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ART. I.—*The Trial of the Rev. William Tennent.*

OF the names conspicuous in the early history of the American Presbyterian Church, there are few more remarkable than that of Tennent. Among the members of the distinguished family which bear the name there is no one whose history is so familiar or so attractive as that of William Tennent, junior. The remarkable events in his early life, so extraordinary indeed as to appear supernatural, have given a deeper interest to his biography, and made his life appear more like the creation of romance than like the sober statements of history. Incredible as the narrative may now appear it is nevertheless true, that in the last fifty years his biography was as generally read and as firmly believed by the multitudes of intelligent Christian people as that of any other remarkable man who has adorned the annals of the American Church. It seemed, at least in the judgment of his biographer, to be founded on facts so clearly established or so well authenticated, however extraordinary they may appear, as not to admit of doubt or denial. So well authenticated indeed did they appear to be that, while the narrative was deemed by many to bear intrinsic evidence of mistake or error, and by others to be absolutely incredible, no serious attempt has ever been made

ART. V.—*The General Assembly.*

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America met, in the Second Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York, on Thursday, May 21, 1868, at 11 A. M.

In the absence of Dr. Gurley, the Moderator of last year, the opening sermon was preached, by request of the Assembly, by the Rev. E. P. Humphrey, D. D., the last Moderator present, from John xii. 24. He also presided until a new Moderator was chosen.

On motion of Rev. Dr. Eagleson, it was resolved, that in all elections by this Assembly a majority of all the votes cast be necessary to an election.

The following resolution was offered by Rev. A. Munson:

“Inasmuch as the Presbytery of Nassau has admitted to a seat in its body a signer of the Declaration and Testimony, and is, therefore, *ipso facto*, dissolved; therefore

“*Resolved*, That its commissioners to this body are not entitled to their seats.”

This was laid upon the table.

The Assembly then proceeded to the election of Moderator.

Rev. George W. Musgrave, D. D., was nominated by Rev. Dr. L. J. Halsey; Rev. J. G. Monfort, D. D., by Judge H. H. Leavitt; Rev. Robert Davidson, D. D., by Rev. John Hancock; Rev. A. G. Hall, D. D., by Rev. Dr. Woodbridge; Rev. A. Happer, M. D., of the Chinese Mission, by ruling elder Breiner.

On the first ballot Dr. Musgrave received 103 votes; Dr. Monfort 71 votes; Dr. Hall 36 votes; Dr. Happer 25 votes; Dr. Davidson 6 votes.

On the second ballot Dr. Musgrave received 139 votes, and was elected; Dr. Monfort 85 votes, and Dr. Hall 20 votes.

Ruling elder Robert McKnight was elected Temporary Clerk by acclamation.

On motion of Rev. Dr. S. I. Prime, it was made the order of the day for to-morrow, at 11 o'clock, to receive the report of the Committee on Reunion.

As Reunion was the chief subject before the Assembly, and gave to its deliberations and proceedings their special interest and importance, so it will constitute the leading topic in the review of its acts upon which we are now entering. We propose, therefore, both for our own convenience and that of our readers, first briefly to dispose of such other matters as require notice, and then to present as one whole, unbroken by other topics, a digest and analysis of the reports, discussions, and acts of the Assembly on the subject of Reunion.

*Southern Presbyterian Churches.*

On motion of Rev. Dr. Humphrey, Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures, certain papers relating to the Southern Presbyterian Church, and its condition, were taken from the hands of that Committee and referred to a special committee of five ministers and four ruling elders.

The Moderator subsequently announced as such committee—*Ministers*—S. J. Nicolls, D. D., A. A. Hodge, D. D., M. B. Grier, D. D., George Hill, L. Merrill Miller, D. D. *Ruling Elders*—W. F. Allen, David Keith, Robert Carter, and James M. Ray.

Rev. Dr. Humphrey also presented a memorial, from sundry ministers and elders residing in and near the city of Philadelphia, suggesting that steps be taken for opening correspondence with the Southern Presbyterian Church.

On motion of Dr. Humphrey, this memorial was referred to the Special Committee of Nine.

Upon the recommendation of this Committee, this subject was finally disposed of by the adoption of the following resolutions:

Whereas, the Synods of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Memphis, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, with the several Presbyteries under their care, have, with the exception of the Presbytery of New Orleans in the Synod of Mississippi, voluntarily withdrawn from our connection and organized themselves into a separate church; therefore

*Resolved*, That the Permanent Clerk is directed to drop their names from the list of our Synods and Presbyteries, and they are no longer to be regarded as a part of the Presbyterian Church under the care of this Assembly, with the exception of

the Presbytery of New Orleans, which is hereby attached to the Synod of Nashville.

*Resolved*, That the Assembly does hereby recognize the organization into which these Synods have formed themselves, as a separate and independent church, sustaining to us the same relation which we accord to other branches of the Presbyterian Church, and hereafter it is to be treated accordingly by all the courts under our care.

*Resolved*, That the Assembly also takes this occasion to say that while it cannot justify these brethren in separating themselves from the church of their fathers, it regrets their withdrawal, and expresses the earnest hope that they may see their way clear to return to their former relations.

Knox Presbytery of Georgia, composed entirely of coloured ministers and churches, also applied for admission to our body. The request was granted, and this Presbytery was attached to the Synod of Baltimore. It was represented in the Assembly by the Rev. Joseph Williams, an aged and venerable man, once a slave, whose hard, broad hands bespoke his former status, while his address to the Assembly on the Report of the Freedmen's Committee, quite charmed and melted all by the wisdom, earnestness, and culture which it displayed. We hope that in all this we have the earnest of a great work begun in evangelizing and elevating the emancipated millions of our land, and of the important part which our own church will take in it. We rejoice in the blessed fruits already resulting from the labours of our Freedmen's Committee.

The difficulties in the border states growing out of the Declaration and Testimony, and other causes, were referred to the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri for adjustment. The whole spirit and attitude of the Assembly, as shown in the action already recited, and in judicial case No. 1., which we are about to bring before our readers, in regard to difficulties growing out of the war, and the Declaration and Testimony, are eminently kind and conciliatory.

#### *Judicial Business.*

Rev. Dr. Monfort, Chairman of the Judicial Committee, reported

Judicial Case, No. 1.—The complaint of Alexander M. Cowan

against the action of the Presbytery of Sidney, which was put upon the docket.

The other cases were disposed of without being directly tried by the Assembly.

The first case was duly heard and issued by the Assembly, being the complaint of Rev. Alexander M. Cowan against the Presbytery of Sidney, Ohio, for refusing to enroll him as a minister, because he had signed the protest of several churches in the border states against the action of the General Assembly upon questions relating to the political condition of the country, growing out of the rebellion, and which protest is known in the church as the "Declaration and Testimony." The appellant had refused to recant his opinions or withdraw his signature from such protest, as required by the action of the General Assembly in 1867.

After hearing the parties and calling the roll, Dr. Backus offered the following, which was adopted:

The General Assembly having heard the complaint of Mr. Cowan, deems that the Presbytery have acted entirely in accordance with the direction of the Assembly of 1867; but inasmuch as the emergency that called for the action of that and other previous Assemblies has passed; and inasmuch as throughout our bounds persons entirely loyal to the church have scruples in respect to its constitutionality, and especially of the orders of 1866; and inasmuch as Mr. Cowan declares that in signing the Declaration and Testimony he had no intention to rebel against or show any disrespect to the church, but merely to protest against what he regarded as an unconstitutional act; and inasmuch as he desires to adhere to the General Assembly and be subject to its authority; therefore,

*Resolved*, That his case be referred to the Presbytery to which he belonged, with instructions to deal tenderly with his scruples, and if, in the judgment of said Presbytery, he can be restored in accordance with the spirit of the action of 1867, that the Presbytery have authority to restore him without further acknowledgment than stated above in the hearing of the Assembly.

*The Boards.*

We had prepared separate notices of each of the Boards, and of the reports, discussions, and other action upon them, but the demand upon our space required for an adequate presentation of the proceedings of the Assembly, in regard to the overshadowing subject of reunion, compels us to omit them. We barely call attention to two points among many of great interest and importance. The first is the great results already achieved by the labours of the Freedmen's Committee; the high promise of their future operations; the plans which they are devising and projecting for the permanent and thorough evangelization of this people; and their just claim upon the aid and sympathy of the church in developing their nascent enterprises. These points will be found embodied in the Assembly's resolutions on the subject, published in all the reports of their proceedings.

The other point is the slender and wholly insufficient contributions to our Boards, and preëminently the Missionary Boards, which sustain the living workers in the field. The Board of Foreign Missions is still burdened with a debt only less than that at the close of the preceding year. Unless the contributions of the people to it largely increase, it must soon adopt a severe and damaging retrenchment that must cut to the quick. Our Board of Domestic Missions has kept out of debt only by reducing the allowance to the missionaries, in these times of unequalled dearness of living, twenty-five per cent. Should these things be? Tell it not in Gath! Publish it not in Askelon!

The whole subject of liberal giving, and systematic benevolence, requires to be brought home to the understanding, heart, and conscience of our people, as it has never yet been. The Assembly had a committee on systematic benevolence, which reported some excellent resolutions. These were of course adopted. This, however, is but a single step towards the result, and will accomplish nothing unless we go further. We have a great work before us, if we would lift the great mass of our people to a just sense of their privilege and responsibility in the premises. Dr. Breckinridge said, "if we would get more

money we must have more piety." This is a part of the truth. Piety and pious giving act and re-act upon each other, for reciprocal increase. Dr. Backus, in his special report on the reorganization of the Board of Missions, stated another equally important truth; that the stinted contributions to our Boards did not arise from any special penuriousness of our people, but from a neglect to ply them with the proper means and agencies to draw out their piety in the form of liberal, hearty, and systematic giving. Rev. Dr. Clark, corresponding delegate, uttered another equally important truth, when he said, "the greatest want in all denominations is that of proper *congregational* organizations for Christian work." When this whole matter is dealt with in conformity with these principles, instead of starving out our missions and missionaries, each of the mission boards, we trust, will be invigorated and amplified by annual receipts of not less than half a million.

*Dr. McCosh's Acceptance of the Presidency of Princeton College.*

The friends of this oldest Presbyterian college, and of high Christian education, will be happy to know that the Assembly joined in the general gratulation inspired by the accession of this eminent man to the Presidency of Nassau Hall.

On motion of Dr. S. I. Prime, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

*Resolved,* That the General Assembly has heard with great satisfaction the acceptance by the Rev. Dr. McCosh of the Presidency of the College of New Jersey, at Princeton, which institution was founded by the Synod of New York and New Jersey, which at that time was the Supreme Judicatory of our Church, for the special purpose of raising up an educated ministry.

*Foreign Correspondence.*

Other churches with which we are in correspondence were unusually well represented. Dr. Fisher of the New-school Presbyterian Church, and Elder William Getty of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, appeared as delegates from the Philadelphia Convention. Dr. Fisher's address, to which we may again refer, bore strongly on the subject of reunion. He

laid before the Assembly the Philadelphia basis of Presbyterian union, which, with other papers relative to the same subject, was referred to a committee, consisting of Drs. Charles Hodge, Eagleson, and Niccolls, and ruling elders Henry Day and J. S. Taylor, who subsequently reported the following resolutions :

*Resolved*, 1. That agreeably to the request of that Convention, this General Assembly appoint five representatives, (three ministers and two elders) to meet with the representatives to be appointed by the several bodies whose delegates constituted the Convention, for the purpose of conferring on a plan of union among those churches.

*Resolved*, 2. That in the judgment of this Assembly, if a more intimate union be found inexpedient or impracticable, our representatives be instructed to confer with the representatives of the other bodies on some plan of confederation of the separate Presbyterian churches in the United States.

The report was adopted, and Rev. Dr. Musgrave, Rev. Dr. A. T. McGill, Rev. Dr. E. P. Humphrey; and ruling elders Hon. Robert McKnight and George Junkin, were appointed a committee under the first resolution.

Rev. Henry Darling, D. D., appeared as delegate from the New-school, and made an address on the subject of Reunion, which made a very favourable impression on the Assembly; to this we may again refer.

Dr. A. R. Thompson represented the Reformed (Dutch) Church. Dr. H. N. Pohlman appeared as the first representative of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The information he gave respecting his body, and the earnest appeal he made for our fraternal sympathy and prayers, deeply affected the Assembly.

Perhaps, however, the body was interested in no address more than that of Pastor George Appia, from the Waldensian Church. The simple and graphic account which he gave of this body of witnesses for Christ, touched all hearts, and won a ready commendation of his appeal, for aid in behalf of the gospel in Italy, to the prayers and sympathies of our churches.

*Theological Seminaries.*

The report of the Committee on the Theological Seminaries, through Dr. Backus, their chairman, presented little beyond the usual routine. A considerable decrease in the number of students in attendance, in most of them, was indicated, and has been gradually developing itself of late. This is due partly to the decrease of candidates in the church since the loud outcry about an excess of ministers, the impossibility of finding employment for many, and the stinted support of those in actual service. We are glad to learn from the Board of Education that the current has turned in this respect, and that the number of candidates beginning their academical education is again on the increase. Another circumstance to be considered is, that during the war several seminaries outside of our church were imperfectly organized, and had more or less of their chairs vacant. A few coming to us from each of these, made a large aggregate, though abnormal, increase. Now that all these institutions have become fully manned and equipped, this source of supply has of course much diminished.

Rev. Nathaniel West, D. D., was elected Professor of Biblical and Ecclesiastical History in Danville Seminary, and Rev. William M. Blackburn, to the same chair in the Seminary of the Northwest.

*Reunion with the New-school.*

On the second day of the session, Dr. Beatty, Chairman of the Joint Committee of the Old and New-school bodies on Reunion, submitted a report recommending the following amended basis for adoption by the two bodies.

PROPOSED TERMS OF REUNION BETWEEN THE TWO BRANCHES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The Joint Committee of the two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church, appointed for the purpose of conferring on the desirableness and practicability of uniting these two bodies, deeply impressed with the responsibility of the work assigned us, and having earnestly sought Divine guidance, and patiently devoted ourselves to the investigation of the question

involved, agree in presenting the following for the consideration, and, if they see fit, for the adoption of the two General Assemblies.

Believing that the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom would be promoted by healing our divisions; that practical union would greatly augment the efficiency of the whole church for the accomplishment of its divinely appointed work; that the main causes producing division have either wholly passed away, or become so far inoperative, as that reunion is now "consistent with agreement in doctrine, order, and polity, on the basis of our common standards, and the prevalence of mutual confidence and love;" and that two bodies, bearing the same name, adopting the same constitution, and claiming the same corporate rights, cannot be justified by any but the most imperative reasons in maintaining separate and, in some respects, rival organizations; and regarding it as both just and proper that a reunion should be effected by the two churches, as independent bodies, and on equal terms, we propose the following terms and recommendations, as suited to meet the demands of the case:

1. The reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures;" it being understood that this Confession is received in its proper, historical—that is, the Calvinistic or Reformed—sense; it is also understood that various methods of viewing, stating, explaining, and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession, which do not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system, are to be freely allowed in the United Church, as they have hitherto been allowed in the separate churches; and the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rule of our polity.

2. All the ministers and churches, embraced in the two bodies, shall be admitted to the same standing in the united body, which they may hold in their respective connections

up to the consummation of the union; imperfectly organized churches shall be counselled and expected to become thoroughly Presbyterian, as early, within the period of five years, as is permitted by the highest interests to be consulted; and no other such churches shall be hereafter received.

3. The boundaries of the several Presbyteries and Synods shall be adjusted by the General Assembly of the united church.

3. The official records of the two branches of the church, for the period of separation, shall be preserved and held as making up the one history of the church; and no rule or precedent, which does not stand approved by both the bodies, shall be of any authority, until reëstablished in the united body, except in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon.

5. The corporate rights now held by the two General Assemblies, and by their boards and committees, shall, as far as practicable, be consolidated, and applied for their several objects, as defined by law.

6. There shall be one set of Committees or Boards for Home and Foreign Missions, and the other religious enterprises of the church, which the churches shall be encouraged to sustain, though free to cast their contributions into other channels, if they desire to do so.

7. As soon as practicable after the union shall be effected, the General Assembly shall reconstruct and consolidate the several permanent Committees and Boards, which now belong to the two Assemblies, in such a manner as to represent, as far as possible, with impartiality, the views and wishes of the two bodies constituting the united church.

8. The publications of the Board of Publication, and of the Publication Committee, shall continue to be issued as at present, leaving it to the Board of Publication of the united church to revise these issues, and perfect a catalogue for the joint church, so as to exclude invidious references to past controversies.

9. In order to a uniform system of ecclesiastical supervision, those Theological Seminaries that are now under Assembly control may, if their Boards of Direction so elect, be transferred to the watch and care of one or more of the adjacent Synods; and the

other seminaries are advised to introduce, as far as may be, into their constitutions, the principle of Synodical or Assembly supervision; in which case they shall be entitled to an official recognition and approbation on the part of the General Assembly.

10. It is agreed that the Presbyteries possess the right to examine ministers applying for admission from other Presbyteries; but each Presbytery shall be left free to decide for itself when it shall exercise the right.

11. It shall be regarded as the duty of all our judicatories, ministers, and people in the united church, to study the things which make for peace, and to guard against all needless and offensive references to the causes that have divided us; and, in order to avoid the revival of past issues, by the continuance of any usage in either branch of the church that has grown out of our former conflicts, it is earnestly recommended to the lower judicatories of the church that they conform their practice, in relation to all such usages, as far as is consistent with their convictions of duty, to the general custom of the church prior to the controversies that resulted in the separation.

12. The terms of the reunion, if they are approved by the General Assemblies of 1868, shall be overtured to the several Presbyteries under their care, and shall be of binding force, if they are ratified by three-fourths of the Presbyteries connected with each branch of the church, within one year after they shall have been submitted to them for approval.

13. If the two General Assemblies of 1869 shall find that the plan of reunion has been ratified by the requisite number of Presbyteries in each body, they shall, after the conclusion of all their business, be dissolved by their respective moderators, in the manner and form following, viz., Each moderator shall address the Assembly over which he presides, saying, "by virtue of the authority delegated to me by the church, and in conformity with the plan of union adopted by the two Presbyterian churches, let this Assembly be dissolved; and I do hereby dissolve it, and require a General Assembly, chosen in the same manner, by all the Presbyteries in connection with this body, and all those in connection with the General Assembly meeting this year in —, to meet in —, on the — day of May,

A. D. 1870; and I do hereby declare and proclaim that the General Assembly thus constituted will be the rightful General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, now, by the grace of God, happily united."

Signed, by order of the Joint Committee,

CHARLES C. BEATTY, *Chairman.*

EDWIN F. HATFIELD, *Secretary.*

*Philadelphia, March 14, A. D. 1868.*

After the reading of the report, it was moved that half an hour be spent in prayer for the divine guidance in the Assembly's deliberations and acts in relation to this grave matter.

The motion was adopted, and the Assembly was led in prayer by Mr. Day, Dr. E. P. Humphrey, Dr. Monfort, and Dr. Charles Hodge.

Judge Leavitt presented the following resolutions:

*Resolved*, That the Report of the Joint Committee on the basis of the Reunion of the two branches of the Church now made, be, and the same is hereby approved and adopted by the Assembly, and it is ordered that it be sent down to the Presbyteries for their final action.

*Resolved*, That the Presbyteries be requested to report to the Stated Clerk their action, approving or disapproving the proposed Basis of Union, before the meeting of the Assembly in 1869.

*Resolved*, That the Stated Clerk be directed to cause to be printed at an early day — thousand copies of the entire report of the Committee for distribution to the ministers and sessions of the churches.

After considerable discussion of various propositions, the Assembly finally determined, by a vote of 124 to 101, to make the resolutions the first order of the day for this afternoon, and to make their consideration continuous, except when it shall be interrupted by orders of the day heretofore fixed.

The discussion of them was carried on according to the above vote, until the final vote was reached on May 30, the ninth day of the session. The debate, as a whole, was characterized by that ability, earnestness, dignity, and courtesy, which became the body, the subject, and the occasion. The principal topic of discussion was the first article, containing the doctrinal basis,

as being at once far the most difficult and most momentous—the pivot of the whole movement. For if this could be adjusted to the satisfaction of both the great contracting parties, or the mass of both churches, there was little doubt that other points could be arranged. If the differences here proved irreconcilable, the adjustment of other matters would signify little.

The following telegram was received on Monday morning:

HARRISBURG, Pa., May 23.

*Rev. Wm. E. Schenck, D. D., Permanent Clerk, Assembly, Albany:*

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in session at Harrisburg, Pa., sends fraternal and Christian salutations to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church holding its sessions in Albany, N. Y., with the suggestion that the first morning hour of Tuesday be devoted by both Assemblies to prayer for Divine guidance in their deliberation and action upon the Report of the Joint Committee on Reunion.

J. G. BUTLER, *Clerk.*

The Clerk was directed to respond by telegraph, informing the Assembly at Harrisburg that the proposition was acceded to, and sending Christian salutations.

Upon certain points there was entire unanimity throughout the Assembly, with possible individual exceptions, too slight to be noted.

1. All desired reunion upon a safe basis, and as soon as it can safely be accomplished. Chancellor Green said what must have impressed all in contact with the Assembly: "He believed every man in this room is in favour of union if it can be done with safety."

2. The dissatisfaction with the doctrinal basis, presented in the first article of the terms of union recommended by the Joint Committee, was equally unanimous. This appeared in all the speeches, votes, the protest and answer, and in all private conversation relative to the subject. This dissatisfaction was not equally strenuous in all, but it was so universal that we have met with but a single avowal to the contrary. All felt that the words, "it being understood that this Confession is to be received in its proper historical—that is the Calvinistic or Reformed—sense;" and especially the following, "it is also understood that various methods of viewing, stating, explain-

ing, and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession, which do not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system, are to be freely allowed in the united church, as they have hitherto been allowed in the separate churches," constitute an awkward and mischievous incumbrance, which they would greatly prefer to have withdrawn from the terms of the compact. The reasons will appear as we present an outline of the debate and subsequent action.

3. The real issue was whether, notwithstanding this and other lesser objections, the plan of union should be adopted and recommended to the Presbyteries for their sanction without amendment, trusting to the efficacy of other measures that might be devised, and the power of orthodoxy in the united church, to neutralize the evils of the obnoxious clause.

On the affirmative, it was argued by Messrs. Hunt, Day, McKnight, Beatty, Green, Blauvelt, Monfort and others, that there is no alternative but to accept or reject the platform as it is, *verbatim et literatim*; that to amend it is to reject it, and this would indefinitely postpone and seriously jeopard reunion, alarm and alienate our New-school brethren, disappoint the church, and destroy much good anticipated from the speedy consummation of the measure.

The part of the doctrinal article objected to is indeed a blemish, but all human compositions have their defects, not excepting even our Confession of Faith. If we wait for a perfect form of compact, we make reunion impossible and defer it for ever.

In regard to the doctrinal question, some contended that there never had been any serious difference between the two bodies, that the original disruption was caused, not by doctrinal but by ecclesiastical differences, that the doctrinal controversy originates with the clergy, and pertains to the fine-spun theories and speculations of theologians and professors, and that laymen do not understand, appreciate, or care anything about them. Others, who did not go quite this length, agreed with these in insisting, that, whatever doctrinal errors once infested the New-school body, were now, for the most part, abandoned and outgrown. Indeed a great doctrinal improvement in it, was testified to and conceded on all sides. Drs. Fisher and Darling bore strong testimony in this respect, as

also that they had got rid of the Congregationalism and Voluntaryism, which contributed much to the original discord and disruption. It was strenuously insisted by these gentlemen, and by all the advocates for adopting the proposed basis unaltered, that, however most of the New-school brethren had interpretations and explanations of doctrine different from us, yet they can and do agree with us in standing fairly and squarely on the Confession; that it will not answer to be too rigid; some diversity and liberty of thinking must be allowed. We have differences among ourselves. Quotations were freely made from this journal and the utterances of its editor, to the effect that it is sufficient to receive the Confession as it is, without insisting on anybody's philosophy or explanation of it; to receive the essentials of the system of Calvinism it contains, without every minute unessential phrase, or all the peculiarities of any one school.

Although the Confession pure and simple is conceded to be a better basis than when coupled with the modifications of the first article, yet it was maintained that the first clause of the addition, known as the Philadelphia Convention basis, viz., that it should be received "in its historical, *i. e.*, the Reformed and Calvinistic sense," was inserted by the New-school brethren to satisfy the Old-school that they did not ask for any broader license, and was meant to be restrictive rather than latitudinarian; that the residue, known as the "Gurley amendment," was inserted at the instance of the New-school members of the Joint Committee, who would have been content with the Philadelphia Convention basis, had they not seen what led them to fear that the Old-school construed it as restrictive of their former liberty. But both Drs. Beatty and Montfort announced their purpose, if the basis were adopted without alteration, to move or favour as the basis, a vote of preference for the Confession alone, and that the New-school Assembly be requested to concur in such an amendment. (The opinion has been expressed by persons familiar with the Assembly, that this announcement secured many votes for the basis as it is, which otherwise would have been withheld. We know not on how reliable grounds).

It was said that the churches in New York City were almost a unit for the reunion; that the Presbyterian body would

gain immensely in power, standing, influence, and in economy and efficiency of evangelistic operations upon its consummation. In reference to the danger to the funds of Princeton Seminary, pointed out in the Report of the Legal Committee of the Assembly,\* it was said that considerations of money were too paltry to be weighed against the moral and Christian advantages and obligations of reunion; that every dollar so lost would immediately be more than replaced; that the danger itself was very slight, that reunion would bring with it any contingencies, in which the courts would sustain suits to alienate those funds.

\* The following is from the portion of the Report signed by Chancellor Green and William A. Porter, Esq., of the Assembly's Committee on the legal questions involved in reunion here alluded to.

"On the 5th of May, 1843, James Lenox, Esq., conveyed to the Trustees of the Seminary the ground now occupied by the library and the house of one of its professors. He accompanied the grant with this condition, which for convenience we have divided into two sections: (1.) 'Provided always, nevertheless, and upon this condition, that if at any time or times hereafter, the said parties of the second part [that is the Trustees of the Seminary] shall pass from under the supervision and control of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *now commonly known and distinguished as the Old-school General Assembly, and its successors*, or (2.) if at any time or times hereafter, the leading doctrines declared in the Confession of Faith and catechisms of the Presbyterian Church, such as the doctrine of universal and total depravity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity, and of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to all his people for their justification, the doctrine of human inability, and the doctrine of the necessity of the influences of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration, conversion, and sanctification of sinners, as these doctrines are now understood and explained *by the aforesaid Old-school General Assembly*, shall cease to be taught and inculcated in the said seminary, then, and in either such case, the grant and conveyance hereby made shall cease and become null and void, and the said premises shall thereupon revert to the said party of the first part, his heirs, or assigns, as in his first and former estate.'

"The second branch of this condition would probably not be violated in the eye of the law, until the doctrines there specified shall cease to be taught in the seminary. On some of these doctrines it is in vain to deny that the two branches of the church are wide apart; and while we agree with our brethren that we cannot, as lawyers, undertake to examine and pronounce upon the effect of these differences of opinion, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact so well known to theologians on both sides, that such differences do exist. Nor can we hesitate to point attention to the peril which may ensue to this property and to other property similarly situated, if in consequence of the terms of a

The speech of Dr. Musgrave, which evidently had great power over the Assembly, took its own ground, which deserves to be separately stated. He took an active part in the measures which led to the separation of the New-school. He differed from those who maintained that "other than doctrinal questions divided the church thirty years ago. Doctrinal questions mainly led to that division. Would Christian men have objected, if their sons were to be trained in orthodoxy? Would we have found fault with the Home Missionary Society, if it had sent forth sound ministers? Can any man be made to believe so? No, the Home Missionary and Education Societies, as we believed, designed to subvert our faith and revolutionize our church. . . . We believed our faith and polity in danger, and hence we felt bound to resist them. . . . Our New-school brethren *went out voluntarily*, and were not *turned out*. We never intended to cut off those from the Synods. . . . I have never regretted that division. I am satisfied it was for the

union with any other body, the doctrines specified in this deed, as understood and explained by the aforesaid *Old-school* General Assembly, may cease to be taught in the institutions thus endowed.

"There is less difficulty in determining the results which must flow from violating the first branch of the condition imposed by Mr. Lenox, viz., if the trustees of the seminary shall pass from under the supervision and control of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, now commonly known and distinguished as the *Old-school* General Assembly, and its successors. In that event the property is to revert to himself and his heirs. The Trustees are, by the express terms of the deed, to be under the supervision and control of the *Old-school* General Assembly as *distinguished* from any other; in other words, from the *New-school* General Assembly. We are of opinion that if these Trustees should pass from the supervision and control of the former Assembly as distinguished from the latter, or if they should be controlled and supervised by an Assembly known by another name, or constituted differently from the Assembly thus specially described by Mr. Lenox, the valuable property conveyed by his deed will be placed in jeopardy.

"On the 25th of April, 1862, Robert L. and Alexander Stuart conveyed to the Trustees of this seminary \$50,000 in bonds of the Federal Government, and inserted in their deed the same condition in substance which has been quoted from that of Mr. Lenox, except that in the event of a breach of the condition, the money is to become the property of the American Bible Society. They had previously presented to the Trustees of the seminary the library of the late Dr. Addison Alexander on nearly the same terms, except that on the violation of that trust the library is to become the property of the Trustees of The College of New Jersey. The views which we have expressed respecting the gift of Mr. Lenox, will apply to the gifts of the brothers Stuart."

good of both parties. If it had not occurred, our church would have been corrupted. We have felt the results of that division in thirty years of harmony and prosperity. How is it; and how has it been with our New-school brethren? They have recognized us as standard-bearers, and as presenting the purest type of Presbyterianism. Our polity has been attractive; and for the last few years they have been coming back to the safe ground, upon which we planted ourselves, and they turned their backs. They found that their Congregational allies were not friends, but enemies; and they have now their own boards for their work as a church. The causes of the division have been largely removed. Slavery is dead. Voluntaryism is no longer popular with them. Our New-school brethren have also approached us *doctrinally*. I believe them much sounder, as a body, than they were thirty years ago. They will not now tolerate things which they tolerated then; nor do we now call men to account for a word. We now allow differences of opinion amongst ourselves, which we did not then allow. . . . I conscientiously believe that nine-tenths of them are substantially as orthodox and sound as we are ourselves. A few still adhere to their old heresies. But these will soon be gone, and their errors will be corrected by a perfect sanctification in glory. But we do not want a basis tolerating fundamental errors, and subverting our faith. Our New-school brethren should be plainly told that we can tolerate no such errors. I said so in the Philadelphia Convention, and I say so again. I would have no union in which errors cannot be disciplined. We enter into this union because they say they agree with us. Let us then unite, but let us discipline them if they are not with us. We shall be in the majority, and with Dr. Breckinridge's half, we shall have a *large* majority. My opinion is that every real heretic should be disciplined for his heresy. With this understanding, let us enter into this union.

“Now, one word as to this basis. I did, in the Philadelphia Convention, cordially accept Professor Smith's amendment, that the Confession of Faith should be received in the Calvinistic or Reformed sense. And *why* did I accept it? He made a speech in which he said that New-school men were falsely accused of subscribing to the Confession of Faith in a different sense from

ours. And so he brought in this amendment, using Dr. Hodge's words as found in the *Princeton Review* for July, 1867. Our New-school brethren agreed to this. I said I would not have offered that amendment myself, as I preferred a simple subscription to the Confession, but that I would accept it. I said, 'If my clan, my brethren, were satisfied with this as the sense in which the basis was accepted, they would be satisfied with the basis itself. I love my people. I do believe that Presbyterians are the best people on God's earth. But as some have thought that this amendment is ambiguous, and as I believe the Gurley amendment is worse, I would rather get rid of the whole of them, and take a subscription to the Confession of Faith as the basis of union. Then no man can say we are innovators. Thus we stand just where our fathers have always stood. Is it not the formula of the constitution? Is it not the formula of the New-school? Then if we take that simple, pure ground—if we get down to the solid rock, we have no necessity for Dr. Smith's amendment, or Dr. Gurley's amendment, and we stand just where both churches profess to stand. Some persons cannot understand what you mean by 'historical,' 'Calvinistic,' and 'Reformed' senses, and their suspicions once awakened, cannot be allayed. They will understand this plain, simple basis, for they know what the Confession means and teaches. Besides the adoption of such a basis as the simple Confession of Faith, is the best way to protect our funds, as no alteration of our constitution can then be charged upon us. I do not say that this union may not be worth one hundred thousand dollars. I would not put it in the balance against money, but if without any sacrifice of principle, we can defend our charter, and protect our property, it is better. I am glad to hear that some brethren intend to offer this amendment, and to take the 'Simon pure,' the real granite rock as a foundation for our union. . . Formed upon the right basis, this reunion will strengthen and encourage us. . . My opinion is that it will come. How soon, I know not. I am not impatient. I am not disposed to rush this matter through without caution, and without proper care."

Rev. Dr. Eagleson, who had been prominent in the Philadelphia Convention, followed Dr. Musgrave in a few remarks

of hearty concurrence with him. He added: "When the telegraphic despatch of last Monday morning came, it met a response in my bosom. I was then led to form a resolution to labour to carry out this union on a proper, scriptural orthodox basis. I am in favour of a union of all branches of my Presbyterian brethren, even with those of the Southern Church, on such a basis. I wish a union of all the Presbyterian churches of this land. I feel that the glory of our country, our Zion, and our God requires that our church shall be national as in former years. I am prepared for this in head and heart. And with this hope in view, I have prepared an amendment to the first article of the basis, as follows:

Strike out the following words:

"It being understood that this Confession is received in its proper historical—that is the Calvinistic or Reformed sense—it is also understood that various modes of believing, stating, explaining, and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession, which do not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system, are to be freely allowed in the united church, as they have hitherto been allowed in the separate churches."

The article will then read as follows:

1. The reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged to be the inspired word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted, "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures;" and the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall be approved as containing the principles and rule of our polity.

He stated in a terse form, eleven points in which the basis thus amended would be preferable to the original, and gave notice that, if it were adopted, he should move that it be telegraphed to the New-school body at Harrisburg, with a request that they also would adopt it. It was after this, and after the views and principles involved therein had manifestly obtained a strong prevalence in the Assembly, that Dr. Monfort proposed to meet the case by moving, after the adoption of the committee's plan *without amendment*, a supplementary reso-

lution of preference for such an amendment, and asking the New-school Assembly to concur in it.

It will be seen that the ground taken by Dr. Musgrave differs from that taken by many of those who advocated the committee's basis without amendment, in several particulars.

1. The main cause of the separation of the New-school from us, was doctrinal differences. Other causes were subordinate and derived their chief power from this.

2. The secession of the New-school was voluntary, because they did not choose to submit to the measures justly adopted by the Assembly to purge the church from doctrinal errors.

3. These errors were grave enough to justify the measures adopted by the Old-school to suppress them.

4. Great good has resulted from the division in arresting the corruption, and promoting the purification of doctrine and polity in both churches, especially the New-school, until probably nine-tenths of them are soundly Presbyterian in doctrine and polity.

5. Hence, reunion with them is safe if it can be effected on a proper basis, and its consummation is probably not distant. But the only proper basis is the Confession of Faith pure and simple. All additions to or qualifications of this, not excepting those of the Philadelphia Convention, but especially the "Gurley Amendment," should be discarded, as ambiguous, indefinite, and fitted to excite distrust and alienation, heart-burnings and strifes.

6. Our New-school brethren should distinctly understand that all errors contrary to the fundamentals of the Confession are to be extirpated by discipline, whether hitherto tolerated in either body or not.

7. Important and desirable as reunion is, it should not be driven through with any such haste as will place it on an unsound and hazardous basis.

Still another *sui generis* speech, which occupied ground peculiar to itself, was that of Dr. Shedd. Although in most of its main positions not essentially differing from Dr. Musgrave's, yet it set them forward from other stand-points and surroundings, and with an aim in some degree different. He made an argument for accepting the Joint Committee's basis as it is, and contri-

buted much to swell the vote given for it. Following Dr. Humphrey's powerful speech on the other side, he commenced by saying, that he spoke "rather as a witness than an advocate. His position had given him peculiar facilities for knowing about the New-school body. The question is, What is the New-school Presbyterian Church at this day? Is it or is it not a Calvinistic body? It matters not what it may have been in the past. He should agree with the gentleman who had just spoken, and with all the gentlemen who had spoken on that side of the question, in regard to the early controversies and causes of the disruption. He had no doubt that there were various serious doctrinal divergencies in 1837—doctrines that were indeed to be lamented, and that could not remain in the church without increasing discord, and increasing corruption. Whether the best method was taken to eliminate them, he would not say; but that it was their duty to eliminate them, he agreed most heartily. In regard to the general character of the two churches, he agreed with the gentleman who had just spoken. The Old-school were undoubtedly a body who held to a stricter interpretation of Calvinism, but there are those among them who would not insist upon so much strictness as the member who had just sat down, would insist upon. He presumed he would agree with that brother as to the doctrine of Calvinism in the Confession, and that they should put in their theological chairs those who hold strictly to those doctrines. He thought he had a right to speak in regard to the other body. Holding the views he did, he had been permitted to hold a theological Professorship in one of the New-school Theological Seminaries, and he knew that nothing he was called upon to teach awakened the least suspicion or anxiety. In the Old-school Presbyterian Church there are several Theological Seminaries. The New-school Presbyterian Church has three of them—one at New York, one at Auburn, and one at Cincinnati. With regard to the position of the Faculty at New York, from the beginning to this day, there had been a respectable minority of Old-school men, and the Board to-day is as thoroughly Calvinistic as any fair-minded Presbyterian would ask. The same might be said of the Seminary at Auburn. With regard to the institution at Cincinnati, that

Church has lately put into the Theological Chairs two gentlemen above criticism. If they are not Calvinistic, is it likely that they would put into their institutions such men? No book is more thumbed in these Seminaries than Dr. A. A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology*. There is a great difference between New-school Presbyterian theology and New-school New England theology. Of the latter, Dr. Nathaniel W. Taylor is the truest representative. His system, and every system founded on the power of contrary choice, as maintained by him, is incompatible with Calvinism. But there is an Old-school theology of New England which is free from this taint, and, if differing from us in smaller matters, is clear and strong for the great essentials of Calvinism. The New England theology which has place among New-school Presbyterians is chiefly of this type. They are a Calvinistic body to all intents, and Calvinistic doctrine would be greatly promoted, not only among ourselves, but among Congregationalists by the proposed union."

He portrayed vividly the great increase of strength and influence for good to be hoped for from the proposed union. It would greatly strengthen Calvinism.

In regard to the doctrinal basis proposed, he thought it meant the Confession of Faith pure and simple, and that was all. He thought if shown to any Presbyterians of other lands, they would judge it thoroughly Calvinistic in its meaning. The words "Calvinistic and Reformed" had been introduced by Dr. Smith to satisfy the Old-school. He and others had worked hard to bring the New-school body up to it. If you now substitute a simple statement of the Confession, these faithful men in the New-school would feel that they were throwing away something which they had worked out of their body at very great cost.

If any man would prove that the New-school body was an Arminian body, he would oppose the union as heartily as any man. "He did not believe they could make Calvinism and Arminianism work together."

This address of Dr. Shedd made all the stronger impression on the Assembly, on account of his great earnestness, his love of Calvinism, his condemnation of Taylorism and Arminianism, his frank admission that doctrinal errors which ought to be

eliminated gave rise to the original division; his strong conviction that the proposed basis ensured the essentials of Calvinism; that the New-school body now hold firmly by these; and that immediate union with them upon it was the surest way to protect and promote the Calvinistic system of doctrine, and repress the contrary.

Against the approval of the proposed basis of union unaltered, Drs. Breckinridge, Charles Hodge, Humphrey, Backus, Mr. Woods and Judge Findlay, urged the following considerations. Although some single individual may have occasionally thrown out something inconsistent with, or eccentric to it, the following is a fair summation of the argument presented on that side.

First, as to the question in issue. This is not as to the present substantial orthodoxy of the great body of the ministers of the New-school church. They rejoiced in the testimony given on that subject, and had no wish to question it. But the question is, on the adoption of the doctrinal basis of union under consideration. However sound the present New-school ministry, this doctrinal article, as viewed by them, may and does provide for the toleration of errors utterly subversive of our standards and the Calvinistic system. There is nothing inconsistent in this. Men may be high Calvinists themselves, and yet hold to very lax principles of subscription. President Dickinson was a high Calvinist in his own belief, and yet held that all should be tolerated as sufficiently accepting our standards, who hold the essentials; not merely of Calvinism, but of the Christian religion. The same is true of many in the Anglican, and American Episcopal Church. It was undeniably true of many who acted with what was known as the New-school party, before and after the disruption. They held that the system known as Taylorism, should be tolerated, which Dr. Shedd, and many, if not all, on the other side, say is contrary to Calvinism. The question, therefore, is not what the New-school ministry believe, but what they tolerate, and, by the terms of the contract now under discussion, expect to bind the united church to tolerate through all time, or until such time as three-fourths of the body may change the constitution in this respect,

and whether we ought, in fidelity to truth, righteousness, and unity itself, to consent to such a compact?

In settling this question we are to bear in mind, 1. That the Gurley amendment gives whatever liberty of "viewing, stating, explaining, and illustrating" the doctrines of the Confession has been enjoyed in either body. 2. It seems to restrict this liberty within the limits of what does not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system. Of these the former is a clause of liberty, the latter of restriction. The following questions instantly arise: Who shall determine what does or does not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system? What is the criterion in this matter? The New-school answer that this is determined by the other clause, securing the allowance of whatever has been allowed in either body, and treated therein as not inconsistent with the integrity of the system. So their journals, and their representative men privately and publicly, say. So all the declarations and arguments of their speakers, and of the Report of their Committee adopted by their General Assembly itself, maintain. So they understand the compact. So we know they understand it. As to those who maintain that the compact is safe, because this liberty is hedged in by what is essential to the integrity of the Calvinistic system, this, standing by itself, is indefinite. The question, what is thus essential? is *adhuc sub judice*, if not among the great mass of theologians, yet, as between us and the New-school. What we have deemed and treated as essential to it, they have not. And hence they argue that the real criterion of what is consistent with the integrity of the system, within the meaning and intent of this article, is what has been tolerated as such in either of the bodies.

But suppose we say otherwise; that the real standard of "integrity" is what we, the Old-school body, have uniformly treated as such: that this controls the clause giving liberty to hold whatever views of doctrine have been allowed in either bodies; the New-school undeniably understand it otherwise, and as above; that this past liberty of theirs controls all else, and is to be accounted and treated as what does not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system. In this view, it is, at best, ambiguous. The New-school enter into the compact believing

it secures them a certain liberty without which it would be unacceptable to them. The Old-school believe it involves a denial of that liberty; otherwise it would be unacceptable to them. Thus the Reunion is inaugurated with an open contest as to the very terms on which they have come together, on the most vital question of all. It becomes disunion. Its consummation on this basis becomes a declaration of war, a drawn battle between the parties, bringing back the strifes and heart-burnings which forced and precipitated the original disruption. This interpretation then does not vindicate the article. It loads it with a fatal ambiguity, at once destructive of itself, and of all the vast interests hinging upon it.

We come, then, to the other alternative. This compact, as understood by the New-school, means, and will secure, the free and unmolested toleration in the united church of whatever has been tolerated in the New-school church. The effect of this must be, 1. To put us all at sea, so far as any definite standard of doctrine is concerned. For how difficult will it be, if a candidate under examination avows any exceptionable doctrines, and claims that they have been allowed in the New-school church, to prove the contrary? 2. However this may be, it will, on this hypothesis, certainly bind the united church to tolerate all modes of "viewing, stating, illustrating, explaining" doctrines that have been tolerated in the New-school church. Now it was contended by the New-school men in 1837 that the doctrines allowed by them, which were so offensive to the Old-school, were only certain "modes of viewing, stating, explaining, and illustrating certain doctrines"—not the rejection of anything essential in the doctrines themselves. What were, then, these views thus allowed by the New-school as consistent, and condemned by the Old-school as inconsistent, with the system of our standards? Among them were these: That all sin and holiness consist in voluntary action, in the violation or observance of known law, and that nothing but such action has moral character. Hence, original righteousness in Adam at his creation, created holiness in men by regeneration and sanctification, original sin, and native sinfulness are impossible. No covenant was made with Adam for himself and his posterity, and in no sense did his descendants sin in him.

The sinner has plenary ability in himself to fulfil the law and receive the gospel. Imputation, whether of Adam's sin, or Christ's righteousness, is absurd. Christ's sufferings were not penal and in satisfaction of Divine (distributive) justice, but a governmental expedient to meet the requirements of benevolence, or a benevolent regard to the general good. God could not exclude all sin, or the present degree of it, from a moral system, etc., etc.

These doctrines, and such as these, the New-school construction of the basis in question requires us to tolerate. Old-school men count them subversive of the system of our Confession. New-school men have regarded them as consistent with its integrity. They are doubtless as honest and sincere as we. This is not in question. Neither is their orthodoxy. It is simply a question of greater strictness or looseness in terms of subscription. We hold to the stricter view. They have held to the broader. This they would have the united churches bound to, by virtue of the article in question—bound to allow the doctrines above enumerated without ecclesiastical hindrance.

If it be questioned that the above doctrines have been tolerated in the New-school body, conclusive evidence is found in the writings of Barnes, Duffield, Beecher, the ecclesiastical prosecutions and trials of these men, the controversies and journals of the period, the writings of the New Haven divines, whose pupils and supporters, holding their system in full, formerly at least, found free admission and unquestioned standing in their Presbyteries. If looking into these is raking up old controversies, this is not our fault, nor have we any option in the matter. It is utterly impossible otherwise to know what this fundamental article of the compact means, and what the doctrinal basis proposed to us is. It is no answer to say that the doctrines of these men are held by few at present. The point is, that this article provides for the future toleration of them in all.

If our New-school brethren meant little, or meant nothing by it, why did they insist upon it, and why did the negotiations of the Joint Committee come to a dead-lock till it was inserted?

To incorporate this new element, thus understood, in our constitution, binding us to the allowance of such doctrines, is to

subvert our standards, undo our history, revolutionize our body, and make an end of the concrete reality known as the Old-school Presbyterian Church. Never was the church brought to a more solemn crisis. Will not the Assembly pause before taking the fearful and irreversible step?

These things are not said in the interest of disunion, but of union. The speakers expressed not only their desire, but their expectation, of reunion at an early day, and on a safe basis. They believed that the New-school was growing more orthodox and assimilated to us, and would soon be ripe for union in form, growing out of a real unity in doctrine and life. But they could not believe them ready for union on safe terms, so long as they insisted on a doctrinal basis so loose and vague as to contain within itself the seeds of heresy and strife, if not of disintegration. The true way to promote union was to insist on a basis at once safe, known, commanding the confidence, and satisfying the conscience of our people. Such is our Confession of Faith, pure and simple, not as blurred and darkened by the proposed codicil to it. The unity prayed for by Christ was not organic unity, which consists merely in being under one government, and is found along with the greatest diversity and opposition of doctrine, as in the Greek, Latin, and Anglican churches, but not between the Presbyterian churches of the United States, Canada, and Scotland, which, in each of the several countries, are subjected to their own several Synods or Assemblies. It is that unity of faith, love, and hope in Christ and in truth, which subsists between these latter bodies without organic unity.

The undeniable danger to some of the chief endowments of Princeton, from union on the Gurley amendment, although not a paramount consideration against principle, is quite too important to be despised, unless necessity is laid upon us. The increased economy of mission and other evangelistic work resulting from reunion, had been earnestly pressed on the other side. It was of no more weight on one side of the balance than peril to our funds on the other. Neither should weigh against the interests of truth and righteousness.

The allegation that this doctrinal dispute is all a quarrel of ministers, theologians, and schools, about which the laymen

know nothing and care nothing, was met by Dr. Humphrey, by citations of the recorded votes in the proceedings against these errors in and before the year 1837, from which it appeared that they were supported by larger majorities of elders than of ministers. And it will be found that now the eldership keeps fully abreast of the ministry in their doctrinal interest and insight. Dr. Humphrey closed his speech on Thursday evening by proposing the following amendment to Article I, under discussion :

“In approving of the foregoing article as part of the terms of reunion between the two branches of the Presbyterian Church, this Assembly desire it to be distinctly understood that no form of doctrine heretofore condemned by the General Assembly of either body shall be deemed consistent with the system of doctrine taught in our common standards.”

At the suggestion of the Moderator this, with all other amendments, was deferred till the vote on the resolutions of Judge Leavitt should be reached.

On Friday afternoon, May 29th, a short time before the vote was to be taken, the following telegram was received, and ordered to be recorded in the minutes :

HARRISBURG, Pa., May 29th, 1868.

*Rev. W. E. Schenck, D.D., Permanent Clerk, General Assembly, Albany, N. Y.*

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in session here, informs the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, now holding its sessions in Albany, N. Y., that after an informal expression of dissentient opinions upon single articles of the proposed terms of reunion, the basis as reported by the Joint Committee was approved and directed to be overtured to the Presbyteries by an unanimous vote, four members being excused from voting.

By order of the General Assembly,

J. GLENTWORTH BUTLER,  
*Permanent Clerk.*

*The New-school Construction of the Doctrinal Basis.*

• The report of the Committee of the New-school Assembly, to whom was referred the report of the Joint Committee at the beginning of their session, prepared by Dr. Hickok, its chair-

man, was then read. Want of space alone prevents us from giving it entire. Having been presented to that body as an authoritative summary of the reasons for, and answer to the objections against adopting the plan of the Joint Committee, it is of great importance as showing the construction put upon it by them. It is mostly occupied with the doctrinal basis, and meets the objections raised against it, in portions of the New-school church, in the following manner.

“Various methods of viewing, stating, explaining, and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, are to be freely allowed in the united church, as they have hitherto been allowed in the separate churches, only they must not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system. And now who shall decide whether the views do impair the integrity of the system? If there be a strenuous and rigid umpire, such will doubtless be found intolerant of opinions and interpretations contrary to its own. A mind cautious and jealous of all encroachment on religious liberty will doubt, and in proportion to his fears he will hesitate or object.

“But is the danger here really formidable? Admit the majority of the ecclesiastical body must decide, but in the way the members of our Presbyteries now will have their standing in the united church there, will they be unsafe and exposed to oppression? Aside from the manifest liberality, and confidence, and love which there must be in the members of the opposite branch, before three-quarters of its Presbyteries shall vote us together, there are three quite impregnable safeguards. The man whose sentiments do not violate the Calvinistic system cannot be hurt. And if the fear still is, that in the opinion of the judicatory the sentiment may be in violation of the integrity of the Calvinistic system, and that the opinion of the judicatory must rule, the answer at once is, not the judicatory on its own opinion, but the judicatory as convinced that the opposite branch of the church has allowed, or not allowed the sentiment to be in consonance with the Calvinistic system. If the man is not out of the pale of his former church's orthodoxy, he cannot be in danger from any ecclesiastical court's rigidity or bigotry. Danger from this cannot be further pressed without directly questioning the candour and honesty of the judicatory,

and then we are at once beyond all Christian redress or regulation. . .

“One other source of apprehended difficulty only need now be mentioned. It is in the expressed agreement that the Presbyteries possess the right to examine ministers applying for admission from another Presbytery. The position from which the objection comes is, that the Presbyterian Church is a confederate body, and the confederacy is a unit, and membership in one place with fair paper of transfer confers the right of membership in all places in the confederacy. This is doubtless safe practice and principle in all ordinary cases. But extremities become often necessities.

“And now, suppose we take this doctrine of previous examination in cases of last extremities, or even to suppose it to be held as very commonly allowable, what danger of oppression is there? Let the examination be as common or as rigid as it may, the judicatory can do nothing against the man who is still within the pale of orthodoxy, according to the allowance of the old body with which he is in sympathy. The united church is to fellowship the orthodoxy of both the present churches.

“Considerations like these induce your Committee to the conviction that if the ‘terms and recommendations’ are not all that one would wish, and even in some things are what one would wish they were not, yet at the most they are not open to an oppressive or dangerous use. There is a defence erected over which nothing but dishonesty can come to work us harm. The blessing of union so accomplished need not be feared, as if about to be counterbalanced by coming injuries.”

The pith and point of all this, it was urged upon the Assembly, is, that it furnishes most decisive evidence that the New-school church understand the Gurley amendment as guaranteeing the allowance in the united church of whatever has been allowed in their own church; that such former allowance in their own church is the criterion which determines that it does not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system; that judicatories, however rigid their examination, “can do nothing against the man who is still within the pale of orthodoxy according to the allowance of the old body with which he is in sympa-

thy." They must rule not in their own opinion of what is essential, but "as convinced that the opposite branch of the church has allowed, or has not allowed the sentiment to be in consonance with the Calvinistic system." And to act otherwise is to violate "candour and honesty." "Nothing but dishonesty" can go athwart these principles in the united church. With this construction of the doctrinal article all the speeches of their leading men coincided. So also have their leading journals and men spoken on all occasions.

Dr. Stearns, moderator of their Assembly, and a member of the Joint Committee which framed the basis, said: "As to the basis of the Joint Committee, it is about as good as men in general would be able to concoct; and about as good as could be devised in the English language. Under this basis, with its conceded rights of stating, explaining, and illustrating doctrine, Albert Barnes never could have been tried for heresy. It gave full liberty in the pulpit. Ministers might preach as they pleased. Nobody could call them to account, unless they came in direct contact with the Confession of Faith. It gave full liberty—such as was heretofore allowed in the separate bodies." Dr. H. B. Smith, also a member of the Joint Committee, said: "Neither of the branches had a right to say that its own interpretation was the only correct interpretation. If he supposed that the basis would prevent free inquiry or new views of the Bible and the Confession, he should not vote for that basis. Liberty was the very life of the church. It should not be bound finally to any particular interpretation. On such a basis both schools could stand." Dr. Nelson, another member of the Joint Committee, said: "To the objection that the article was susceptible of different constructions, he replied by showing that the same was notoriously true of the Confession of Faith itself and even of the inspired word of God."

Rev. Arthur Swayze, representing those of the other branch who had been opposed to the first article, lest it should compromise their former liberty, said: "I came to this Assembly opposed to the basis proposed by the Joint Committee, in no spirit of captious hostility, but in the love of my brethren, and in a strong desire for the maintenance of the honour of our beloved church. The first article seemed to me to ignore the

real question at issue, which is not—whether an historical Calvinistic theology shall be allowed in a Calvinistic church, but—whether the various types of theology, taught and publicly allowed in our branch of the church, should be allowed in the united church, as not impairing the Reformed or Calvinistic system. I have, I am glad to allow, some new light on that matter, and I am willing to accept that article, chiefly because it is attended with the explanation of the Committee, and also by the explanation of the Special Committee of Nine, and because the discussion has drawn from the lips of Dr. Hickok, Dr. H. B. Smith, Dr. Stearns, and indeed all the speakers in favour of the articles, the full and earnest declaration that they would not for a moment entertain the idea of reunion on this basis, if they did not understand that, by the proposed terms, the same liberty will be freely allowed in the united church that is allowed in our branch. These explanations and declarations become historical, belong to the basis itself henceforth in the eyes of the world, and for this reason I am happy to add my voice of assent, and if the difficulties of the tenth article can be surmounted, to join with others in hastening the consummation for which we have all devoutly prayed.”

It is past all doubt, therefore, that the New-school body regard the doctrinal basis presented by the Joint Committee, as binding to the allowance, in the united body, of whatever doctrines have been tolerated at any time in their own body, and as making all action in the new body antagonistic to such doctrines a breach of faith. The real question is thus again proved to be, not how orthodox they are, but whether we shall enter into a compact establishing, in their estimation at least, such a doctrinal basis for the Presbyterian Church of the United States for all time?

The debate on the side of the negative was closed by Dr. Charles Hodge, in a short speech mainly devoted to the removal of misapprehensions of the real issue, and ending with the following words: “What do we want? We ask for the adoption of the Confession of Faith and catechisms, pure and simple. When a man is asked what original sin is, we wish him to give the answer of those standards. Our New-school brethren say they have adopted them since 1837. Then make this your

simple basis, and adopt Dr. Humphrey's amendment, and I am for union. I have no more to say, except to express the hope that the Holy Spirit may hover over us, and guide us in our deliberations."

As the time fixed for the vote approached, Dr. Monfort, after saying that the New-school had never endorsed the errors complained of in the debate, made the following announcement, which it is understood had much influence in persuading the Assembly to the form of action and series of votes subsequently adopted.

"We wish to have the report carried through as it came from the hands of the Committee; and then I am willing to bring forward Dr. Eagleson's amendment, as a separate motion, and if passed, to send it to the New-school Assembly, and if adopted by them, this will be the doctrinal article in the basis of reunion."

The moderator announced that the time for taking the vote had arrived.

Dr. Breckinridge moved that each article be voted on separately, and that the vote be counted, and that the yeas and nays be called on the vote for the adoption of the whole. Carried.

The paper of Judge Leavitt was read. Then the first article of the basis of reunion proposed by the Committee, was read, and its adoption moved.

Dr. Eagleson moved the amendment to Article I. already mentioned, of which he had given previous notice. Laid on the table.

Mr. D. W. Woods moved to strike out all from "it being understood" to "separate churches." It was moved to lay this on the table.

Ruling elder George Junkin asked for the yeas and nays on laying this amendment on the table. Not granted. The amendment was then laid on the table.

Dr. Humphrey moved as an amendment to insert after the words "separate churches," these words: "The Assembly desires it to be distinctly understood that no form of doctrine heretofore condemned by either Assembly, shall be held or taught in

the united church; nor shall a man who holds it be licensed to preach the gospel." Laid on the table by a vote of 155 to 80.

Mr. E. B. Miller moved to amend the first article as follows, viz., "The reunion shall be effected on the doctrinal and ecclesiastical basis of our common standards; and all questions arising in consequence of such reunion, and all matters requiring adjustment thereto, shall be settled and determined by the re-united church, according to the principles and policy of said standards." Laid on the table.

Dr. John C. Backus moved to strike out these words, viz., "As they have hitherto been allowed in the separate churches." Laid on the table—162 to 80.

On motion it was ordered that all the amendments proposed be entered on the minutes, and the votes upon them counted.

The Rev. George Hill then moved that the yeas and nays be called in voting for the first article. The yeas and nays were called, and the moderator announced that the first article had been adopted by a vote of 187 to 78, two being excused from voting. The Assembly now adjourned to Saturday morning, May 30. When the subject was resumed, several amendments were offered to the 2d, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th articles, and rejected.

The adoption of the first resolution of the paper of Judge Leavitt was moved.

The Rev. S. J. Nicolls, D. D., moved to amend, so that it would read, "receive the report and approve the basis." It was moved to lay the amendment on the table. Lost by a vote of 84 to 124. The amendment was then adopted, and the first resolution as amended, adopted. Yeas, 188, nays 68, excused, 1.

The second resolution was then adopted, and the blank in the third ordered to be filled with five thousand, thus providing that this number of the Joint Committee's Report be sent to the ministers and ruling elders of the church, the expense to be borne by the Board of Publication.

Upon the question of adopting the whole, including the last two resolutions of Judge Leavitt, Dr. Backus moved its postponement in order to present a substitute prepared by his Presbytery. The substitute was read by Dr. Backus, and pro-

vides that the question of reunion be postponed, and that a committee of five be appointed to confer with the several branches of the Presbyterian Church with regard to a union of all, and report at the next Assembly. The motion of Dr. Backus was tabled, and the resolutions as a whole agreed to.

Dr. Monfort then offered the following:

While the Assembly has approved of the Report of the Joint Committee on Reunion, it expresses its preference for a change in the first item on the basis, leaving out the following words, viz.: "It being understood that the Confession is received in its historical, that is, the Calvinistic or Reformed sense. It is also understood that various methods of viewing, stating, explaining and illustrating the doctrines of the Confession, which do not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system, are to be freely allowed in the united church, as they have been in the separate churches." The Assembly believe that, by leaving out these clauses, the basis will be more simple and more expressive of mutual confidence, and the Permanent Clerk is directed to telegraph this proposed amendment to the Assembly at Harrisburg, and if that Assembly shall concur in the amendment, it shall become of effect as the action of this Assembly also.

This was adopted; that relating to a change of doctrinal basis unanimously. Drs. Beatty and Reed, and elders Day and Carter were appointed a committee to proceed forthwith to Harrisburg, and urge its adoption by the New-school Assembly.

Dr. Humphrey gave notice that, in behalf of himself and others, he should protest against the action of this Assembly upon the subject of union, and gave notice to all who joined in such protest to meet together after the morning adjournment.

MONDAY MORNING, June 1, 1868, 9 o'clock.

Previous to the opening services, the Moderator stated that the committee to the Assembly at Harrisburg desired the prayers of this Assembly in behalf of the object for which it had been sent. The Assembly was then opened with singing, reading the Scriptures, and prayer by the Moderator.

The Permanent Clerk read a telegram (unofficial) from the Clerk of the Assembly at Harrisburg, stating that the telegram

from this Assembly had been received, but owing to the fact that eighty members had already left, it was doubtful whether the Assembly would think it proper to take up the matter again, and consider the proposed change.

On Monday afternoon the calling of the roll on the case of Rev. Mr. Cowan was suspended to hear the protest of Dr. Humphrey and others against the action of the Assembly touching reunion. Previous to hearing the protest, Dr. Hall asked leave to present the following paper, which he said would render the protest unnecessary, if adopted by the Assembly:

*Resolved*, That this Assembly desires it to be understood that the first article of the Report of the Joint Reunion Committee, which is the doctrinal Basis of Union, and which was adopted on Friday last by this Assembly, is not to be interpreted as giving license to the propagation of doctrines which have been condemned by either Assembly, nor to permit any Presbytery in the united church to license or ordain to the ministry any candidate who maintains any form of doctrine condemned by either Assembly.

This paper was adopted unanimously by the Assembly.

Rev. Dr. Humphrey—The resolution of Dr. Hall is no part of the terms sent to the New-school Assembly, and hence does not meet the case, and obviate the necessity for the protest which I now offer.

Dr. Humphrey then read the protest signed by himself and fifty-two others, which was ordered upon record. Drs. Shedd, Monfort, Prime, and the Hon. Messrs. Leavitt and McKnight were appointed a committee to answer it. The protest and answer will be given in another article, in which they will receive distinct consideration.

After the protest had been read, Dr. Backus moved to telegraph to the Assembly at Harrisburg the paper of Dr. Hall, just passed by the Assembly. It was moved to lay this on the table, but the motion was lost.

Mr. D. W. Woods said that the refusal on the part of some was an effort to deceive the other Assembly as to what our views really were.

Dr. Prime scorned the idea of bad faith, and said he hoped the resolution would pass. In this matter nothing was to be

gained by keeping anything hidden. The best way was to be free and open; this was just what the advocates of reunion desired.

The motion was then adopted.

Rev. Dr. Monfort offered a resolution that a committee of five be appointed to act with a similar committee of the New-school Assembly to report to the first Assembly of the united church, such amendments of the Constitution as may be deemed necessary.

Dr. Breckinridge opposed the resolution, and announced that he should do all he could to defeat the adoption of the reunion basis by the Presbyteries. He pointed out what he regarded as some of the difficulties in the work of the proposed committee. The resolution gave the committee illimitable power over the boundaries of the Presbyteries, and over the proposal of changes in the constitution. He concluded by moving to lay the resolution on the table. Lost—ayes, 70; noes, 80.

The resolution was then adopted.

Before the adjournment on Tuesday afternoon, the members of the committee sent to Harrisburg returned, and reported verbally the result of their mission to the Assembly: "That the committee were received with great cordiality and kindness, and that important business which was before that body was postponed at once to hear their communication. The members expressed a desire to comply with the action of this Assembly, but in consequence of the necessary two-thirds not being present, it was unable to adopt the proposition of your body in addition to the basis, as it was of the nature of a change. If it had been presented two days previous, it would have been adopted. There was an entire willingness on the part of the brethren of that body to give assurance of their readiness to unite on the basis of the common standards. They believed their mission had resulted in much good, although it seemed on the face not to have been successful. It proved to them that there was an earnest desire on our part to know their hearts, and to agree with them on some measure for a union of the churches."

The Assembly then united in singing the 117th hymn, after which the Moderator made a fervent prayer and dissolved the

Assembly, ordering another one to be held in the Brick Church (Rev. Dr. Spring's) at New York on the third Thursday in May, 1869.

The import and effect of the Assembly's action on reunion, seen in the light of the discussions and facts which preceded or accompanied it, are in some respects perfectly clear and indubitable, and in others exceedingly dubious and perplexing. In regard to most of the former kind withal, the body was, with immaterial, if any exceptions, unanimous. In regard to the latter it was divided, as well as obscure and uncertain in its action, and probably divided very much because of this obscurity and uncertainty.

The Assembly was substantially a unit on the following points, as its votes unmistakably show.

1. In the ardent desire for reunion, if it can be accomplished on safe basis.

2. In the hearty disapprobation of the doctrinal basis contained in the first article of the proposed plan, so far as it includes anything beyond the Confession of Faith pure and simple, and in the earnest desire to amend it accordingly.

3. In a great aversion to reunion on any basis but our common standards, or on a basis which in any manner qualifies it, or gives it an ambiguous or indefinite significance or authority. All the speeches, Dr. Monfort's resolution, and the committee sent with it to the Harrisburg Assembly, prove this.

4. In the refusal to assent to any terms of reunion which imply a compact or obligation to tolerate in future candidates for licensure or ordination any form of doctrine which has been condemned by either Assembly, and of course those forms of doctrine condemned by our Assembly, which the other body have been extensively supposed to allow. Dr. Hall's resolution means all this. It was unanimously adopted. The substance of it has been twice proposed to the Assembly before, in the form of amendment to the basis. While rejected in that form, in conformity to a foregone and ill-advised conclusion not to alter the basis itself, but to cure its defects by supplemental resolutions, it was well understood when first offered, that many who declined to vote for it at that time and place, would vote for the substance of it at another stage of the proceedings.

A motion to reconsider it some time after its adoption, was also voted down by an overwhelming majority. It was therefore the deliberate mind of the Assembly. And if further confirmation were needed, the protest of the minority, and answer of the majority furnish decisive proof. The latter document says :

“The authors of the protest first speak of a series of doctrinal errors and heresies, which may be concisely stated as follows: (1.) There is no moral character in man prior to moral action, and therefore man was not created holy. (2.) There was no covenant made with Adam, his posterity did not fall with him, and every man stands or falls for himself. (3.) Original sin is not truly and properly sin bringing condemnation, but only an innocent tendency leading to actual transgression. (4.) Inability of any and every kind is inconsistent with moral obligation. (5.) Regeneration is the sinner’s own act, and consists in the change of his governing purpose. (6.) God cannot control the acts of free agents, and therefore cannot prevent sin in a moral system. (7.) Election is founded upon God’s foreknowledge that the sinner will repent and believe. (8.) The sufferings of Christ are not penal, and do not satisfy retributive justice. (9.) Justification is pardon merely, and does not include restoration to favour and acceptance as righteous.”

It proceeds to declare that the New-school church cannot claim these doctrines to be consistent with Calvinism, “because such a position, if taken by the New-school church or any church, would simply be self-stultifying and absurd.” “Not a man on the globe possessed of a sane mind and acquainted with the subject of doctrine” would maintain that the reception of such doctrines would not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system. They ask allowance for nothing lower than “the theology of Richards.” We are not considering the merits of the protest or answer here. We only cite this additional proof of the unanimous and settled determination of our Assembly to enter into no compact tolerating these doctrines.

We wish explicitly to guard against the conclusion hastily adopted by many, that the doctrinal basis in the first article of the proposed plan of union binds the Old-school to tolerate any

doctrines that may have hitherto been allowed in either body, in case it should be adopted. This we have shown to be the New-school construction of it. It has also been inconsiderately pressed by some opponents of the article in arguing its great faults. But it is equally capable of a construction which permits the Old-school to determine for themselves and in accordance with their past history, what is essential to the integrity of the Calvinistic system, and what doctrines at any time allowed in either church are inconsistent with it. We are therefore not bound to the looser construction of it, when it is equally capable of the stricter. Especially are we in no manner bound by it, after the passage of Dr. Hall's resolution officially notified to the other body. The Assembly's answer to protest also takes similar ground. The fatal objection to this basis is not its positive and necessary endorsement of the doctrines which went under the name of New Divinity at the time of and after the disruption, but *its fatal ambiguity*: that it is capable of contrary meanings on the most vital points; that it is adopted in these contrary senses in the two bodies respectively; that hence it brings the germs of discord and strife, if not of disintegration, into the united church.

For reunion on a basis conformed to the principle of the supplementary resolutions of Drs. Monfort and Hall, unanimously adopted by the Assembly, all parties would go with the utmost cordiality and earnestness. On this our body would be a unit. But here the two elements in the Assembly begin to diverge.

1. The minority insisted that the principles of these supplementary resolutions should be incorporated, in the form of amendments, into the basis itself, and that, so amended, it should be proposed to the New-school Assembly for their concurrence. If they accept it, then we have union on a basis acceptable to all, and without needless peril to truth and unity. If they decline, they, and we, and all others, will know beyond all doubt the real difficulty, what each side insisted on, and in what way each was responsible for the result, and what needs to be done further to prepare the way for union. Unless the majority in our Assembly are wholly mistaken in their estimate of the doctrinal state of the New-school body, the latter would not long delay compliance with terms so fully in

accordance with their own convictions, and with the demands of truth, peace, and unity. This the majority steadfastly refused to do. They rejected every form of amendment fitted to bring the basis into harmony with their own subsequently declared preferences and convictions. They voted to approve the committee's basis pure and simple, and recommend it to the Presbyteries for their adoption. But no sooner was this done, than they joined the minority in voting virtually that it was unsatisfactory; that the obnoxious clauses were better stricken out, and they sent forthwith a Commission to Harrisburg to obtain the concurrence of the other Assembly in the proposed amendment. Thus, they immediately, in effect, disapprove of what they have just before approved, and recommended to the Presbyteries. In this disapproval we entirely concur. They then adopted Dr. Hall's resolution, thus precluding the lax construction to which the Committee's doctrinal basis had been proved liable, in case the New-school Assembly should decline the proposed amendment.

2. In consequence of this circuitous way of meeting a very plain case, the matter goes before the two churches and their Presbyteries, as it seems to us, under a great cloud of uncertainties and ambiguities. It is far from certain what is sent to them, and requires a sober second thought to know what will be the effect of affirmative action thereupon.

1. Supposing there had been no action by the Assembly beyond the mere adoption of Judge Leavitt's resolutions approving and recommending the basis of the Joint Committee, there is the inherent ambiguity of this basis, *per se*, as shown in the debates, and in the proof already adduced from Dr. Hickok's report, etc., that the New-school body construe it as binding the united church to tolerate whatever they have tolerated, and the evidence furnished by Dr. Hall's resolution, that our body construe it as prohibiting whatever doctrines have been condemned by either Assembly. If the requisite number of Presbyteries in each church then adopt it, though they may adopt the same words, they do not, in intent, adopt the same thing, the same basis. They may adopt the same letters, but the same in sound only, not in sense. On the most material point they adopt contradictories of each other. It is said

each adopts the same platform. It might as well be argued that white is black, because white is a colour; black is a colour; therefore, white is black. Surely the two great Presbyterian churches of the United States owe it to themselves and their posterity, to truth and the God of truth, to found their compact of union on a basis which is not one of mutual stultification, nor full of the germs of perpetual mistrust, discord, and strife.

2. But this difficulty aside, what is actually sent down by the Assembly to our Presbyteries? Is it the Joint Committee's basis by itself, as it stood on the adoption of Judge Leavitt's resolutions, or that basis as controlled by Dr. Hall's resolution afterwards adopted and sent officially, by direction of the Assembly, to the New-school body? We think, according to every moral, if not legal intendment, it is the latter; that what the Assembly has approved and recommended to the Presbyteries is, in common honesty, just that and nothing else. We think this will be a very common view in our church. But then it is plain that this is not what the New-school body have sent down to their Presbyteries. On this construction, then, the Presbyteries of the two churches, in ratifying this basis, do not ratify the same thing, even *pro forma*, much less in fact. On the other hand, the same motives which resisted and prevented the amendment of the basis in the Assembly, will also tempt large numbers to claim that the Assembly approved and recommended the basis without conditions. So, if the basis is endorsed by the necessary three-quarters of the Presbyteries, without any qualifying expressions, the contest will be endless in what sense it was accepted. This is not the best way to real union. But suppose they adopt qualifying or amendatory expressions. If they vote to adopt or approve the plan sent down to them by the Assembly, all this will go for nothing. If they accept, they accept, no matter what expressions of desire or preference for the Confession pure and simple they may couple with it. No matter even if they say they accept it, in the sense of Dr. Hall's amendment, or in any other sense. Still, acceptance is acceptance. If three-quarters of the Presbyteries pass it as the Assembly did, and then append both Dr. Monfort's and Dr. Hall's resolutions, or whatever else, as an antidote,

still they adopt it, and they found the united church on that basis. When this is once done, its amendment, or the substitution for it of the standards pure and simple, will be vastly more difficult. What could not be gained in order to union, will not, we fear, be yielded when union is secured without it.

The only way, therefore, we are sorry to be obliged to say, to avoid the evils, the interminable strifes and fatal contentions of a basis loaded with ambiguities so grave that the contracting parties undeniably interpret it in senses directly contradictory, *is to reject it*. Otherwise, union is inaugurated with the seeds of perpetual disunion. *But let this rejection be followed by a request or overture to the next General Assembly to negotiate a plan of union, having for its doctrinal basis our common standards pure and simple.* Meeting almost within speaking distance of the other Assembly, such negotiation will be practicable and easy. When both bodies confide in each other sufficiently to ratify union on this granitic stratum, then may we hope it will abide on this deep and broad foundation. But how can it last on the shifting quicksands of undeniable ambiguities and equivocations? That this is the path, the only path to that true and safe reunion, so much desired by us all, seems to us perfectly plain. Let us have a basis conformed clearly and unambiguously to the principles involved in the supplemental and unanimous resolutions of the Assembly. Let us stand upon our Confession pure and simple. With Dr. Musgrave, we say, let us "get down to solid rock." Here we can stand, and, it is to be hoped, have a union firm and enduring. If, as we trust, what the majority say of the doctrinal position of the New-school church be well-grounded; if we can judge from the reported reception of the Committee to Harrisburg, that body cannot long be unwilling to meet us here. Until they can, judging from the unanimous action of our Assembly, that agreement in doctrine and polity, which the initiatory resolution of our Assembly at St. Louis, proposing the Joint Committee on Reunion, laid down as its indispensable pre-condition, is proved not to exist. But this obstacle, if such witnesses as Dr. Shedd are right, cannot last long. Then we shall have a basis on which all the Presbyterian bodies of the country may at length unite. The "Gurley amendment" will be a formidable

hindrance to such union with other Presbyterian bodies. It will confine our union with other bodies to the New-school, and prevent that ultimate pan-presbyterian unification, which is now so much the object of prayer and hope. So the terms "Reformed," "Calvinistic," &c., however significant in discussions, when superimposed upon our standards, answer about the same purpose as if we should say, they are to be taken in a sense broad enough to include the "Old-school New England Theology," or "Dr. Richards' Theology." These terms, as used by Dr. Shedd and other orthodox men who understand them, have a definite and not unsafe meaning, but, in a Confession of Faith, would unsettle every thing. However proper in discussions, such provisos are utterly out of place in church creeds. They only vacate and nullify them. The course indicated may, though we hope it need not, delay the formal consummation of reunion for a year. It will promote its extension through all the Presbyterian bodies, and its duration through the ages. And in the long future, whatever trials may come upon it, we may hope it will be written of it, "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, AND IT FELL NOT, FOR IT WAS FOUNDED ON A ROCK."

We cannot permit ourselves to doubt that this will be the ultimate yet speedy solution of the problem, whereby all will rejoice in real union, while the other alternative will satisfy none. Dr. Prime says in the *New York Observer* of the Gurlay amendment, "It is a foolish clause. If it means anything, it adds to the basis, and that ought to be the Confession only. If it means nothing, it ought to have been left out. It does amount to just nothing at all. It tolerates diversities of explanation, where integral doctrines are not involved. But such diversities are necessarily allowed in both churches, and always will be, in every Protestant church, and when it is known that both sides prefer the basis without the clause, it is truly to be regretted that it remains. It can only do harm, however, in suggesting evil which will not exist, either with or without the amendment." Elder Henry Day said to the Harrisburg Assembly: "He felt as if this Assembly *must* pass the amendment, because the whole power and opportunity now rested

with this body. The plain men of the church wanted this amendment, because it wiped out all ambiguity, and left the old tenets of their fathers pure and simple. They could not exactly understand what 'Calvinistic sense' and 'Reformed sense' meant. The New-school committee had said that their property was all safe under this basis. But the Old-school committee had reported that there were certain trusts, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars, that would be placed in a delicate position by this little change in the basis of the church, as embraced in the first article, and it was this difficulty which the proposed amendment obviated. The Old-school, with this amendment, had advanced a step ahead of the New-school, and had burned their ships behind them. They could not and would not retreat."

It appears that in the New-school body 117 voted for, and 36 against reconsideration. But some 80 members had left. The rule required two-thirds of all that had voted on the question before, and it was lost. The impression was, however, that, had the body been full, it would have passed by a large majority. It would seem therefore that they will have little difficulty in uniting on this basis; and there can be little doubt that, after thorough reconsideration, it will prove far more acceptable to the great mass in both bodies than any substitute for, or modification of it. We are glad to learn that an influential movement is already begun in the central portion of our church to bring the matter to this happy issue.