

CREED REVISION

IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
AT NEW YORK

THE LIBRARY OF THE

OCT 8 1926

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1890

COPYRIGHT, 1890,
BY PHILIP SCHAFF.

TROW'S
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

Du
238.5
Sch 14c

CREED REVISION
IN THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

DR. SCHAFF'S WORKS.

- HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. Fifth edition, revised and enlarged, 1890.
- Vol. I. Apostolic Christianity, A.D. 1-100. 8vo, \$4.00.
 - Vol. II. Ante-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100-325. 8vo, \$4.00.
 - Vol. III. Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 311-600. 8vo, \$4.00.
 - Vol. IV. Mediæval Christianity, A.D. 590-1073. 8vo, \$4.00.
 - Vol. VI. Modern Christianity—The German Reformation. 8vo, \$4.00.
- THE CREEDS OF CHRISTENDOM. 4th edition, revised, 3 vols., 1884. 8vo, \$15.00.
- Vol. I. History of Creeds.
 - Vol. II. The Greek and Latin Creeds (with Translations).
 - Vol. III. The Protestant Creeds (with Translations).
- THE TEACHING OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES; or, THE OLDEST CHURCH MANUAL. 3d edition, revised and enlarged, 1889. 8vo, \$2.50.
- ST. AUGUSTIN, MELANCTHON, NEANDER. *Three Biographies*, 1886. 12mo, \$1.00.
- THE PERSON OF CHRIST: the Perfection of His Humanity Viewed as a Proof of His Divinity. 12th edition, 1882. 12mo, \$1.00.
- BIBLE DICTIONARY. 4th edition, 1888. \$2.00.
- THROUGH BIBLE LANDS: a Narrative of a Recent Tour in Egypt and the Holy Land. With Illustrations. A new edition, with a contribution from Edouard Naville on the latest Researches in Egypt and their bearing upon Bible History, 1889. 12mo, \$2.25.
- CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY: Studies In Christology, Creeds and Confessions, Protestantism and Romanism, Reformation Principles, Slavery and the Bible, Sunday Observance, Religious Freedom, and Christian Union, 1885. 8vo, \$2.50.
- THE PROGRESS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM: as shown in the History of Toleration Acts, 1889. 8vo, \$1.50.
- CHURCH AND STATE IN THE UNITED STATES; or, The American Idea of Religious Freedom and its Practical Effect, 1888. 8vo, \$1.50.
- LITERATURE AND POETRY. 1890. \$2.50.

238.5
Sch 14c

PREFACE.

THE General Assembly of 1889 has opened a new chapter in the history of American theology. This chapter involves some of the profoundest problems that have exercised the human mind since the days of St. Paul, and have never yet been satisfactorily solved.

The Presbyterian Creed Revision movement is inspired by the central truth of God's saving love *to all men* (John iii. 16), and the corresponding duty of preaching the gospel *to every creature*, in obedience to Christ's last command (Mark xvi. 15; Matthew xxviii. 19, 20). This truth and duty have taken a deeper hold on the mind and heart of the living Church than ever before, and must overrule the particularism and exclusivism of the Augustinian and Calvinistic system, with its doctrines of reprobation, preterition, and the wholesale damnation of the non-Christian world.

The movement cannot be traced to any individual, nor to any theological school or party; nor has it any leader. Like the Kingdom of God, it has come "without observation." It has broken out suddenly, though not without long, silent preparation, and is spreading with astonishing rapidity over the Presbyterian Churches in Europe and America, among laymen as well as ministers. The participation of intelligent elders in the discussion is a striking feature which distinguishes it from earlier theological controversies.

The discussion has been conducted so far with admirable Christian temper. May its further progress give an example to the world that theologians can engage in a tournament of thought as courteous and honorable gentlemen, "with malice

P 52625

towards none, with charity for all." In battling against each other, they also battle for a common end—the promotion of truth which both have at heart, with all good men, as the supreme object of their desire.

I was unexpectedly, though not unwillingly, drawn into this discussion. I take my stand on the side of a revision of the Westminster Creed, in accordance with the advanced stage of theology and Christianity; as some years ago I took an active part in the revision of the English Version of the Bible. The two movements are parallel, and look to the same end.

The first essay includes an article which was prepared for the last number of the *Presbyterian Review* (October, 1889), but is nearly doubled in size, and adapted to the further progress of the movement. In response to a considerable number of encouraging letters, and requests for more copies from influential ministers and elders (including three ex-Moderators of General Assemblies of Scotland), I resolved to publish it in this improved form. The second paper appears as delivered in Presbytery. Two important documents are appended, which may help to solve the problem of revision.

P. S.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
NEW YORK, *December 25, 1889.*

CONTENTS.

CREED REVISION AND THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS, . . .	1-42
A PLEA FOR THE REVISION OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION, .	43-51
DOCUMENTS BEARING ON REVISION :	
I. The New Confession and Declaratory Statement of the Presbyterian Church of England, . . .	52-63
II. Action of the New York Presbytery, . . .	64-67

CREED REVISION
AND THE
WESTMINSTER STANDARDS.

A Progressive Age.

REVISION is in the air. Some years ago it was the revision of the Bible; now it is the revision of creeds. The former has been successfully accomplished without doing any harm either to the Bible or to Bible readers; the latter will be accomplished at no distant day, with the same result of sundry improvements in minor details without detriment to the substance. The Bible-revision movement extended over the whole Protestant world, and resulted in a material improvement of the Authorized English, German, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish versions; the Creed revision movement, so far, is confined to the Presbyterian churches of America and Great Britain, but may soon spread to other evangelical denominations which have formulated confessions of faith. The result will be to bring them nearer together, on the basis of a consensus in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, and charity in all things.

We live in an age of research, discovery, and progress, and whosoever refuses to go ahead must be content to be left behind and to be outgrown. Whatever lives, moves; and whatever ceases to move, ceases to live. It is impossible for individual Christians or churches to be stationary; they must either go forward, or go backward.

Enlargement of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.

Revision of creeds is not a new thing. It runs through the history of Christian doctrine. Creeds are the mile-stones which mark the stages of development in the knowledge of revealed truth. Every creed is the result of preceding theological controversy.

The Confession of Peter and the baptismal formula are the basis of the Apostles' Creed, the oldest and the youngest of all creeds, which can never be superseded. The Apostles' Creed itself is a gradual growth of three or four centuries, and was not completed till the time of Jerome and Augustin.¹

The Nicene Creed of 325 was an expansion and adaptation of the baptismal confessions of Jerusalem and Cæsarea, and was partly abridged and partly expanded in the Constantinopolitan Creed of 381, the damnatory clause against Arianism being omitted, and the third article, on the Holy Spirit, being enlarged.² This was a substantial improvement. In this revised shape, it became the accepted creed of the Eastern and Western churches, till two centuries afterward a new change was made, which became the cause of the greatest schism in Christendom.

The addition of the *Filioque* (which means the doctrine of the *double* procession of the Holy Spirit) was a misimprovement, and furnishes the first example of unauthorized, unnecessary, and hurtful revision. It was made, without the consent and the knowledge of the Eastern church, by the churches of Spain and Gaul, and at first resisted by Pope Leo III., but accepted by his successors and the whole West. It was also adopted by the evangelical churches, but without investigation. It still keeps the Greek and Latin churches apart, and must be eliminated before peace between the two can be restored. The

¹ See the various Rules of Faith of the Ante-Nicene Age, and the gradual expansion of the Apostles' Creed, in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. ii., 11 sqq., and 45 sqq.

² *L. c.*, ii., 57 sqq., and vol. i., 24-29.

Greek church believes in the single eternal intertrinitarian *procession* of the Spirit from the Father alone, but in the double temporal *mission* of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, and appeals to the farewell discourses of Christ, who makes a distinction between procession and mission (John xv. 26). The former, like the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, belongs to the Trinity of essence, the latter to the Trinity of revelation, and began with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The clause might have been enlarged, agreeably with this distinction, in this form: "We believe in the Holy Ghost, who proceeds from the Father. *and is sent by the Father and the Son.*"¹

New Creeds in the Roman Church.

The Roman Church revises her creed by additions, as in the case of the *Filioque* just mentioned. She puts her standards on a par with the Bible, and cannot give them up, but she increases their number when new problems are to be solved. To the œcumenical creeds, which are the inheritance of all Christendom, she added the Tridentine standards in the sixteenth century, and the two dogmas of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary and the infallibility of the Pope in the nineteenth century. The Tridentine standards settle the questions raised by the Protestant Reformation; the Vatican decrees refer to controversies within the Roman Church.

Revision of Protestant Creeds.

Passing to Protestant creeds, they admit of alteration or increase, as may be deemed best. None of them claims infallibility, which belongs to the Word of God alone. The 19th Article of the Church of England says: "As the Church of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch, have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and man-

¹ On the History of the *Filioque* controversy, see Schaff, *Church History*, vol. iv., 476 sqq.

ner of ceremonies, but also in matters of doctrine." The Westminster Confession declares, in ch. xxv. 5: "The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error." Consequently the purest confessions of faith, being the work of imperfect and fallible men, may embody error, and are capable of improvement. The knowledge and understanding of the Bible is progressive, and the results of progress should from time to time be embodied in the old or in new public standards.

The first doctrinal deliverances of the Reformation churches were crude experiments, and retain only a historical interest. Such are the Ninety-five Theses of Luther, the Sixty-seven Conclusions of Zwingli, the Ten Articles of the Synod of Berne, the Fifteen Articles of Marburg, the First Helvetic, the Tetrapolitan, and the Two Scotch Confessions. They were followed by maturer statements, and these again have undergone various modifications and adaptations.

Revision of the Augsburg Confession.

The Augsburg Confession of 1530, which is the fundamental creed of the Lutheran church, was altered by its author in the edition of 1540, especially in Article X., which treats of the real presence in the eucharist. All the changes were real improvements in contents and form, but caused a great deal of trouble, and were never properly adopted by the Lutheran church, because Melancthon made them in his individual capacity, without official authority or consultation with Luther and other leading theologians. The edition of 1540 is very valuable, however, for the history of the later Melancthonian type of Lutheranism. Melancthon dealt with this document as he dealt with his *Loci Theologici*, which represent in their successive editions the progress of his knowledge and the changes of his views on the doctrines of predestination, free will, and the real presence. These changes were rejected in the Formula of Concord, the last of the Lutheran symbols, but reappeared afterward in the history of German theology.

If the Lutheran Church of to-day were to undertake a re-

vision of this document, the changes would be far more radical than those made by Melancthon, especially in Articles IX. (which condemns the Anabaptists for teaching that "children are saved without baptism"), X., XI. (which retains private confession and absolution), XVI., XVII., XX., XXII. The whole Second Part, which treats of seven abuses, with special reference to the controversies of the sixteenth century, would probably be omitted as being no more applicable to our time, and unsuitable in a confession of faith.

The Heidelberg Catechism.

The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 has likewise undergone a change, but a change for the worse, by an arbitrary act of Elector Frederick III.

He inserted, in the third edition, the eightieth question, which denounces the Roman mass as an "accursed idolatry." This question roused the just indignation of Roman Catholics, and provoked persecution. It furnishes another instance of an unfortunate and hurtful revision. Polemics have no proper place in a catechism.

Nevertheless, the Heidelberg Catechism, owing to its intrinsic merits, is almost the only Reformed symbol from the sixteenth century which is still in practical use in the Reformed churches of the continent, and in the German and Dutch Reformed churches of America. The Dutch Reformed Church of America accepts also the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort, which have long ceased to have authority in the national Reformed church of Holland.

Revision of the Thirty-nine Articles.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England from the reign of Queen Elizabeth were an abridgment and adjustment of the Forty-two Articles made in the reign of King Edward VI. by Archbishop Cranmer and his advisers.

These articles were revised and adapted to a new state of

things by the American Episcopal Church when it assumed an organization independent of the English government.¹

More radical changes were made by the Reformed Episcopalians after their secession in 1874.²

John Wesley abridged and reduced the Thirty-nine Articles to Twenty-five, chiefly by omitting the Calvinistic features (1784), and the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States made some additional alterations in 1804.³

The Anglican Liturgy, which embodies the Thirty-nine Articles, has been repeatedly revised under Edward VI., Queen Elizabeth, Charles II., etc., and is now again subjected to various modifications by the Episcopal Church of the United States, some of which were adopted by the General Convention of 1889, at New York, while others will be acted upon by the Convention of 1892.

The Westminster Confession.

The Westminster Assembly, which sat from 1643 to 1652, in the Jerusalem Chamber of the Westminster Deanery, during the reign of the Long Parliament, began with a revision of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, but having reached the fifteenth article, the Assembly abandoned the revision as an unprofitable business, and with great care prepared a new confession and two catechisms, which were intended for the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, but succeeded only in Scotland. The Book of Discipline and the Directory of Worship had the same fate, and have undergone several changes.

The Westminster Confession of 1647 is the clearest and strongest statement of the Calvinistic (sometimes wrongly called the "Augustinian") system of doctrine. It is framed from the standpoint of Divine Sovereignty and Justice, and on the basis of a close alliance of Church and State. The Assembly was

¹ The English and American revisions are given in parallel columns in *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. iii., 486-516.

² *Ibid.*, vol. iii., 814-828.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. iii., 807-813.

itself the creature of the Long Parliament, appointed and paid by it, and amenable to its authority. The Confession which was sent to Parliament under the title of "The Humble Advice," assigns to the civil government the right and duty of calling synods, protecting orthodoxy, and punishing heresy. It thus sanctions the *principle* of religious persecution, and the Long Parliament acted on this principle by the expulsion of about two thousand clergymen from their livings for non-conformity to Puritanism.¹ The Church of England, after the Restoration, fully repaid this act of intolerance, with interest, by expelling and starving the Puritan ministers, including such men as Baxter and Bunyan, for non-conformity to episcopacy.

Calvin and Beza had written special works in justification of the burning of Servetus;² All the leading divines of the seventeenth century, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, with the exception of a few persecuted Independents, Baptists, and Quakers, regarded religious toleration as a dangerous heresy and a device of the devil. This view was held even by the venerable and liberal Richard Baxter, and by the New England Puritans in the days of expelling Baptists, hanging Quakers, and burning witches. The principle of persecution, to the

¹ Dr. John Walker, in his *Attempt towards Recovering an Account of the Numbers and Sufferings of the Clergy of the Church of England, Heads of Colleges, Fellows, Scholars, who were sequestered, harassed, etc., in the late times of the Grand Rebellion* (London, 1714), states the number of suffering clergymen at 8,000, but this is a gross exaggeration, as Neal shows in his *History of the Puritans*, Part III., ch. iii. (Harper's ed., vol. i., 486 sq.). The respected editor of a Presbyterian paper in Pennsylvania, who had forgotten this fact, charged me with confounding the Episcopal sufferers with the Puritan sufferers under Charles II.

² As this statement has been denied by "The Mid-Continent" of St. Louis, December 4, 1889, p. 4, I shall give the title of Calvin's book: "*Defensio orthodoxe fidei de sacra trinitate contra prodigiosos errores Michaelis Serveti Hispani ubi ostenditur hæreticos jure gladii coearendos esse.*" It appeared in 1554, a few months after Servet's death, and is republished in the new edition of Calvin's *Opera* by the Strasburg Professors Reuss, etc., vol. viii., 483-644. The title of Beza's tract is: "*De hæreticis a civili magistratu puniendis,*" etc., Geneva, 1554, second ed., 1592, French translation by Nic. Colladon, 1560. Calvin wished the sword to be substituted for the stake in the case of Servetus; but as to the right and duty of the death penalty for obstinate heretics he had not the slightest misgiving, and it is only on this ground that his conduct in that tragedy can be in any way justified or at least explained. It is well known that all the surviving Reformers, even the gentle Melancthon, fully approved of it.

extent of burning heretics, is inseparable from the union of Church and State, which makes a crime against the Church also a crime against the State, to be punished according to law. If the practice of persecution has gone out of use even in the State Churches of Europe, it is a happy inconsistency which undermines the theory.

It is but just to say, however, that Presbyterians, notwithstanding their strong convictions of truth and hatred of error, which caused so many divisions and secessions, have suffered far more persecution from Romanists and Anglicans than they have inflicted upon others, even where they had the power, as in Scotland. The Presbyterian Church is, practically, the most liberal among the orthodox Protestant denominations, and is much more liberal and prosperous since the reunion of the Old and New School, in 1869, than she was during the Thirty Years' War of these two schools.

Revision of the Articles on Church and State, 1788.

On the important subject of the relation of Church and State, and the right of religious persecution, public sentiment has undergone a radical revolution, especially in England and North America, since the last century. The principle of persecution gave way first to the principle of toleration, and then to the deeper and stronger principle of religious liberty, which is now regarded as a fundamental and inalienable right, as a gift of God, the only Lord of the conscience. No government has a right to interpose itself between God and man's conscience. This principle in its legitimate development leads to a peaceful separation of Church and State, which guarantees full liberty and independence, or the right of self-government to all denominations, disconnecting them from politics, and thereby making civil persecution for religious opinions impossible. Temporal punishment for offences against the State, spiritual punishment for offences against the Church.

This great progress was effected in the United States after the Revolutionary War. It was brought about by the provi-

dence of God, which left Congress no alternative but to recognize and guarantee the civil and religious rights of all citizens who had aided in the achievement of national independence. The general government never had and never claimed any authority over religious and ecclesiastical affairs, and left them to the separate States; but the States which formerly exercised this authority, especially in Massachusetts and Virginia, gradually abandoned it; so that mutual independence of Church and State is now the general American system. The Reformers of the sixteenth century and the Westminster Divines would have abhorred our system as a dangerous heresy and as downright political atheism. But we generally accept it as a much better solution of the vexed problem of Church and State than either the theocratic or the Cæsaropapistic (Erastian) theories, which have been the fruitful causes of endless collisions and civil wars.

In this important matter American Presbyterianism has forever departed from the old Calvinism and the Westminster standards. The ecclesiastico-political clauses in chs. xx. 4; xxiii. 3; xxxi. 1 and 2 of the Confession were altered in the same year in which the Federal Constitution was framed, and were adopted by the Synod of Philadelphia, May, 29, 1788.¹

Nobody in America doubts the wisdom and necessity of this revision, or would advocate a return to the old theory of the union of Church and State. The American Episcopal Church had to make a similar alteration in the Thirty-nine Articles. England and Scotland, too, have abandoned the theory of persecution, and are drifting steadily toward the American system of separation of Church and State. If Americans hate anything it is the principle and practice of religious persecution; and if they love anything it is civil and religious liberty, as guaranteed by their Constitution.

¹ The changes, together with the original statements, placed in parallel columns, may be seen in Schaff's *Creeeds of Christendom*, vol. i., p. 806 sqq.

Removal of a Restriction on Marriage, 1888. Revision of Proof-texts.

On another point also the Northern General Assembly has altered the Confession by removing, in 1888, the prohibition of marrying a deceased wife's sister (ch. xxiv. 4). It is difficult to see what business such a prohibition has in a Confession of Faith, even if it were well founded.

Besides this, the General Assembly, on the overture of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, appointed a committee, which is charged with the duty of revising the proof-texts of the Confession—a duty next in importance to a revision of the text. The old proof-texts were already once altered in 1792, but for the worse, by incompetent men. The new committee is making satisfactory progress, and will report to the Assembly of 1890.¹

The Doctrinal Revision of 1889.

But now a more serious revision, which cuts into the core of scholastic Calvinism—namely, the doctrine of predestination, is demanded by a growing sentiment, which repudiates the decrees of reprobation, or preterition, as unscriptural and inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, so called, dissents from the strict Presbyterians on this point, and has altered the Confession in a semi-Arminian sense; and yet that body was admitted into the pan-Presbyterian Council at Belfast in 1884.

During the last year the Presbytery of Nassau and several other Presbyteries began to move in the matter, and overtured the General Assembly, which was held in the city of New York, May, 1889, asking that proper steps be taken for a revision of the third chapter of the Confession of Faith, with especial reference to Sections 3, 4, 6, and 7. After some discussion

¹It is surprising how generally these facts of previous revisions are ignored by the anti-revisionists. I have not seen an argument on their side which could not be waged against the previous revisions and against the Westminster Confession itself.

on the point alluded to, in which Professor Duffield, of Princeton, advocated an elimination of the supralapsarian decree of reprobation, the Assembly unanimously adopted the following resolution :

“Whereas overtures have come to the General Assembly from fifteen Presbyteries, asking for some revision of the Confession of Faith ; and whereas, in the opinion of many of our ministers and people, some forms of statement in our Confession are liable to misunderstanding, and expose our system of doctrine to unmerited criticism ; and whereas, before any definite steps should be taken for revision of our standards, it is desirable to know whether there is any general desire for revision ; therefore,

“Resolved, That this General Assembly overture to the Presbyteries the following questions :

“ (1.) Do you desire a revision of the Confession of Faith ?

“ (2.) If so, in what respects and to what extent ? ”

This action is wise and in accordance with Presbyterian custom of referring questions which affect the organic laws of the Church to the Presbyteries, as the primary source of power. If a majority of the two hundred and eleven Presbyteries should vote against revision, the movement will be retarded for the present, but will break out again in a new form. If two-thirds of the Presbyteries should vote for revision, the next General Assembly must appoint a Committee on Revision, and another Assembly will either adopt or reject or revise the report of this committee, and send it down to the Presbyteries for final action. Several years, therefore, must elapse before the question can be finally settled, in case the General Assembly should resolve upon revision.

An influential Presbytery in the East, which includes the Theological Faculty of Princeton, has already, rather prematurely, voted against revision. Three professors of as many theological seminaries have publicly committed themselves in the same direction, though from different motives.¹

¹ Since the above was first published (October, 1889) a marked change has taken place. The action of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, alluded to, was reconsidered and opposed by a large minority, headed by Dr. McCosh, the venerable ex-President of Princeton College ; and of the three theological professors, one (Dr. Briggs) has changed his opinion and now favors both a revision and a new creed. But what is more significant is the fact that, within the last few weeks (November and December) several of the largest and most influential Presbyteries, as those of New York,

The Western Presbyteries are more orthodox than those of the East, as America is more orthodox than Europe. This seems to be a contradiction to the westward course of empire and liberty, but the progress of liberty requires a constraining conservative force. If the ultra-conservatives and the radicals combine against revision they will kill it, or retard it, as they killed the formulation of the pan-Presbyterian consensus at Belfast.

But, on the other hand, many articles from ministers and elders in several papers and sections of the country are strongly advocating revision. The discussion will go on during the autumn and winter, and culminate at the next General Assembly. No harm can come out of the discussion if it be carried on in a Christian spirit, as has been the case so far. We have observed no signs as yet of the *odium theologicum* and the *rabies theologorum*, from which Melancthon suffered so much and prayed to be delivered.

Revision in England and Scotland.

The revision movement is not confined to America; it pervades the whole Presbyterian family. This is evident from the simultaneous and independent actions of the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and England taken last spring. They are all moving in the same direction, though on different lines. They are all demanding greater liberty and an adjustment of the Confession to their personal convictions and the present state of theology.

The Established Church of Scotland has, at her last General Assembly, met the difficulty by broadening the terms of subscription, and leaving it to the conscience of each minister to decide for himself what he regards as essential and necessary articles of faith. She could not alter the Confession without an act of Parliament, owing to her alliance with the State.

The Free Church of Scotland has, by a large majority, re-

Brooklyn, Boston, Baltimore, Cincinnati, etc., have voted in favor of revision with overwhelming majorities, which took both parties by surprise.

solved upon a revision of the Confession, and appointed a commission for the purpose, which is at work now.

The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland had already, in 1879, taken definite action by the adoption of a Declaratory Statement, which embodies a modification of the Confession chiefly in three points—namely, the doctrine of redemption, so as to make it general in intent; the doctrine of divine sovereignty, so as not to exclude human responsibility for accepting or rejecting the gospel; and a distinct disapproval “of all compulsory or persecuting and intolerant principles in religion,” which are taught, or supposed to be taught, in the Westminster standards. The last point is in accordance with the views of American Presbyterianism as incorporated in the American recension of the Confession. The other two points express views which have come to prevail in modern theology, and will claim the chief attention of a Revision Committee, if one should be appointed by the next General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Church of England has chosen the most radical solution of the problem by making a new Confession of Faith, which is an able and judicious popular abridgment of the Westminster Confession, without its hard and objectionable features, and is pervaded by a more evangelical and devotional tone. It will probably be adopted by the next Synod in 1890.

Grounds of Dissatisfaction.

These facts prove that the desire for some change is deep, general, and irresistible; while throughout the Anglo-American branches of the Presbyterian family there is a considerable difference of opinion as to the manner and extent of revision. A growing number of ministers, elders, and students are calling for relief from bondage to certain doctrines which the theology of the age has outgrown, which are no more taught in the pulpit and would not be tolerated in the pews. Some theologians still defend them, but few students believe them. I know of no Presbyterian minister in these United States who preaches the decree of reprobation or preterition, the irresponsibility of

the sinner for not accepting the gospel, the limitation of the atonement to the small circle of the elect, and the eternal damnation of non-elect infants dying in infancy, and the damnation of the non-Christian world—heathen, Jews, and Mohammedans—who still constitute by far the greatest part of mankind. And yet these doctrines are supposed to be taught expressly or implicitly by the Westminster standards. If not, then let us disown them publicly and officially beyond the power of contradiction.

What cannot be preached in the pulpit ought not to be taught in a Confession of Faith, either expressly or by fair logical inference. On the other hand, what is taught in the Confession ought to be preached in the pulpit.

The great and most serious objection to the Westminster Confession is the overstatement of divine sovereignty, at the expense, if not to the exclusion, of human responsibility, and the overstatement of the doctrine of particular or partial election, to the exclusion of the general love of God to all his creatures. The last is nowhere mentioned. It is a Confession for the exclusive benefit of the elect. To this small inside circle all is bright and hopeful; but outside of it all is dark as midnight. It is the product of the most polemical and most intolerant age of Christendom.¹

¹ It is highly significant, although almost incredible, that the clearest and strongest modern reproduction of Westminster Calvinism ends, not with Heaven (as the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds), but with Hell, and devotes only three pages to Heaven (Dr. Shedd's *Dogmatic Theology*, 1888, vol. ii., 664-666) and eighty-seven pages to Hell (ii., 667-754)! In opposition to the unanimous opinion of the ancient Fathers, and modern exegetes and Bible Revisers, the learned author denies all distinction between Hades and Gehenna, and thus doubles the Scripture passages on Hell! But it is equally significant, on the other hand, that, in happy and laudable inconsistency, the same distinguished and most amiable divine narrows the vast dimensions of the Augustinian and Calvinistic Hell into "a narrow pit," and would not condemn a single Arminian unless God had condemned him by an immutable decree. Thus the liberal spirit of the nineteenth century protests against the intolerance of the seventeenth, and the charity of the Christian heart prevails over the cold logic of the intellect.

Liberal Members of the Westminster Assembly.

But it is an important fact, which deserves careful consideration in the present discussion, that there was no unanimity in the Westminster Assembly on these hard doctrines or "knotty points" of Calvinism. This is evident from the Minutes of the Assembly published by Professor Alexander F. Mitchell, of St. Andrew's, from the London manuscript, in 1874, and from the private writings of several of the leading Westminster Divines, quoted in his valuable introduction.

Dr. Twisse, the Prolocutor of the Assembly, was a pronounced advocate of supralapsarianism, which makes God's almighty and sovereign will the effective cause of Adam's fall for the purpose of revealing both his terrible justice on the lost and his free grace on the redeemed. The majority of the Assembly were infra- or sublapsarians, who put the fall of Adam under a simply permissive decree, but sided with the supralapsarians in denying the universal intention and offer of salvation, and restricting it to the ring of the elect. A third party dissented from both, and favored a kind of conditional universalism—that is, the doctrine of an abundant *provision* for, and sincere *offer* of salvation to *all* men on condition of faith.

The last theory was taught in the French Reformed School of Saumur by La Place, Louis Cappel, and Moses Amyraut at the beginning of the seventeenth century. These divines departed from the prevailing scholastic Calvinism in three points: verbal inspiration, particular or limited redemption, and the imputation of Adam's sin. Their views were "disapproved" (not condemned) by the Helvetic Consensus Formula, the latest and narrowest symbol of scholastic Calvinism,¹ but they triumphed afterward in all the Reformed Churches of the Continent, and will triumph in America. The doctrine of God's impartial love to all mankind is the theme of Paul's Epistle to the Romans (i. 16): "The gospel is the power of God unto

¹ On the Helvetic Consensus Formula of 1675, and the Saumur controversy, see Schaff, *Creeeds*, i., 477-498.

salvation to *every one* that believeth," and he concludes his argument on the mystery of predestination (xi. 32) with the declaration that "God hath shut up *all* unto disobedience that he might have mercy upon *all*." Herein lies the key for the solution of the problem.

Among the liberal members of the Westminster Assembly who may be termed conditional universalists, were Calamy, Seaman, Arrowsmith, and Gataker.

In the debate on redemption, Calamy remarked :

"I am far from universal redemption in the Arminian sense, but I hold with our divines in the Synod of Dort that Christ did pay a prize for *all*, with *absolute intention* for the elect, with *conditional intention* for the reprobate in case they believe; that Jesus Christ did not only die sufficiently for all, but God did *intend*, in giving of Christ, and Christ, in giving himself, did *intend*, to put *all* men in a state of salvation in case they do obey. . . . This universality of redemption does neither intrude upon either doctrine of special election or special grace. . . . The difference is not in the offer, but in the application. For the word *world* (John iii. 16) signifies the *whole* world. . . . In the point of election I am for special election, and as to the reprobate, they do *wilfully damn themselves*." (Mitchell's *Minutes*, pp. 152, 154, 156, etc.)

In a sermon before the House of Commons, Calamy said :

"It is most certain that God is not the cause of man's damnation. He found us sinners in Adam, but made none sinners."

Seaman declared in the Assembly :

"All men in the first Adam were made liable to damnation, so *all* are liable to salvation in the second Adam. Every man was *damnabilis*, so is every man *salvabilis*" (p. 154).

Dr. Arrowsmith, who was a member of the Committee on the Confession and on the Catechisms, in his explanation of Rom. ix. 22, 23, justly presses the important difference between the active *προητοίμασεν* and the passive (or middle) *κατηρτισμένα*—that is, *God* himself *prepared* his chosen vessels of mercy for glory, but the vessels of wrath *were fitted by themselves* (not by God) for destruction. He adds :

"I call this a remarkable difference, because where it is once rightly apprehended and truly believed, it sufficeth to stop the mouth of one of those

greatest calumnies and odiums which are usually cast upon our doctrine of predestination—viz., that God made sundry creatures on purpose to damn them—a thing which the rhetoric of our adversaries is wont to blow up to the highest pitch of aggravation." (*Chain of Principles*, 1659, quoted by Mitchell in the Introduction to the *Minutes*, p. lxi.)

Limited Election and Redemption.

These liberal views did not prevail. The Westminster Confession is a compromise between the supralapsarian minority and the infralapsarian majority. It limits redemption to the elect (the term "atonement" does not occur in the Confession), and plainly excludes the doctrine of a universal redemption in ch. iii., 6 ("they who are *elect*ed are redeemed by Christ"), in ch. viii., 8 ("to all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, he doth certainly and effectually *apply* and *communicate* the same"), and in ch. vii., 3 ("promising to give unto all those that are *ordained unto life* his Holy Spirit"). Some Presbyterian divines have tried to harmonize the document with the doctrine of universal atonement, but the natural meaning and intent of the language excludes the non-elect.

Non-elect Infants.

The same limitation is applied to infants. For the term "*elect* infants," in ch. x., 3, plainly implies, in the Calvinistic system, "non-elect" or "reprobate infants." If the Confession meant to teach the salvation of *all* infants dying in infancy, as held by Dr. Hodge and nearly all the Presbyterian divines in America, it would have either said "*all* infants," or simply "infants." To explain "*elect*" to mean "*all*," is not only ungrammatical and illogical, but fatal to the whole system of a limited election, and would make it universal. If *elect infants* is equivalent to *all infants*, then *elect adults* would be equivalent to *all adults*.¹

¹ The latest and the most far-fetched misinterpretation of ch. x., 3, is that of Dr. Patton, in his address before the meeting of the New York Presbyterian Social Union, held December 2, 1889, as published in the "New York Independent," December 5,

This unnatural interpretation is also unhistorical and contradicts the expressed opinions of the scholastic Calvinists who regarded the eternal damnation of reprobate infants an essential part of the manifestation of the glorious majesty and justice (!) of God. Zwingli was the only one among the Reformers who boldly broke through the tradition of centuries and ventured to express the belief or strong hope of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy, and of all the noble heathen who honestly and earnestly strove after righteousness. Luther doubted whether Zwingli could be a Christian at all with such sentiments. Melancthon, in the Augsburg Confession, condemns the doctrine that infants can be saved without baptism. Calvin did not shrink from what he himself confesses to be a "terrible" or "awful decree," that "the fall of Adam, independently of any remedy, should involve the eternal death of so many nations, *with their infant offspring*," and he can only answer, "Such was the will of God."¹ In another place he says: "It is quite clear that infants who are to be saved—as certainly *some* of that age are saved—must before be regenerated by the Lord."² This is precisely the doctrine of the Westminster Confession.

The Continental Calvinists, with few exceptions, followed the great Geneva Reformer in confining salvation to elect infants after previous regeneration, whether baptized or not, and in excluding non-elect infants, whether baptized or not. Wendelin (1584–1652), in his *Theologia Christiana*, proves that "baptism does not change infants spiritually," and says: "I confess, with Ursinus and our other teachers, that not all who

1889, where he says: "The antithesis is not between elect infants and non-elect infants, but between elect infants that die in infancy, and elect infants that do not die in infancy." Such a class is nowhere spoken of in the Confession.

¹ *Institutes*, Bk. III., ch. xxiii., 7: "*Iterum quæro* (he takes the fact for granted, and asks this question as an answer to the objector), *Unde factum est ut tot gentes, una cum liberis eorum infantibus æternæ morti involveret lapsus Adæ absque remedio, nisi quia Deo ita visum est? Hic obmutescere oportet tam dicaces alioqui linguas. Decretum quidem horribile, fateor: infligari tamen nemo poterit quin præciverit Deus, quem exitum esset habiturus homo, antequam ipsum conderet, et ideo præciverit, quia decreto suo sic ordinarat.*"

² *Ibid.*, Bk. IV., ch. xvi., 17: "*Infantes qui servandi sint (ut certe ex ea ætate omnino aliqui servantur) antea a Domino regenerari minime obscurum est.*"

are baptized, whether adults or *infants*, become participants of the grace of Christ; for the election of God is most free: it is therefore a prerogative of *the elect alone*, which baptism seals." In the Synod of Dort (1619) the Calvinists, including the delegates of the Church of England, asserted in various shapes infant reprobation and infant damnation against the Arminians who at first admitted a sort of negative hell for *some* infants (the *pœna damni*, as distinct from the *pœna sensus*), but afterwards positively maintained the salvation of *all* infants dying in infancy.¹

What else can we expect from the Westminster divines, the severest among the Calvinists? They are on record for the same awful opinion. Dr. William Twisse, the Moderator, expressly includes "all the infants of Turks and Saracens, dying in original sin," among those whom God "torments in hell fire," though he confesses that he cannot "devise a greater shew and appearance of cruelties than in this."²

On this point there is no essential difference between Roman Catholic and the older Protestant divines, except that Calvinism substitutes *non-elect* or *reprobate* infants for *unbaptized* infants, and by denying the necessity of water baptism for salvation, leaves room for an indefinite enlargement of the number of

¹ See passages from Wendelin, Heidegger, Musculus, Alsted, Pareus, Chamier, and the Acts of the Synod of Dort, collected by the late Dr. Ch. P. Krauth in his book *Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System* (against Dr. Charles Hodge), Philadelphia, 1874.

² See this and similar testimonies of Robert Baylie, Samuel Rutherford, Cornelius Burgess, Stephen Marshall, and other Westminster divines asserting infant damnation, in Dr. Briggs' *Whither*, pp. 123-132. The early New England Puritans held the same revolting view down to the middle of the last century. The Rev. Michael Wigglesworth, of Malden, Mass., a tutor in Harvard College, published a popular poem, *The Day of Doom* (1662, 6th ed., 1715), in which God on the Judgment Day reasons with reprobate infants who "from the womb unto the tomb were straightway carried," about the justice of their eternal damnation, and in consideration of their ignorance of Adam's sin, assigns to them "the *easiest room* in hell!" Catholic divines are not less merciful than Mr. Wigglesworth. St. Augustin, who first formulated this horrible dogma, reduced the damnation of unbaptized children to a negative state of privation rather than positive suffering, as his Christian heart revolted against his theology. And Bellarmine, the standard expounder of the Roman system, locates the unbaptized children in the border region of hell, called the *limbus infantum*, which is some distance away from the burning flames.

saved infants, whether baptized or not. This difference marks a progress in the right direction. Modern Calvinists, including Dr. Hodge and Dr. Shedd, have made the further progress of extending election to *all* children dying in infancy ; but their view is irreconcilable with the theology and terminology of the Confession, and this departure should be frankly acknowledged.

The Decree of Reprobation.

According to the Confession, then, Christ is not the Saviour of the world or of mankind, but the Saviour of the elect only. This is in open contradiction to several of the clearest declarations of the Bible, such as 1 John ii. 2 : " Christ is the propitiation for our sins, *and not for ours only, but also for (the sins of) the whole world.*"

As to the fall of Adam, the Confession (ch. v., 4) puts it (with the infralapsarians) under a *permissive* decree, but expressly adds that it occurred "*not by a bare permission ;*" and states more plainly in ch. vi., 1 (with the supralapsarians) that God not only "permitted" the sin of our first parents, but "*purposed to order it to his own glory.*" Calvin likewise combines the two views in his famous sentence : " Adam fell, God having so ordained it, but he fell by his own guilt." ¹

The Confession, moreover, teaches, together with a decree of election, also a decree of reprobation, or an eternal foreordination of " some men and angels to everlasting death " (ch. iii., 3, " for their sins " being omitted), and declares that God was pleased "*to pass by* the rest of mankind [the non-elect] and to *ordain* them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice " (ch. iii., 7). This decree of reprobation and preterition must include all Gentiles, Jews, and Mohammedans, who constitute more than two-thirds of the human race ; for they are expressly excluded from salvation in ch. x., 4.

¹ *Institutes*, Bk. III., ch. xxiii., 8 : "*Cadit homo, Dei providentia sic ordinante, sed suo vitio cadit.*" Just before he said : " The first man fell because the Lord had determined that it should so happen. The reason of this determination is unknown to us (*cur censuerit, nos latet*)."

Such a decree is truly a *decretum horribile*, as Calvin himself called it, although he reluctantly accepted it as true (*attamen verum*) in obedience to his logic and a false interpretation of the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which can be properly understood only in connection with the tenth and eleventh chapters, and the theme (i. 16).

The Objectionable Passages in the Confession.

In order to judge intelligently of the teaching of the Confession, we must read the whole third chapter and all other passages which bear on this hard topic. We print the objectionable words and phrases in italics. It is a remarkable fact that these are in part borrowed verbatim, without a word of acknowledgment or explanation, from the Irish Articles of 1615, which are attributed to Archbishop Ussher, and form the connecting link between the Thirty-nine Articles and the Westminster Confession. Ussher was appointed a member of the Assembly, but never came near it. The agreement in the order of subjects, the headings of chapters, in doctrine and language, is very striking.

CHAPTER III.

OF GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE.

GOD from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass ; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.¹

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, *and others foreordained to everlasting death.*

¹ Almost verbatim from the Irish Articles. See Schaff, *Creeds*, iii., 528. This first paragraph is entirely unobjectionable and would be sufficient, but the second part is afterward ignored and even contradicted by the Confession. (Ch. ix. 3.)

IV. *These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.*¹

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. *Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.*

VII. *The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.*²

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

CHAPTER V.

IV. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even

¹ Sections III. and IV. are thus combined in the Irish Articles: "By the same eternal counsel God hath predestinated some unto life and *reprobated* some unto death; of both which there is a certain number, known only to God, which can neither be increased nor diminished." Schaff, *l. c.*, iii., 528.

² Irish Articles, Art. 14: "It seemed good to his heavenly wisdom to choose out a certain number toward whom he would extend his undeserved mercy, leaving the rest to be spectacles of his justice." . . . Article 15: "Such as are not predestinated to salvation shall finally be condemned for their sins." Article 32: "All men are not so drawn by the Father that they may come to the Son. Neither is there such a sufficient measure of grace vouchsafed unto every man whereby he is enabled to come unto everlasting life." Comp. the Lambeth Articles, VII., VIII., and IX., which were composed and approved in 1595 as a Calvinistic supplement to the Thirty-nine Articles, but afterward discarded by the Episcopal Church.

to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, *and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends* ;¹ yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

VI. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden, from them he not only withholdeth his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings and wrought upon in their hearts, but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had, and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin ; and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan ; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.²

CHAPTER VI.

I. Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit, *having purposed to order it to his own glory*.

IV. From this original corruption, whereby we are *utterly* indisposed, *disabled*, and made opposite to all good and *wholly* inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.

CHAPTER IX.

III. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath *wholly lost all ability of will* to any spiritual good accompanying salvation ; so, as a natural man, being *altogether* averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

CHAPTER X.

I. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, *and those only*, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ ; enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God ; taking away their heart of stone and giving unto them a heart of flesh ; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing

¹ Irish Articles (28) : " God is not the author of sin ; howbeit, he doth not only permit, but also by his providence govern and order the same," etc.

² This section is true in a certain sense, but unguarded and liable to misunderstanding and unnecessary in a Confession. It ought to be stricken out.

them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

III. *Elect* infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

IV. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; *much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested.*

Criticism.

In a thorough revision of the Confession, if such a one should be undertaken, all the sentences which we have underscored ought to be either stricken out or modified, and supplemented by clear statements of the sole responsibility of the sinner for rejecting the Gospel, and of the general love of God to all mankind, in accordance with such unmistakable passages as: "How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not*" (Matt. xxiii. 37); "God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16); "God our Saviour *willeth* that *all men* should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4); "The Lord is long-suffering to you-ward, *not wishing* that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9); "Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but *also* for (the sins of) *the whole world*" (1 John ii. 2).¹

To escape the irresistible force of these and similar passages high Calvinists (and Luther also, in his tract *De Servo Arbitrio*) have resorted to the distinction between the *revealed* will of

¹ It is characteristic that these passages are not quoted in the Confession, while the passages about God hating Esau, and hardening Pharaoh's heart, from the ninth chapter of Romans, figure prominently among the proof-texts.

God, which would save all men, and the *secret* will of God, which would save only a few. But this would put an intolerable contradiction into the being of God, and charge him—*sit venia verbo!*—with falsehood and deceit. This is logic with a vengeance; and it is irresistible from Augustinian premises.

Divine sovereignty and election by free grace are most important truths and cardinal doctrines of the Reformed system of theology, which should never be surrendered or weakened. Even the supralapsarian scheme of predestination must be allowed as a private opinion, but it ought never to be forced upon the whole Church as an article of faith in a public Confession which all office-bearers have to subscribe. The older Reformed Confessions, even Calvin's own Catechism, keep within the limits of infralapsarianism, and either ignore or expressly deny the decree of reprobation. Their teaching on the subject is summed up in the sentence of *Œcolampadius*, the Reformer of Basel: "*Salus nostra ex Deo, perditio nostra ex nobis.*"

As to Divine sovereignty, no theologian with any proper conception of God can deny it; but the question is concerning the extent of its *exercise*. Sovereignty implies the power of self-limitation, and this is necessary to leave room for the free action of the creature. Freedom of will is clearly recognized in ch. iii., 1, but just as clearly denied in chs. vi., 2, 4, and ix., 3, which teach the slavery and total inability of the will since Adam's fall. Without some degree of freedom there can be no responsibility. The two are inseparable. The Confession expressly admits this in the case of Adam, but denies it in the case of his posterity.

As to predestination, the Scriptures clearly teach the comfortable doctrine of an eternal and unchangeable election of believers in Christ to holiness and salvation, but they nowhere teach an eternal decree of reprobation. The latter is merely an inference, but it is not a necessary inference; for there are degrees even among the elect. The term "reprobate" (*ἀδόκιμος*) is always used as a description of moral character (Rom. i. 28; 2 Cor. xiii. 5-7), but not as the counterpart of the elect. The terms reprobation and preterition do not occur at all. The pas-

sages quoted for it prove nothing to the point. God hardened Pharaoh's heart, because Pharaoh himself had previously hardened his heart. God punishes sin by sin. God did not prepare the vessels of wrath for destruction, but they prepared themselves for it. We have already pointed to the important difference between the passive or middle, and the active in Rom. ix. 22, 23.¹ What is said in the same chapter about God loving Jacob and hating Esau (verse 13), refers to their representative place in the history of Israel, but not to their eternal destination. God "hated" Esau, must be understood in the Hebraistic sense of loving less, or postponing; as in some other passages, notably in the words of Christ, Luke xiv. 26, who claims supreme love and devotion from his followers, but does not expect them literally "to hate father and mother," that is, to break one of the chief commandments which by precept and example he taught us to fulfil. Esau, though more frank and generous than his brother, was unfitted for the position in the theocracy, and so far rejected, but he received a blessing from his father (Gen. xxvii. 39, 40), and notwithstanding his inferior position on earth may be among the saved in heaven as well as Adam.¹

Reprobation and damnation are not antecedent causes, but judicial acts for sins already committed. A decree of reprobation, antecedent and independent of all foreseen moral conduct, is a logical fiction, and contradicts the genius of Christianity and the plainest declarations of the Bible. It is a recognized exegetical canon that the obscure passages must be explained in the light of the clear passages, and not *vice versa*.

I fully admit that supralapsarianism is more logical than infralapsarianism. I believe that St. Augustin and all the Reformers who followed him in this dogma, felt as thinkers the superior force of the former system, and were only restrained by

¹ See the quotation from Dr. Arrowsmith, p. 16.

² According to the unanimous opinion of the Christian fathers, based upon the Book of Wisdom x. 2, Adam and Eve were the first among the saved, as they were the first among sinners. Dante assigns them a high place in Paradise, near the Holy Virgin. (*Paradiso*, canto xxvi., 82-85, and xxxii., 5, 6.)

moral considerations from fully adopting it.² It is impossible, with any proper conception of Divine omniscience and omnipotence, to reduce the fall of man to a mere accident and to exclude it from the will and purpose of God. But what is logical is not necessarily theological. God's truth is above logic, as it is above reason, and cannot be compressed within the narrow limits of syllogisms. If we follow the rules of logic, we must go much further than the supralapsarians themselves are willing to go; we must make God the author of sin—which they illogically deny—and must land at last in pantheism, which obliterates all distinction between good and evil, or in universal restoration, which assumes that the elect are simply the first, and the non-elect the last link in the chain of the saved. This is the scheme of Schleiermacher, the greatest theological genius of the nineteenth century. By an ingenious process of reasoning, from strictly Calvinistic premises, he arrives at the conclusion that there is an absolute decree of universal salvation, and that particular election and temporary preterition are only the necessary intervening stages in the gradual restoration of all mankind. This scheme is very attractive to a philosophical mind, is apparently favored by Paul (Rom. v.; 1 Cor. xv.), and promises the most satisfactory solution of the dark problem of sin; but it is ruled out by the plain declarations of our Lord on the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent (Matt. xii. 32; xxv. 46). Beyond his authority we cannot go.

¹ Luther did not hesitate, in his book on the *Slavery of the Human Will* (1525), to go so far as to resolve all the exhortations of the Scriptures into divine irony: "Only try to repent, and you will soon find out that you cannot do it." But the Lutheran Church did not follow her leader more than half-way. Melancthon at first (1522) traced even the adultery of David and the treason of Judas to divine agency, but he afterward abandoned what he called a figment of Stoic fatalism. Zwingli, in his tract *De Providentia* (originally a sermon preached at Marburg, in 1529, before Philip of Hesse and the Lutheran Reformers, who did not object) boldly teaches that God is the author of the fall of Adam as a means to an end, yet without guilt, since he is not under law; but he moderated his supralapsarianism by extending saving grace to all infants and a large part of the heathen world. Calvin ably reasons in the third book, ch. 23d, of his *Institutes*, that God cannot permit what he does not determine and ordain. He and Beza are strongly inclined to supralapsarianism, although they insist always on the guilt of man for what he cannot help. Their system involves the contradiction of demanding repentance from all men, and yet making repentance impossible for the non-elect.

The Augustinian and Calvinistic system looks only at the dark side of the problem, and needs to be supplemented and corrected. It is true that all men by Divine foreknowledge and foreordination are born into an economy of sin and death; but it is equally true that by the same divine foreknowledge and foreordination all men are born into an economy of grace and life. Immediately after the fall of our first parents they received the promise that the seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head and destroy the consequences of the fall. As soon as we come into this world, we are brought into contact with the saving influence of this protevangelium, so gloriously fulfilled in the person and work of Christ. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly: that, as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 20, 21).

And this gospel is sincerely intended and offered to all. As to the heathen, there is nothing in the Scriptures to forbid and much to encourage the charitable belief and hope that all those are saved who die in a state of preparedness for the acceptance of the gospel if it were offered to them. The examples of such holy outsiders as Melchisedek and Job, in the Old Testament, and of the captain of Capernaum and Cornelius, in the New, and the parable of the judgment of the Gentiles, who, without knowing Christ historically, yet do the works of Christ, Matt. xxv. 44, 45, are most significant and full of comfort. The case of infants dying in infancy is still clearer. From God they came, to God they return if he calls them home. We have the express assurance of the highest authority, our Lord and Saviour, who called little children to his arms, blessed them, and said, without any reference to baptism and before it was instituted: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." In view of this declaration what right has St. Augustin to exclude from that kingdom all unbaptized children, and what right has John Calvin to exclude non-elect children, or to assume that there are any non-elect children? Is it rational, is it Christian to conceive even the possibility that an infinitely good and mer-

ciful God should create, in his own image, countless millions of human beings to hurry them from the cradle to the tomb, and from the tomb to eternal perdition, before they have committed any actual sin? Is such a God not a monstrous caricature of the God of the Bible, who is a God of love? I know that those great and good men appeal to some Scripture passages, and humbly, though reluctantly and against their better feelings, submit to them; but those passages are of doubtful interpretation, and exegesis has made considerable progress since their days.

The extent of redemption, as far as God is concerned, is as unlimited as the extent of the fall. And this is nowhere more clearly stated than in the epistles of that very apostle who has been so much misunderstood and abused by limited redemptionists. Paul's parallel between Adam and Christ, as the representative heads of the whole human race, in the state of sin and the state of redemption, is a complete refutation of the scheme of limited election and exclusion.¹

He will be the master theologian of the future who will be able to combine in one coherent system the awful truth of universal sinfulness and the blessed truth of universal redemption, and reconcile the apparent antagonism of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, of the free salvation of the elect and the merited condemnation of the finally impenitent.

In the meantime I would rather stand the reproach of being illogical than deny one or the other of two great truths which God has clearly revealed in his word, and which enter into our inmost Christian experience.

¹ Comp. Rom. i. 16, 17; v. 12-21; xi. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 22; Gal. iii. 22. The important parallel between the first and second Adam in Rom. v. 12 sqq. should be read in the Revised Version; for King James' Version, by neglecting the definite article before "many" (οἱ πολλοί= πάντες) creates a false and misleading distinction between *many* and *few*, or *many* and *all*, instead of Paul's distinction between *all* and *one*, or the whole race and the one representative. Comp. ver. 18.

The Mystery of Predestination.

The doctrine of predestination, as the Confession truly says (ch. iii., 8), is a "high mystery," and should be "handled with special prudence and care." But the Confession fails just in presuming to know and to teach too much about this transcendent mystery, and in handling it as if it were a mathematical problem. It gives it a disproportionate importance and devotes much more space to it than to the Holy Trinity and other vital doctrines.

The very terms *predestination* and *foreordination* involve a metaphysical impossibility; for in God there is neither before nor after; neither forethought nor afterthought; nor can we fix any point in eternity when he formed a resolution and passed a decree. The Calvinists assert that foreordination precedes foreknowledge; the Arminians reverse the order; both forget that all is simultaneous and eternal before God. We reason from our human stand-point, and ought, therefore, to be cautious and modest.

We have to stop somewhere in the flight of speculation, and must admit the boundaries of our knowledge. There is a moral as well as an intellectual logic—a logic of the heart as well as of the head. Our conscience forbids us to bring a God of infinite purity and holiness into any contact with sin, direct or indirect, except that he punishes and overrules it for good by his infinite wisdom and goodness. Speculation would drive us, with irresistible force, from absolute sovereignty to fatalism, from infralapsarianism to supralapsarianism, from supralapsarianism to pantheism or universalism; but theoretic speculation is checked by the Bible, by the Christian consciousness, and by practical experience. Christian humility claims no merit whatever, and gives all the glory of our salvation to God alone, but those who are lost are exclusively lost by their own guilt.

This is the ground on which every Calvinist practically stands as a preacher and worker, whatever be his theory as a theologian. He preaches and works as if all depended on man,

and he prays as if all depended on God. He addresses his hearers as responsible beings to whom the Gospel salvation is sincerely offered, without exception, on the terms of repentance and faith. If this is an illogical inconsistency, then it is at least a necessary, happy, and useful inconsistency, and is supported by the authority of the great Apostle of faith, who exhorts us : "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13).

The Confession and Biblical Criticism.

Other questions now agitating the Presbyterian Church need not trouble the Assembly at present, nor are they necessarily connected with the proposed revision, but may be briefly mentioned in this connection.

There is much popular discontent with higher criticism, so called. But criticism is neither demanded nor forbidden by the Confession, and has nothing to do with it as long as it does not deny the Divine inspiration and authority of the Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and practice. The Confession assumes the fact, but does not define the mode, of inspiration, and leaves this to scientific theology. Its chapter on the Bible (ch. i.) is the best in the whole book, and unsurpassed by any confessional statement of the same subject. The Confession borrows its proof-texts from King James' Version, but it nowhere declares it infallible as to text or rendering, and the proposal of a revision of that version was made by the best scholars in the Westminster Assembly, but defeated by the course of events, until it was resumed and carried out at last in our generation by the co-operation of scholars of all denominations in the same Jerusalem Chamber where the Westminster Confession was framed.

Biblical criticism, both textual and literary (miscalled lower and higher), is an essential and important branch of theological science which endeavors to solve the problems of the text, origin, history, character, and value of the several books which

constitute the canon. It is of comparatively recent date, and has been cultivated chiefly in Germany, the workshop of modern theology and research, with more or less co-operation of Swiss, Dutch, French, English, and American scholars.

Textual Criticism.

Textual criticism aims to restore the primitive text of the sacred writers from the multitude of ancient manuscripts, versions, and patristic quotations. By the discovery and publication of the oldest manuscripts, and the painstaking labors of Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott, and Hort, we have now a much older and purer text of the New Testament than the so-called *textus receptus*, from which the authorized Protestant versions were derived. The Anglo-American revision of 1881 contains over five thousand textual improvements, and made them accessible to the English reader.¹

It is to be presumed that the Revisers of the proof-texts of the Confession will give due weight to the Revised Version. It would be a sore blemish (to quote only one instance), if the spurious interpolation of the three witnesses in 1 John v. 7 were again used as a proof-text for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in ch. ii., 3, where it stands first, even before the baptismal formula. The restoration of the distinction between Hades (the spirit-world) and Gehenna (the place and state of torment), in the Revised Version, will also require a sifting of proof-texts, and Job xix. 26, 27, which teaches the immortality of the soul, should not be quoted in proof for the resurrection of the body, as it is in ch. xxxii., 2.

The material for the restoration of the best Hebrew text is not yet sufficiently collected and edited; but the process has begun, and will be prosecuted with increasing zeal by the few scholars who are equipped for the difficult task.

¹ A list of the principal textual changes may be found in Schaff's *Companion to the Greek Text and the English Version*, pp. 428 sqq. (third ed., N. Y., 1888).

Literary Criticism.

Literary or higher criticism deals with the questions of authorship, time, and place of composition, the object and aim of the writer, and all the historical antecedents and surroundings of the books of the Bible. These are all legitimate and important questions. As Protestants we have a right and duty to examine and revise the historical evidence on which the traditional views rest. Some of these questions are exceedingly difficult, such as the authorship of the Pentateuch, of Deutero-Isaiah, of Daniel, of the Apocalypse, the Synoptic problem, and the Johannean problem. They have called forth a wilderness of experiments, conjectures, and hypotheses.

Criticism is not yet out of the woods; but some things are settled, others will be settled, and still others can never be settled with any degree of certainty. The labors of patient and well-conducted criticism will lead step by step to a clearer and fuller knowledge of the human history of the Bible, and strengthen rather than weaken the foundation of its Divine origin and authority. The Bible can stand any amount of investigation. This century has produced a multitude of Lives of Christ, and the result is that the humanity of our Lord has been brought nearer to the head and heart of Christendom; while his Divinity, full of grace and truth, shines all the brighter through the veil of his flesh.

The Anti-popery Clauses of the Confession.

Finally, we venture to raise an objection which has not been touched at all in this discussion, as far as I have seen, and is probably not contemplated by the General Assembly, but which I feel very strongly, both on moral as well as exegetical and historical grounds. I will mention it at the risk of provoking the opposition of many Presbyterian friends whom I highly esteem.¹ It is the declaration of the Confession that the Pope

¹ In this I was happily mistaken. Quite a number of influential voices have since responded to my protest and advocated an elimination of the unfortunate attacks of

of Rome is the Antichrist,¹ and that Papists, that is, all Roman Catholics, are idolaters.²

I protest against this judgment as untrue, unjust, unwise, uncharitable, and unsuitable in any Confession of Faith. It is a colossal slander on the oldest and largest Church of Christendom. It is the passionate outburst of an intensely polemical age, but absolutely unjustifiable now. It can only do harm and no possible good. Instead of converting Romanists, it must repel them and intensify and perpetuate their prejudices against Protestantism. It will become more and more obnoxious and hurtful as the Roman Catholic Church grows in numbers and influence in our country.

The Pope of Rome is the legitimate head of the Roman Church, and as such he has the same rights and privileges as the Eastern Patriarchs or the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have over their respective dioceses. He is older than any one of them, and his line goes back in unbroken succession to Clement of Rome at the end of the first century. There were not a few wicked popes, and many bad bishops, as there were wicked high-priests in the history of Israel; the first connived at the worship of the golden calf, and the last demanded the death of the Messiah, who came to save his people. Dante, who was a good Catholic, puts five popes into hell, two into

the Confession upon a venerable and powerful Christian Church. Two theological professors also, who are decided anti-revisionists, have assured me privately that on this point they heartily agreed with me, and would support an excision.

¹ Ch. xxv., 6: "The Pope of Rome . . . is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God." This section was likewise anticipated by the Irish Articles, Art. 80. See Schaff, *Creeds*, iii., 540.

² Ch. xxiv., 3, forbids marriage "with infidels, *Papists, and other idolaters.*" This sentence should read: "With infidels and idolaters." There is not a Roman Catholic who would not indignantly reject the charge of idolatry as a calumny. The Roman divines distinguish between different degrees of worship (*latría, doulia, and hyper-doulia*), and claim the highest degree for God alone, as the giver of every good gift. We must respect their honest convictions and judge them by their doctrinal standards, however much we, from our Protestant stand-point, may oppose Mariolatry and hagiolatry, as a refined form of semi-idolatry. How differently did Paul deal with the Athenians, who were real idolaters. He gave them credit for being even "over-religious," or "very religious," in their anxiety to worship all gods—known and unknown. Acts xvii. 22.

purgatory, and saw none in heaven, at least none who attracted his attention. We go further and admit that there is an anti-Christian element in the *papacy* as a system—namely, the claim of the pope to be the head of *all* Christendom and the vicar of Christ on earth. Even Pope Gregory I., or the Great, rebuked this assumption as “anti-Christian,” and preferred to be called “the servant of the servants of God,” rather than œcumenical or universal bishop. But this does not make every or any pope “that Antichrist,” or “that man of sin,” and “that son of perdition that exalteth himself against Christ and all that is called God.” The alleged proof-text in 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, refers to “the mystery of lawlessness” (not “iniquity,” as the Authorized Version has it), which was “at work already” (verse 7) in the time of Paul, before there was any popery. If he had had popery in mind, he would have warned against it in the Epistle to the Romans, and not in that to the Thessalonians. “Lawlessness,” moreover, is not the characteristic mark of popery, which is just the reverse—namely, tyranny. As to the term “antichrist,” it only occurs in the Epistles of John (1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3; 2 John 7), and is used not of a future individual, but of contemporaries of the Apostle, of heretical teachers in Asia Minor, who had been members of the Church, and left it, and who denied the incarnation and the real humanity of Christ. The pope has never done this, but, on the contrary, has ever held those doctrines with the utmost tenacity, and can never give them up.

The misinterpretation of these anti-poperity pet texts, which has long since been exploded among scholars, furnished a pretext for the repeated attempts made in the General Assembly to unchurch the Church of Rome, and to unbaptize or to heathenize her two hundred millions of members. It seems incredible that a body of intelligent and well-educated Christian ministers, as the majority of Presbyterians undoubtedly are, should be able to entertain such a monstrous proposition. It outpopes the Pope, who recognizes Protestant baptism, and it would unchurch all the churches of the Reformation which received their ordinances from the mediæval Catholic Church.

The last attempt of this kind was made in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, at Cincinnati, in 1885, but was fortunately defeated by the good sense of the majority.' I thank God that, as a delegate, I helped to oppose and defeat this unreasonable anti-popery fanaticism. The action of the United Assembly of 1885 nullifies the contrary action of the Old School Assembly, likewise held in Cincinnati forty years earlier (1845), which declared Romish baptism invalid. But this decision was opposed, with irrefragable arguments, by Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton, and later, in 1853 and 1854, when the same question came up in the New School General Assembly, by Dr. Henry B. Smith, of New York. These honored divines, now in their graves, did by this protest immense service to the cause of truth and righteousness, and prepared the way for the rejection of the anti-popery clauses of the Confession.

It is high time that we should abandon the policy of intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry against our Roman Catholic fellow-Christians, and adopt the policy of justice and charity which will lead to better results. I hope that the day may not be far distant when American Protestants will no longer envy and oppose, but hail with joy the progress of the Catholic, as well as any other Christian Church which preaches the gospel and promotes piety and virtue among the people.

Liberal Terms of Subscription.

The views I have here expressed are not new. I have held and taught them for nearly fifty years. But how, then, could I ever subscribe to the Westminster Confession? I may as well answer this question. I honestly stated my objections to the Heidelberg Catechism (the eightieth question) before I signed it, after my call from the University of Berlin to a pro-

¹ One of the arguments used by a clerical delegate and Doctor of Divinity in that Assembly against the validity of Romish baptism was, that the Pope sometimes baptized donkeys; to which my neighbor good-humoredly replied in a whisper: "And we ordain them."

fessorship in the German Reformed Church of the United States in 1844; and I as honestly stated my objections to the Westminster Confession when I was called (in view of all my previous publications) to a professorship in the Union Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in 1869; and on both occasions I was assured by men then highest in authority (as Drs. John W. Nevin, William Adams, Henry B. Smith, E. F. Hatfield, and others) that the terms of subscription were so liberal as to leave ample room for all my dissenting views on these and other points.

It is well understood that ministers and elders generally are allowed, according to the "Form of Government" (chs. xiii., xiv., and xv.), liberty of dissent in all those articles of the Confession which are not necessary or essential to what is termed (somewhat inaccurately) "the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures."¹

But I confess I do not altogether like this mode of subscription. Would it not be wiser and safer so to alter and abridge the Confession as to make it less objectionable and more generally acceptable? Unless some change takes place, it will become, I fear, more and more difficult after this revision question has been agitated, to secure the services of intelligent and conscientious elders and deacons. This has been made very apparent during the recent discussions in meetings of Presbyteries and in public papers.²

¹ I say "inaccurately," for the Bible is much more and much less than a logically constructed "system," and much higher, deeper, and broader than the Calvinistic or any other human system. It would be better to say: "the teaching of the Bible." The precise formula of subscription for ministers, elders, and deacons is this: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" The proof text quoted is 2 Tim. i., 13: "Hold fast the form of sound words," etc.

² A Presbyterian elder and director of the Princeton Theological Seminary is quoted as having said during the last Assembly: "It always gives me a cold chill when I read the third chapter of the Confession on predestination; it ought to be changed." Such is the judgment of the most intelligent and best-informed laymen. They would not listen to a sermon on the decree of reprobation or preterition of the rest of mankind, or the damnation of non-elect infants and the whole non-Christian world. In the Presbyterian Church the elders have as much right to speak and to vote as the ministers.

Different Modes of Relief.

Let us now briefly consider the different modes of relief.

1. The easiest mode is to widen the terms of subscription and to reduce it to a general approval of the Confession, with a distinct reservation of dissent from some of its doctrines. This is demoralizing, and would virtually neutralize the subscription. Better do away with subscription altogether. The terms are already liberal enough.

2. The second mode is a supplement or declaratory statement such as the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland adopted in 1879. But this amounts to two Confessions which flatly contradict each other in several important articles. It does not remove the stumbling-blocks, and gives no permanent relief.

3. A third mode is a revision of the Confession itself by omissions and modifications. This is in accordance with the tradition of the American Presbyterian Church, which has already revised four articles on Church and State, and one article on remarriage, and has appointed a committee for the revision of the proof-texts. This is the course adopted by the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, with which the American Church is most in sympathy. Revision can be made without difficulty by the simple omission of the hard doctrine of reprobation and preterition, the wholesale condemnation of the heathen world, and the anti-popery clauses. If we can remove these stumbling-blocks, why not do so? Is it not our duty to do so? If we can make our system clearer, more acceptable, and less liable to misunderstanding by friend or foe, we ought not to hesitate for a moment. It will be a great gain and an important step toward a new, shorter, and simpler Confession, which at no very distant time will express the living faith of the Church in the nineteenth or twentieth century, as the Westminster Confession expressed the faith of the Presbyterian Church in the seventeenth century.

4. The most radical cure would be, of course, a new Con-

fession. The English Presbyterian Church has taken this course, and produced a document which retains all that is good in the Westminster Confession, and skilfully avoids all the objectionable points which we have mentioned, omitting also the anti-popery clauses. The Congregational Churches of England and the United States, which formerly accepted the Westminster system of doctrine, have likewise made new statements of faith which seem to give reasonable satisfaction. Such a work requires much learning, wisdom, and a secondary inspiration. Only the Holy Ghost can inspire creeds that will live. But he has done it repeatedly, and can do it again. He is as mighty and active now as he was in any former age.

A new creed of the Presbyterian Church should be undertaken by the Pan-Presbyterian Council, which is based upon "the consensus" of the Reformed Confessions, but has not defined it as yet. This was the very first subject of discussion at the Council in Edinburgh, 1877, and led to a laborious report of a committee on creeds and subscription to creeds. The report was accepted by the second Council in Philadelphia, 1880, and another international committee was appointed to consider the expediency of formulating "the consensus." The American branch of this international committee, at a meeting in the chapel of the Union Theological Seminary of New York, and including such wise and orthodox divines as Dr. Shedd, Dr. A. A. Hodge, and Principal Cavan, unanimously recommended the preparation of a Consensus creed, as expedient and desirable. But Dr. Hodge, for reasons unknown, changed his mind, and voted against a Consensus creed when the several branches of the committee met at Edinburgh. The cautious conservatives feared a *minimum*, the advanced liberals feared a *maximum* of orthodoxy, and so the whole movement was crushed between the upper and lower millstone at the third Council, in Belfast, 1884. But the conservatives could not prevent the admission of the semi-Arminian Cumberland Presbyterians into the Council of the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance. I was told at the time by Dr. Oswald Dykes (the chief framer of the new English Presbyterian creed) and several foreign missionaries, that since the

Pan-Presbyterian Council refused to help them in this matter, they must help themselves, and prepare a simple and popular creed for the benefit of their churches, and for the foreign mission fields, which it is folly to disturb with the theological controversies and subtleties of the seventeenth century.

Whether the consensus-creed movement will ever be revived in the Council, nobody can tell. But there is a growing desire for some new statement of the old faith in the language of the present age, a statement less metaphysical and more practical, less denominational and more catholic than the Westminster Confession. It will come in God's own good time—perhaps in this or the next generation.

Conclusion.

Let us be honest, and confess that old Calvinism is fast dying out. It has done a great work, and has done it well, but cannot satisfy the demands of the present age. We live in the nineteenth, and not in the seventeenth century. Every age must produce its own theology and has its own mission to fulfil. We may learn wisdom and experience from the past, but we ought not to be slaves of the past, and recognize no final and infallible authority but that of Christ. We must believe in the Holy Spirit, who is guiding the Church to ever higher life and light. He produced reformations in the past, he will produce greater reformations in the future.

I yield to no man in sincere admiration for St. Augustin of Hippo, and for John Calvin of Geneva, and have stated it more than once in public print. They were as pure and holy in character as they were strong and deep in intellect. They stand in the front rank of theologians of all ages, and their influence will be felt to the end of time. The truths which they brought forth from the mine of God's Word can never die or lose their power. St. Augustin impressed his mind upon every page of history, and his doctrines of sin and grace controlled the theology of the Reformers. These doctrines tend to humble man and to glorify God. They will always remind

us that we cannot have too deep a hatred of man's sin and too high an estimate of God's mercy.

But Augustin ran his system to an untenable extreme. It leaves no room for freedom, except in the single case of Adam, who by one act of disobedience involved the whole human race in the slavery of sin. It suspends the history of the world upon that one act. It condemns the whole race to everlasting woe for a single transgression committed without our knowledge and consent six thousand years ago. Out of this mass of corruption God by his sovereign pleasure elected a comparatively small portion of the human family to everlasting life, and leaves the overwhelming majority to everlasting ruin, without doing anything to save them. Calvinism intensified this system, and produced heroic races like the Huguenots of France, the Puritans of Old and New England, and the Covenanters of Scotland. But the Augustinian system was unknown to the ante-Nicene and Eastern Church. The Latin Church only half-adopted it, and virtually condemned it by condemning Jansenism. The Lutheran Church accepted the doctrine of the slavery of the human will in the strongest form, and also the unconditional decree of election, therein following the extravagant views of Luther's book against Erasmus, but repudiated the decree of reprobation, and taught the universal offer of salvation. The Reformed Confessions of the sixteenth century wisely confined themselves to the positive part of predestination—the decree of election, but the Westminster Confession added to it the negative decree of reprobation and sharpened it into a two-edged sword against Arminianism and against itself.

Arminianism arose and progressed in the heart of the Reformed Church in opposition to scholastic Calvinism, and through Wesleyan Methodism it has become one of the strongest and best organized agencies for the revival of practical religion and for the conversion of the world, so that in the United States this youngest of the great evangelical denominations outnumbers all others. This fact is a lesson and a warning more powerful than any argument.

And yet Arminianism and Methodism have not solved the

theoretical problems on which they differ from Calvinism. We must look to the future, when God will raise another theological genius, like Augustin or Calvin, who will substitute something better, broader, and deeper than the narrow and intolerant system which bears their honored names.

We need a theology, we need a confession, that starts, not from eternal decrees, which transcend the utmost limits of our thoughts, nor from the doctrine of justification by faith, nor from the Bible principle, nor from any particular doctrine, but from the living person of Jesus Christ, the God-man and Saviour of the world. This is the burden of Peter's confession, the fruitful germ of all creeds; this is the central fact and truth on which all true Christians can agree. We need a theology and a confession that is inspired and controlled, not by the idea of Divine justice, which is a consuming fire, but by the idea of Divine love, which is life and peace. For "God is love," and love is the key which unlocks his character and all his works. And this love extends to all his creatures, and has made abundant provision in Christ for the salvation of ten thousand worlds. Love is the chief of Christian graces, the true sign of discipleship, and the bond of perfection. We need a theology and a confession that is more human than Calvinism, more Divine than Arminianism, and more Christian and catholic than either; a confession as broad and deep as God's love, and as strict and severe as God's justice. We need a theology and a confession that will not only bind the members of one denomination together, but be also a bond of sympathy between the various folds of the one flock of Christ, and prepare the way for the great work of the future—the reunion of Christendom in the Creed of Christ.

A PLEA FOR THE REVISION

OF

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

THE Westminster Confession of Faith is the clearest, strongest, and most logical statement of the Calvinistic system, but contains also its hardest features, which belong only to a school of theology in the Reformed Churches, and have always been disputed. These are the connected doctrines of reprobation, preterition, limited atonement, and the damnation of the whole non-Christian world, including (at least by inference) non-elect children dying in infancy.

The passages in which these doctrines are taught are as follows :

Chap. III., Sec. 3. "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, *and others foreordained to everlasting death.*"

Sec. 4. "These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

Sec. 6. . . . "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, *but the elect only.*"

Sec. 7. "The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, *to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath* for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."²

Chap. VI., Sec. 1. "Our first parents being seduced by the subtlety of

¹ A paper read November 4, 1889, by Dr. Schaff at a special meeting of the Presbytery of New York, after Dr. Shedd's plea against Revision.

² By "passing by," or preterition, is meant, of course, not a *temporary*, but a *permanent* omission, with everlasting consequences, in harmony with Chap. III.,

Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, *having purposed to order it to His own glory.*"

Chap. X., Sec. 3. "*Elect* infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word."

Sec. 4. "*Others, not elected*, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore *can not be saved; much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved* in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess: and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested."

The Confession also teaches that the Bishop of Rome is the Antichrist predicted by St. Paul, and that the Papists, *i.e.*, the Roman Catholics, are idolaters.

Chap. XXV., Sec. 6. "The Pope of Rome . . . is that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God."¹

Chap. XXIV., Sec. 3, forbids marriage "with infidels, Papists, or *other idolaters.*"

These doctrines have long since been abandoned in all the Reformed Churches on the Continent of Europe. They are now on trial in the Presbyterian Churches of the United States and Great Britain. A simultaneous movement has suddenly and independently broken out on both sides of the Atlantic, and is rapidly spreading among ministers and intelligent laymen, in favor of such a revision of the Westminster Confession as will relieve it of these offensive features, give prominence to the precious doctrine of God's love to all mankind, and express

Sec. 34. In a restricted sense it would be true, as the salvation of the world proceeds gradually, beginning with the Jews, and passing to the Gentiles in a certain order of providential preparation and succession.

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Paul speaks here of "a mystery of lawlessness" (*ἀνομία*) that was already at work in his own day (ver. 7). Whatever he meant by it, he could not mean the Pope, who did not yet exist, and who could hardly be charged with lawlessness, but rather with the very opposite—despotism. As to the term "Antichrist," it is only used by John, and he speaks of *many* Antichrists in his own day in Asia Minor, and characterizes them as false teachers who denied the incarnation (which the papacy never did).—1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3; 2 John 7.

the living faith of the Church in the present age. I cannot but see in this movement the finger of God, who calls the Presbyterian Church to a higher, broader, and more liberal position in theory and practice. It is stronger than the reunion movement which, twenty years ago, melted the minds and hearts of the Old and New School into one communion, for greater and better work than they have ever done before.

Without entering into an argument, I shall briefly present my objections to the doctrines of reprobation and preterition, and my reasons for a revision :

1. Supposing these doctrines were Scriptural, they are out of place in a public Confession of Faith, where they can do no possible good, but a great deal of harm. They ought to be left, with other transcendent and ante-mundane mysteries, to scientific and speculative theology, where they properly belong. Calvin himself set this example by omitting them from his Catechism, and Caspar Olevianus and Zacharias Ursinus followed it in the Heidelberg Catechism. There is a great difference between a confession of faith and a system of theology.

2. They are based upon a misunderstanding of a few obscure passages of the Bible, which nearly all modern exegetes of all schools explain differently and in harmony with the clear and undisputed teaching of Christ and the Apostles. St. Paul undoubtedly teaches Divine sovereignty in the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans—the strong fortress of supralapsarianism—but in the tenth chapter he teaches as clearly human responsibility, and in the eleventh chapter the future conversion of “the fulness of the Gentiles” and of “all Israel;” and he winds up the discussion with that wonderful sentence which contains the ultimate solution of this mysterious problem (xi. 32): “God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all” [not “upon some,” or “the elect only”]. Let us not stick in the darkness of the ninth, but go on to the glorious light of the eleventh chapter.

3. They are inconsistent with the whole spirit of the gospel, which expressly and repeatedly teaches that God is love;

that His love extends to all mankind; that He wills all men to be saved, and none to perish; that Christ is the Saviour of the race, and died not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world; that the gospel is freely and sincerely offered to all men, and should be preached to every creature; that believers are saved by free grace, but the impenitent are lost by their own guilt. Compare John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 8, 16; 1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9; 1 John ii. 2, etc.

God's saving love in Christ to all mankind is the central truth of Christianity, and the very marrow of the gospel, and ought to be the heart and soul of every evangelical Confession of Faith. The older Calvinism exalts God's love to the elect, but "passes by the rest of mankind." It admits the common grace shown to all, but confines the special or saving grace to a few. It calls upon all men to repent, but denies that any man can repent who is not among the elect. It did little or nothing for the conversion of the heathen before the great missionary revival which inspires the churches of our age.

4. Foreordination of some men to everlasting life, and of others to everlasting death, and preterition of all the non-elect (including the whole heathen world), are equally inconsistent with a proper conception of Divine justice, and pervert it into an arbitrary partiality for the circle of the elect, who are equally guilty, and an arbitrary neglect of the great mass of men. Justice is strictly impartial, and adapts rewards and punishments to man's merits and opportunities. What would you think of a father who would shower all his blessings upon two or three of his children, and neglect and disinherit all the rest, and who would make such a discrimination from arbitrary choice without any regard to moral merit?

It is only by an indefinite extension of the decree of election beyond the limits of the visible Church that Calvinism can be relieved of the charge of narrowness, and be measurably reconciled with the idea of Divine justice and wisdom; but the Westminster Confession gives the benefit of such extension only to elect infants dying in infancy, and to incapables, and denies it to all adults who are ignorant of Christianity, and

profess any other religion, although they “frame their lives according to the light of nature.”

5. These doctrines are not taught in the œcumenical creeds, nor in the older Reformed Confessions, with the exception of the Genevan Consensus (1552), the Lambeth Articles (1595), and the Irish Articles (1615), which documents never had much authority, and have long since gone out of use. Supralapsarianism represents only a theological *school* in the Reformed Church, and a very respectable one, but not the Church itself; it was, and should be tolerated, but it was not, and should not be, enjoined or imposed. It has, in my judgment, greater logical and speculative force than infralapsarianism; but it was always felt by the majority of Reformed divines that by irresistible logic it makes God the author of sin and death, and that it would consistently lead to hopeless fatalism and pantheism, from which the supralapsarians themselves shrink back with horror. Hence nearly all the Confessions stop within the limits of infralapsarianism. Christian truth rises above the narrow limitations of logic and mathematics.

The Theses of Berne (1528), the First Confession of Basel (1532), the First Helvetic or Second Basel Confession (1536), the Geneva Catechism of Calvin (1545), the Gallican Confession (1559), the Belgic Confession (1561), the Heidelberg Catechism (1563), the Second Helvetic Confession (1566), the First and Second Scotch Confessions (1560 and 1580), the Thirty-nine Articles (1571), and even the Canons of the Synod of Dort (1619), and the Shorter Westminster Catechism (1647),¹ are silent on the decree of reprobation and preterition, and confine themselves to the positive, undisputed, and most comforting doctrine of the election of believers by free grace to everlasting life.

And in the Westminster Assembly itself, several of the ablest men, as Calamy, Seaman, Arrowsmith, and Gataker, were opposed to the majority on those knotty points, and

¹ But the Larger Catechism agrees with the Confession and teaches that “God . . . has *passed by*, and *foreordained* the rest [*i. e.*, the non-elect] to *dishonor and wrath*, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of His justice.” Qu. xiii.

advocated what is called hypothetical or conditional universalism, *i.e.*, a sincere Divine intention and provision for the salvation of *all* men on condition of faith.

6. These doctrines are no longer believed by the majority of Presbyterians, nor preached by any Presbyterian minister as far as I know.¹ They certainly could not be preached in any pulpit without emptying the pews. Presbyterian ministers, on the contrary, uniformly assume in their sermons the free and sincere offer of salvation to all men, and the sole responsibility of the sinner for rejecting the gospel.

What cannot be preached in the church and taught in the Sunday-school, ought not to be put into a Confession of Faith, and imposed as a yoke upon the conscience of ministers and elders.

7. They obstruct the progress of the Presbyterian Church; they give aid and comfort to her enemies, and plausibility to their charges and misrepresentations; they have in times past driven away from the Confession a large party of English Presbyterians, New England Congregationalists, and the Cumberland Presbyterians, and they will in future prevent many promising students from entering the ministry, and intelligent laymen from serving as elders, so long as they are required to subscribe that document as "containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures."²

It is true this formula of subscription, as generally understood by ministers and elders, is fortunately very liberal, and gives a large margin for dissent. But if the word "system" is used in the strict sense, it is not applicable to the Bible at all; for the Bible contains an infinite variety of truths, and is as far above the narrow limitations of any particular or denomina-

¹ Dr. Cuyler of Brooklyn, an experienced Presbyterian pastor, goes much farther, and asserts that "ninety-nine hundredths" do not believe these features of the Westminster Confession. See "The New York Evangelist" for October 31, 1889. When Dr. Schaff read his more moderate statement in Presbytery, he asked the brethren present to contradict his assertion by rising, if any of them ever preached on the decree of reprobation and preterition; but no one rose. Silence gives consent.

² This is the subscription required of all church officers, ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, according to the *Form of Government*, chaps. xiii., xiv., and xv.

tional system of human theology, as nature is above every system of natural philosophy, and history above the compends of historians. It would be better to abolish subscription altogether, or so to alter the Confession as to make it unobjectionable, that subscription to it may be an act of cheerful and whole-hearted assent.

A revision would not be complete without striking out the incidental and unnecessary denunciation of the Pope as Antichrist, and of two hundred millions of professed worshippers of Christ as idolaters. Such a denunciation can be easily explained from the polemical heat and political complications of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but calmly viewed from the present stage of historical knowledge, the charge is untrue, unjust, uncharitable, and unchristian, as well as out of place in a religious creed; and no wise man or body of men would now venture to insert it.

Dr. Archibald Alexander and Dr. Charles Hodge, the fathers and founders of Princeton theology, have done the greatest service to the Presbyterian Church by liberalizing the Calvinistic theology. Dr. Hodge boldly opposed the uncharitable anti-popery fanaticism of his day, and maintained, against the decision of the Old School General Assembly of 1845, the Church character of the Roman Catholic communion, and the validity of her baptism. It was an equally great service that the same honored and beloved divine (with whom I had a delightful personal acquaintance) obliterated the Westminster distinction between elect and reprobate infants, and taught the salvation of *all* infants dying in infancy.¹ Yea, he goes so far as to assert, on the closing page of his *Systematic Theology* (iii., 880), that the number of the lost "in comparison with the whole number of the saved will be very inconsiderable." I confess my own ignorance on the numerical aspect of this problem, but most sincerely hope that Dr. Hodge is

¹ Dr. Shedd also, while he still teaches *reprobation* and *preterition* as a necessary part of Calvinistic theology, agrees with Princeton, whether logically or illogically, in extending election to *all* infants dying in infancy, and to *some* adults among the heathen. A very important concession, which diminishes the practical importance of *preterition*.

right. At all events he made an immense progress in the right direction, and the goodness of his heart and his amiable temper gave to his whole theology a sweet, evangelical, and catholic tone, which favorably contrasts with the severity and narrowness of older systems.

Now is the providential occasion to proceed a step farther, and to remove from the Confession itself those stumbling-blocks and burdens which are becoming more and more unbearable to a large number of conscientious and liberal-minded men.

If the Church refuses to make the reasonable changes demanded by many of her most loyal sons, she will virtually reindorse and deliberately profess before the world the most obnoxious features of the theology of the seventeenth century, and make them ten times more offensive and obstructive to the progress of the Church hereafter.

Nobody asserts the infallibility of the Westminster Confession, and nobody denies the *right* of revision. All the arguments which can be urged, are arguments of inexpediency against revision, arguments of expediency for revision. The latter are stronger.

The Confession has already been revised, in 1788 and 1888, in several important articles, bearing upon Church and State, and forbidden marriages, and it is all the better and more acceptable for these changes. It is not more difficult to remove reprobation and preterition, the damnation of the heathen, and the denunciation of Papists from the Confession, than it was a hundred years ago to reconstruct chap. xx., 4; xxiii., 3; xxxi., 1, 2, in favor of the doctrine of separation of Church and State, which the Westminster Assembly, itself the creature of the State and responsible to it, would have indignantly rejected as a dangerous heresy and downright political atheism. Why then not make these further changes and save the life and usefulness of a venerable document for other generations?

Or if this cannot be done without mutilating the document, then in humble reliance upon the Holy Ghost, who is ever guiding the Church, let us take the more radical step, with or through the Pan-Presbyterian Council, of preparing a brief,

simple, and popular creed, which shall clearly and tersely express, for laymen as well as ministers, the cardinal doctrines of faith and duty, and leave metaphysics and polemics to scientific theology; a creed that can be subscribed, taught, and preached *ex animo*, without any mental reservation, or any unnatural explanation; a creed that is full of the marrow of the gospel of God's infinite love in Christ for the salvation of the whole world.

Such a consensus-creed would be a bond of union between the different branches of the Reformed Church in Europe and America and in distant mission fields, and prepare the way for a wider union with other Evangelical Churches. It ought not to contradict the Westminster Confession, but retain its best features, and supplement it by those truths of the Scriptures which are now made most vital and important in the mind of the Church, and which are best calculated to promote its mission at home and abroad.

The Congregationalists in America made a new creed of Twelve Articles in 1883,¹ and the English Presbyterians made one of Twenty-four Articles in 1888;² both are thoroughly evangelical, and skilfully avoid all the knotty and disputed points of the scholastic Calvinism of a by-gone age. The Presbyterian Church of the United States, with or without the cooperation of the Pan-Presbyterian Council, has sufficient wisdom, learning, and piety to produce a creed to suit her wants.

In conclusion: I am in favor of both a revision of the Westminster Confession by the General Assembly, and an œcumenical Reformed Consensus to be prepared by the Pan-Presbyterian Council. If we cannot have both, let us at least have one of the two, and I shall be satisfied with either. Something must and will be done to bring the Presbyterian Standards into harmony with the living Church of to-day, and to make them a potent factor for the instruction and edification of the people.

¹ Printed in Schaff's *Creeeds of Christendom*, vol. iii., p. 910 seq. Fourth Edition, 1884.

² Published in the "Minutes of the Synod of the Presbyt. Church of England, held at London, 1889," London, pp. 261 sqq., and in "The N. Y. Evangelist" for October 31, 1889. See next page.

DOCUMENT I.

THE NEW CONFESSION AND DECLARATORY STATEMENT
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THE Presbyterian Church of England, instead of revising the Westminster Confession, has adopted the more radical course of preparing a new Confession, together with a Declaratory Statement, which is to be used alongside of the old for practical purposes. It was prepared with great care by a Synodical Committee during the last four years (1885-89), and has undergone several revisions. The Rev. J. Oswald Dykes, for several years the foremost Presbyterian preacher in London, now Principal of the Presbyterian Theological College in that city, acted as convener of the Synodical Committee. The Creed, with the Declaratory Statement, is now before the English Presbyterian Church for consideration, and will, in all probability, be adopted in substance in the course of the year 1890. A new formula of subscription was also submitted by the Committee, but has not yet been acted upon.¹

It is often said that the present generation is unfitted to make a new Confession of Faith. This document is an answer. It shows what can be done by Presbyterians in this direction. It will bear a comparison with the older Reformed Confessions of Faith, and in several respects it is superior to them. It wisely omits metaphysical and polemical topics, and presents

¹ It is as follows: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt, as in accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture, the doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, as the said Confession is understood by this Church in conformity with the Declaratory Act of 1889; and do you consent to the said Confession as the standard by which your teaching in this Church shall be judged?"

the essential doctrines of the gospel in the right proportion and with devotional fervor. Altogether it is an admirable document, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and answers all the reasonable demands of those who favor revision in the form of a new Confession. Its language, moreover, is chiefly borrowed, or in harmony with, older creeds, as is made manifest by the references given in the copies printed for private circulation. This Confession will be of great value in the preparation of a Reformed Consensus-Creed, which was abruptly broken off at the Third Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches, in Belfast, 1884, but will probably be revived at the Fifth Council, to be held in Toronto, Canada, in 1892.

THE ARTICLES OF THE FAITH AS HELD BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

(Report of the Synod's Committee, as submitted to the Synod of 1889.)

I.

Of God.

We believe in and adore one living and true God, who is spirit and the Father of spirits, present in every place, personal, infinite, and eternal, the almighty Author and sovereign Lord of all; most blessed, most holy, and most free; perfect in wisdom, justice, truth, and love; to us most merciful and gracious; unto whom only we must cleave, whom only we must worship and obey. To Him be glory forever! Amen.

II.

Of the Trinity.

We acknowledge, with the ancient Church, the mystery of the Holy Trinity as revealed in Scripture, and believe that in the unity of the ever-blessed Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, of one substance, equal in power and glory.

III.

Of Creation.

We believe that Almighty God, for His own holy and loving ends, was pleased in the beginning to create the heavens and the earth, by the Son, the Eternal Word; and through progressive stages, to fashion and order this world, giving life to every creature; and to make man in His own image, that he might glorify and enjoy God, occupying and subduing the earth, and having dominion over the creatures, to the praise of his Maker's name.

IV.

Of Providence.

We believe that God the Creator upholds all things by the word of His power, preserving and providing for all His creatures, according to the laws of their being; and that He, through the presence and energy of His Spirit in nature and history, disposes and governs all events for His own high design; yet is He not in anywise the author or approver of sin, neither are the freedom and responsibility of man taken away, nor have any bounds been set to the sovereign liberty of Him who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth.

V.

Of the Fall.

We believe and confess that our first father, Adam, the representative head as well as common ancestor of mankind, transgressed the commandment of God through temptation of the devil, by which transgression he fell, and all mankind in him, from his original state of innocence and communion with God; and so all men have come under just condemnation, are subject to the penalty of death, and inherit a sinful nature, degenerate in every part, and estranged from God, from which proceed all actual transgressions: and we acknowledge that out of this condition no man is able to deliver himself.

VI.

Of Saving Grace.

We believe and proclaim that God, who is rich in mercy as well as of perfect justice, was moved by His great love to man to hold forth from the first a promise of redemption, which from age to age He confirmed and unfolded, and that, in the fulness of the time, He accomplished His gracious purpose by sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world : wherefore our salvation out of sin and misery is ever to be ascribed to free and sovereign grace.

VII.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe in and confess, with the ancient Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the Eternal Son of God, became man by taking to Himself a true body and soul, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary ; so that He is both God and Man, two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the divine and the human, being inseparably joined together in one person, that He might be the Mediator between God and man, by whom alone we must be saved.

VIII.

Of the Work of Christ.

We believe that the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, being anointed with the Holy Spirit to proclaim and set up the Kingdom of God among men, did by His perfect life on earth, through words and deeds of grace, declare the Father, whose image He is ; and did fully satisfy divine justice, and obtain for us forgiveness of sins, reconciliation to God, and the gift of eternal life, through His obedience on our behalf to the law and will of His Father, even unto the death of the cross, wherein, bearing our sins, He offered Himself up a sacrifice without spot to God.

IX.

Of the Exaltation of Christ.

We believe that Jesus Christ, being for our offences crucified, dead, and buried, saw no corruption, but was raised again on the third day, in whose risen life we live anew, and have the pledge of a blessed resurrection; that in the same body in which He rose, He ascended into heaven, where, as our High Priest, He maketh continual intercession for us; and that He sitteth at the right hand of God, Head of the Church, clothed with authority and power as Lord over all.

X.

Of the Gospel.

We hold fast and proclaim that God, who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, has, by His Son our Saviour, given commission to the Church to preach unto all nations the gospel of His grace, wherein He freely offers to all men forgiveness and eternal life, calling on them to turn from sin to God, and to receive and rest by faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

XI.

Of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who worketh freely as He will, without whose gracious influence there is no salvation, and whom the Father never withholds from any who ask for Him; and we give thanks that He has in every age moved on the hearts of men; that He spake by the prophets; that through our exalted Saviour He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten the minds of men 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.

XII.

Of Election and Regeneration.

We humbly own and believe that God the Father, before the foundation of the world, was pleased of His sovereign grace to choose a people unto Himself in Christ, whom He gave to the Son, and to whom the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life by a secret and wonderful operation of His power, using as His ordinary means, where years of understanding have been reached, the truths of His Word in ways agreeable to the nature of man ; so that, being born from above, they are the children of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

XIII.

Of Justification by Faith.

We believe that everyone, who through the quickening grace of the Holy Spirit repents, and believes the gospel, confessing and forsaking his sins, and humbly relying upon Christ alone for salvation, is freely pardoned and accepted as righteous in the sight of God, solely on the ground of Christ's perfect obedience and atoning sacrifice.

XIV.

Of Sonship in Christ.

We believe that those who receive Christ by faith are vitally united to Him, and become partakers in all the benefits of His redemption ; that they are adopted into the family of God ; and that they have the Spirit of His Son abiding in them, the earnest of their inheritance.

XV.

Of the Law of the New Obedience.

We believe and acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ has laid His people by His grace under new obligation to keep the

perfect Law of God ; and that by precept and example He has enlarged our knowledge of that Law, and illustrated the spirit of filial love in which the divine will is to be obeyed.

XVI.

Of Christian Perseverance.

We bless God that the obedience of Christians, though in this life always imperfect, is yet accepted for Christ's sake and pleasing to God, being the fruit of union to Christ and the evidence of a living faith ; and that in measure as they surrender themselves to His Spirit, and follow the guidance of His Word, they receive strength for daily service, and grow in holiness after the image of their Lord ; or if, through unwatchfulness and neglect of prayer, any of them fall into grievous sin, yet by the mercy of God who abideth faithful they are not cast off, but are chastened for their backsliding, and through repentance restored to His favor, so that they perish not.

XVII.

Of the Church.

We acknowledge one holy catholic Church, the innumerable company of saints of every age and nation, who, being united by the Holy Spirit to Christ their Head, are one body in Him, and have communion with their Lord and with one another : further, we receive it as the will of Christ that His Church on earth should exist as a visible and sacred brotherhood, organized for the confession of His name, the public worship of God, the upbuilding of the saints, and the proclamation of the gospel ; and we acknowledge, as a part, more or less pure, of this universal brotherhood, every particular Church throughout the world which professes faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him, as Divine Lord and Saviour.

XVIII.

Of Church Order and Fellowship.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole Head of His Church, has appointed its worship, teaching, discipline, and government to be administered, according to His will revealed in Holy Scripture, by officers chosen for their fitness, and duly set apart to their office; and although the visible Church, even in its purest branch, may contain unworthy members, and is liable to err, yet believers ought not lightly to separate themselves from its communion, but are to live in fellowship with their brethren: which fellowship is to be extended, as God gives opportunity, to all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

XIX.

Of Holy Scripture.

We believe that God, who manifests Himself in creation and providence, and especially in the spirit of man, has been pleased to reveal His mind and will for our salvation at successive periods and in various ways; and that this Revelation has been, so far as needful, committed to writing by men inspired of the Holy Spirit, so that the Word of God is now contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are therefore to be devoutly studied by all: and we reverently acknowledge the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures to be the Supreme Judge in questions of faith and duty.

XX.

Of the Sacraments.

We acknowledge Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the two Sacraments instituted by Christ, to be of perpetual obligation, as signs and seals of the new covenant, ratified in His precious blood; through the observance of which His Church is to confess her Lord and to be visibly distinguished from the rest

of the world ; Baptism with water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost being the sacrament of admission into the visible Church, in which are set forth our union to Christ and regeneration by the Spirit, the remission of our sins, and our engagement to be the Lord's ; and the Lord's Supper, the sacrament of communion with Christ and His people, in which bread and wine are given and received in thankful remembrance of Him and of His sacrifice on the Cross, and in which they who in faith receive the same do, after a spiritual manner, partake of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, to their comfort, nourishment, and growth in grace.

XXI.

Of the Second Advent.

We assuredly believe that on a day known only to God, the Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly come again from heaven with power and great glory ; and we look for this second appearing of our Saviour as the blessed hope of His Church, for which we ought always to wait in sober watchfulness and diligence, that we may be found ready at His coming.

XXII.

Of the Resurrection.

We believe that the souls of the righteous enter at death upon a state of rest and felicity at home with the Lord ; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, through the power of the Son of God, when the bodies of all who are fallen asleep in Christ, as well as of the faithful who are then alive, shall be fashioned anew and conformed to the body of His glory.

XXIII.

Of the Last Judgment.

We believe that God will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ, before whom all men must appear, who shall

separate the righteous from the wicked, make manifest the secrets of the heart, and render to every man according to the deeds which he hath done in the body, whether good or evil, when the wicked shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

XXIV.

Of the Life Everlasting.

Finally, we believe in and desire the life everlasting in which the redeemed shall receive their inheritance of glory in the kingdom of their Father, and be made fully blessed in the presence and service of God, whom they shall see and enjoy forever and ever. Amen.

DECLARATORY STATEMENT.

Whereas this Church has ever acknowledged the canonical books of Holy Scripture to be her sole Supreme Standard, to which the Westminster Confession of Faith is to be regarded as subordinate ;

Whereas every endeavor to set forth in the form of a Creed the truth taught in Holy Scripture must be at the best imperfect ; and

Whereas every such Creed is liable to become less adequate to express the Church's faith, through that fuller and clearer apprehension of His revealed truth which it pleases God from time to time to grant unto His Church ;

Therefore it has seemed good and needful to this Church, in Synod assembled, for the better exhibition of her belief on certain points, to declare as follows :

I.

That the doctrine of Redemption set forth in the Westminster Confession, particularly in its reference to the election

of some among mankind to eternal life, is held and taught in this Church, together with other great truths which are vital to the gospel, such as

1, That the love of God to mankind moved Him to provide, by the gift of His Son to be a propitiation for the whole world, a way of salvation which in His gospel is freely offered to all;

2, That God has no pleasure in the death of any sinner, but desires that all should repent and live; and

3, That every man who hears the gospel is responsible for his acceptance or rejection of its free offer of eternal life.

II.

That the teaching of the Confession on the subject of man's total depravity since the Fall, is not to be understood as denying his responsibility both under the Law and under the Gospel, or the existence and value of the natural virtues.

III.

That while the duty of proclaiming the gospel to all men is clear and imperative, and while the proclamation of the gospel is the ordinary means of salvation for all who are capable of being called thereby; and while it is certain that no one is saved except through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the working of the Holy Spirit: yet it does not follow, nor is it required to be held, either that any who die in infancy are lost, or that God may not extend His mercy to those who are beyond the reach of the ordinary means of salvation, as it may seem good in His sight.

IV.

That with reference to the teaching of the Confession regarding the duty of Civil Rulers, this Church, while holding that such rulers are subject in their own province to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, does not accept anything in that document which favors, or may be regarded as favoring, intolerance or persecution.

V.

That liberty of opinion is recognized in this Church on such points of the Confession as do not enter into the substance of the Faith : the Church retaining full authority to determine in any case which may arise what points fall within this description, as well as to guard against any abuse of this liberty to the injury of her unity and peace.

NOTE.—From a letter of Dr. Dykes, the Convener of the Synodical Committee, dated Dec. 15, 1889, I learn that the Committee are still at work on the revision of this Confession for the next meeting of Synod, and that their difficulty is “not at all with Calvinism, but almost exclusively on the Doctrine of Scripture (as stated in Art. XIX.), which led to an arrest of procedure last Synod, and to the addition of some members to the Committee who were to represent the conservative party in the Church.” It seems that some desire a definition of the mode and extent of inspiration (which the Westminster Confession does not give). Dr. Dykes also sent me a confidential report of the Minutes of the Committee at meetings held, London, Nov. 19, 20, and 21, 1889. Some slight verbal alterations were adopted, but action on the precise wording of Art. XIX. was deferred to a future meeting in March, 1890. Dr. Dykes thus concludes his letter: “I am anxious to learn all I can of the progress of discussion and opinion on the Confession question in the States; and pray God to guide your Church wisely in this very difficult and hazardous movement.”

DOCUMENT II.

ACTION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK.

THE Presbytery of New York, the largest in the United States, if not in the world, at a special session held November 4, 1889, after an earnest discussion of six hours, voted in favor of revision by an unexpected majority of sixty-seven to fifteen. It answered the first question of the General Assembly in the affirmative, "understanding the word 'revision' to be used broadly, as comprehending any confessional change." The second question of the General Assembly, as to the manner and extent of revision, was referred to a "Digesting Committee," composed of twelve ministers and elders, as follows:

Ministers: The Revs. Thomas S. Hastings, Howard Crosby, Robert R. Booth, Charles H. Parkhurst, C. L. Thompson, Robert F. Sample, George Alexander, John C. Bliss, and Richard D. Harlan; and Elders: Henry Day, John C. Tucker, and Moses W. Dodd.

This Committee held four meetings, and presented, through the Rev. Dr. Hastings, President of the Union Theological Seminary, a *unanimous* report, which will be discussed in special meetings of Presbytery, beginning on the third Monday of January, 1890. The report covers all the points under discussion, and commends itself by its moderation and wisdom. If adopted, it will have considerable weight in shaping the action of the General Assembly. It proposes both a revision of the Westminster Confession and the preparation of a "short and simple creed." If this proposition should be agreed upon, the revision of the Confession (which is much too long anyhow) can be most easily accomplished by an elimination of the objectionable sentences, without an attempt at reconstruction.

New doctrinal statements can be better expressed in a new creed of the living Church, in which, as the report says, "the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord shall be central and dominant."

THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

"The Committee which was appointed to prepare an answer to the second question of the General Assembly's overture, and to submit that answer to the Presbytery, respectfully reports:

"That we have carefully considered the whole subject, and have reached a conclusion with a unanimity for which we are devoutly thankful. This unanimity resulted from concessions which were made in a most excellent spirit, after a full and free presentation of our different personal views.

"Your Committee felt that it is necessary to reduce to the minimum the changes which different minds may desire, and to unite in asking only such modifications as are necessary to remove from our Confession those statements which have proved to be stumbling-blocks to many honest believers.

"Other changes, in the judgment of the majority of the Committee, would be improvements; but we prefer to leave them to the wisdom of the General Assembly, whose province it is to formulate such modifications. We think it wiser and safer to ask only that which the general desire designates. Therefore your Committee recommends unanimously the following answer to the second question of the General Assembly's overture:

"This Presbytery would regard with apprehension any attempts to remodel the Confession of Faith, as endangering the integrity of our system of doctrine. We deprecate most earnestly all such changes as would impair the essential articles of our faith contained in that Confession, which has so long served as our Standard, and to which we are bound by so many historic and personal ties. We desire only such changes as seem to us urgently needed and generally asked.

“1. We desire that the third chapter, *after the first section*, be so recast as to include these things only: the sovereignty of God in election, the general love of God for all mankind, the salvation in Christ Jesus provided for all, and to be preached to every creature.

“2. We desire that the tenth chapter be so revised as not to appear to discriminate concerning “infants dying in infancy,” or so as to omit all reference to them (sec. 3); and so as to preclude that explanation of sec. 4, which makes it teach the damnation of all the heathen, or makes it deny that there are any elect heathen who are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, and who endeavor to walk in penitence and humility, according to the measure of light which God has been pleased to grant them.

“While there are other points which the Presbytery would be glad to see modified or changed—as conspicuously chap. xxiv., sec. 3, and chap. xxv., sec. 6—nevertheless we prefer to confine our suggestions for revision to the third and tenth chapters, as above indicated.

“Furthermore, as germane to the object which the Assembly had in mind in referring these questions to the Presbyteries, your Committee recommends that this Presbytery overture the General Assembly to invite the co-operation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches of America and of Great Britain and Ireland to formulate a short and simple creed, couched so far as may be in Scripture language, and containing all the essential and necessary articles of the Westminster Confession, which creed shall be submitted for approval and adoption as the common creed of the Presbyterian and the Reformed Churches of the world.

“We believe that there is a demand for such a creed, not as a substitute for our Confession, but only to summarize and supplement it for the work of the Church. We would, and we must, retain our Standards, which we have as our family inheritance, and as the safeguard of our ministry and of our institutions. But a brief and comprehensive creed, at once interpreting and representing those Standards, would be wel-

came by our churches as most helpful and beneficent for the exposition of what we have meant through all these years by 'the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.' We want no new doctrines, but only a statement of the old doctrines made in the light and in the spirit of our present Christian activities, of our high privileges, and of our large obligations—a statement in which the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, shall be central and dominant.

“On behalf of the Committee:

“THOMAS S. HASTINGS, *Chairman.*”

THE LIBRARY OF THE
OCT 18 1950
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

CHURCH HISTORY.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY. With a View of the State of the Roman World at the Birth of Christ. By **GEORGE P. FISHER, D.D., LL.D.,** Professor of Church History in Yale College. 8vo, \$2.50.

THE BOSTON ADVERTISER.—"Prof. Fisher has displayed in this, as in his previous published writings, that catholicity and that calm judicial quality of mind which are so indispensable to a true historical critic."

THE EXAMINER.—"The volume is not a dry repetition of well-known facts. It bears the marks of original research. Every page glows with freshness of material and choiceness of diction."

THE EVANGELIST.—"The volume contains an amount of information that makes it one of the most useful of treatises for a student in philosophy and theology, and must secure for it a place in his library as a standard authority."

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By **GEORGE P. FISHER, D.D., LL.D.,** Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Yale University. 8vo, with numerous maps, \$3.50.

This work is in several respects notable. It gives an able presentation of the subject in a single volume, thus supplying the need of a complete and at the same time condensed survey of Church History. It will also be found much broader and more comprehensive than other books of the kind. The following will indicate its aim and scope.

FROM THE PREFACE.—"There are two particulars in which I have sought to make the narrative specially serviceable. In the first place the attempt has been made to exhibit fully the relations of the history of Christianity and of the Church to contemporaneous secular history. * * * I have tried to bring out more distinctly than is usually done the interaction of events and changes in the political sphere, with the phenomena which belong more strictly to the ecclesiastical and religious province. In the second place it has seemed to me possible to present a tolerably complete survey of the history of theological doctrine. * * *

"It has appeared to me better to express frankly the conclusions to which my investigations have led me, on a variety of topics where differences of opinion exist, than to take refuge in ambiguity or silence. Something of the dispassionate temper of an onlooker may be expected to result from historical studies if long pursued; nor is this an evil, if there is kept alive a warm sympathy with the spirit of holiness and love, wherever it is manifest.

"As this book is designed not for technical students exclusively, but for intelligent readers generally, the temptation to enter into extended and minute discussions on perplexed or controverted topics has been resisted."

STANDARD TEXT BOOKS.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. By PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D. New Edition, re-written and enlarged. Vol. I.—Apostolic Christianity, A.D. 1—100. Vol. II.—Ante-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 100—325. Vol. III.—Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity, A.D. 311—600. Vol. IV.—Mediæval Christianity, A.D. 590—1073. 8vo, price per vol., \$4.00.

This work is extremely comprehensive. All subjects that properly belong to a complete sketch are treated, including the history of Christian art, hymnology, accounts of the lives and chief works of the Fathers of the Church, etc. The great theological, christological, and anthropological controversies of the period are duly sketched; and in all the details of history the organizing hand of a master is distinctly seen, shaping the mass of materials into order and system.

PROF. GEO. P. FISHER, of *Yale College*.—"Dr. Schaff has thoroughly and successfully accomplished his task. The volumes are replete with evidences of a careful study of the original sources and of an extraordinary and, we might say, unsurpassed acquaintance with the modern literature—German, French, and English—in the department of ecclesiastical history. They are equally marked by a fair-minded, conscientious spirit, as well as by a lucid, animated mode of presentation."

PROF. ROSWELL D. HITCHCOCK, D.D.—"In no other single work of its kind with which I am acquainted will students and general readers find so much to instruct and interest them."

DR. JUL. MULLER, of *Halle*.—"It is the only history of the first six centuries which truly satisfies the wants of the present age. It is rich in results of original investigation."

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN CHRONOLOGICAL TABLES. A Synchronistic View of the Events, Characteristics, and Culture of each period, including the History of Polity, Worship, Literature, and Doctrines, together with two Supplementary Tables upon the Church in America; and an Appendix, containing the series of Councils, Popes, Patriarchs, and other Bishops, and a full Index. By the late HENRY B. SMITH, D.D., Professor in the Union Theological Seminary of the City of New York. Revised Edition. Folio, \$5.00.

REV. DR. W. G. T. SHEDD.—"Prof. Smith's Historical Tables are the best that I know of in any language. In preparing such a work, with so much care and research, Prof. Smith has furnished to the student an apparatus that will be of life-long service to him"

REV. DR. WILLIAM ADAMS.—"The labor expended upon such a work is immense, and its accuracy and completeness do honor to the research and scholarship of its author, and are an invaluable acquisition to our literature."