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MINUTES

OF THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

NEW SERIES, VOL. II, No. 2, 1902.

Proceedings, etc., of the 114th General Assembly

PHILADELPHIA :
Office of the General Assembly, Witherspoon Building.

EDITED BY THE STATED CLERK.

1902.

119,339
SEP 3 1902

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MINUTES,

ETC.

THE ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, met in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York, N. Y., Thursday, May 15, 1902, and was opened with a sermon by the Moderator, Rev. Henry C. Minton, D.D., from Heb. xi. 40: "That they without us should not be made perfect."

After the sermon, the Assembly was constituted with prayer.

The Assembly took recess until 3 o'clock P.M., and was closed with prayer.

THURSDAY, May 15, 3 o'clock P.M.

The Assembly met, and was opened with prayer.

Upon the Report of the Permanent Committee on Commissions, the following ministers and elders were recognized as duly appointed Commissioners, and their names were entered upon

THE ROLL OF THE ASSEMBLY.

PRESBYTERIES.

MINISTERS.

RULING ELDERS.

I. SYNOD OF ATLANTIC.

<i>Atlantic,</i>	R. W. Holman,	R. L. Douglass.
<i>East Florida,</i>	John N. MacGonigle,	M. R. Bainter, M.D. (4)
<i>Fairfield,</i>	A. J. Jefferson,	L. C. Craig.
<i>Hodge,</i>	A. M. Caldwell,	Julius L. Kent.
<i>Knox,</i>	Simon F. Frazier,	J. G. Portis.
<i>McClelland,</i>	Joseph S. Williams,	George M. Richey.
<i>South Florida,</i>	Fleming G. Railey,	W. S. Preston.

II. SYNOD OF BALTIMORE.

<i>Baltimore,</i>	James W. McIlvain, D.D.,	J. T. M. Finney, M.D., (5)
	John Lee Allison, D.D.,	Caleb S. Davis,
	John P. Campbell, D.D., (2)	Nathan O. Stokes.
<i>New Castle,</i>	Thomas A. McCurdy, D.D.,	George A. Blake,
	L. C. Wainwright,	John G. Conner.
<i>Washington City,</i>	Nelson H. Miller, D.D.,	Leidy S. Depue.
	Donald C. MacLeod, D.D.,	

Overture No. 10.—Shall a chapter be added to the Confession of Faith, to be numbered Chapter XXXV, and entitled “Of the Love of God and Missions,” as follows :

CHAPTER XXXV. OF THE LOVE OF GOD AND MISSIONS.

I. God, in infinite and perfect love, having provided in the covenant of grace, through the mediation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, a way of life and salvation, sufficient for and adapted to the whole lost race of man, doth freely offer this salvation to all men in the Gospel.

II. In the Gospel God declares His love for the world and His desire that all men should be saved, reveals fully and clearly the only way of salvation; promises eternal life to all who truly repent and believe in Christ; invites and commands all to embrace the offered mercy; and by His Spirit accompanying the Word pleads with men to accept His gracious invitation.

III. It is the duty and privilege of every one who hears the Gospel immediately to accept its merciful provisions; and they who continue in impenitence and unbelief incur aggravated guilt and perish by their own fault.

IV. Since there is no other way of salvation than that revealed in the Gospel, and since in the divinely established and ordinary method of grace faith cometh by hearing the Word of God, Christ hath commissioned His Church to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations. All believers are, therefore, under obligation to sustain the ordinances of religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts and personal efforts to the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth.

Overture No. 11.—Shall any change in the numbers appearing in the Declaratory Statement, in the numbering of the new chapters, and in the wording of the Preamble proposed in *Overture No. 8*, made necessary by the adoption of any or some of the above Overtures, be committed to the Chairman of the Revision Committee, under the direction of the General Assembly :

II. Concerning the Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith which the Committee was directed to prepare and to submit to this Assembly, we beg to say that this has been by far the most difficult task assigned to us, and that it has occupied the greater part of the thirty days in which the Committee has been actually in session. The Assembly's instructions were explicit, and yet they left room for difference of view. Apart from the direction that it should be “brief” and “expressed as far as possible in untechnical terms,” the Committee was given to understand the kind of statement required, only by the Assembly's instructions that it was “to be prepared with a view to its being employed to give information and a better understanding of our doctrinal beliefs, and not with a view to its becoming a substitute for, or

an alternative of, our Confession of Faith." These instructions are both positive and negative.

The Committee's understanding of the work thus enjoined upon it found expression in the following resolution which appears in its records, namely:

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Committee that the Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith which the Assembly has ordered us to prepare, should be made with the view to inform and enlighten the people in regard to the significance and religious meaning of the Reformed Faith and not with the view of becoming a test of orthodoxy for ministers, elders and deacons."

The conception of the design of the statement to be prepared, as thus presented, has influenced our action, and, as far as it could be so, controlled our conclusions. In this work few precedents were within reach. We were not to prepare a new Confession of Faith, or merely a condensed compendium of our doctrine, or a new standard of orthodoxy; much less a standard of new orthodoxy. The enjoined brevity made necessary the delicate task of selection. We could not include in such a statement everything we hold to be true, nor, on the other hand, could we confine ourselves to doctrines distinctively our own. Indeed, many of our most fundamental and vital doctrines we hold in common with the whole evangelical Church; and, moreover, what is peculiar to our own faith is susceptible neither of being stated nor of being known except in the light of what we thus hold in common with other communions. Nor could we forget that the intellect is not the only organ of religious perception and knowledge. We must avoid reduplicating in principle, even though it be in reduced compass, what we unquestionably already have. The three confessional formulæ which we have received from the past, and which we hold in veneration, address themselves, primarily and predominantly, to the logical faculty, and in a way that is preëminently successful; certainly, then, it was not simply another symbol framed on the same organizing principles and destined to be inferior to them, both in precision of statement and in systematic excellence, which the Assembly had in mind, or which the present condition of the Church calls for.

Accordingly we have endeavored to introduce in some degree into our work a different principle of expression and so to bring out more plainly the evangelical aspects of our faith. We have aimed to connect truth with life, and to give to our doctrinal elements a personal reference. We have tried to make the Statement not intellectual only, but also devotional in its conception and form. We would not have it first of all theological, although we have constantly endeavored to preserve intact the substance of the truth as we hold it. There has been neither desire nor disposition to disobey the Assembly's injunction, that we should "in no way impair the integrity of the system of

doctrine set forth in our Confession and taught in the Holy Scripture."

The Committee presents this Statement to the Assembly and to the Church, acknowledging that it has found it easier to exercise the critical than the constructive faculty in dealing with confessional literature. It is probably true that the result of our work pleases no member of the Committee exactly; and it would be presumption to hope that any one else should be entirely and in every particular satisfied. Every member of the Committee surrendered to the others, not principles, but preferences. Otherwise, the Assembly would receive twenty-one different statements of our doctrine instead of one. If we had had more time we could, doubtless, have produced a more satisfactory result, but we were resolved, if possible, to obey our instructions, both in the letter and in the spirit. We do not affirm that there are no imperfections in this statement; we are confident only in the consciousness that our purpose has been one of loyalty to our divine Lord and to our beloved Church, and our prayer is that, whatever may be the outcome of our labors, the truth of God to which our Church is called to testify shall ever be held in grateful allegiance and in loving reverence. The Committee has the honor to submit, "for such disposition as may be judged to be wise," the following as a

BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE REFORMED FAITH.

ARTICLE I. OF GOD.

We believe in the ever-living God, who is a Spirit and the Father of our spirits; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, most just in all His ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom and plenteous in mercy, full of love and compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, one in substance and equal in power and glory.

ARTICLE II. OF REVELATION.

We believe that God is revealed in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has made gracious and clearer revelations of Himself to Men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. We gratefully receive the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration, to be the faithful record of God's gracious revelations and the sure witness to Christ, as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life.

ARTICLE III. OF THE ETERNAL PURPOSE.

We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God embraces all events, so that while the freedom of man is

not taken away nor is God the author of sin, yet in His providence He makes all things work together in the fulfillment of His sovereign design and the manifestation of His glory; wherefore, humbly acknowledging the mystery of this truth, we trust in His protecting care and set our hearts to do His will.

ARTICLE IV. OF THE CREATION.

We believe that God is the creator, upholder, and governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and forever responsible to his Maker and Lord.

ARTICLE V. OF THE SIN OF MAN.

We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and we confess that, by reason of this disobedience, we and all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

ARTICLE VI. OF THE GRACE OF GOD.

We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the Gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. And we praise Him for the unspeakable grace wherein He has provided a way of eternal life for all mankind.

ARTICLE VII. OF ELECTION.

We believe that God, from the beginning, in His own good pleasure, gave to His Son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service, and salvation; we believe that all who come to years of discretion can receive this salvation only through faith and repentance; and we believe that all who die in infancy, and all others given by the Father to the Son who are beyond the reach of the outward means of grace, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases.

ARTICLE VIII. OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, without sin; unto us He has revealed the Father, by His Word and

Spirit making known the perfect will of God ; for us He fulfilled all righteousness and satisfied eternal justice, offering Himself a perfect sacrifice upon the cross to take away the sin of the world ; for us He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where He ever intercedes for us ; in our hearts, joined to Him by faith, He abides forever as the indwelling Christ ; over us, and over all for us, He rules : wherefore, unto Him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King forever.

ARTICLE IX. OF FAITH AND REPENTANCE.

We believe that God pardons our sins and accepts us as righteous solely on the ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ received by faith alone ; and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of, and endeavor after, a new obedience to God.

ARTICLE X. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who moves everywhere upon the hearts of men, to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that He has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation ; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the Gospel ; and that He abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of holiness, and of comfort.

ARTICLE XI. OF THE NEW BIRTH AND THE NEW LIFE.

We believe that the Holy Spirit only is the author and source of the new birth ; we rejoice in the new life, wherein He is given unto us as the seal of sonship in Christ, and keeps loving fellowship with us, helps us in our infirmities, purges us from our faults, and ever continues His transforming work in us until we are perfected in the likeness of Christ, in the glory of the life to come.

ARTICLE XII. OF THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE TO COME.

We believe that in the life to come the spirits of the just, at death made free from sin, enjoy immediate communion with God and the vision of His glory ; and we confidently look for the general resurrection in the last day, when the bodies of those who sleep in Christ shall be fashioned in the likeness of the

glorious body of their Lord, with whom they shall live and reign forever.

ARTICLE XIII. OF THE LAW OF GOD.

We believe that the law of God, revealed in the Ten Commandments, and more clearly disclosed in the words of Christ, is forever established in truth and equity, so that no human work shall abide except it be built on this foundation. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

ARTICLE XIV. OF THE CHURCH AND THE SACRAMENTS.

We believe in the Holy Catholic Church of which Christ is the only Head. We believe that the Church Invisible consists of all the redeemed, and that the Church Visible embraces all who profess the true religion together with their children. We receive to our communion all who confess and obey Christ as their divine Lord and Saviour, and we hold fellowship with all believers in Him.

We receive the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, alone divinely established and committed to the Church, together with the Word, as means of grace; made effectual only by the Holy Spirit, and always to be used by Christians with prayer and praise to God.

ARTICLE XV. OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again in glorious majesty to judge the world and to make a final separation between the righteous and the wicked. The wicked shall receive the eternal award of their sins, and the Lord will manifest the glory of His mercy in the salvation of His people and their entrance upon the full enjoyment of eternal life.

ARTICLE XVI. OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE AND THE FINAL TRIUMPH.

We believe that it is our duty, as servants and friends of Christ, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding His people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and declare unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be

saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently trust that by His power and grace, all His enemies and ours shall be finally overcome, and the kingdoms of this world shall be made the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. In this faith we abide; in this service we labor; and in this hope we pray,

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

HENRY COLLIN MINTON, *Chairman*,

CHARLES A. DICKEY,
HERRICK JOHNSON,
SAMUEL J. NICCOLLS,
D. W. FISHER,
WILLIAM MCKIBBIN,
GEORGE B. STEWART,
S. P. SPRECHER,
HENRY VAN DYKE,
*JOHN DEWITT,
†J. ROSS STEVENSON,

D. W. MOFFAT,
S. B. MCCORMICK,
JOHN M. HARLAN,
DANIEL R. NOYES,
E. W. C. HUMPHREY,
WILLIAM R. CRABBE,
JOHN E. PARSONS,
ELISHA A. FRASER,
JOHN W. FOSTER,
CHARLES T. THOMPSON.

* In signing the Report of the Assembly's Committee on Revision, I except as follows: (1) I am opposed to the verbal amendment of the seventh section of Chapter XVI of the Confession. (2) I think it unwise to erect into a Church doctrine our belief that all who die in infancy are saved. (3) I do not think that the second sentence of Article X of "the brief and untechnical statement" (the article entitled "Of the Holy Spirit") accurately states the "Reformed faith."

JOHN DEWITT.

† After signing this Report on April 19, 1902, Dr. Stevenson forwarded to the Moderator of the General Assembly his formal resignation as a member of this Committee. In doing so, he stated as his reason his anticipated transfer of membership from the Synod of Missouri to the Synod of New York, which latter Synod already had its full representation on the Committee under the provision of the Form of Government, Chapter XXIII, Section 3. He desired that no question of constitutionality should be raised on account of this change.

Upon completion of the consideration of the subject of Revision the Assembly spent a season in thanksgiving and prayer. Rev. Herrick Johnson, D.D., and Rev. Charles A. Dickey, D.D., led in prayer, the Moderator read the 133d and 134th Psalms, the congregation sang the 100th Psalm, and Rev. R. R. Booth, D.D., closed the exercises with prayer for the Church Universal, and the benediction.