

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

THIS section of Presbyterianism had its originating cause in a schism that took place in the year 1837. The point at issue was the right construction to be put upon the acknowledged standards of the Church. Heresies and errors of different kinds, principally of a Pelagian character, had crept into the north-eastern part of the united body, and parties subscribing to the Confession of Faith did so with a mental reservation that almost entirely destroyed the nature of the covenant made. The matter was at last brought to an issue, and in the year mentioned above the Old and New Schools of Theology were established. The southern presbyteries manfully adhered to the principles of the Old, and required of all a literal interpretation of, and faithful adherence to the requirements of the standards of the Church. Its final separation from the North was, of course, at the beginning of the disastrous war in 1861.

After it had begun the Assembly met in Philadelphia, and a set of resolutions were passed by a large majority, that the Presbyterian Church vow her allegiance to the central civil administration, or Federal government, as the visible representative of the national existence. This was, in other words, a writ of ejectment against all that portion of her domain within the bounds of the eleven states that was by that time known as the Confederacy.

True to the standards of the Old School—that nothing secular must enter into her administration—the southern delegates felt compelled to separate themselves in order to conform with the spiritual tenor of Presbyterianism, and by so doing preserve the crown rights of the Redeemer, and the spiritual independence of His kingdom.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States was organized on the 4th of December, 1861, in the city of Augusta, Ga., and after fixing upon its name and title, the first act was the formal and explicit adoption of the Westminster Standards as its constitution. The resolution was in these words:—