

PRESBYTERIAN REUNION:

A MEMORIAL VOLUME.

1837—1871.

*Ὅτι εἰς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν· οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς
ἄρτου μετέχομεν.— I CORINTHIANS x. 17.*



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3. THE PITTSBURG CIRCULAR, 1868. REFERRED TO ON PAGE 326.

This circular, it is believed, exerted an important influence in behalf of the Reunion, and paved the way for its general acceptance upon the basis finally adopted. The idea of issuing it was originally suggested by the Rev. James Allison, D.D., editor of the PRESBYTERIAN BANNER. It was projected in its present form by Drs. Paxton, A. A. Hodge, and Jacobus, Drs. Allison, McKinney, and others consenting. The first part of the paper was written by the Rev. A. A. Hodge, D.D., and the remaining portion by Dr. Allison. A few verbal alterations were afterwards made by the brethren who were present at the meeting at which it was signed.

CIRCULAR ON REUNION.

The late General Assembly, which held its sessions in Albany, after having referred the Basis reported by the Joint Committee to the consideration of the presbyteries, declared, by a unanimous vote, their decided preference for the Common Standards of the Presbyterian Church without qualifying clauses of any kind, as the doctrinal basis of the reunited Church. When this was reported to the General Assembly sitting in Harrisburg, although by reason of the previous departure of many of their members they were unable formally to reconsider their former

action, yet by a very large majority of their remaining members they also expressed their preference for the change proposed.

In view of these facts, the undersigned desire to make known their very decided agreement with both these General Assemblies in preferring that the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, without qualification, should be the only doctrinal basis of the reunited church in the future.

1. Because the Common Standards, without qualification, have been from the first the basis of both churches, and their adoption consequently will involve no sacrifice of principle nor of consistency upon the part of either.

2. Because it is known to have been the first choice of our New School brethren, and is now preferred by an overwhelming majority of both branches.

3. Because its adoption in preference to the Doctrinal Basis reported by the Joint Committee will conciliate the cheerful acquiescence of very many who acted with the minority in the late General Assembly.

4. Because it has already been approved by the New School, Old School, United, and Reformed Presbyterians in the Philadelphia Convention, and its adoption will therefore greatly facilitate the ultimate reunion of all branches of the hitherto divided Presbyterian family in the United States.

5. Because it will avoid all ground of litigation with respect to church property of every kind.

6. And, finally, because the adoption of the common Confession and Catechism, without qualifying clauses, will facilitate instead of delaying our reunion with the other branch; since, as the adoption of this basis involves the creation of no new "constitutional rule," nor any modification in any pre-existent rule, it is self-evident that, provided it is in the meantime indicated as the preference of the Church, it may be adopted by the two General Assemblies of 1869, and made the basis of reunion by a simple resolution.

On the other hand, the adoption of the doctrinal basis reported by the Joint Committee, however well intended, may be divisive in its tendency. It is very complex in its terms, and is already interpreted in different senses by different parties. It is a new basis, altering, in terms at least, if not in spirit, the established formula of subscription. Being a modification of the ancient constitutional form of subscription, it cannot be made binding by a mere resolution of the General Assemblies, but must receive, according to the plan of the Joint Committee, the suffrages of three-fourths of the presbyteries of both branches. It is the first choice of neither party. It is more or less seriously objected to by a large portion of the Old School, and is conscientiously protested against by a respectable minority. It is believed to be especially distasteful to the great body of the United and Reformed Presbyterians, and its adoption by us would therefore embarrass and tend to postpone our reunion with them.

Therefore we recommend that the presbyteries adopt, as far as they may be able, the other parts of the basis, and that all presbyteries which may prefer this proposed article to the one now in the basis of agreement give expression of their desire that the two branches should unite on this basis; and that presbyteries

which may prefer the basis of the Joint Committee, but who are *willing* to unite on the basis proposed, give expression to that *willingness*, asking that if it shall appear that a majority of the presbyteries *desire* the doctrinal basis here proposed, or are *willing* to accept it, the General Assembly may adopt such measures as, in its wisdom, may be deemed best to secure the concurrence of the General Assembly of the other branch; and that the stated clerks of the presbyteries report their action to the next General Assembly.

We hereby most respectfully ask our Committee on Reunion, whose prudence, wisdom, patience, and great desire to act so as to subserve the highest interests of the Church we most highly appreciate, either by correspondence or personal intercourse with the Committee on Reunion of the New School, to secure a recommendation to the presbyteries of both branches, to adopt the suggestion made above, so that simultaneous and undivided action may be taken by the presbyteries in both branches.

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PITTSBURG, PA., June 25, 1868.

4. SPEECH OF THE REV. GEORGE W. MUSGRAVE, D.D., LL.D.,
IN PRESENTING THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE,
ETC., GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OLD SCHOOL, 1869. REFERRED TO ON
PAGE 348.

The following speech was delivered by the Rev. G. W. Musgrave, D.D., LL.D., Chairman of the O. S. Committee of Conference, on the occasion of the presentation of the Report of the Joint Committee of Conference, to the Old School General Assembly sitting in the Brick Church in the City of New York, May 27th, 1869 :

MR. MODERATOR,—It affords me great pleasure to be able to report a Plan of Union between what are known as the Old and New School bodies, and to be able to say that our report is *unanimous*, and is signed by every member of each Committee. The Joint Committee report three papers to the Assembly. The *first* is a Plan of Union, containing the Basis, which will be sent down to the Presbyteries for their acceptance or rejection. The *second* paper is a *declaration*, made that there may be a good understanding between the two branches. This paper is not a *compact* or *covenant*, but is a *recommendation* of certain arrangements as to Seminaries, Boards, etc. It is no part of the Basis or Terms of Union. It only recommends certain arrangements as suitable to be adopted. The *third* paper is one recommending a day of prayer to Almighty God for his guidance and presence, that Presbyteries may be under the Divine influence when they come to vote upon this momentous question. The report has been printed, and will be distributed as soon as read. It has not been circulated before, because it was feared that members would be so much engaged in the reading of it that they would not listen to it with sufficient attention. I will now call upon the Secretary of the Committee to read the Report.

[The Report having been read, Dr. Musgrave proceeded:]

I have already, Mr. Moderator, made a very brief explanation of the character of the three papers submitted by the Joint Committee. But I wish to make a few additional remarks with respect to each of them consecutively.

The first paper, as you will notice, is the Plan of Union, containing the basis upon which it is proposed this union shall be effected. That basis is to be over-