

THE  
AMERICAN  
PRESBYTERIAN AND THEOLOGICAL  
REVIEW.

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NEW SERIES. No. XX—OCTOBER, 1867.

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ART. 1.—THE VISION THEORY OF THE RESURREC-  
TION OF JESUS CHRIST.

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[Continued from No. XIX, page 277.]

We return, now, to the the narratives of this fact in the Gospels and the Acts. It is difficult to repress a feeling of indignation at the unfair criticism these books have received under the pretense of historical research. Ewald, Schenkel and others, hold a theory which corresponds nearer to Mark than to the other Gospels. Therefore, the second Gospel—not the copy which we possess, of course, but the “Urmarcus” of which this is a later corruption—is the original document from which all the others are derived.\* Schleiermacher and many of his pupils, with Hase, find their theory of miracles more in accord with John, than with the synoptists; so they hold fast to the fourth Gospel as the work of an eye-witness. Beyschlag, and many of the most determined opponents of the mythical school, seek to avoid the dif-

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\* Schenkel, Vol. I, 21.

other minds in the same direction, may stimulate abler pens to the discussion of the theme, and may result in combining the wisdom of the Church in the production of a creed, in the adoption of which all portions of the Church may heartily unite.

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#### ART. VI.—PRESBYTERIAN REUNION.

Thirty years ago the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America was divided. The rupture was preceded by violent ecclesiastical agitations, and bitter doctrinal controversies. A new generation has since grown up, and a new and calmer spirit pervades our churches. By a sure instinct they have been coming nearer together. The question about voluntary societies has become insignificant; the doctrinal differences are fading away; the Plan of Union is well nigh obsolete; slavery is abolished throughout the land, by a higher than ecclesiastical authority; the Southern Presbyterian churches of both Schools are together, and by themselves, and likely to remain so for some time. The whole of the new generation of ministers, and the great body of the laity, in both branches of the church, see no sufficient reason for continuing a division, which weakens and embarrasses us at many points, which is a reproach to our Christianity, and an incubus upon our proper Christian work. We have the same standards of doctrine and polity; we are distinguished by identical family characteristics from the other denominations around us; we are living and working for the same ends, in the same towns and villages across the broad central belt of our common country; we are planting our missionary and feeble churches side by side in our new states and territories, and so wasting our strength. Why, then, should we stay longer asunder?

Wise and good men have been asking this question for the

last ten years ; and the time has now come when it must be answered. Before God and our consciences, acting in the name of the Great Head of the Church, and under the most solemn sense of our responsibility to Him and to his Church, we are summoned to answer this question, on which so much depends. No more momentous ecclesiastical decision is now pending. Personal and partisan considerations are as the small dust in the balance. And we are to answer it in view of the present and the future, rather than of the past. The stress is not on what we may have been, but on what we now are, and what we are to be. Each side may honor for their services the men who bore aloft its banner in the contests of the past generation ; each may still claim that itself was then all right, and the other party all wrong ; but that it is not the question now before us. We have a present duty to perform ; and the past may be to us quite as much a warning as an example. He who reads the present only by the lights and shades of the past can not act wisely for the future. And we are in fact deciding rather for our posterity than for ourselves. Those who oppose reünion assume, then, a most serious responsibility. He who, at such a juncture, wrongly accuses brethren of heresy, that he may get an argument for continuance in schism, incurs a double guilt. He defames, that he may keep asunder.

The Presbyterian Churches, commonly called Old and New School, exchanged delegates for the first time in 1863, at Philadelphia, where the New School was in session, and at Peoria, where the Old School met. A thrill of joy swept through the churches, when these cordial and fraternal greetings were swiftly and widely diffused. The *Princeton Review* then said : " Every Christian must rejoice in the spirit manifested in both the venerable bodies, which have thus auspiciously inaugurated the measures which contemplate the ultimate reünion of the great churches which they represent . . . . All the causes [which led to the separation] are gradually ceasing to exist." All felt what was coming. The prog-

ress of the war drew our churches together. The Old School, became, as a whole, as loyal, and as outspoken on the subject of slavery, as the New School. Their extreme Border State men were driven to the wall. Matters advanced so rapidly that, in 1866, large and able committees were appointed by both Assemblies, to consider the terms of reünion. After repeated, prayerful and encouraging conferences, they agreed, with most unexpected unanimity, upon a joint Report. This Report is able, candid, acute and conciliatory. It is a noble basis, possibly with some slight modifications, for a magnanimous, cordial and permanent reünion. The fact that our admirable committees were able, after a prolonged, sharp and yet most courteous discussion, to agree on this document, is an indication and presage of what we hold to be the fact about our two churches,—that they are already one in fact, in heart and mind, and only need to come together, and talk with each other in a Christian mood, in order to arrive at the same unanimity (with some stern exceptions), which characterised the deliberations and results of the joint committees. Their Report covers all the grounds of difference, and is as follows :

PROPOSED TERMS OF REÜNION 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 questions 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 in a great degree inoperative ; and that two bodies, bearing the same name, adopting the same Constitution, and claiming the same corporate rights, can not 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 Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures ;" and its fair, historical sense, as it is accepted by the two bodies in opposition to Antinomianism and Fatalism on the one hand, and to Arminianism and Pelagianism on the other, shall be regarded as the sense in which it is received and adopted ; and the Government and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in the United States shall continue to 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 ; and all the churches connected with the united body, not thoroughly Presbyterian in their organization, shall be advised to perfect their organization as soon as is permitted by the highest interests to be consulted ; no other shall be chosen Commissioners to the General Assembly as are eligible according to the Constitution of the Church.

3. The boundaries of the several Presbyteries and Synods,

shall be adjusted by the General Assembly of the united Church.

4. 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 reestablished in the united body.

5. The corporate right, 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 left 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. When it shall be ascertained that the requisite number of Presbyteries of the two bodies have approved the terms of union as hereinafter provided for, the two General Assemblies shall each appoint a Committee of seven, none of them having an official relation to either the Board or the Committee of Publication, who shall constitute a Joint Committee, whose duty it shall be to revise the Catalogues of the existing publications of the two Churches, and to make out a list from them of such books and tracts as shall be issued by the united Church; and any Catalogue thus made out, in order to its adoption, shall be approved by at least five members of each Committee.

9. If, at any time after the Union has been effected, any of

the Theological Seminaries, under the care and control of the General Assembly, shall desire to put themselves under Synodical control, they shall be permitted to do so at the request of their Boards of direction ; and those Seminaries which are independent in their organization shall have no privilege of putting themselves under ecclesiastical control, to the end that, if practicable, a system of ecclesiastical supervision of such Institutions may ultimately prevail through the entire united Church.

10. 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 consistent with their convictions of duty, to the general custom of the Church prior to the controversies that resulted in the separation.

11. The terms of the Reunion shall be of binding force, if they shall be 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.

12. The terms of the Reunion shall be published by direction of the General Assemblies of 1867, for the deliberate examination of both Branches of the Church, and the Joint Committee shall report to the General Assemblies of 1868 any modification of them they may deem desirable, in view of any new light that may have been received during the year.

13. It is recommended that the Hon. DANIEL HAINES, and the Hon. HENRY W. GREEN, LL.D., of New Jersey, DANIEL LORD, LL.D., and THEODORE W. DWIGHT, LL.D., of New York, and Hon. WILLIAM STRONG and Hon. GEO. SHARSWOOD, LL.D., of Pennsylvania, be appointed by the General Assemblies a Committee to investigate all questions of property and of

vested rights, as they may stand related to the matter of Reunion, and this Committee shall report to the Joint Committee as early as the first of January, 1868.

14. It is evident that, in order to adapt our ecclesiastical system to the necessities and circumstances of the united Church as a greatly enlarged and widely extended body, some changes in the Constitution will be required. The Joint Committee, therefore, request the two General Assemblies to instruct them in regard to the preparation of an additional article on this subject, to be reported to the Assemblies of 1868.

Signed, by order of the Joint Committee,

CHARLES W. BEATTY, Chairman.

EDWIN F. HATFIELD, Secretary.

NEW YORK, May 7th, 1867.

Leaving their Report with the General Assemblies and the ministers and churches of their denomination throughout the land, your Committee can not disregard the Providential auspices under which their recommendations await decision. The present is thought to be a favorable time, now that many questions of former controversy have lost their interest, for adopting a magnanimous policy suited to the necessities of our country and the world. The Presbyterian Church has a history of great renown. It has been intimately associated with civil and religious liberty in both hemispheres. Its republican and representative character, the parity of its clergy, the simplicity of its order, the equity of its administration, its sympathy with our institutions, its ardent patriotism in all stages of our history, its flexible adaptation to our heterogeneous population, its liberal support of schools, colleges, and seminaries designed for general education and theological culture, its firm and steadfast faith in the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom, and that by means of revealed truth and the special effusions of the Holy Spirit in distinction from all trust in human arts and devices, all unite to promise, if we are wise and faithful, a future for the Presbyterian Church in



these United States greater and better than all the past. Amid the changes which have occurred around us, we are confident that nothing true and good will ever recede or decay; and it becomes all those who love the faith, order, and worship, abounding in love and hope, to pray that God would count them worthy of their calling, that they may fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them, and they in Him, according to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Signed, by order of the Committee,

WILLIAM ADAMS, Chairman.

NEW YORK, May 7th, 1867.

In the Old School Assembly, which met last May at Cincinnati, this Report was referred to a Special Committee, a majority of whom brought in a series of resolutions, adopted by a nearly unanimous vote, the most important of which are the first, which "recognizes in the unanimity of the Joint Committee the finger of God as pointing toward an early and cordial reunion of the two sister churches now so long separated"; and the seventh, which declares that "the Assembly is not called upon to express either approbation or disapprobation of the terms of reunion presented by the Committee in its details." This Assembly also declined to instruct the Joint Committee to bring in an article on the "changes in the Constitution" that may be required after reunion. The minority of the Special Committee in that Assembly brought in a Report, asking that their Committee on Reunion be instructed to obtain, 1. A more definite statement of the doctrinal basis; 2. An exclusion of "Committee-men" (as under the Plan of Union) from the church courts; and, 3. An express recognition of the right and duty of each Presbytery to be satisfied of the soundness of every minister it receives. After a close debate, these resolutions were rejected by the decisive vote of 152 to 64.

The New School Assembly, at Rochester, adopted the Re-

port of the Joint Committee with entire unanimity, including the fourteenth article on "the changes in the Constitution." They say "that results have already been reached full of promise and hope; that, whatever concessions have been made, they only indicate how near the two parts of the divided Church have approached each other; that nothing more and nothing less than Christian charity would dictate has been yielded; and that, in the adjustment of any difficulties or differences, a proper regard has been preserved for the honor and rights of the respective bodies." And they add, that the Report as adopted still "leaves the General Assemblies of 1868 free to act with reference to these terms of Reunion, in whole or in part, as providential signs may indicate; and, if advisable, to submit them to the constitutional and final action of the Presbyteries. Ample opportunity is thus afforded for a full and deliberate consideration of the whole subject, in all its bearings, as they shall affect local interests or the well-being of the entire Church."

It was, of course, to be expected that so momentous a Report would be closely scrutinized. The Joint Committee invite suggestions, from both friends and opponents, on all the proposed articles of agreement. Every sentence and clause should be scanned. Each side ought to be convinced that the other, as well as itself, is prepared for reunion. This can, indeed, be fully determined only by the final votes in the Assemblies and Presbyteries, but testimony from all quarters may, in the meanwhile, indicate the mind of the church. The Presbyteries are already taking up the matter. Our religious journals, on both sides, are debating it somewhat warmly. This is as it should be; for it is better for us not to press immediate reunion, if we are to come together only for strife and debate. Let us have the debate first, that when we "meet to part no more" it may be only with peace and thankfulness.

At the same time, in such a preliminary discussion, it is all-important that we should be candid and set down naught in

malice. We are bound by the most solemn considerations to judge each others' position and words in the most charitable manner. Each must, to some extent, take the other's testimony about itself. Neither should impute to the other what that other expressly disavows: for when this is done, and persisted in, all possible basis for reünion is gone. The moral tie of all reünion is mutual confidence. More than this is indeed needed, but this is vital.

And our religious newspapers, on both sides, it must be confessed, have, with slight exceptions, thus far conducted the discussion in a good spirit, trying to bring out the real facts of the case. Dr. Monfort, of Cincinnati, a member of the Joint Committee, has gone into the subject, in the *Presbyter*, with the most fulness and ability. *The Banner*, of Pittsburg, has done good service; and *The Presbyterian*, of Philadelphia, though not fully decided, has been entirely fair. The New School journals have all favored the Report. The general tone of discussion was manly and conciliatory, until the publication of an article in the *Princeton Review*, in July, giving an account of the last Assembly. Everybody knew that that *Review* would oppose reünion. Ever since the division, which it at first opposed, it has been uncompromising toward the New School. It has, recently, been fond of the conceit of likening us to "secessionists" and "rebels," and the Old School to the loyal nation. Two years ago, it advocated the reädmission of the seceded Southern churches, with all the guilt of secession in both state and church upon them, back to the fellowship of the Northern church, without any conditions; while it insisted, at the same time, that the New School should be reädmitted only on condition of repenting of sins it was not committing, and recanting heresies it had always repudiated. So that, unless it had experienced a remarkable change, all knew that its opposition to reünion would be an inevitable part of the programme. Progress, in this world, is through antagonisms; and here was the antagonism in our progress to reünion. But, in spite of all the experience of the past, we did not really

anticipate just that style of opposition which these last tactics have developed. We had supposed that some feeble rays of the general spirit of conciliation and courtesy, which is pervading our churches, might have been reflected from this mirror; but it seems that it is a mirror which reflects only past feuds and not present harmonies. In all the heat of the fierce controversies, thirty years ago, no more reckless or distorted representations of the New School positions were ever penned than have just appeared in the *Princeton Review*. We say this deliberately, for we must say it. We owe it to ourselves not to be silent under such imputations. Principles are ascribed to us which we have uniformly disavowed, and doctrines we have never cherished. If the New School and the Old School be as here represented, all talk about reunion is a waste of breath; for the *Review* knows that we deny these charges, and yet reiterates them, as if its dictum were infallible against our disclaimer: how, then, can we ever come to terms? In discussing the points here made, we mean to use great plainness of speech, following the example set us by the *Review*; but even in doing this, we trust that we may be kept from ascribing to the other side what it would indignantly reject as a calumny. We shall also discuss these points in a strictly impersonal way, taking the *Princeton Review* as the representative of certain opinions and prejudices. Men are of comparatively slight account in such a debate.

The whole tone of its discussion is that of an argument for a foregone conclusion; it is not an inquiry, but an indictment and a judgment. It is the spirit of an advocate, intent at all hazards in making out his case. The thesis is, that reunion is now impossible; this is "demonstrated" by divers dicta. It is not an inquiry whether the New School be heretical, but the point-blank assertion that it does foster heresy. It does not attempt to prove that we subscribe to the Confession in an "immoral" way, but it roundly declares that we allow it to be done. Reunion was rapidly advancing. Both Assemblies encouraged it. It must be blocked if possible. A strong

assault must be made at once on the advancing lines. The danger is so imminent, that there is hardly time for argument ; it is dictation and authority. The faithful are told that the ark is in danger ; that all they hold dear is on the verge of ruin ; that more than half of their own number have already struck their arms and capitulated, and must be brought back, or else the heresies and immoral principles of the New School will speedily overwhelm them. All of which is just in place in the midst of negotiations for peace, in the course of which the Old School Assembly solemnly enjoins on all its churches and ministers "to cherish fraternal feelings, to cultivate Christian intercourse . . . and to avoid all needless controversies and competitions adapted to perpetuate division and strife." (Minutes, 1866.) And so the *Princeton Review*, to honor its own Assembly, rakes up old charges against us, in the most exaggerated and embittered form. This, to say the least, is a novel way of promoting "fraternal feelings." It may come back to plague the inventor.

The *Princeton Review* seems to be quite oblivious of the great changes which have come over both "schools" since the acts of excision. Some of these are patent to all who have eyes and are willing to see ; others are more hidden and subtle, but not the less real, though they may not be so readily put into formulas. Among the former are the notorious facts, that the New School is thoroughly organized as a Presbyterian body, having renounced the vain attempt to combine incongruous elements in its system of church order, and no longer favoring even the vestiges of the Plan of Union for any future churches ; that it is not strenuous as to the support of voluntary societies ; that it is separated in all church action from Congregationalism ; that many of its more extreme men have willingly gone into other church connections ; that certain objectionable forms of doctrine and of practice are no more taught in its pulpits and seminaries ; that it, in short, has become a homogeneous body, on the basis of the standards of the Presbyterian church ; and that, especially in case of

reunion, all these tendencies will be accelerated and carried to their completion. In the Old School, too, there is, if we mistake not, less disposition to insist on the mere technicalities of systematic theology; a position harmonious with ours on the subject of human rights and bondage; a greater willingness to hear and credit our testimony about ourselves; a desire, in short, to look at the points of agreement rather than at the differences; and an increasing disposition, while clinging to the essentials, to let the non-essentials adjust themselves. In social, political, ecclesiastical and even doctrinal matters, we can no longer draw our lines outside of both schools. There are Old School men in New School churches, and New School in the Old, and they are liked in both. The distinction of New England and Scotch-Irish belongs to the past. Nine-tenths of our laymen do not know the points of difference; and two-thirds of our ministers do not mind them. They are discussed in our seminaries, but not much in our pulpits. True, if certain phrases be started, as imputation, inability and limited atonement, some ears at once become erect, and neither extreme can quite see through the definitions and philosophy of the other; but the disputation is generally adjourned, *nemine contradicente*; and the disputants go into their pulpits and preach the same grand, old doctrines of our Reformed Confession, the same "system of doctrine" in its fitting terms; and the people hear them gladly, and sinners are converted and saints built up in the immemorial faith of the Church of our Redeemer. This is about the fair state of the case now in both branches of the Presbyterian church. Strong, subtle, unseen, divine influences are drawing them nearer and closer—even to each others' hearts. The breath of a new and better life is wafted over us from above. We feel and know its serene energy. It comes from the deepest instincts of the Christian heart. Day by day it is gathering nutriment and vigor, and struggling to put on its full and radiant form of harmony and beauty. It is a partial fulfilment of our Lord's intercessory prayer, that they all may

be one! It is the voice of the Spirit to our churches. They who fight against it know not what they do.

The first specific point made by the *Princeton Review* shows its animus, viz.: that the Reunion of the churches "concerns the very existence" of the Old School Church; that the Report calls upon them "to renounce that in which our special identity consists;" "that the historical reality known and revered as the Old School Presbyterian Church will cease to exist," and, therefore, "with the opponents of the proposed union, it is a matter of conscience," while with its advocates it is only "a matter of expediency, or, at most, of sentiment." (pp. 502-3.) Is it not rather an assumption, that the advocates of reunion, both Old School and New School, have no "conscience" in the matter, but are only controlled by "expediency" or "sentiment"? Who gave anybody a monopoly of conscience in this debate? The argument, too is fallacious. If it has any force, it is an estoppel on all possible projects for reunion. If the Old School is bound in conscience not to renounce its "identity" as Old School, of course there can be no reunion, but only absorption. Reunion implies, that it is willing to put off "this fond and false identity," and "woo and clasp" a better mode of being. A bachelor cannot remain a bachelor and get married too. And how long has this Old School "identity" been in existence? Just as long as the New School, and no longer. If the two are reunited, their separate identity, of course, is lost. But this identity consists, in each case, chiefly in its antagonism to the other. What will be lost is this antagonism, and nothing more. The reunited body will have the same Confession and Catechisms and Government and Representation; only the presbyteries will send Commissioners to one Assembly instead of two. The proper Presbyterian identity will remain unchanged. It may, indeed, be said, that it is best to have just such a separate body as the Old School, forever apart from all others, as a standing memorial of certain peculiar views and principles. But a church is not merely a monument: the Greek Church

called itself "orthodox" and became stagnant. Can not something be conceived more perfect than even the Old School Presbyterian Church just as it now is? Would it not be a good thing to have a church both conservative and progressive, liberal while true to the faith, storing the wealth of the past and, also, provident for the wants of the future, cordially accepting its historic symbols while recognizing infallibility only in the Divine Word, combining and adjusting all the diverse elements, by whose perpetual inter-action the highest forms of life are engendered? We would rather be in a church which contained both Calvin and Edwards, both Alexander and Richards, than in one which had only one of these; and we would not stay in a church which would cast out any one of them.

The *Princeton Review* further asserts, that in the proposed plan of reünion everything has been sacrificed by the Old School to the New; that the Old School members of the Joint Committee, and two thirds of the last O. S. Assembly, and all Old School men who advocate this plan, have "surrendered at discretion," and given up all the principles which distinguish that venerable body. The acceptance of this plan, it says, would involve "a great moral wrong." It spares neither friend nor foe; all that do not agree with it have slight claims to conscience, or orthodoxy, or faithful adherence to the standards. This sweeping charge, now, has in it a fallacious semblance of truth, while it is essentially untrue. Of course, in all questions between two parties about reüniting on fair and equal terms, the stricter party will always seem to yield the most for the sake of peace; it is in its very province and position, that it appears to exercise the grace of magnanimity more conspicuously. It is essential to reünion, that there be some concessions in deference to each others' rights; and such benignity would be most significant where it was most required. If the *Princeton Review* would only once speak out fairly and kindly about the New School, we have no doubt it would seem to have "surrendered at discretion" all



that it has been so long fighting for ; but it might none the less be a hopeful sign.—Taking Old School and New School, however, as they were thirty years ago, and as they now are, it can not by any means be said that in the proposed plan the New School has made no concessions. It says nothing about the excising act, though it still thinks it unconstitutional ; in all that concerns Presbyterian order and organization, and affiliation with outside bodies, it concedes everything ; it gives in a more unreserved adhesion to our symbols, with entire unanimity, than it could then have done ; it gives up its distinctive committees and organizations, built up entirely by its own energy ; in respect to the churches formed on the Plan of Union, and to Seminaries, it is willing to do all that it can in consistency with the rights of others ; it takes the place of a minority, when all its own schemes and operations are vigorous and growing ; if it looked chiefly to personal and denominational ends, it would be wiser for it to remain separate.—But, after all, have we not grown so near together, that neither really, under this plan, “surrenders” aught to the other ? Is there much of a sacrifice on either side ? What is sacrificed, what is not gained, if both are really willing to receive the same old standards in the same spirit ?—As to the Old School men, so far as appears, a very large majority of the Old School itself, who are accused by the *Review* of giving up all their distinctive principles,—they probably know what they are about and are well able to defend themselves. They comprise some of the most honored names in the Presbyterian Church of this country, far above the reach of wholesale accusations. But it certainly is a curious, if not entertaining spectacle, to have on one side nearly all of the best Committee that could be found in the Old School, and more than two-thirds of its last Assembly, and most of its laymen, agreeing to a carefully proposed plan,—and then to have its only quarterly *Review* announce in magisterial terms, that they have all gone over to the enemy, and prophesy that this plan thus sanctioned, will “be nearly unanimously rejected by our

branch of the church." It must be very cogent arguments that can achieve such a victory ; mere dictation will not be likely to do it.

We come, now, to the special objections made to the Plan and to the New School :

1. The first count in the indictment is upon the interpretation of what is commonly called "the terms of subscription," or, more properly, the form of assent, to our Confession of Faith. Our ministers, ruling elders and deacons are required to receive this Confession "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." This is the whole of the formula ; and the question is upon its interpretation. The *Princeton Review* rightly considers this as a vital point, involving the personal honor and honesty of our ministry ; and it ought, therefore, to make no charges which cannot be proved. If it accuses us of holding an "immoral" principle, and the accusation is not sustained, it is itself liable to the counter charge of wilful defamation ; and its own unproved accusation against us is the proof of its guilt.

It says, that we hold to "a latitudinarian principle of subscription," which "allows men to adopt our system, who notoriously do not adopt it ;" that this is "a revival of the famous doctrine of the Oxford Tract No. 90, which asserted the propriety of signing a creed in a 'non-natural' sense ;" and further (pp. 505-6), that "*this is the very principle which constitutes the sum and substance of the Plan of Union proposed in the Report of the Joint Committee of fifteen.*" That is, not only does the New School adopt this vicious and dishonest principle, but it is also sanctioned by the Old School Joint Committee, and by all in both schools who advocate the adoption of the Report. All these have been given over to blindness of mind on this clear question.

Against this, we take the open ground, that the New School has never sanctioned, directly or indirectly, but, on the contrary, has uniformly repudiated the principle here ascribed to it ; still further, that it holds to the principle of subscription

now advocated by the *Princeton Review*, so that there is no ground of difference on this point between the two schools; and, that the Report of the Committee is so far from adopting the lax principle of subscription, that it is wholly inconsistent with it.

There are three ways, says the *Review*, in which the form of assent has been interpreted: 1. As signifying the adoption "of every proposition" in the Confession; 2. As meaning just what the words say, that "the system of doctrine" contained in the Confession, that is, the Calvinistic or Reformed system, is adopted; 3. That by "system of doctrine" is here meant "the essential doctrines of Christianity and nothing more." The first it rejects; the second it defends; the third it ascribes to the New School and to the Committee's Report. We also reject the first, accept the second, and repudiate the third: this is the New School view, and there is no proper evidence to the contrary. The *Princeton Review* has foisted upon us a theory we have never espoused; and done this to rouse the conscience of Old School men and to prevent reunion. Does the end justify the means?

During its long and consistent career that *Review* has discussed the question of subscription at various times, with different degrees of precision. In its third volume, October, 1831, it equally opposed two extremes—that latitude, which embraces only "the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as they are recognized by all evangelical denominations"; and that strictness which "precludes all diversity in the manner of receiving and explaining the doctrines" of the Confession. The "profession to adopt the system of doctrines," it said, implies, that we "profess to believe the whole series of doctrines which go to make up the Calvinistic system, in opposition to the Socinian, Pelagian, Semi-Pelagian, Arminian, or any other opposite and inconsistent view of Christianity." "The Confession," it stated, "as formed by the Westminster divines, was an acknowledged compromise between two classes of theologians. When adopted by the Presbyterian church in this country it was with the distinct understanding that the

mode of subscription did not imply strict conformity of views."\* And much more to the same effect. In this view there was a general agreement. Mr. Birnes, in his Defence before the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, 1835, directly refers to it as expressing his "own views," (pp. 23-25 of his "Defence").

This same *Review*, in July, 1858, said, unqualifiedly, that the Old School Presbyterian Church "could not hold together a week, if we made the adoption of all its [the Confession's] propositions a condition of ministerial fellowship." Being thereupon called to account, it published, in October, 1858, an extended article on the "Adoption of the Confession of Faith," reiterating the same views as in 1831, but adding an exposition and refutation of what it called the New School theory. It classified the theories as 1, "Substance of doctrine;" 2, "Every proposition;" 3, "System of doctrine." The first, it said, was New School and indefinite; the second was extreme and impracticable; the third was the true "via media," and its own view. But the New School at once objected to ascribing to them any such indefinite view as that presented under the title "substance of doctrine." No declaration of the New School as a body, nor of those considered as its representatives, could be, or was, cited in favor of such a loose phrase; and by many New School men it was publicly and definitely denied. We agreed to the "system of doctrine" view, and agreed, also, in condemning the "every proposition theory," as inconsistent with the plain terms of the Adopting Act, and with the uniform practice of the Presbyterian church. In respect to this last, the *ipsissima verba* theory, viz.: that we receive "every proposition" contained in the Confession, the *Princeton Review* said, and still says, that "it is contrary to the plain historical meaning of the words" of assent; that it "is contrary to the mind of the church;" that it is "impracticable, and could not to be carried out without working the certain and immediate ruin of the church;" that it tends to "vitiate" the ministry — for "the over-strict, the world

\* Bibl. Repertory, Vol. iii, 521-523.

over, are the least faithful," etc. To all this we heartily agree. We disallow the phrase "substance of doctrine," because it is indefinite, easily misunderstood, and does not suggest the right theory.

That right theory is found in a simple and honest interpretation of the ordination formula, "that we receive the Confession of Faith as containing the *system of doctrine* taught in the Holy Scriptures." This declares that the system of the Confession is the system taught in the Bible. The system of the Confession, as everybody knows, is the Reformed or Calvinistic system, in distinction from the Lutheran, the Arminian, the Antinomian, the Pelagian, and the Roman Catholic. No one can honestly and fairly subscribe the Confession who does not accept the Reformed or Calvinistic system.

This is the plain sense of the Adopting Act of 1729. The Synod there declared its approval of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, "as being in all *the essential and necessary articles*, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine;" and it further said, that if any minister had "any scruples about any article, he was to declare the same to the Presbytery or Synod," and was still to be admitted, if the scruples were only about "articles not essential and necessary." On the same day, too, the Synod heard "each others' scruples," "agreed to their solution," and formally adopted the Confession on this basis. The Synod of 1736 (Minutes, p. 126) gave a stricter interpretation, saying that the Confession, etc., was, and was to be, adopted "without the least variation or alteration, and without any regard to said *distinctions*," (i. e., to the distinctions contained in the preliminary act). But we do not see how they could say this, seeing that, as a matter of fact, those distinctions are referred to in the Adopting Act itself, where it says that "scruples" were proposed and a "solution of them" agreed upon. And, if we rightly understand the *Princeton Review*, it could not say that no reference is to be had to such "distinctions," viz. : between

articles essential and non-essential, otherwise its whole argument against the "every proposition" theory topples over.— Again, in 1758, after the first division, the first article of the "Plan of Union" declares, that the Synods of New York and Philadelphia, "having always received and approved the Westminster Confession, etc., as an orthodox and excellent system of Christian doctrine, we do still receive the same as the Confession of our Faith, strictly enjoining it on all our members and probationers for the ministry, that they preach and teach according to the form of sound words in said Confession and Catechisms, and avoid and oppose all errors contrary thereto." These are the main facts in the case; and they fully and only sanction the intermediate theory of subscription, viz. : that it is an adoption of the essential and necessary articles of the Confession itself, as containing the Reformed or Calvinistic system of faith.

The last number of the *Princeton Review* goes over substantially the same ground with the article in 1858, but with one significant variation. It expounds the "every proposition" theory, and the "system of doctrine" theory as before; but it now ascribes to the New School another and still looser dalliance with subscription. It says that our view, sanctioned, too, by the Joint Committee, is, that we adopt the Confession as containing "the essential doctrines of Christianity and nothing more." We do not merely adopt it for "substance of doctrine" but have reached a still lower degree of indefiniteness and indifference. We act, it is declared, on a principle which is "immoral," "destructive," "contrary to the very principle on which our church was founded;" which allows us to assent to what we deny, "to reject the system we profess to believe," and which brings in heresies and divisions.

Here is a broad and plain charge, and on it we take a plain and sharp issue. Our Christian honor and integrity are assailed, and we can not let it pass in silence. The charge is false and groundless. There is no evidence for it, either in the records

of our church, or the declarations of our leading representatives. It is a lawless fiction, imputed to us by one who is not our representative.

What is the evidence alleged for it? At the time of the Adopting Act, Presidents Dickinson and Davies, it is said, contended for the position, that the Synod required candidates to adopt the Confession only as to the "articles essential to Christianity." Very well; what if they did? How are we now responsible for these antiquated views unless we advocate and defend them? Has the New School Church, have any of its divines, ever done this?—Dr. Gillett in his able "History of the Presbyterian Church," gives a fair account of this matter, saying that the Synod of 1736 adopted a too unqualified interpretation of the form of assent, viz.: that it was to be "without the least variation or alteration, and without any regard to said distinctions," i. e., to the distinctions contained in the preliminary act. Now Dr. Gillett is right in saying, that the Synod of 1736 could not undo what the Synod of 1729 had done; for the latter, as we have seen, had actually adopted the Confession with the distinctions expressed in the preliminary act. If the Synod meant, as the *Princeton Review* says, (p. 516, note,) that these "distinctions" referred only to "what is essential to *Christianity* and what is not," they might have expressed themselves more clearly,—and they would have been correct in saying that the Confession is not to be received on the basis of such a distinction. But they certainly seem to deny that any "distinctions" whatever were made by the Synod of 1729, or could be made; and this is plainly incorrect. For the Adopting Act, and the whole church ever since, including the *Princeton Review*, have made and must make a plain distinction between articles essential to the integrity of the Reformed system and articles not thus essential. But however this may be, Dr. Gillett is speaking as a historian; he gives the facts; he does not say that the New School adopts this theory of "the essentials of Christianity," as their theory of subscription. The *Princeton Re-*

*view*, however, asserts that the "New School as a church is committed to the "broad-church principle," because our Publication Committee issued Dr. Gillett's book." This is an extraordinary argument. Even if Dr. Gillett had formally, in our name, espoused the theory, which he has not, the church could not thus be committed to it. The *Princeton Review* itself, in speaking of the publications of its own church, (1858, p. 562,) says, "the Board of Publication is *not the Church*, and therefore no *special authority belongs to any of its publications*." It is convenient to have the articles in a *Review* anonymous, for then the contradictions do not seem quite so glaring.

And will it be believed, that this is the only direct evidence, which the *Princeton Review* has to offer in support of its dogmatic position about our principle of subscription? And yet this is the fact of the case. Its indirect proof, from our doctrinal differences, we shall soon consider. But of direct, historical evidence it has nothing at all; no declarations of Assembly, Presbytery or Synod; no avowals of our leading men. It is an unsupported accusation; and because it is so grave, we stamp it as false in fact and a calumny.

The *Review* adds, that this "broad-church principle constitutes the sum and substance of the Plan of Union proposed by the Joint Committee." Here, too, is a great error. Nothing in the plan favors it. A fair interpretation of the first article refutes it. That article says: "The Confession of Faith shall continue to be sincerely received and adopted as "containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures"; and its fair historical sense, as it is accepted by the two bodies in opposition to Antinomianism and Fatalism on the one hand, and to Arminianism and Pelagianism on the other, shall be regarded as the sense in which it is received and adopted." What theory of assent is here implied? Manifestly, and that only, of accepting "the system" as Calvinistic. There is not a hint about "substance of doctrine;" there is not a sidelong allusion to "essentials of Christianity only." Everybody knows that the "fair historical" sense of



the Confession is plainly and resolutely Calvinistic. And if this were doubtful, the following clause settles it, viz.: "as received by the two bodies in opposition to Antinomianism and Arminianism," etc. What system, what system only, stands thus between and opposed to Antinomianism and Arminianism? Only the Calvinistic. And the phrase, "as received by the two bodies" is directly connected with the words, "in opposition to," etc., without even the intervention of a comma\*; so that there is no possible doubt about its meaning that the Confession is received by both parties, in this, and this its only historic, sense. The words, "as it is received by the two bodies," are carefully chosen: they indicate what the two bodies *now* profess to be and believe, and wisely avoid reference to past differences. No candid mind can give any other sense to this article, than that it endorses the view, that the Confession is to be received in its integrity as containing the Reformed system of faith. It is a better statement of the true principle than that contained in the Plan of Union of 1758. How, then, does the *Princeton Review* dare to assert that it sanctions the latitudinarian scheme? It thus puts dishonor on its own brethren as well as on us. In its eagerness, it seems to suppose that those whom it is opposing can resort to subtle tricks of language to favor heresy.

As far as we are concerned, too, we see no possible objection, if it will allay any doubts, to adding another clause to this article, expressly declaring, what it undoubtedly implies, that by "the system of doctrine" is meant the system of the Confession itself, in its integrity, as Calvinistic or Reformed.

On this capital point of assent to the Confession, then, we conclude, that there is no real difference between the Old School and the New. We are both willing to accept it as containing the Reformed system of doctrine. We cordially agree, and so we are convinced would our whole New School ministry and eldership, to the statement of this theory as given in the *Princeton Review*. We only demand, that that

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\* It is so printed in the Minutes and special pamphlets of both Assemblies; but a comma is put in by the *Princeton Review*.

*Review* retract its false, damaging and unsupported statement of our views. Among honest and candid men, there is really no doubt or question as to what subscription implies. Any candidate, before any of our presbyteries, who should say that he received the Confession "as containing the essential principles of Christianity and no more," would be unhesitatingly rejected by them.

## 2. The Doctrinal Differences of the Two Schools.

Within the metes and bounds of the "fair historical" sense of the Confession of Faith, certain, somewhat undefined, differences in the mode of explaining its individual doctrines have always been recognized and allowed by the Presbyterian Church in the United States, as well as by all other Reformed churches. These allowable differences must, of course, be such as do not impair the integrity of the system, as distinguished from Lutheranism, Arminianism, Pelagianism, etc., nor vitiate any one of the doctrines that make up the system. But within these limits, there have been, and still are, very considerable diversities. In Switzerland there was a Stapfer as well as a Turretine; in France, there was the school of Saumur as well as that of Montauban; the Heidelberg Catechism and the Decrees of Dort are both Reformed Confessions, yet different in tone; Supralapsarianism, Sublapsarianism, and the Theology of the Covenants, were varying forms of the one Calvinism; the Confession of Westminster itself was a compromise between theological parties; our own Adopting Act recognizes differences upon points "not essential or necessary." The Calvinism of Edwards was of a different type from that even of Dickinson and Davies; Alexander and Woods, Ashbel Green and Richards, did not agree on all points. The Erskines and Glas, Dick and Hill, John Brown and Chalmers, were all Calvinists with variations. Every theological system, and every Confession, is to a certain extent an adjustment of antagonisms. The *Princeton Review*, in its last number, concedes that "the Old School, although averse to the modified Calvinism of New

England, as represented by such men as the late Drs. Richards and Griffin, of Newark, N. J., and many others who agreed with them, and although still more averse to the hyper-Calvinism of the Hopkinsians, never desired that men adopting those views should be excluded from the ministry in our church," (p. 517). If this is generally conceded by the Old School, we have a good starting point for coming to an understanding about even our doctrinal differences. For most of these men agreed in rejecting the explanations and philosophy of the *Princeton Review*, on the three points of imputation, inability and the extent of the atonement. The doctrines they held, but with differing adjustments. They did not regard the imputation of sin as immediate; they qualified the inability as "moral;" and they held to a general provision, though not to a universal application, of the atoning work of Christ. These views, then, are not inconsistent with an honest acceptance of the Confession, nor a bar to ministerial communion; and this by the concession of the *Princeton Review* itself.

That *Review*, also, in the same article, in arguing against the strictest constructionists, says: "No prosecution for doctrinal error has ever been attempted or sanctioned [in the Presbyterian Church of this country] except for errors which were regarded as involving the rejection, *not of explanations of doctrines*, but of the doctrines themselves." For example, in respect to original sin, it allows that either the theory of "representative responsibility," or that of "realism," or even that of "the general law of propagation"—although "not equally scriptural, or equally in harmony with our Confession, nevertheless *leave the doctrine intact*, and do not work a rejection of the system of which it is an essential part." "So also of the doctrine of inability. . . . if the fact be admitted, it is not essential whether the inability be called natural or moral." "Men," too, it goes on to say, "may differ as to the mode of God's providential government or the operations of his grace, and, retain the facts which constitute the essence of this

doctrinal scheme." "We do not expect that our ministers should adopt every proposition contained in our standards. This they are not required to do. But they are required to adopt the system ; and that system consists of certain doctrines, no one of which can be omitted without destroying its identity," (pp. 507, 509). All this is excellent against the strict constructionists, and favorable to reünion, and well worthy of being pondered by some brethren on both sides, who are clamorous for having all these doctrines set down, and assented to, in a final form, before we can come together.

Everybody knows that there are such doctrinal differences between the Old School and the New, chiefly in the explanations and philosophy of the doctrines and of the system. But are there not nearly as great differences in each school, as there are between the schools? We think there are. We have some pretty thorough Old School men on almost all the points in the New School ; we know many Old School ministers who can only be classified as New School in point of doctrine. The Old School is divided on the question of immediate and mediate imputation ; the distinction between natural and moral inability and ability, is recognised by many of their divines ; and they very generally preach that the atonement is sufficient for all, while we agree with them that it is applied only to the elect. All that we claim and say is, that these differences are consistent with an intelligent and honest adoption of the standards, and should be no bar to ministerial fellowship. The technical adjustment of them is not a condition of reünion.

It would be utterly impracticable and futile to attempt such an adjustment, and embody it in a Plan of Union. Both parties already have the same Confession of Faith and Catechisms, the best extant. All that we can do is to accept them in their essential and necessary articles, with a recognition of possible, though guarded, diversities of explanation, the system and doctrines remaining in their integrity. Just as soon as we go beyond this, we are involved in inextricable

logomachy. The old disputes, and feuds and warriors come into the van. Each side has its schemes and definitions. Quite a number of able men on both sides would be glad to add codicils to the Confession, and seal the final form of orthodoxy. We must be content to wait for this, till the church is wiser, and better and more united; until, in fact, somebody can give us a perfect form of faith in unison with a perfect system of philosophy, adjusting all antagonisms. A united Presbyterianism may possibly, on the eve of the millennium, breed such a theologian, but the time is not yet. We do not know the man, nor even the school that is now qualified to do this immortal work. The wisest and best and most learned men we have, are just the ones who would shrink from attempting it. Our tyros and partisans are all ready for it, and would not make much of it. The points of difference we ought to be willing, on all proper occasions, to state and discuss; they are important in their place, and some of them are essential to the order and coherence of the system; but they can not be embodied in a new confession.\* Any further questions that may arise, as to the orthodoxy of this or that man, are utterly irrelevant to reunion. No one man's system is good enough for the reunited church.

How is it, now, that the *Princeton Review*, after making so many concessions, is still able, on this point, to frame such an indictment against the New School, as to reject reunion? It does this, not by attempting to prove "the prevalence of heresy in the New School Church," or denying "its general orthodoxy," but by the unqualified assertion, that "the New School admits to its ministry men who "openly deny" the essential doctrines of the Confession, such as original sin, in-

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\* When the Southern Presbyterian churches reunited, in 1864, a kind of Confession was agreed upon informally, but not embodied in the act of reunion. That Confession may serve as a warning; it is theologically a confusing and inconsistent document. In particular, on immediate imputation, it "surrenders at discretion." In the reunion of 1758, no new confession seems to have been thought of.

ability, the atonement as a real satisfaction to the law and justice of God. It says, that "it is as clear as day," that this is the case; that our church "freely receives and ordains" men who do this; that the programme of the Joint Committee would allow it; and that therefore "union with the New School Church, on the proposed programme, would be the renunciation of a principle to which the Old School are pledged, in honor, in conscience, and by solemn vows." It charges the Old School members of the Committee with being virtually misled on this point by the New School; and seems somehow to have found out that, in that Committee, the New School members, when speaking of the orthodoxy of our church, were speaking only of themselves "individually," and said what is quite untrue of the New School Church as a whole. It says, "the New School members of the Committee assured them [the Old School members,] that as for themselves they did adopt the Confession as we do. This is no doubt true of them individually, but it is as clear as day that it is not true of the New School as a Church."

These are quite serious charges now all round. We venture the assertion, that the New School members of that Committee did not speak of themselves "individually" on this matter, but testified, from what they know of our church as a whole, that it did honestly accept the Confession of Faith. And does the *Princeton Review* know more about the real opinions of the New School than we do ourselves? The Searcher of hearts could not be more positive than is the *Review* on this point, where it must get its information chiefly from us, and where we directly contradict it. It says that "everybody" knows, what we say nobody can know—for it is not so. Men are not admitted to our ministry who deny these cardinal doctrines of the Reformed system. The charge is reckless and baseless. If the *Princeton Review* does not know better, it ought to know better. It is essentially unfair to judge a great religious body by hearsay and rumor, by the exaggerations and eccentricities of individuals, by past

feuds and not by present acts, by prejudicial conjectures and not by public documents and authentic records. But the *Review* gives no documentary evidence. It speaks *ex cathedra* as if its mere dictum established truth and fact.

To substantiate its accusation, it refers to a certain scheme of what it calls the "New Divinity," which it says, "is publicly avowed and taught by not a few of their [our] ministers." This scheme, as here presented, is what is popularly known as the New Haven theology, an eccentric and provincial phase of New England theology. But even the most consistent New Haven men would refuse assent to some of the points and many of the inferences here made. It is reduced to three propositions: 1. That "ability limits obligation," with the inferences, that there is no moral character before moral action, no hereditary depravity and no original sin. 2. "That a free agent can always act in opposition to any amount of influence that can be brought to bear upon him;" and that, consequently, certainty is inconsistent with free agency; God cannot control man's acts; there is no election; regeneration is the act of the sinner and not of God; and God cannot prevent sin in a moral system. 3. "A regard to our own happiness is the ground of obligation. We are bound to do whatever gives us most *enjoyment*. Our whole allegiance is to ourselves. If serving the world, sin, or Satan, would make us happier than serving God, we should be bound to serve sin."

This is the system, or its caricature; and the New School, it is alleged, has "refused to allow these doctrines to be condemned," ordains men who hold them, and they are "publicly taught" in our churches. We say, on the contrary, that the New School has virtually condemned this system as here presented; that it does not ordain men who hold it; and that some of the principles and all of the main inferences, as thus given, would be as universally repudiated among us as in the Old School. In respect to the "happiness" principle, for example, Dr. Taylor himself did not espouse it in the

sense or form here laid down ; but even in his more subtle mode of statement, it would be generally reprobated by the whole of the New School. And on the other points, the Auburn Convention formally adopted an "Explication of Doctrine," drawn up by the New School members of the Assembly of 1837, in which these topics were candidly explained, and the inferences above made formally repudiated. This is authentic and documentary evidence. Thus, they say expressly, that "God permitted the introduction of sin, not because He could not prevent it consistently with the moral freedom of his creatures, but for wise and benevolent reasons which He has not revealed." They speak of regeneration, as "a radical change of heart, produced by the special operations of the Holy Ghost, determining the sinner to that which is good." "Original sin is a natural bias to evil, resulting from the first apostasy, leading invariably and certainly to actual transgression. And all infants, as well as adults, in order to be saved, need redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost." "The sufferings and death of Christ were not symbolical, governmental, and instructive only, but were truly vicarious, *i. e.*, a substitute for the punishment due to transgressors." And so on other points.\*

That there are differences of opinion on certain abstract principles about the will, ability and inability, and the nature and mode of the divine influence, we do not deny. There are differences among ourselves ; there are differences in the Old School also ; there have always been, and may always be, differences in the church. For here is the mysterious region where the infinite and the finite, divine and human agency, come together ; and what mortal vision has penetrated that mystery ? Here is where moral obligation, moral agency, and personal responsibility are at stake. Divine sovereignty and human freedom here come to their closest contact, and the problem of theology is to save both. There is a fair and

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\* Dr. Monfort in *The Presbyterian* (Sept. 25) argues well and ably, that the paper on Doctrinal Errors, adopted by the Assembly of 1837, is the common property of both branches ; the New School never repealed it.



broad distinction between natural and moral ability and inability. The differences here, as they actually exist, are of more or less, rather than of Yes and No. We do not all agree in our philosophy and metaphysics; and do we need to do so, in order to ministerial fellowship? If any one so holds the fact of man's freedom and ability as to deny the doctrines of God's omnipotence, and of original sin, he of course could not accept our Confession of Faith, and would be rejected by our presbyteries. Does the *Princeton Review* know of any such, who have been accepted? We do not. A man may hold an abstract thesis, and deny our inferences from it; and we can not hold him responsible for our inferences. He may be inconsistent; but consistency, though a jewel, is not essential to ministerial communion; else we should find it difficult to fraternize even with the *Princeton Review* in all its moods. There must be toleration on points not essential and necessary, or there can not be either union or reünion.

We say, then, if any one demands that we should tie ourselves down to any single extreme explanations of the mooted points of imputation, inability, and a limited atonement, we could not accept even reünion at such a price. Even the *Princeton Review* does not seem to stand upon this. Some may hold and continue to teach immediate imputation, an unqualified inability, and an exclusive limitation in the very design of the atonement. But no one has the right to say that such views are essential to the integrity of the Reformed system, or to an honest adhesion to all its doctrines. Any school that does this, assumes what it has no right to assume; it creates a narrow and partial standard of orthodoxy, to which we owe no allegiance. Even if we held the same doctrines, we would deny the dictation. No man and no school can say, that historical Calvinism is necessarily identified with such partial views; other men, the best, wisest and most learned in both schools, know that this is not the case. The spirit that fosters reünion is opposed to such exclusive claims. For these extreme views represent one phase, and one only, of the Calvinistic system; there are other and

broader phases. It was, we believe, from the very first, a historical and theological mistake to put the defense of our Confession, against the one-sided theories of the "New Divinity," on these equally one-sided theories of the older Calvinism—as though these antagonisms represented the only phases of theological belief. This is not so. The bulk of our ministry and churches have never gone with either extreme; they have kept the true *via media*. In this middle and temperate zone lies the solid faith of our churches, making them strong for solid work.

On the points of doctrinal belief, then, it is our conviction, that the two schools are substantially agreed, and can unite in a common confession. There are no differences that may not honestly be brought under the constitutional form of assent, as explained by the *Princeton Review*. There are no differences which do not fairly come under historical Calvinism. We can both receive the Reformed system of faith, and its individual doctrines, in their integrity, while differing in explanations and proportions. If we did not believe this, we would not, and could not, favor reünion. Apart from theological technicalities and philosophical explanations, we are one in accepting that grand old system of faith, Pauline, Augustinian and Reformed, which has been the vital substance and stay of the church in its main conflicts with error and unbelief. We believe in the one only Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Godman, divine and human, consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity, and consubstantial with us men according to his humanity; and in the Holy Ghost, the lord and giver of life, who alone renews and sanctifies our fallen human nature. We believe that God created all things from nothing, by the word of his power; that in his all-wise providence He sustains and governs all his creatures and all their actions; that by his decree all things stand, that in his wise, holy and eternal purpose all our destiny, for time and for eternity, is embraced—yet so that violence is not done to the will of creature, nor is the liberty and contingency of second causes

taken away, but rather established. We also confess the essential doctrines, which make the distinguishing and vital substance of the Reformed system,—original sin, as derived from Adam, since we sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression ; total depravity, which makes us averse to all good, and unable, of ourselves, to repent and believe—yet so that this inability is moral, rooted also in our personal responsibility, and stricken with our own and not merely a foreign guilt ; the atoning work of our Lord, not symbolical and governmental only, but also a proper sacrifice for sin, and thus a satisfaction to the divine justice as well as a revelation of the divine love ; the covenant of redemption, wherein this atonement was made so general as to be sufficient for all and to be offered unto all, and so particular as to be effectually applied in the salvation of believers ; personal election unto everlasting life, and the final perseverance of those who are effectually called. Justification only by the righteousness of Christ, regeneration only by the power of the Holy Ghost, sanctification, progressive here and completed hereafter, and endless life in Christ, we equally confess and believe. With all the diversities of the imperfect and jarring speech of earth, there is amongst us a substantial accord in that which makes the unison and melody of the one language of heaven.

If such, now, be the state of the case as to our interpretation of the terms of subscription, and as to our real doctrinal belief,—what judgment must we and others form as to the representations made of us in the *Princeton Review*? We can not be silent under such imputations, for too much is at stake ; nor will we retort them. We are bound, on both sides, as matters now stand, to say nothing that we should wish to retract, provided the reunion is consummated. But the *Princeton Review* has said what, in common courtesy, it must take back, if we come together. It has made specific charges, which we definitely deny. They are charges which affect our Christian faith and honor. They are made in a

dictatorial tone. They have aroused a general feeling of indignation throughout our church, and among many in the Old School, who are surprised and grieved at these unproved denunciations in the midst of our reunion conferences. Such accusations put grave difficulties in the way of reunion, and they will be frowned upon by all in case we come together. Then, if not now, they must be given right up. Then, if not now, it will be a violation of Christian courtesy and honor, and a desecration of a fraternal compact, to assert or insinuate unproven charges of heresy, and false doctrine, and evasive subscription, against our ministry and our churches. We would not enter into reunion where any school or review was allowed to assume such a tone. Now it is done to prevent reunion; it is a desperate charge on which all is staked. If defeated, as we believe it will be, such things may be forgotten, if they are not reiterated. But these discordant and belligerent tones are sadly out of place in negotiations for reunion. Already many, very many, who have seen these violent accusations, and have read the emphatic and unanimous denial of all our journals and many of our leading men, are beginning to see that a cause which requires such means is one that ought not, for the good of the church, to carry the day. The whole argument against us has been pitched on the highest possible key; the Old School, it seems to have been thought, must be made to feel that their all was at stake, that heresy and latitudinarianism were about to overwhelm them; that the New School, irrevocably committed to the fostering of heterodoxy, had virtually hoodwinked and overslaughed the Old School members of the Joint Committee and their last Assembly—so that unless the Old School rose *en masse* and rejected the whole scheme, it would renounce the principles to which it is “pledged in honor, in conscience, and by solemn vows.” Now all this, when fairly and fully stated, is worse than uncharitableness, it is a blunder. Nobody can really believe it. The whole thing is overdone, and likely to go by the board. Nobody can believe that the Joint Committee

was so blind, and weak and silly. And nobody does believe, that there is in the Presbyterian Church any infallible teacher or supreme commander. It is quite too much for any review to claim a monopoly, not only of Presbyterian orthodoxy, but also of the Presbyterian conscience.

The character of the argument in the *Princeton Review* becomes still more apparent, when it presses the matter to the conclusion, that if this Plan of the Committee be adopted, the reunited church will have "forfeited the moral right to all endowments, whether of churches, or boards or seminaries;" and this on the ground, that this Plan "abandons the principles" on which the Presbyterian Church was founded. The writer is not speaking of the strictly "legal" questions, which are in the hands of an able Committee, but of the "moral" right; and it is this right which is said to be lost by this Plan! That is, this plan unpresbyterianizes the Presbyterian Church, so that it loses its proper identity, and becomes something else and opposite. This, now, we say, is a gross, an incredible, a fictitious plea. What does the Plan, then, mean and say? Why, simply that we reunite on the basis of an honest adherence to our common standards! And such a reunion, says the *Review*, works the "moral" forfeiture of all our endowments. Logic could not be more lame, nor exaggeration more unqualified.

In respect, then, to the charges of the *Princeton Review* against the Committee's Plan, and against the New School, on the capital points of assent to the Confession, and doctrinal soundness, we claim that they are refuted, partly by its manifest exaggerations, for such exaggeration is always a sign of conscious weakness, what is wanting in facts being made up by a painful stress of emphasis; partly by its concessions, for it really grants all for which we really contend, both as to doctrine and subscription; partly by its failure to give any proof of its wanton and cruel accusations; and also by the manifest animus of the article, which is to prevent reunion at all hazards, by arousing dormant suspicions, inflaming the *odium*

*theologicum*, firing the Presbyterian conscience, and rekindling a warfare of which the church is weary, and which will only lead to ceaseless discussion, dissension and division. If its end be gained, it will be gained by the ruin of the fairest prospects and best hopes of the Presbyterian Church in these United States.

We had intended to comment on other articles in the Plan of the Committee, but have not now the space. These two are fundamental; if we can come to an agreement here, all the other points may be adjusted, if need be by further mutual concessions. And we can come to an agreement here, on the basis of the concessions made by the *Princeton Review*. Let it abandon its groundless imputations and the way is clear. Or, does that *Review* really mean, not liking to say,—“letting ‘I dare not’ wait upon ‘I would’”—that reunion is impossible until the three peculiarities of the Princeton type of theology are accepted by our New School churches. Does it mean, that we must repeat its shibboleths of immediate imputation, unqualified inability, and a partial atonement? If this is what it means, both the Old School and the New School ought to understand it; and then we shall see, whether even the Old School is prepared to make this an imperative condition. If it is, reunion is undesirable and impossible. We will concede all we can, but concessions have their limits.

The chief responsibility for reunion now rests with the Old School. God in his Providence has laid this task upon it, and momentous results are pending on its decision. Perhaps it is the most important question it will have to decide for the next generation; for, if the present attempt fails, we see not when and how it can be again renewed. Now is the golden opportunity. Once we were together. We have a long and common tradition of sacred compacts, sealed with the best blood of patriots and Christians. For many years we battled side by side with unbroken front against the powers of sin and unbelief, and our victorious hosts spread over all the

land. Then came a sad and fierce internal strife. Our branch of the Church was cut off by an arbitrary act, which, we have always thought, violated both the spirit and the forms of our constitution. Our name was cast out as evil. We went on our way, trusting in God's Providence to vindicate the right. We became consolidated both as to doctrine and polity; and we also cast in our lot with the poor and down-trodden slave, and so lost all our Southern churches; yet we grew stronger and stronger. The Old School cast in its lot rather with the Southern churches, and for a quarter of a century its highest courts were dumb to the cry of those in bonds. A righteous and terrible retribution has come upon the whole land for the sin of slavery and complicity therewith. Almost all the Southern Presbyterian churches are now wholly separated from the Northern; and this seemed to open the way for reunion at the North. The Old School, as it made the division, made, as was meet, the first advance towards reunion. We accepted its proposal for a Joint Committee. That Committee prepared its admirable Report—the work of neither School, the product of no one mind, the joint and nearly unanimous project of the whole Committee. Our Assembly virtually endorsed it; the Old School sent it down, unaltered, to its churches. It may be modified and made more precise in some of its details, but essentially as it stands it must probably be finally accepted or rejected. And now, in the midst of our fraternal negotiations, the chief quarterly *Review* of the Old School sounds the alarm, charges our New School Committee with not knowing or misrepresenting the real views of our church, charges our church with sanctioning a dishonest principle of subscription and with fostering heresy, and charges even the Joint Committee with abandoning the vital principles of the Presbyterian Church and with endorsing what it has always contended against. Was it to such an entertainment that we were invited, when the Old School asked us to appoint our Committee? To such an entertainment we can not, and we will not, twice come. The Old School must, by

its action, disown these imputations, or break off the negotiations. The responsibility is now in its hands. We are ready to accept reünion on fair and honorable terms, and on no other.

And the question must be soon decided. Both parties are and will be hampered by a long delay. We both have a great work to do, together or apart. If you say together, we will join you heart and hand. And if you say, apart—so be it. We are vigorous, elastic and united. We are not yet doing half of what we ought to do. We are ready for the race. And we will contend with you in an earnest and peaceful rivalry all through our boundless prairies, and along our majestic rivers, and up and down the slopes of our grand Western mountains, rich in gold and silver; wherever our teeming population wanders and clusters, there, too, we will go, if not with you, yet laboring by your side, for our sacred and common cause, the cause of our only Lord and Master. And when this our task is done, and this our land has become the land of Christ, then, on the shores of the peaceful Pacific, if not now on the stormy Atlantic coast, we will clasp inseparable hands, and repeat with penitence and faith that hallowed petition of our interceding Lord—"That they all may be one!"

But better, far better, wiser, far wiser, that we go together. A separate existence, based in mutual misunderstandings and misrepresentations, cannot be best for either side. Why may we not forget or tolerate our non-essential differences, and rise to the full stature of our work? The strength of Presbyterianism is in its doctrine and polity; its weakness is, in its tenacity for non essentials—here is the main cause of its divisions. This is not in harmony with the spirit of the nineteenth century, with the true spirit of American Presbyterianism, or with the spirit of Christianity. We need a broader basis for our work. Ours must be an American, and not an imported, still less a merely Scotch, Presbyterianism. Much as we love and honor Scotland, we can not there find the



perfect type for our free and growing church. The Scotch bag-pipe doubtless discourses most excellent music, and we like to hear it; but we do not care to be restricted to it, especially when it is out of sorts; and we seem to have heard some loftier and more inspiring strains. The Psalms of David are good to be sung in the old Scotch version; but even in public worship it is also well to sing such hymns as "Blest be the tie that binds." It is goodly to sit down at the Lord's table with those who literally accept every proposition of our somewhat long Confession; it is better to sit down at the Lord's table with all who can humbly partake of the life-giving symbols of the passion of our Lord. We can have cordial fellowship with those who hold to the strictest forms of Calvinism, provided we are not compelled to repeat only their words and to withhold a freer gospel. If we can learn to bear with one another's weaknesses, we may be united and become strong. Otherwise, we must keep on, divided, and subdividing; and our wilfulness becomes our folly.

The question we are now helping to decide is really this,—whether we can have an American Presbyterian Church, or whether we are to be given over to perpetual conflict, and provincial assemblies. And to all who really love our Reformed faith and Presbyterian order, this is a vital point, that needs to be laid well to heart. There is an unbroken Roman Catholic, and a reunited Episcopal Church, each stretching all over the land. Congregationalists are working together, in spite of their intense individualism. The Methodists and Baptists, North and South, will doubtless ere long come to terms. If we believe that our faith and polity are better than any of these, we must use the means to insure success. Every other denomination in the land wonders why we do not unite. Impartial observers tell us that our continued separation and strife bring reproach upon our common Christianity. Our reunion is recommended and enforced, not only by all the general arguments for Christian union, by the necessity of making an organized stand against inroads of in-

fidelity and superstition, and by the plain admonitions of God's Holy Word ; but also by the special and cogent reason, that we have the same standards of doctrine and of polity. A united Presbyterian Church, combining our main divisions, would be a powerful organization. Reunion would stimulate us to renewed efforts. We could at once lay a noble thank-offering on the altar of the Lord. All our schemes would be enlarged and vitalized. Our Boards of Foreign and Home Missions could soon double their work. Our best young men would have strong inducements to flock into our ministry. We might look, with more confidence, to the favor and blessing of our Lord. Why may not this be? What are any partial and partisan ends compared with this magnificent prospect? Let us come together. The one stream, flowing for a while parted, with some debatable land between, will be reunited in a broader, deeper and swifter channel, the debatable ground left behind, and before us that delectable land, towards which we were trending even while sundered, our common port and haven, where our earthly conflicts will be forgotten in our eternal fellowship. Then shall our peace be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea, and the Prince of peace will crown us with his benignant blessing.

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NOTE.—Since writing the above, we have received the article from the *Princeton Review* on which we have commented, reprinted in a pamphlet form, with the name of the Rev. Charles Hodge, D. D., as its author. We deeply and unfeignedly regret to see that venerable name associated with such an article, and to be obliged to hold Dr. Hodge personally accountable for its grave misrepresentations. He can hardly be aware of the depth and strength of the indignant feelings, which his article has called forth in all parts of our church.

Dr. Hodge has a perfect right to oppose reunion ; but he has no right to oppose it so as to attach to us the opprobrium of sanctioning an "immoral" principle, or of conniving at heresy.

In a Preface, he notices some of the objections made to his article. He says that he has not made "a sweeping charge of heresy against the New School." He is indeed kind enough to praise the orthodoxy of "many" among us ; but still he does charge us as "a church" with fostering heresy. He further says, that in ascribing to our church a lax rule of subscription, he does not accuse any of us of "a grave moral offense," nor "soil with a breath the char-

acter of any individual in the New School Church, nor that Church itself." Why not? Because, he says, such a lax principle may come to be a matter of common agreement, as in the Episcopal and other churches. This, too, may be kindly meant, but we can not accept it—*haud tali auxilio*. We have no such agreement about it, for the simple reason that we repudiate the lax principle just as much as does Dr. Hodge. We hold with him, that it is "wrong," that it "will work great evil," and that "it is utterly inconsistent with the principles and the obligations," he says, "of the Old School body," we say, of the Presbyterian Church. He charges us with holding a principle which he considers "immoral," and charitably suggests that we may hold it unstained, because we do not see that it is immoral, or have agreed that it is not. This seems to be saving our character at the expense of our moral perceptions. The Cretans might all have agreed not to consider lying a sin, but they would have been liars for all that. Dr. Hodge makes out almost as bad a case for us as our apologist as he did against us as our accuser. His intentions may be excellent, but he is plainly lacking in judgment or sympathy. These principles are altogether too accommodating to suit us. *Haud istis defensoribus*.

What is further said in this Preface about the amount of the evidence he adduces in support of his accusations against us, and about our favoring the "New Divinity," is sufficiently answered in the preceding pages.

There is one curious omission in this notice of objections to his article; he refers to almost all, excepting the main one, on which the whole hinges; and one he must have seen in every New School notice of his article. That objection thus becomes conspicuous by its absence. It is this, that we utterly and unanimously disavow the principle of subscription which he imputes to us. The present posture of this matter is most extraordinary, and well nigh unexampled, especially in negotiations for a peaceful and fraternal reunion. One of the parties is charged with holding a certain lax principle; it instantly and earnestly repudiates it; and the accuser, knowing this disclaimer, reprints the accusation, and takes no notice of the denial. But the point is so vital, and the issues at stake are so momentous, that we can not allow it to be evaded. No accuser has the right thus to trifle with the fair rules of controversy. We put the matter in a simple and direct form:

Dr. Hodge says, that the New School Church adopts and acts on the following principle as to the terms of subscription, viz.: That the Confession is to be received "as containing the essential doctrines of Christianity and nothing more." This we directly and unanimously deny. It is now Dr. Hodge's turn to speak.

Further: We say that we adopt the principle of subscription which he advocates; that this principle is really implied in the Plan of Union of the Joint Committee; and that we are willing to have it distinctly stated in this Plan. This is the heart of the matter. If this principle is formally incorporated into the Plan of Union, is Dr. Hodge, so far as this point is concerned, in favor of a reunion of the Old and New Schools?