

for all that gathered company claimed the privilege of joining in the solemn and grateful act—came to the firm and strong response. The voice of deep and earnest prayer followed, and at its close the whole assembly united as one man in the divine words, ‘Our Father, who art in heaven,’ &c.”

Next morning the “Declaration of Faith,” in perfected phraseology, was adopted in a more regular and orderly manner, and with no less solemnity and fervour. The vote was taken by rising, and the Council remained standing, while Rev. Dr. Palmer, of Albany, led in prayer; after which all joined in singing that sweet hymn, composed by him,—“My faith looks up to Thee,” and the doxology, “To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One,” &c.

The following is the Declaration of Faith as adopted:—

DECLARATION OF FAITH.

Standing by the rock where the pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshipped God, and among the graves of the early generations, we, elders and messengers of the Congregational Churches of the United States, in National Council assembled—like them acknowledge no rule of faith but the Word of God—do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive Churches, held by our fathers, and substantially as embodied in the confessions and platforms which our synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or reaffirmed. We declare that the experience of the nearly two and a half centuries which have elapsed since the memorable day when our sires founded here a Christian commonwealth, with all the development of new forms of error since their times, has only deepened our confidence in the faith and polity of those fathers. We bless God for the inheritance of these doctrines. We invoke the help of the Divine Redeemer, that, through the presence of the promised Comforter, He will enable us to transmit them in purity to our children.

In the times that are before us as a nation, times at once of duty and of danger, we rest all our hope in the gospel of the Son of God. It was the grand peculiarity of our Puritan Fathers that they held this gospel not merely as the ground of their personal salvation, but as declaring the worth of man by the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son of God, and therefore applied its principles to elevate society, to regulate education, to civilize humanity, to purify law, to reform the Church and the State, to assert and defend liberty; in short, to mould and redeem, by its all-transforming energy, everything that belongs to man in his individual and social relations.

It was the faith of our fathers that gave us this free land in which we dwell. It is by this faith only that we can transmit to our children a free and happy, because a Christian, commonwealth.

We hold it to be a distinctive excellence of our Congregational system that it exalts that which is more above that which is less important, and by the simplicity of its organization facilitates, in communities where the population is limited, the union of all true believers in one Church: and that the division of such communities into several weak and jealous societies, holding the same common faith, is a sin against the unity of the body of Christ, and at once the shame and scandal of Christendom.

We rejoice that, through the influence of our free system of apostolic order, we can hold fellowship with all who acknowledge Christ, and act efficiently in the work of restoring unity to the divided Church, and of bringing back harmony and peace among all “who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

Thus recognizing the unity of the Church of Christ in all the world, and knowing that we are but one branch of Christ’s people, while adhering to our peculiar faith and order, we extend to all believers the hand of Christian fellowship upon the basis of those great fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree. With them we confess our faith in God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the only living and the true God—in Jesus Christ, the in-