

General Assembly became a reality, this theme occupied the center of the floor in all gymanvas and presbytery meetings. The overture was discussed in the Ohio Gymanva at Palmyra, October, 1866, and in the Pennsylvania Gymanva in session at Minersville, May, 1867. The latter reaffirmed the action of the previous gymanva, favoring the General Assembly. In the New York Gymanva at Rome, October, 1867, the matter received favorable attention. Every gymanva manifested a vital interest in the proposal. For two years, the pros and cons were vigorously discussed in them all.

There were many questions and phases to be considered: When and where shall the first meeting be held? Who are eligible? How many commissioners shall be sent? Shall representation be on the basis of percentage of membership, or shall it be presbyterial or synodical? How shall the expense accounts of commissioners be defrayed? These and other items called for discussion, and there was a variety of opinion.

The Ohio Gymanva took the foremost part in discussing plans and purposes; it also was persistent in its appeal for an early assembly. Ohio invited the General Assembly to convene in Cincinnati, September 13, 1867. New York was hesitant, counseled more deliberation in such an important matter, and advised the appointment of a committee, consisting of one member from each gymanva, to make plans and to arrange a tentative docket which would expedite matters. Pennsylvania agreed with New York, and the early date announced by Ohio was reluctantly withdrawn. Ohio, however, persisted and in October, 1868, the gymanva appointed a committee of three to correspond with the other gymanvas regarding the time and place for meeting. This correspondence brought matters to a climax, as encouraging replies were received and all were in favor of an early meeting. Accordingly the first General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodists in America was announced to meet at 10 A.M., September 22, 1869, at Columbus, Ohio. The delegates assembled for that purpose at the appointed time and place.

The Friend for November, 1869, gives a full report of the proceedings of the first General Assembly. Its importance entitles it to a place on these pages.

REPORT OF THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE CALVINISTIC METHODISTS

Held in Columbus, Ohio, September 22-26, 1869.

WEDNESDAY, TEN O'CLOCK A.M.

I. The following brethren were elected officers of the General Assembly by secret ballot:

Moderator: Rev. William Hughes, Racine, Wisconsin.

Stated Clerk: Rev. M. A. Ellis, Hyde Park, Pennsylvania.

Treasurer: Elder W. W. Vaughan, Racine, Wisconsin.

II. The roll of commissioners, representing the various gymanvas, was called, and the following responded:

New York:

Ministers: Rev. Thomas T. Evans, Floyd.

Rev. John Jones, Middle Granville.

Elder: William N. Jones, Rome.

Pennsylvania:

Ministers: Rev. M. A. Ellis, Hyde Park.

Rev. John L. Jeffreys, Slatington.

Elders: None.

Ohio:

Ministers: Rev. Howell Powell, Cincinnati.

Rev. John W. Evans, Oak Hill.

Rev. Thomas C. Davies, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Elders: None.

Wisconsin:

Ministers: Rev. William Hughes, Racine.

Rev. Rees Evans, Cambria.

Elders: W. W. Vaughan, Racine.

Minnesota:

Ministers: Rev. Daniel T. Rowlands, Foreston, Iowa.

Elders: None.

III. Rev. Humphrey Humphreys and J. M. Davies were received as delegates from the Welsh Presbyterian church in St. Louis, Missouri. They were extended all privileges of the sessions of the Assembly, except voting.

IV. In view of the fact that there were a number of ministers and ruling elders present who were not commissioners, a motion prevailed to extend them the privilege of expressing themselves freely on all subjects brought to the attention of the Assembly—but no vote.

V. Having thus organized, those present were addressed by the moderator in a very purposeful and sincere manner, urging everyone to be brief, calm, and discreet in all his remarks. He expressed the conviction that everyone would, so far as he was able, speak words of wisdom,

looking constantly to the glory of God and the welfare of the Cause in their midst. He considered that a great responsibility was incumbent upon those present, as members of this General Assembly, and he entertained a strong hope that the movement would turn out advantageously to the denomination in America.

VI. It was thought advisable, before framing the constitution of the General Assembly, to address the throne of grace and invoke the guidance of the Spirit of God upon entering so important a task. Elder William N. Jones, Rome, New York, led in prayer.

VII. It was resolved to spend the remainder of the morning expressing our sentiments and feelings with respect to the great work we were soon to enter upon. Thereafter each of the brethren spoke briefly. This was a solemn and sacred hour in which the commissioners expressed themselves, stressing the importance of the undertaking and their responsibility in the matter of its success. A résumé of the remarks made by each commissioner is recorded in the minutes. One of the commissioners, Rev. J. L. Jeffreys, of Slatington, Pennsylvania, remarked that he had been present, about eighteen years previous, as a delegate to the Organized Assembly in New York, where that Assembly was struggling for existence, but failed. He felt different about this Assembly, and now "rejoiced with exceeding great joy" that his life had been spared to see what was now taking place in Columbus. Rev. Thomas T. Evans, of Floyd, New York, expressed himself in like manner; for he too had witnessed the failure of the former Assembly. At one time, he would have opposed the present organization, but was now persuaded that the General Assembly was necessary to unite the gymanvas of the West and the gymanvas of the East in a common effort. He spoke heartily in its favor.

Regrets were expressed because of the absence, owing to illness, of Rev. Robert Williams, Moriah, Ohio. A committee was appointed to draw up resolutions of sympathy.

WEDNESDAY, TWO O'CLOCK P.M.

Devotions: Led by Rev. J. L. Jeffreys.

VIII. Resolved, that a Committee on Communications, consisting of three members, be appointed, who shall act during the period of this Assembly. The moderator appointed Rev. Rees Evans, Rev. H. Powell, and the stated clerk.

IX. Greetings from the General Assembly in Wales to the General Assembly in America were received. The greetings were sent by Thomas Phillips, D.D., on behalf of the Welsh Assembly. (Here the letter from Dr. Phillips was read.)

Greetings also from Rev. John Gordon Jones, Manchester, Michigan, expressing his own feeling, as well as that of the Presbyterian Church, toward our Assembly. (Here the letter from Mr. Jones was read.)

Greetings from Rev. B. W. Chidlaw were conveyed through Rev.

David Harries. All the greetings were greatly appreciated, and a motion prevailed that grateful acknowledgment be expressed by the clerk.

X. The Form of the Constitution of the General Assembly. It was resolved to proceed to frame the constitution of the General Assembly. Thereupon with calm deliberation the following was framed:

"i. The Name

"This General Assembly shall be called, and known by the name: The General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodists in America.

"ii. Members of the General Assembly

"The members of the General Assembly shall consist of:

"1. Two ministers and two elders from each state gymanva.

"2. The brethren appointed to read special papers before the Assembly.

"iii. Officers of the General Assembly

"1. A moderator, who shall be elected by secret ballot of the majority of members present.

"2. A stated clerk, who shall be elected in the same manner as the moderator.

"3. A treasurer, who shall be nominated from the floor and elected *viva voce*.

"iv. The Work of the General Assembly

"The work of the General Assembly shall be to discuss matters pertaining to the entire denomination, such as:

"1. Monthly periodicals and books relating to the body.

"2. Missions, home and foreign.

"3. Other matters which may be presented in due form to its attention by the state gymanvas through their clerks or authorized commissioners.

"v. The Order of the Meetings

"1. The first session:

"(1) The Assembly shall be constituted by a roll call of the commissioners, and others who have a right to be present.

"(2) The election of moderator.

"(3) An address by the resigning moderator; and the new moderator shall be conducted to the chair.

"(4) The election of a new stated clerk to take the place of the outgoing clerk.

"(5) Arrangement of the docket.

"2. In the succeeding sessions:

"(1) Decide the time and place of the next General Assembly.

"(2) The monthly publications and books of the denomination.

"(3) Missions.

"(4) Unfinished business.

"(5) Presentation of delegates, or visitors, from other church bodies or countries.

"vi. The Committees
"Committees shall be appointed by the Assembly for the carrying on of its work.

"1. A committee on the time and place of the next meeting whose duty shall be, in collaboration with the clerk, to make all arrangements for the next Assembly.

"vii. Quorum
"Ten commissioners, who shall represent a majority of the state gymanvas, one half of whom shall be ministers, and personally present on the day appointed, shall be necessary to constitute a quorum of the General Assembly.

"viii. Voting Privileges
"The following persons have the right to vote in all the sessions of the General Assembly:

- "1. All commissioners from all state gymanvas.
- "2. The brethren appointed to read papers before the Assembly.
- "3. The former moderator and the former clerk.
- "4. The clerks of the different state gymanvas who may chance to be present.

"ix. Amendments
"The constitution may be amended by a majority or two-thirds vote of the commissioners present, after the proposed amendment has been under consideration in two General Assemblies.

It was decided that, when the clerk has accurately recorded the opinions of the Assembly on framing the constitution, we confirm the same and receive it as the constitution of the General Assembly."

THURSDAY, TWO O'CLOCK P.M.

Devotions: Led by Rev. John Moses.

XI. Motion prevailed that the next General Assembly convene in Pittsburgh, Pa., September 28, 1870, at 10.00 A.M.

XII. The Friend (*Y Cyfaill*) was presented to the attention of the Assembly for consideration.

A committee of five, one from each state gymanva, was appointed to report on the matter. The following were appointed on the committee: Rev. Rees Evans (Wis.); Rev. John Jones (N. Y.); Rev. Howell Powell (Ohio); Rev. Daniel T. Rowlands (Minn.); and Rev. J. L. Jeffreys (Pa.).

XIII. Home and Foreign Missions.
A committee of four was appointed to draw up a constitution for a Missionary Society. The following members were appointed: Rev. T. C. Davies, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Rev. M. A. Ellis, Hyde Park, Pa.; Elders W. W. Vaughan, Racine, Wis.; and William N. Jones, Rome, N. Y.

XIV. A resolution was passed thanking the Welsh Presbyterian church

in St. Louis, Mo., for sending delegates to the Assembly, and to the delegates themselves for their report.

FRIDAY, EIGHT O'CLOCK A.M.

Devotions: Led by Rev. T. C. Davies.

XV. A Committee on "Papers to Be Read Before the Next Assembly" was appointed: Messrs. W. W. Vaughan and W. N. Jones.

XVI. Report of the Committee on Missions, including the adoption of the constitution of the Missionary Society.

XVII. Resolved that the moderator and clerk of this Assembly communicate with the state gymanvas, the presbyteries, and the churches, through The Friend, urging them to act enthusiastically, effectively, and immediately on behalf of the Missionary Society.

XVIII. Mr. W. W. Vaughan, Racine, Wis., was elected treasurer of the General Assembly.

XIX. The following were elected members of the Missionary Society Board: W. N. Jones, Rome, N. Y.; Rev. M. A. Ellis, Hyde Park, Pa.; Rev. Howell Powell, Cincinnati, Ohio; Rev. William Hughes, Racine, Wis.; and Rev. Daniel T. Rowlands, Foreston, Iowa.

XX. Report of the Committee on The Friend was read and adopted.

XXI. The following were elected members on the Board of Directors and Publishers of The Friend: Rev. Rees Evans, Cambria, Wis.; Rev. John Moses, Newark, Ohio; Rev. Richard W. Jones, Judson, Minn.; Rev. J. L. Jeffreys, Slatington, Pa.; and Rev. Thomas T. Evans, Floyd, N. Y.

XXII. Rev. M. A. Ellis, Hyde Park, Pa., was elected editor of The Friend.

FRIDAY, TWO O'CLOCK P.M.

Devotions: Led by Rev. Daniel T. Rowlands, Foreston, Iowa.

XXIII. A discussion pertaining to ways and means of purchasing and publishing The Friend. A resolution prevailed that the Board of Publishers submit a plan to the Assembly session on Saturday morning.

XXIV. Resolved to present to the attention of the different state gymanvas the necessity of providing suitable literature for the children of the denomination.

XXV. The Committee on Correspondence reported, and the report was adopted.

XXVI. The kind and friendly attitude of the Presbyterians toward us as a denomination was dwelt upon, and sincere appreciation of their attitude was expressed.

XXVII. Resolved that, if the Congress of Evangelical Churches convenes in New York City before our next General Assembly meets, we intrust to the New York Gymanva the task of appointing a delegate to represent the Calvinistic Methodists of America in that meeting.

XXVIII. In reply to the appeal from the church in Emporia, Kansas, it was resolved to send a communication to the church advising delay in the matter of uniting with the Presbyterians, inasmuch as it may soon be able to receive aid from the Missionary Society of the General Assembly, if that be desired.

XXIX. Resolved that we recommend the organizing of churches in mission fields, and that they be called Presbyterian churches under the auspices of the Calvinistic Methodists; and as such they are to be considered eligible to receive aid from our Missionary Society.

XXX. Resolved that we send a delegate to the General Assembly (of the Presbyterian Church) in 1870.

XXXI. Resolved that William Roberts, D.D., Bellevue, Pa., be the delegate on behalf of our denomination in America to the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1870.

XXXII. Report of the Committee on "Papers to Be Read Before the Next Assembly" was submitted and adopted.

FRIDAY, SEVEN O'CLOCK P.M.

XXXIII. Education for young people, or candidates for the ministry, was the subject under discussion.

XXXIV. The Week of Prayer. Resolved that we urge our churches to observe the first week in 1870 as the Week of Prayer. A committee of three was appointed to arrange a list of subjects for the Week of Prayer.

XXXV. A discussion on "What is necessary to constitute a presbytery?" The question was answered with the following resolution after due consideration: Resolved, that three churches, in which there shall be a complete set of officers, with at least two ministers in their midst, shall be necessary to constitute a presbytery.

XXXVI. Rev. D. Harries was appointed to prepare resolutions on the "Avondale Disaster," Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, the resolutions to be submitted at the next session.

SATURDAY, EIGHT O'CLOCK A.M.

Devotions: Led by Rev. John Jones, Middle Granville, N. Y.

XXXVII. Report of the Board of Publishers on the ways and means of purchasing and publishing *The Friend*; the report was adopted.

XXXVIII. Articles VI and VII of the Confession of Faith were discussed. It was resolved to call the attention of the state gymnasiums especially to Article VI, for we believe that the immoral practices forbidden therein are rife, in many forms, in our country. Rev. J. L. Jeffreys was appointed to write an article to *The Friend* on the necessity of opposing the evils forbidden in Article VI. Consideration of Article VII was tabled, to be taken up for consideration at the next General Assembly.

XXXIX. Report on the "Avondale Disaster" presented; the same adopted.

XL. Sabbath observance was discussed; and resolutions against Sabbath desecration were passed.

XLI. A memorial monument to the late William Rowlands, D.D.: Resolved, that we urge all the gymnasiums, and all others who wish to contribute to this worthy cause, to send their contributions to the treasurer, Evan Roberts, Whitesboro Street, Utica, N. Y., by January 1, 1870.

XLII. Raising and ordaining brethren to the ministry. Resolved:

1. That we appoint a committee of one to draw up rules on the subject, and to present them at the next General Assembly.

2. That Rev. John J. Roberts, Columbus, Wis., be appointed for the task.

XLIII. A committee of three appointed to arrange for the next General Assembly. Committee: Rev. Thomas C. Davies, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Rev. David Harries, Ironton, Ohio; Rev. John Moses, Newark, Ohio.

XLIV. Statistics. All the state gymnasiums were earnestly requested to send their statistics to the next General Assembly. The clerk was instructed to issue blanks for that purpose and to send them to the clerks of the several gymnasiums in order to secure complete, orderly, and uniform statistics.

XLV. The Church Diary. Resolved that we urge the clerk, on his own responsibility, to publish a diary for the year 1870, in the hope that the whole denomination will support the undertaking and thus protect him against loss.

XLVI. Resolved that a complete report of the transactions of this Assembly be published in *The Friend*.

XLVII. A resolution of thanks to the moderator and clerk for their services during the Assembly was passed.

XLVIII. Rev. William Parry, Granville, Ohio, was appointed a committee on resolutions to express the appreciation of the General Assembly to the friends in Columbus for the kind, cheerful, and generous hospitality extended.

Thereupon came adjournment. The Assembly was dismissed with prayer by Rev. Rees Evans, of Cambria, Wisconsin.

WILLIAM HUGHES, *Moderator*.
M. A. ELLIS, *Clerk*.

Following the printed minutes is a list of public services. Fifteen sermons were delivered at the public services of this General Assembly.

Some changes in the constitution were made from time to time, but the amendments were not numerous and were comparatively unimportant. The essential changes were few in number.

The General Assembly of 1875 changed the reading of article 6, Section 1, which reads, "The Assembly shall be constituted by

a roll call of the commissioners, and others who have a right to be present." The last clause was changed to read, "And others who have a right to vote."

The first three General Assemblies were held annually (1869, 1870, and 1871). The Minnesota Presbytery, in September, 1870, voted in favor of a biennial meeting of the General Assembly. This action appears to have struck a responsive chord, for the Assembly of 1871, in session at New York City, adjourned to meet at Racine, Wisconsin, in May, 1873. The two succeeding General Assemblies were also biennial, meeting at Hyde Park, Pennsylvania, in 1875, and in Chicago, Illinois, in 1877. At the Chicago Assembly, the interim between Assembly meetings was made still longer, when the time for the next Assembly was set for September, 1880. From 1880 until its dissolution in 1919, the General Assembly convened triennially. Many of the church leaders felt that the interim between Assemblies was too long and that its usefulness was impaired thereby. Efforts were made to restore it to the biennial period. The Assembly itself, in 1901, sent down an overture to the gymanvas recommending that this be done, but the appeal was answered in the negative by a majority of the gymanvas.

The official name, or title, of the denomination was a source of confusion to some of our American brethren, and even some belonging to the younger generation of Welsh in America were misled by the word "Methodists" in the official title, "Calvinistic Methodists." The Church was definitely Presbyterian in form of government, and the General Assembly of 1892, in an effort to obviate this confusion, passed a resolution declaring that "we are to be known throughout the country as Calvinistic Methodists or Welsh Presbyterians." This new alternative title, "Welsh Presbyterians," while clearing up matters in the minds of American friends, became a source of some confusion from within the denomination itself in matters where legal transactions were involved. Some documents were drawn in the name of "The Welsh Presbyterian Church," and this, as may be assumed from the discussion in more than one Assembly, caused confusion; for in the General Assembly of 1907 the question of the name was revived, discussed, and then tabled for three years. In the Assembly of 1910 the mat-

ter was again postponed, but the Assembly of 1913 made the following deliverance on the subject:

"We urge the gymanvas to see to it that all legal transactions be made in the name of the Calvinistic Methodist Church in the United States of America. If churches desire to use, by way of interpretation, such words as 'Welsh Presbyterians,' et cetera, in parenthesis, that may be done."

So, for all practical purposes, we might be known as Welsh Presbyterians; but in legal transactions the official title, "Calvinistic Methodists," had to be employed.

The membership of the General Assembly, namely, the duly authorized commissioners and voting delegates, changed in the course of time. The change as a rule was in the interest of an increase in the number of those eligible to vote. This may be explained, in part, by the limited number of authorized commissioners—four from each gymanva. There were but five gymanvas when the General Assembly was organized; a sixth was formed later. The Assembly, if confined to the commissioners, would consist of but twenty men; even including the former moderator and clerk, if they were present, the number would be comparatively small. An appeal was made to change from the synodical to the presbyterial form of representation, but the General Assembly of 1875 ruled to abide by the Constitution and to continue the system of four commissioners from each gymanva.

The constitution, article ii, states that the membership of the General Assembly shall consist of:

- "1. Two ministers and two elders from each state gymanva.
- "2. The brethren appointed to read special papers before the Assembly."

But article viii of the constitution defines voting members and reads:

"The following persons have the right to vote in all the sessions of the General Assembly:

- "1. All commissioners from all state gymanvas.
- "2. The brethren appointed to read papers before the Assembly.
- "3. The former moderator and the former clerk.
- "4. The clerks of the different state gymanvas who may chance to be present."

In article viii we have several voting delegates added to those mentioned in article ii. The General Assembly of 1871 revised the article on membership to include the chairman and secretary of the Board of Missions and the treasurer of the General Assembly, as "among those having a right to vote from now on." Another amendment to the constitution on the question of membership was submitted to the General Assembly of 1895, to be voted upon in the Assembly of 1898, namely:

"In addition to the authorized commissioners, all ex-moderators, former clerks, the editor of *The Friend*, and the statistician be considered members of the Assembly."

To the General Assembly of 1898 the Wisconsin Gymanva sent a protest "against changing the constitution to admit so many members who are not duly authorized commissioners." The revision finally passed, in the Assembly of 1901, in the following form:

"That all ex-moderators, the editor of *The Friend*, and the statistician be made members with the privilege of voting."

The General Assembly of 1916 voted to make the business manager of *The Friend* a member of the General Assembly.

Thus it appears that changes in the constitution, in the articles on membership, were in the interest of an increased voting body, and in recognition of certain offices of importance. A possible danger in admitting so many noncommissioners to voting privileges was that voting members who were not actual commissioners, appointed by the several gymanvas, might control the balance of power on the floor of the Assembly, should a question of importance on which the commissioners were at variance be at stake. Out of eighteen voting members at one Assembly, six were not sent as commissioners from any gymanva.

The authority of the General Assembly was a much debated subject. The essential value and usefulness of this central body was seriously questioned by some of the prominent men of the denomination, because it lacked authority. The question was asked: "Is the General Assembly a legislative body and does it constitute a court of final appeal on important questions of concern to the denomination?" It was contended that the General

Assembly was no more than a clearing house—a place for exchange of opinions for the gymanvas—a sort of advisory institution without authority for the final settlement of any important issue. "It has no authority other than advisory," said one; "it has no authority to pass any measure which will be binding upon the churches." The gymanva, it was insisted, was the authoritative judicatory, and as a court of appeal it spoke the last word; the gymanva's verdict was final.

An appeal was made to the General Assembly of 1888 for the decision of a case by the church in Mankato, Minnesota. The presbytery had ruled on the question, and the Minnesota Gymanva had sustained the ruling of the presbytery. The General Assembly ruled that the "appeal" be sent back as inconsistent with the constitution of the denomination (*yn anghyson a Chyfansoddiad y Cyfundeb*). Whether the appeal itself was inconsistent, or whether the way in which it was sent up to the Assembly for ruling was inconsistent, is not clear. In either case the appeal precipitated anew the question of the authority of the General Assembly. R. R. Owen, a prominent and influential elder of Newark, Ohio, in an article on the authority of the General Assembly wrote:

"The constitution of the General Assembly does not state what its authority is, but defines its work only. It appears to me that the commissioners constitute a sort of committee to act at the behest of the state gymanvas, and there is no power in anything it does until it has been ratified by the gymanvas. . . . The Confession of Faith also shows that the Quarterly Gymanva (in Wales), the equivalent of our state gymanvas in point of authority, is the highest court. . . . 'The Bill of Incorporation of the Ohio Gymanva' does not admit of any authority other than the gymanva, and I do not see how it can transfer its authority to any other body without changing its constitution."

Information was sought, in the Assembly of 1889, regarding the ruling of the denomination on the matter of receiving appeals from church members by higher judicatories. No action was taken by that Assembly save to give information regarding the practice in the several gymanvas.

In an effort to have the question of authority settled, the Western Presbytery (Ohio) overtured the Ohio Gymanva "on the advisability of making the General Assembly a court of final ap-

peal," and the gymanva in session at Oak Hill, in June, 1892, overtured the General Assembly as follows:

"We humbly call the attention of the General Assembly to the desirability of making the Assembly a legislative body and a court of appeal, without interfering with the rights (*howliau*) of the various gymanvas. We feel that unless it possesses some authority greater than it now has the General Assembly had better be dissolved."

Pursuant to this overture, the Assembly sent the following overture down to the gymanvas:

"Resolved that the matter [of making the General Assembly a court of appeals] be submitted to the several gymanvas, and through them to the various presbyteries, for the purpose of getting the voice of all the churches on the matter. We consider that a favorable vote of two thirds of all the churches is sufficient to make the General Assembly a court of appeals in matters of general concern to the entire denomination which cannot appropriately be determined by the state gymanvas themselves."

During the ensuing two years or more this overture was warmly debated on the floors of gymanvas and presbyteries. Some presbyteries sent the question down to the churches for action. The result returned to the General Assembly of 1898, which convened at Columbus, Ohio, showed that the measure was defeated. The Pennsylvania Gymanva only favored making the General Assembly a court of appeal. The prevailing attitude of the gymanvas that opposed the overture was their reluctance to surrender their authority to the General Assembly, an authority vested in them by the Confession of Faith, as pointed out by R. R. Owen. Another fact which helped its defeat was the long interval between Assembly meetings. This fact is well stated in a terse resolution of the New York Gymanva:

"Inasmuch as the General Assembly convenes only once in three years, we believe that to make it a court of appeal would answer no real practical purpose; we therefore are opposed to it."

It is a matter of interest to observe that on this point the Organized Assembly of 1842-1853 differed from the General Assembly. The Organized Assembly in Article VII definitely stated:

"That the Organized Assembly shall have the power and authority

in America equivalent to the power and authority of the Quarterly Assembly in Wales."

The General Assembly of the Calvinistic Methodist Church was neither a legislative body nor a court of appeals. It had no legislative power. It could only recommend measures to the gymanvas for their confirmation, if acceptable. Because of this, there were those who questioned its essential value and usefulness as an institution of the Church. Cries were heard, now and then, calling for its dissolution. Others defended it as very essential, notwithstanding its lack of legislative power or judicial authority.

It was observed that the Organized Assembly in 1845 moved to formulate a plan and to negotiate with the state legislatures an act of incorporation for the safeguarding of the property of the denomination. The same question was taken up by the General Assembly of 1877, when a committee was appointed to negotiate the incorporation of the General Assembly. The committee reported to the Assembly of 1880 "that a general charter could not be obtained." Based on that report the following resolution was passed:

"Inasmuch as a general charter cannot be secured, this Assembly recommends to all the states [i.e., gymanvas], where there are causes belonging to our denomination, the securing of the necessary charters from their respective legislatures, as has already been done in Ohio and Wisconsin."

So the General Assembly was never an incorporated body.

The General Assembly was the only body in the Calvinistic Methodist Church that had limited representation. Representation in the gymanvas and presbyteries consisted of all ordained ministers, and all preachers not ordained, who had been received into membership in the gymanvas; and all ruling elders of the gymanvas who were present. The same was true of membership in the presbytery. It is true that some churches and sessions regularly appointed one or more elders as delegates to the gymanvas and presbyteries. But that was for the purpose of having the church and session officially represented. If no one was appointed, the church might not be represented. On the other hand, notwithstanding the fact that one elder was designated as delegate, all the other elders of that session might attend; and, if present,

each one of them was entitled to a vote on the floor. The gymanva and presbytery were not delegated bodies. There may have been exceptions, but this was the rule in the denomination. The case was the same when presbytery appointed one or more delegates to the gymanva. The appointed delegate was the mouthpiece for his presbytery, but all ministers and elders present were equally entitled to participate in the deliberations on the floor and were eligible to vote. But in the General Assembly only authorized commissioners, and those especially designated as voting members, were permitted to exercise the privilege of voting.

The first General Assembly (1869) ruled that three churches, equipped with a complete set of officers and having at least two ministers in their midst, were necessary to constitute a presbytery. There were exceptions to this rule. The La Crosse Presbytery, Wisconsin, for example, existed for many years with its three churches and with but one minister who was pastor of all three churches. The most notable exception to this rule, however, was the church in New York City. This church, because of its distance from other churches—the Oneida County group and the churches in Pennsylvania—was, in the days of the Organized Assembly, permitted to be constituted a presbytery. The General Assembly of 1871, in session in New York City, ratified the action of the Organized Assembly of 1848 in allowing the church in New York City to have presbyterial authority. So here is a session of a single church which may, on occasion, transform itself into a presbytery and perform the functions of that judicatory. Perhaps there is no similar case known in the history of the Church. The New York Church session continued to have that power until the General Assembly was dissolved in 1919, at which time the church was divested of its power as a presbytery, and its membership was transferred to the Presbytery of Eastern New York and Vermont of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

“Once an elder, an elder for life,” was the rule in the Calvinistic Methodist Church. But the rotary system for the election of elders was proposed at an early day. The New York Gymanva overtured the General Assembly of 1871 regarding the rotary system. After

careful discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the rotary eldership a resolution prevailed that:

“The General Assembly does not consider it advisable to change the order of the denomination from the beginning and it judges that a change, simply for the sake of changing, would tend to disturb the peace of the churches.”

It had been the custom of the General Assembly to appoint the members on its several boards. But the Presbytery of Vermont in 1915 passed a resolution to submit to the General Assembly:

“That the representatives of the different gymanvas on the permanent committees of the General Assembly, such as the General Board of Missions, the Board of Directors of The Friend, be elected every three years, not by the General Assembly, as heretofore, but by a vote of the gymanvas just as other officers are elected.”

The New York Gymanva adopted the resolution verbatim and sent it as an overture to the General Assembly, and the Assembly of 1916 agreed to allow the gymanvas to nominate their own representatives to the permanent Boards of the Assembly, the same to be elected by the General Assembly.

Many ministers from Wales visited the churches in America. Some came as fraternal delegates from the denomination in Wales, some as invited guest preachers of the different gymanvas; others came without special invitation to visit churches in the United States, and to all a cordial welcome was extended. In the early days of settlement it was customary to arrange for visiting brethren preaching tours, more or less extensive, on week days as well as on week-day evenings and Sundays. When a minister of prominence was scheduled to preach in the churches of a country community, men dropped their work and followed the great preacher who had been announced to preach in one church at 10 A.M., in another at 2 P.M., and in a third at six or seven o'clock in the evening. The people crowded to hear him at these services on week days, even in mid-harvest. On Sundays arrangements were made, as a rule, for the preacher to appear in some city pulpit. Among the first distinguished visitors to come as delegates from the denomination in Wales were Rev. Henry Rees and Rev.

Moses Parry, who came as commissioners in 1839. The Church in America was small indeed, at that time, compared with the proportions it assumed during the fifty years which followed.

With the passing of time, and the increase and extension of the Church, the General Assembly decided to appoint in each *gymanva* a man whose duty it was to plan and arrange itineraries for the visiting preachers from Wales and even for ministers in this country, for it frequently happened that a minister from one *gymanva* in America would be given a tour of preaching in the churches of another *gymanva*, or he might tour the entire *gymanva* and preach in most of its churches. To meet this situation of arranging appointments for visiting ministers, the General Assembly of 1870 resolved to appoint a "superintendent of itineraries" (*trefnydd cyhoeddiadau*) in each *gymanva* "to arrange preaching tours for brethren from Wales, visiting this country as delegates."

The General Assembly of 1895, to facilitate matters, carried the plan still farther and appointed an "Assembly supervisor of itineraries," whose function was to collaborate with the synodical supervisors in arranging all itineraries. The first to hold this office was Elder T. Solomon Griffiths, of Utica, New York. Others were appointed in succeeding Assemblies, and the office continued to function until the General Assembly was dissolved.

The matter of a book agency was under discussion at the Minneapolis Assembly in 1895. The fraternal delegate from Wales that year was Rev. D. O'Brien Owen, and a committee was appointed to interview Mr. Owen regarding the possibility of establishing a branch agency of the Welsh Book Concern, designed chiefly for the handling of literature and books from Wales for American consumption. The result of the conference with Mr. Owen was the decision to establish a branch agency under the auspices of the denomination in this country, so that books for the denomination in America might be obtained at reasonable prices. The agency, however, was not a success. The venture was not satisfactory and the General Assembly of 1910 agreed to pay the agency in Wales the amount they considered owing to them for books, in full, "and that negotiations be terminated."

THE CENTURY FUND

It was proposed by the General Assembly of 1901, in session at Cambria, Wisconsin, to raise a fund of twenty-five thousand dollars, "as a modest expression of thanksgiving to God for his goodness to us as a denomination during the past century." The various *gymanvas* were requested to express themselves on the use to be made of the fund. The proposition of raising the money for the fund was also sent down to the presbyteries and through them to the churches. If the denomination throughout the country looked upon the movement with favor, suitable persons in each *gymanva* were to be appointed to solicit funds for the purpose. If and when the goal (\$25,000) was reached, a committee of seven was to be appointed to safeguard the fund and to employ it to the best interest of the denomination. The *gymanvas*, for the most part, seemed eager to embrace the opportunity of subscribing to the fund. At the meetings of *gymanvas* immediately following the General Assembly, the fund was indorsed with enthusiasm. Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and New York *gymanvas* indorsed the project at their fall meetings. Wisconsin *gymanva* was less enthusiastic and somewhat hesitant in its indorsement, yet expressed itself as willing to do its part if the other *gymanvas* were determined to carry on and to realize the completion of the contemplated goal. The Ohio *gymanva* was silent. Nothing definite had been expressed to reveal its attitude toward the proposed fund until a few months before the next meeting of the General Assembly, when a terse resolution was sent by Ohio explaining why it could not indorse the proposed fund. The Ohio *gymanva* instructed its commissioners to the General Assembly of 1904 to report that:

"Ohio cannot conclude to move forward with the fund because no definite objective is announced."

In this brief report, the Ohio *gymanva* stated the principal reason for the failure of the proposition of raising a "Century Fund" thank offering. The General Assembly of 1904, in session at Venedocia, Ohio, concluded that:

"In view of the fact that there was no consensus of opinion with