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# REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## SECOND GENERAL COUNCIL

OF THE

# PRESBYTERIAN ALLIANCE,

CONVENED AT PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER, 1880.

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PRINTED BY DIRECTION OF THE COUNCIL.

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EDITED BY

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Catechisms in the same unqualified sense in which they are understood to embrace and assent to the doctrines, principles, precepts, and statements contained in other parts of the Confession of Faith? To which enquiry, the Assembly ordered an affirmative answer to be given.

II. The Formula of Questions addressed to candidates for license is as follows :

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the word of God, and only infallible rule of faith and practice?
2. Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?
3. Do you promise to study the peace, unity, and purity of the Church?
4. Do you promise to submit yourself in the Lord, to the government of this Presbytery or of any other Presbytery in the bounds of which you may be called?

Having satisfactorily answered the questions of the formula, a certificate of licensure is given to the applicant, in which the fact is distinctly stated that he has adopted the Confession of Faith of this Church.

The first and second questions, as given above, are addressed to licentiates also, previous to their ordination, with the addition of a third one as follows :

Do you sincerely approve of the government and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in these United States?

And the same three questions are addressed to elders when they are about to be ordained.

PRINCETON, N. J., September 7th, 1880.

*Dear Brother Mathews:* I think the report you have drawn up is excellent as far as it goes. In order to set forth *all* the facts of the case I would add the following two particulars :

I. In 1869, the two branches of the Presbyterian Church, known as Old School and New School, by an affirmative vote of nearly all the Presbyteries of both bodies, were united on the following basis: "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 doctrines 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 rules of our polity."

II. In our Seminaries (this is certainly true of Union Theological Seminary, New York city, of Princeton, and of the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny City, Pennsylvania. I believe it to be true also of Auburn and Chicago) professors are required at their installation, and in some instances every third year of their continuance in office, to take a more stringent engagement to the doctrinal standards of the Church, than the pastors are. In Princeton and Allegheny the professors subscribe the following formula, and that used in the other seminaries is virtually identical with it: "In the presence of God and of the Directors of this Seminary, I do solemnly and *ex animo* adopt, receive, and subscribe the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as the confession of my faith, or as a summary and just exhibition of that system of doctrine and religious belief which is contained in Holy Scripture, and therein revealed by God to man for his salvation; and I do solemnly *ex animo* profess to receive the form of government of said Church as agreeable to the inspired oracles. And I do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate anything that shall appear to me to contradict or contravene, either directly or impliedly, anything taught in said Confession of Faith or Catechisms, nor to oppose any of the fundamental principles of Church government while I continue a Professor in this Seminary."

The above facts are part of the history of the case, and are necessary to make out the whole truth.

The formula our pastors subscribe to at their ordination is less stringent than that in use in the Churches of Scotland. It is therefore necessary, in order to exhibit

the whole truth as to the relation of our Church to the standards, that the formula imposed upon the professors should also be given.

The formula subscribed by the professors of Union Theological Seminary, New York city, is as follows :

"I believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice ; and I do now, in the presence of God and the Directors of this Seminary, solemnly and sincerely receive and adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. I do also, in like manner, approve of the Presbyterian form of government ; and I do solemnly promise that I will not teach or inculcate anything which shall appear to me to be subversive of the said system of doctrine, or of the principles of said form of government, so long as I shall continue to be a professor in this Seminary."

Yours sincerely,

A. A. HODGE.

#### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

This Church was organized separately in 1861. Up to that year, its members had formed part of the "Presbyterian Church in the United States of America," and held till that date the position of that Church in all matters of doctrine and discipline.

In answer, more specifically, to the questions of the Committee on Creeds and Confessions, we reply :

I. This Church receives and adheres to the Westminster Confession as originally issued, except so far as altered by the Church in the United States of America down to 1861.

II. The questions addressed to Candidates for licensure, or ordination to ministers, and to elders, and deacons, are the same as in the Northern Presbyterian Church.

III. In the Book of Church Order, adopted in 1879, form of government, chap. 4, section 4, article 5, is the following provision :

"The Presbytery shall cause to be transcribed in some convenient part of the Book of Records, the obligations required of ministers at their ordination, which shall be subscribed by all admitted to membership in the following form, viz. : 'I, A. B., do *ex animo*, receive, and subscribe the above obligation, as a just and true exhibition of my faith and principles, and do resolve and promise to exercise my ministry in conformity thereunto.'"

IV. An adoption of the "Confession" is not required of private members. They are required to give "credible evidence" of faith in Christ, together with a correct walk and conversation.

#### UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA.

The following is submitted by the subscriber, a delegate from the United Presbyterian Church of North America to the Presbyterian Council that met in Edinburgh, July 2, 1877, as his report to the Committee on Creeds and Confessions appointed by said Council :

"The United Presbyterian Church of North America" is the result of a union formed in the year 1858 between "the Associate Presbyterian Church of North America" and "the Associate Reformed Church in North America."

The highest court of the Associate Presbyterian Church at the time of the aforesaid union was "The Associate Synod of North America."

The standards of this Church at that time were those which had been previously adopted by the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania. These standards consisted of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and a "declaration and testimony for the doctrine and order of the Church of Christ." This "Testimony," as it was commonly called, was adopted by the "Associate Presbytery" at Pequea, Pennsylvania, on the 25th of August, 1784.

The following extract from an "Act of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, concerning the admission of Church-members to Communion, passed at Philadelphia, April 28, 1791," will indicate the view of that Presbytery as to the binding obligation of the Standards of the Associate Presbyterian Church upon its members :