregations, who have had no pastor for several years, and who say that it really appears to them that the church has forgotten that it has brethren in Virginia, or if it has not forgotten them, it is at all events determined to abandon them, and leave them to the mercy of their destroyers. Under such circumstances it is to be supposed, that we can accomplish much good, and that in the short space of one, two, or even three years? I may have the best farm in the world; yet if I do not plough it well, put in the seed and harrow it in, I need not look for a plentiful harvest, nor for any harvest at all. So, perhaps, we are looking to this section of the church, and expecting much from it, when we have no right to look for any thing; for we have as yet done, I may say, almost nothing for it. The objection mentioned in a former letter to you, is still the most prominent one, with most of my people to taking the Messenger. Others say, that they would take it if it were a weekly paper.—Others to whom I present its claims, to use their own language, say that they have no heart to do any thing; for when they get a minister with whom they are pleased, and who seems to be doing some good among them, he is soon taken away from them again—which, by the by, has some truth in it. Now, sir, under such circumstances, dare I not appeal to the Christian magnanimity of the churches north of us, I mean the Ger. Ref. churches? Are not these destitute people your brethren in Christ? Are they not (if the expression be allowed,) bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh? Were they not reared and nurtured by the same hands that broke unto you the bread of everlasting life?—Is it not now the office of brotherly kindness to provide for their wants out of your abundance? Have their wants been supplied as they ought to have been? On the contrary, while we have been legislating for other portions of the church, has not Virginia been almost or quite forgot-

ten? Where are the ancient glories of our church: that self-denial—that liberality—that bearing of the cross? We hold in our hands, only the wrecks of that glory our fathers left us, and they are fast decaying. Excuse my wrath; I plead not for myself; I plead for the salvation of hundreds, yea, perhaps thousands. The little star that is yet glimmering in the firmament here, shall it too be extinguished, and the long, dark night of oblivion settle down upon us forever? Remember the life of these congregations depend upon us. If we extend the fostering hand, they live; if we withhold it, they die. The common ties which bind us to our common Lord demand of us attention to their wants. But there is yet a stronger reason, why we should be up and doing for them, and all who are in like circumstances.—It is the retribution of the world to come. OMEGA.

SELECTED.

Extract from Dr. Porter's Lectures on Homiletics and Preaching.

CRITICAL EXERCISES.

The laws of this Seminary require, that each sermon of the senior students, after it has been corrected, "shall be transcribed and re-examined, as often as the officer by whom it is examined shall deem necessary; and that no sermon shall be publicly delivered in the Seminary, by any student, which has not been thus regularly examined and approved.

Besides the great responsibility attached to this branch of instruction, there is an intrinsic delicacy connected with it, which does not appertain, in the same measure, to any other of our public exercises. For this reason, I shall now bring together a number of considerations, which may serve to show, at once, why such critical exercises are important, and how they may be rendered most profitable.

1. The preaching of the gospel is a great work. In the magnitude of its objects, it surpasses, beyond all comparison, every other employment in which men can engage. This might be illustrated, did my limits allow the detail, by an ample exhibition of facts, showing that the highest degree of intellectual cultivation, of civil liberty, and of social order, which are found in the most favored communities, result not so much from all other causes combined, as from the sanctifying influence produced by the faithful preaching of the gospel.

But the consideration which attaches preeminent importance to this work is, that God has appointed it as the grand instrument of salvation to men. The scheme of redemption is an object to which all other objects and events in our world, are subordinate. This is the radiant point, where all the attributes and works of God converge in a blaze of glory. In contemplating the "great mystery of godliness, into which angels desire to look," we see how infinite wisdom, love, justice, and grace unite in the forgiveness of sin, and in suspending the immortal hopes of sinners on the cross of Christ. Now the principal means, which God has instituted to make known this scheme of mercy to a lost world, is the preaching of the gospel. This consideration invests the preacher's work

with a character of exalted and awful dignity, which far transcends the most elevated employment of this world. Well did Paul say, and had he been an *angel*, well might he have said: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Surely then, a pious, uninspired man should aim at the highest attainable degree of perfection, in his preparation for this work.

2. No man who has any just conceptions of this work, and of his own acquisitions, will think himself already so perfect as to be above improvement.

He who has made any real progress in wisdom, will see at every step of his researches, a field opening before him, that is absolutely boundless. His sermons cannot be rich in thought, unless his materials are drawn from inexhaustible resources; and to these he cannot have access, without patient, assiduous, well-directed and long-continued, application. But supposing him to be a "scribe well instructed," and furnished with ample stores of biblical and theological learning, he may be very unskilful in "bringing forth" these treasures, for the instruction of others. His style may be vulgar, or inaccurate, or unintelligible, or dry, or feeble.

In one or more of the qualifications requisite to form an able preacher, very few, at any age, or in any circumstances, are free from considerable imperfections. To any *young* man, then, it can be no reproach, to acknowledge himself imperfect.

3. To correct our own defects, and to increase our qualifications for usefulness, is a work which requires our *own* efforts. No process, in which one is merely passive, can transform him into an able preacher, or a useful man in any respect. Important acquisitions, of every kind, must be the result of care and labor. "There is no royal road" to knowledge in our profession, more than in others. It would indeed be unwise, at this day, for a christian student to adopt a course like that of the Athenian orator, who transcribed the history of Thucydides eight times, with his own hand, that he might learn to imitate the conciseness, strength and fire of the historian. But the same *industry*, though it may be better applied in this age of books, is as necessary as it was in the age of Demosthenes.

"Men," says Johnson, "have sometimes appeared, of such transcendent abilities, that their slightest and most cursory performances excel all that labor and study can enable meaner intellects to compose; as there are regions of which the spontaneous products cannot be equalled in other soils by care and culture. But it is no less dangerous for any man to place *himself*, in this rank of understanding, and fancy that he is born to be illustrious without labor, than to omit the cares of husbandry, and expect from his ground the blossoms of Arabia." Johnson was practically acquainted with the principle of Quintilian, "that it is the work of correction to add, to retrench and to change. That it is comparatively easy to determine what parts require amplification or abridgement, but to repress the timid; to raise the low, to prune the luxuriant, to restrain the extravagant, to condense the diffuse, is a labour of double difficulty."

It deserves to be remembered that Johnson was neither too indolent nor too fastidious to become a critic on himself. His *Rambler*, which, as it was first published, competent judges had classed among the finest specimens of English composition, he almost re-wrote for subsequent editions. Chalmers, in his biographical preface to the *Rambler*, has preserved one of its original papers, as a literary curiosity. Any student who will carefully compare this with the corrected copy, and see with what punctilious inspection, this great man revised his own composition, will find himself amply repaid for his trouble.

I am aware that this critical process, when employed in the correction of a *sermon*, needs to be conducted with more caution and judgement, than in the case of an *essay*, where the heart may slumber, while the intellect is engaged in adjusting the parts of sentences. But the fervor of feeling, which is indispensable in the compositions of the preacher, is injured, not so much by subsequent correction, as by the refrigérant proceeding too often adopted, in the original discussion of a subject, in which the writer forgets his main business, to search for favorite forms of expression. I cannot too often repeat the remark that the only adequate remedy for this difficulty, is to acquire such *habits* of correctness, that propriety of language shall be spontaneous, and cost no labor of reflection; while the *thoughts* to be communicated, should engross the attention.

But to form these habits in a young writer, it is necessary that he should be accustomed carefully to revise, after a proper interval, every production of his own pen. That this labor, of course, does not tend to destroy the spirit of a sermon, is evident from the fact, that to this very process we are indebted for the most animated, energetic and eloquent discourses, that have ever issued from the press. And to the want of this, in a great measure, we may ascribe the superabundant supply of those, which deserve a different character.

But patience in revising our own compositions, is not all that is requisite on this subject, because,

4. No man, however accurate, or however desirous of improvement, can be so perfect a critic on *himself*, as not to need at least an occasional aid from the judgement of others.

The reasons of this remark, as applicable to the writer of mature and well disciplined mind, are chiefly two. One is the imperceptible influence of *habit*. It is not my purpose here, to analyze those laws of the mind, on which the power of habit depends. The fact is too obvious to be proved, that this power does exist, and exert an important influence upon our whole course of thinking and acting. The constant recurrence of any object or event diminishes the interest which it excites in the mind. On this principle, we gradually become familiar with the attitudes, features, voice and language of one with whom we daily associate, so as not to observe any peculiarities in these respects, that would be instantly noticed by a stranger. For a still stronger reason, we become insensible to whatever is peculiar in *ourselves*. Faults that are quite obvious to others, in our use of

favorite words and phrases, or in the general method of expressing our thoughts, may excite as little notice in our own minds, as the action of our limbs in walking, or of our lungs in respiration.

The other, and the more important reason, why a man cannot be a perfect critic on himself is, that he is liable to feel a *partiality* to the faults which need correction, because they are his *own*. This difficulty exists in all its force respecting a composition that is recent, and towards which the writer cherishes a fond regard, as possessing a sort of identity with himself. It was the tendency of both the above causes, especially the latter, to pervert a man's judgement of his own performance, that occasioned the precept of the Latin critic: "nonum in annum prematur." And with reference to the same tendency a modern writer, of good sense, remarked: "The attachment felt to the defects of our style, at the moment of their production, is to be ranked with the sort of oblique taste manifested by idolaters; who usually most reverence those idols which are most deformed." This, I apprehend, is peculiarly true of those faults, which spring from the heedless darings of affection, or the sallies of a wayward fancy. Pride is always at hand to volunteer its approbation, or at least apology, for our own defects. After the assassination of Cæsar, when Brutus was about to make a speech in the Roman Senate, some of his friends urged Cicero to prepare that speech for him. Cicero replied: "No orator ever believed that another man could write better than himself."

These principles, especially the latter, which sober experience, and even piety, do not exterminate from any human bosom, may be expected to operate, with peculiar strength, when combined with the ardent temperament of youth. Accordingly, I have always observed in circles of ministers, that, other things being equal, the *youngest* men are least patient of criticism. In any one of ingenuous and intelligent mind, the desire of improvement is in proportion to his intercourse with men and books, his knowledge of himself, in a word, his attainments in real wisdom. In such a man, of course, a partial attachment to his own productions, and his own errors, always abates with the progress of years: but there is danger of its continuing, to an unhappy extent, till the best period of improvement is past. Instead of shrinking from the scrutiny of judicious criticism, therefore, he who understands his own interest, will invite it; he will prize it, as the invaluable, indispensable auxiliary of his own efforts. He will seek this aid *seasonably*, before his defects acquire insuperable strength by indulgence. And he will desire that such criticism should be impartial and thorough: that it should not spare real blemishes, though he himself might regard them as minor defects, or even as beauties. No one, in the forming age, ought to be indifferent to *small* faults; because the carelessness that overlooks these, at twenty, if unchecked, will grow into intolerable blinding by *forty*. In a *sermon*, *peculiarly*, no error of *sentiment* should be deemed too small for animadversion. Let the empiric tamper with his patient's life, by random prescriptions, and

be comparatively blameless; but let not the preacher tamper with the *Bible*, and the *souls of men*. The error of one sentence from the pulpit, may produce mischief through a *century*, nay through *eternity*.

* Hæ nugæ seria ducent. Hor. Ars. Po.

MESSENGER.

YORK, FEBRUARY 15, 1855.

We have inserted in this number of the Messenger the proceedings of the Synod which met at Harrisburg on the first Monday of December last, selected from a mass of papers forwarded by the Secretary of that meeting.

It will be seen that the Synod acted upon certain propositions which are represented as having come from the American Home Missionary Society, but the nature and object of which do not appear from the minutes. These propositions were referred to a committee, whose report, after a protracted debate, was finally rejected. We do not find this report among the papers sent to us. We regret its absence, as the subject to which it relates is one of the most important that have occupied the Synod's attention, and the report would doubtless have shed some light upon it, and would have enabled our readers to understand this part of the Synod's proceedings.

We think it due to the H. M. Society to state, that the propositions alluded to were not volunteered by that Society, but had been elicited from it by the previous action of our Board of Missions.

When the Young Men's Missionary Society at Easton had resolved to send the Rev. Mr. Rashig as their missionary to Cincinnati, the Rev. B. C. Wolff of Easton informed the editor of this paper, who was then a member of the Board of Missions, that the aid of the A. H. M. Society had been obtained upon satisfactory terms, and that the same institution was willing to extend its aid on the same terms to other missions of our church. This information having been communicated to our Board of Missions, the editor was directed to address a letter of enquiry on the subject to the Secretary of the H. M. Society, with a view to some plan of cooperation with that institution in missions of our church. In the letter which was written the basis of a plan, to which the Board was willing to accede, was proposed. It contained every thing which the Reformed church could reasonably desire and that the H. M. Society could be expected to concede. To this letter the Secretary of that Society replied in terms which evinced that the association whom he represented possessed the true spirit of a christian institution, and was worthy of the fullest confidence and of the most respectful attention from our church. The following is a copy of his letter.

Office of the American Home Missionary Society, }
155 Nassau st. New-York, Oct. 17, 1854. }

MY DEAR SIR,

Your letter of August 14, was received at our office on the 16th of the same month, but at that time I was absent in New England, and did not return till near the middle of September. The subject was then immediately brought before the Executive Committee, and referred to me with instructions to communicate with you, but necessary absence during a part of the time since, the ill health of my assistant, and the con-

sequent pressure of business upon me has postponed my reply much longer than I intended. Be so good as to accept this apology for a delay which I very much regret, and believe me not the less cordially interested in your proposition, on account of this apparent neglect.

Permit me now to assure you that the kind and fraternal spirit of your communication is cordially reciprocated by this committee, and that we will gladly co-operate with the Board of Missions of the Ger. Ref. Synod in all such measures as shall be mutually agreed on, to extend the blessings of the Gospel to the whole German population of this country. This is an object in which we have felt a continually growing interest, as we have become every year more acquainted with its importance. We have been disposed to employ German Missionaries, and have done so in several instances, but without the co-operation of your churches we have, of course, been able to do but little in this way, and our hearts are now cheered with the hope that the correspondence, which your Board has commenced in a manner so acceptable, will result in a plan of co-operation by which this immensely important field may be fully occupied. The details of such a plan must in some respects be the subject of future correspondence, as I can now give you only a general view of our plan, and of the perfect practicability of its being made to harmonize with yours in joint operations.

You ask whether aid can be obtained from the Am. Home Mis. Society, and on what conditions? We answer yes; and the general conditions will be the following: (See the Fifth Report of the A. H. M. Society, Appendix, page 68 to 71.) These "stipulations" contain the substance of what we require of Auxiliary Societies. Please to read them in the above report, which I send you by the same mail with this, and remark the following things.

1. They imply no change in the organization of your Board, and no change in your mode of making appropriations, excepting the substitution of our forms of commissions for yours. These we will furnish to your hand and you will issue them.

2. They do require you to become auxiliary, by reporting your funds to us, which we acknowledge as a receipt of the same, and bind ourselves to leave them wholly in your hands to be appropriated by you, if you desire it.

3. They will require you to confine your appropriations to the destitute and needy within the limits of your own Synod, if it have any limits, and if the Synod of Ohio chooses to act separately from you we will be glad to co-operate with them in the same way. But if they choose to come under your supervision, they may be embraced in this stipulation.

4. Should you become Auxiliary on this plan, you will have a claim on us for such aid as we can render you, in full proportion to your necessities as compared with those of other auxiliary bodies; and I cannot see, at once, any valid objection to your adopting this plan, at least substantially. It has been adopted by all the larger Societies and Boards with whom we co-operate, and has more than answered their expectations in the harmony and efficiency of its actions. Yet I can imagine that objections, at first, may suggest themselves, and we shall hold ourselves ready to make any alterations in it on which we can mutually agree. Your object is to organize congregations in connexion with your Synod. Of this we approve, and shall promote it by the same plan which you propose. You regard it important that your missionaries should receive their appointments from your Board. We regard it so too, and will furnish you with blank commissions for this purpose. I send you herewith by mail a copy of our form of commissions, for your examination. If there is any objection to this form, it may probably be altered to suit your views.

Will you please to look over our general plan above referred to in the "Fifth Report," and also the suggestions I have now made; and if any objections occur to you, please to state them, and we will agree to any modification of the plan which shall not be inconsistent with the unity of our operations, and which shall secure to us a general supervision of the field. Perhaps we may in this way come to a full agreement

by correspondence. If not, I shall be glad to meet you, or any other representative of your Board whom you may send here to confer with us on the subject. My impression is that some personal conference will be necessary to a full agreement, and if you can visit us, I hope you will. But if this is not convenient, it will afford me pleasure to be present, if practicable, at some meeting of your Board, or of your Synod, as you shall advise, where mutual explanations and suggestions may be made. The best mode of cooperation for the promotion of so great an object is surely worth much care and deliberation, and I have great confidence that we can agree upon a plan which with the blessing of God, will effectually promote the object you have in view, in a manner entirely acceptable to your Synod. May the Master whom we profess to serve, guide us to such a result, and bless us in the prosecution of our united efforts, until, not the Germans only, but the whole population of our land, shall be converted and saved. I am, dear sir, very respectfully and affectionately, your friend

and brother in Christ,

ABSOLOM PETERS,

Cor. Sec. of A. H. M. Soc.

Before this letter was received the editor had ceased to be a member of the Board of Missions; a new Board had been elected by the Synod at Pittsburg, and its locality changed. This Board, to whom the letter and the accompanying documents were communicated, entertained the propositions of the A. H. M. Society with great cordiality and zeal; but believing that the Synod's sanction ought to be obtained, before any further proceedings in the case should be undertaken, they submitted the whole matter to the Synod at Harrisburg, where it issued in a cold rejection.

We regard this result as extremely unfortunate, and cannot think of it without pain. That the young brethren who composed the majority of the small assembly at Harrisburg, are sincerely attached to the welfare of their church, and would not do what they conceive to be prejudicial to her interests, we do not question; but an experience of nearly thirty years in the ministry of the German Reformed church, and an ardor of devotion to her cause that is second to none, has qualified us, we think, to form a judgement of her true interest in which we are less likely to be wrong; and upon this ground we do not hesitate to say that our brethren have erred, and their error will not be without effects which we may justly deplore.

We should like to be informed on what grounds the rejection of the proposed cooperation with the Home Missionary Society was placed by those who took that side of the question. We are persuaded that there was some misapprehension, and that the ground which has been taken will be found on a closer examination to be untenable; but if it can be shown that we are in error, we shall acquiesce in silence.

SYNOD AT PITTSBURG.

We shall give some of the proceedings of the Synod at Pittsburg in our next. In our present number we have not room.

A young brother writes to us in answer to our impertunity on the subject of synodical proceedings: "It was certainly desirable that such an abstract should have appeared in our paper as early as possible; but I do not know that it was the duty of any one to furnish it. Editors usually regard such things as a favor con-

ferred: they do not claim it as a right." To this young brother we reply, *Every* member of the Reformed church, and still more *every* one of her ministers, is bound to do whatever he is able for the common good; and a right sense of his obligation will make every one forward to do what he acknowledges to be necessary, and possesses the ability to perform, without waiting for a special law to make him legally responsible. The brother's remark might have been applicable if the Messenger were the Editor's private property, and if we had needed or had asked for an account of Synodical proceedings on our own account. The paper belongs to the Reformed church: not to us; and in the transactions of Synod, we have no interest which is not common to all who profess to be members and ministers of the church. We beg leave to add, that if we esteem only *that* to be our duty which we are *legally* required to do, our religion is not Christianity, but the servile service of the hired laborers in the vineyard. *The Christian's law is love, and his well-doing is limited only by his ability.*

To other brethren we say, "Be not high-minded, but fear."

ECCLIASTICAL NOTICES.

The pastoral connexion lately subsisting between the congregation in Frederick, Md. and Rev'd C. Raleigh has been dissolved. Rev'd D. Zacharias of Harrisburg Pa. has been elected his successor.

From Lebanon we learn that Rev. J. C. Bucher has not accepted the call sent to him from that place.

Rev'd S. K. Denius, late of Bedford Pa., has accepted the charge of the congregations in Berlin and its vicinity, Somerset co. Pa.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The communication of Z came too late for this number. It shall have a place in our next.

Agents having money for the Messenger in their hands, and subscribers who are in arrears, are informed that notes which are at par in the places where they reside will be received in payment here. Such however as are under the denomination of five dollars are not current in Pennsylvania and must be disposed of at a heavy loss. Notes of the banks in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia pass freely in our place without discount. We are still dragging heavily with pecuniary difficulties, and regret to say that our appeals to subscribers and agents have not been generally successful.

Miscellaneous.

From the London Christian Observer.

STATE OF RELIGION IN FRANCE.

A rapid tour in France has enabled me to present you with a few remarks which will, I trust, have a useful tendency.

The degraded state of Religion in that country, or rather the absence of all religion whatever, almost exceeds belief. Not only is it a fact generally acknowledged, that the churches are almost entirely forsaken by the male part of the population, but sentiments are boldly expressed in conversation, which though the natural effects of infidelity, appear too atrocious for an age of civilization. I met, some time ago, with a gentleman, who calmly maintained, that when calamity had reached a certain pitch, it was a most wise and justifiable measure to take poison; and more recently, with another, who argued at considerable length for the policy of destroying by law, a large portion of infants, in order to avoid the evil of an overgrown population: The death-blow has been given almost to the semblance of a Christian Sabbath, by the custom of devoting the golden hours of the Sunday morning to the review of the National Guard. The evening, alas! has long been given up to the theatre and other profane amusements.

But gross as is the present darkness, the dawn of day appears to brighten the horizon. Now, first, in the history of France, is entire freedom of religion conceded to the inhabitants. A minister of the Gospel of whatever denomination, has now only to inform the public authorities of the place which he visits, of his intention to establish a religious service and he is immediately placed under their protection. Hence efforts have been undertaken for the good of France, trifling indeed in their apparent importance, but blessed already with remarkable success, and the harbingers, we may humbly trust, of more extensive labors. In a small town which had been visited by the itinerant *colporteurs*, who sold Bibles and tracts, and conversed on religion with those who would hear them, so active a spirit of curiosity was awakened in regard to the doctrines professed by Protestants, that immediately on the arrival of a Protestant minister a considerable number of persons resorted to hear him; and now, though eighteen months have scarcely elapsed, upwards of thirty individuals have been converted from Romanism, and give evidence by their spirit and conduct, of a conversion to true Christianity. I have myself visited this infant church, and can bear testimony to the unfeigned piety which appears to pervade it. Nor has the divine favor been limited merely to one place. In two adjacent towns, much more considerable for population, Protestant services have been open for the first time since the revocation of the edict of Nantz, and each of these services is attended by upwards of two hundred persons, of whom not more probably than twenty are Protestants. In one of these new temples I had myself an opportunity of preaching, and the impression produced on my mind by the whole conduct and conversation of those with whom I came in contact, was this, that had the temple been capable of containing three thousand instead of three hundred persons, it would have been as full in the one case as in the other. Indeed, if God would give grace to some individual or individuals to make a grand effort for calling the attention of the whole town to the doctrines of Christianity, perhaps the whole town might be brought over to the side of truth.

I cannot describe the painful admixture of joy and anxiety which have been agitating my mind by exhibitions of the present description. It was greatly joyful to see hundreds of Roman Catholics lending ear to the preaching of Christ crucified; but it was deeply afflictive to think that this valuable opportunity might be lost, either by the total neglect or the injudicious conduct of Protestants. Oh, for a new Farel to appear at this crisis! Where is such a being amongst all the Protestant churches, to be found?—There can be little question, that in the ordinary course of God's providence, a man of Farel's spirit would soon meet with a Farel's success.

Is it not painful and even extraordinary, that none of our younger clergy can cross the Straits of Dover to devote five or six of their youthful years to the evangelization of France? Labors of this kind would never unfit them for the subsequent duties of a clergyman at home, if after a certain period they deemed it advisable to return to their native land. And how is it that our Dissenting brethren lose sight of this object? If, with all the ministers of all the religious denominations in England, there is still a large portion of our population without any religious instruction what-ever, how much wider is the range for Christian effort in France! Here is a scope too wide, alas! for all the zeal and activity which all the Protestant communities of England and America could bring into exercise. And yet I find no Protestants of our country, except the Wesleyan Methodists, who have sent a single English evangelist to preach to the French nation "the unspeakable riches of Christ!"

How abundant are the opportunities for ministerial effort in France may be inferred from this circumstance, that during six days which I passed at Nîmes, I had no less than two occasions for preaching in the temples, and four in more private assemblies, besides two others which I lost from the note of invitation arriving too late. All these means of usefulness were afforded me by the assistance and sanction of one of the established clergymen.

The plan of exertion to be recommended for France is, not to fix on the same place as the Protestant ministers. Occasional visits to such stations are very desirable, and might prove greatly encouraging and beneficial to the Protestant churches; but the method of finding access to the Roman Catholics is to fix on one of the many towns in which there is not a Protestant minister; and, finding out the few Protestants who reside there, to invite them to the performance of Divine worship. There are probably few towns where such a simple effort would not soon be followed by a concourse of persons, Roman Catholics more than Protestants, who would fill any place, however large, in which Divine service might be celebrated.

The great thing, after all, which is requisite for the advancement of true religion in France, is a spirit of self-renunciation. Men are wanted who for the love of Christ can surrender the love of ease and emolument and applause, and, "enduring hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," can delight in their work, and say, "None of these things can move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy." For my own part I look with more sincere respect and admiration on a Christian minister who is "spending and being spent" in the obscurity of a remote village in France, than on one who is commanding vast assemblies of our countrymen by the splendor of his eloquence, or is ever so useful where there is so much of human reward connected with his labors. We ought to admire every Christian minister who is faithful to his Divine Master; but most, the man whose earthly solace is little else than the warm affection of the converts given to him from infidelity or superstition, and whose simplicity or sincerity of purpose will not perhaps be known or appreciated till the moment when the language shall be addressed to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant! enter then into the joy of thy Lord. Thou hast been faithful in a few things, be thou ruler over many things."

The Goddess of Reason.—In the Paris papers of August 1, 1817, we find among the obituaries the following announcement:—"Died, within these few days, in the hospital of lunatics of Salpêtrière, where she had lived unquiet and unknown for many years, the famous Théroigne de Méricourt, (the Goddess of Reason,) the most remarkable of the heroines of the Revolution." This female (nearly in a state of nudity) was seated upon a throne by Fouché and Carnot, in the Champ de Mars, and hailed alternately as the Goddess of Reason and Liberty. There was something remarkable in the

history of the latter days of this poor creature, and her life is not without its moral. She, who was taught publicly to blaspheme her Creator, and to dishonor her sex, (for she appeared in public nearly naked,) was for the last twenty years of her miserable life, subject to the greatest of human calamities—the deprivation of reason. She repented severely of her horrible crimes, and her few lucid intervals were filled up by the most heart-rending lamentations.—She died at the age of fifty-seven. This is another awful warning to the living atheists, radicals, and “free-thinking Christians,” who are now following in the steps of the French revolutionists.

New York Observer.

From the New York Observer.

LOVEST THOU ME?

We make a profession of Christianity, and go along from day to day, and perhaps from year to year, supposing that we are Christians, and that all is well with us; that we are equipped for the encounter of death, and prepared to meet our Judge, and take our place in heaven, when it may be we are not able to answer till after long consideration, and then with not a little doubt and misgiving, so simple a question in Christian experience, as “Lovest thou Me.” Peradventure the utmost we dare say after all our reflection and self-research is, “I really do not know how it is. I hope I love him.” This will never do. The question, “Lovest thou Me,” is one which every person making any pretensions to Christianity ought to be able to answer affirmatively at once. Indeed we ought not to give our Savior any occasion to ask the question. It is very much to our discredit—it should make us blush and be ashamed—that our manifestations of love to Him are of so equivocal a character, as to leave the very existence of the affection doubtful, and to render it necessary for him to interrogate us in reference to it. There are many less lovely beings than Christ that have not to ask us if we love them. We act in such a manner towards them that they cannot for a moment doubt the fact of their being dear and precious to us. They do not want our words to assure them. They have our uniform conduct and deportment making the silent yet most forcible declaration. Has your parent to ask you if you love him, or your child? Have husbands and wives, brothers & sisters, and friends, to ask this question of each other?—Oh no—none but Christ has to ask us if we love him! And he has not only to ask the question, but to wait, sometimes a long while, for an answer. We have to consider and go into an examination, and call up our conduct to the bar of judgement, and dissect our very hearts, before we can venture an answer. This is strange. It is not so in other cases. If a relative or a friend, more for the gratification of a renewed expression of our love, than from any doubt of its existence, ask us if we love him, do we keep him waiting for an answer? Do we say, “Well, I must consider. I must examine myself. I hope I do.” No, indeed. We are ready with our affirmative. Nor is it a cold Yes we return, but we

express our surprise at the question. “Lovest thou?” And we assure the person in the most emphatic and ardent language that we love him, and all our manner shows him that we speak out of the abundance of the heart. But we do not express surprise that our Saviour should ask us if we love him. We do not wonder at the question from him. We know too well how much reason we give him to doubt our affection.

Why should there be such a difference, in favor of the earthly objects of our love? Is not Christ as lovely as those other beings—as deserving of affection—as attractive of love? He is *altogether lovely*. Are they? He possesses infinite loveliness. Nor does that express all. He is essential Love. Nor love at rest, but in motion; nor far off, but near; exerting infinite energy in action, exercising infinite fortitude in suffering; earth the scene, and man the object. It is He who asks, “Lovest thou me.” And he of whom he asks it is this man, the intelligent spectator of all this love, eye, its chosen and cherished object.

If Christ was not as nearly related to us, as those other beings are, that might be the reason of the difference in their favor. But who is so closely related to us, so intimately joined to us as Christ? He formed us, and in him we live, move, and have our being. Does not that imply nearness? Is He divine, while we are human? He is human as well as divine—one of the brotherhood of flesh and blood. He came down to earth to take our nature on him, nor went up to heaven again without. There it is—our humanity allied to divinity, divinity radiant through it on the throne. Is He not related to us? He says of every one who does the will of his Father, “the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” That alone relates us to him more than all human ties. But that is not all. Christ is the husband of the church. He is one with it. If we are his disciples, He is the vine and we the branches—He the head and we the members. Yea, “we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” Does not this express a near and intimate relation? Now it is one so near to us, so joined to us, who asks, “Lovest thou Me.”

Have our friends whom we are so conscious of loving, done more for us than Christ, or made greater sacrifices for us? Are we under greater personal obligations to them?

“Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood?

But this Savior died to have us

Reconcil'd in him to God.”

And yet we know we love those friends, but this friend we know not whether we love him or not—we only hope we do!

Do other beings find such difficulty in loving Christ? and are they at such a loss to know when they do love him? Oh no. His father testifies, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” And he is called also his *well-beloved*, his *dear Son*, all the angels of God love and worship him, and delight to ascribe infinite worthiness to him. It is only men who find any difficulty in loving Christ. It is only the human heart that hesitates and hangs back. Is there any reason for this—any reason why men should be he least to love Christ, and why they should love him least of all who behold his loveliness? I see none, but I think I see reasons many, and strong, and tender, why we should be first, and most forward, and warmest in our affection to him. How many worlds he passed to alight on this! How many created natures he rejected, when from all of them he chose the human to be united to Divinity! Others have sinned, yet not their sins baro he, but ours. It may be said of other creatures “He loved them,” but of men only can it be added, “and gave himself for them.” And yet who is so backward to love him as redeemed man? Nor tardy merely. Oh, how parsimonious of his love—loving him so little, often he cannot ascertain if he if he loves at all! Shame, where is thy blush, and

sorrow, where thy tear?

Oh! how different Christ's love to us from ours to him! We have not to ask him if he loves us. If any one should ever ask that question of Jesus, he would say “Behold my hands and my feet.” He bears on his very body the marks of his love to us. But what have we to point to as proofs of our love to him? What has it done for him. What *suffered*? Oh! the contrast! His love, so strong! Ours, so weak! His, so ardent! Ours, so cold! His so constant! Ours, so fickle! His, so active! Ours, so indolent! So high, so deep, so long so broad His love, its dimensions cannot be comprehended, it passeth knowledge; while ours is so limited and so minute, it eludes research.

“Dear Lord! and shall we ever live

At this poor dying rate?

Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,

And Thine to us so great?”

M. S.

Communicated.

PIKELAND CHURCH BURNT!

On the night of the 20th January, some enemy or enemies of the Christian religion set fire to, and burnt down the St. Peters church in Pikeland township, Chester co. Pa. This church belonged jointly to two congregations of different Christian denominations; the “Evangelical Lutheran” and “German Reformed.” The Rev. Mr. *Hampole* is pastor of the Ev. Lutheran and the Rev. Mr. *Knipe* is pastor of the Ger. Reformed.

These two congregations have worshiped together with the most becoming Christian feeling & brotherly affection, for upwards of twenty years. The members of the two congregations have had a joint meeting, and resolved unanimously to re-build the church; they have also offered a reward of \$200. for the apprehension and conviction of the incendiary or incendiaries who set fire to it.

The church with the organ cost about \$5000.

CHAMBERSBURG. We omitted to notice in the proper place that the person to whom this writer alludes as the supposed author of the article in the Messenger over the signature of York is not the author of those articles, nor, as “Chambersburg” thinks, one of the authors.

Contribution to Theological Seminary.

By Mr. Christopher Hickel for second professorship paid, - - - \$10 00

MONEYS RECEIVED.

By Mr Christopher Hickel for himself, Mr Absolom Rinker and Mrs Elizabeth Rinker, each \$1.50 to Dec. 1835; Messrs Benjamin Hudson, Joseph Coffman, Isaac Folz, John Deininger & Elizabeth Rinker each 25 cts balance for 1834. By Mr Charles F. Hoffmeyer for Mr Carpenter M'Cleary \$1.50 to Dec. 1835. By Mr Gideon Bantz jr. for Dr. J. Baltzel, Samuel Dutrow, David Kemp, each \$1.00; Rev'd C. Reighley \$2.00, Mrs Julian Hedges \$3.00, C. Steiner & Jacob Remsberg, each \$1.75, & David Schley \$7.50. By Mr. D. May, for Daniel Small Esq., John Evans Esq., Rev'd D. Ziegler, Mrs Mary Dritt, each \$1.25 for 1834; Henry Willard for '32, '33, '34 & 1835 \$4.75. Joseph Keiffer for '32, '33 & 1834 \$3.25; George Laucks jun., William Goodridge, balance, each 25 cts.