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THE Union Seminary Magazine.

Vol. XIV.

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER, 1902.

No. 1.

I. Literary.

THE PASTOR IN HIS STUDY.¹

BY PROF. T. R. ENGLISH, D. D.

IN complying with the request of the editors for a series of articles dealing with the practical work of the ministry, we are keenly alive to the fact that we have to deal with a hackneyed subject, and one in which there is more need of practice than of theory.

So many masters in Israel, as well as ecclesiastical quacks, have discussed the subject, that we cannot hope to say anything original, or to state these old truths more forcibly than has been done by others; but we constantly need to be reminded of things we already know, and it is with the hope that some may thereby be stirred up to greater activity that the task is undertaken.

We propose at this time to speak of the Pastor in his Study. The term "pastor" is used deliberately, and in preference to the more usual term "preacher," for the reason that it is the generic term. Preaching is a function of the pastor, a very important one, indeed; but, nevertheless, only a function. One is first a pastor, in the broad Scriptural use of the term, and then, as a pastor, he is also a preacher.

After the fashion of an old cook-book, which begins its directions for cooking a hare, "*Imprimis*, first catch your hare," we begin with the obvious remark—

¹This is the beginning of a series of four articles by Prof. English on "A Modern Pastor's Work."

(3) But the study should not only be an intellectual workshop, but a place for communion with God as well, a sanctuary, a Bethel. Meditation and prayer must go hand in hand with study. The pastor must know God as well as men, and while he holds intercourse with the great of earth, he must also have intercourse with the King of kings. He has a soul to be saved, as well as others, and his very first duty is to himself. "Take heed to *thyself*" is the way the apostolic injunction runs. Above all others, he needs to be a man of deep piety, and piety needs to be cultivated. The Syrian king gave command to his captains, saying, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel," and against these leaders of the Lord's hosts Satan directs his fiercest assaults. He has battles to fight, upon the result of which depends the salvation of others, as well as his own, and his study is the battle-field where the issue is determined. He needs to be in closest touch with the Master, and, as God's messenger, he must receive the message from his mouth. His study is his place of meeting with him, and if it be not a sanctuary, a very holy of holies, then he is no ambassador for Christ. It was said of Michael Angelo, that he

"Never moved his hand,
Till he had steeped his inmost soul in prayer,"

and he who does not dwell in an atmosphere of prayer is unfit to fill so high an office. Not only does he need this communion for himself and for his work, but he is called to be an intercessor for his people, even as his Master was, and now is. As an ambassador, he stands in the pulpit and speaks for God; but as an intercessor, he must also speak to God for men.

Let the pastor take heed to himself in the study, for such as he is in the study, such will he be also in the pulpit, and among his people. It is there that the battle is lost or won. Let him bear in mind that, though removed from the gaze of men, yet the eye of his Master is upon him, and while men may measure him by his pulpit ministrations, yet fidelity, or the lack of it, in the study will enter largely into his standing with him to whom he must at last render account.

CONFESSIONAL REVISION IN THE PRES- BYTERIAN CHURCH, NORTH.

BY PROF. FRANCIS R. BEATTIE, PH. D., D. D., LL. D.

IN accepting the courteous request of the editors of this MAGAZINE, to prepare an article upon this subject, the writer is fully aware of the large and difficult task he undertakes. To discuss in any luminous and useful way the question of Confessional Revision, as it is now before the Church, North, is confessedly no easy matter, and to do justice to all the issues raised would require a volume, rather than an article. The number of overtures sent down to Presbyteries, and the exact nature of the changes and additions proposed, make it so. And the precise significance of the Brief Statement of Doctrine for popular use, acted on by the last Assembly, further complicates the problem; for, while this statement is not to become, in any sense, a part of the creed of the church, yet it goes forth with the tacit approval of the Assembly, and to some extent it will be regarded by many as a popular statement of the doctrinal system of the church.

During the past century there have been various attempts to revise or modify the Westminster standards. In some cases the changes proposed were radical, and affected the system of doctrine they represent. In other cases the changes made were in matters non-essential to that system. The Congregational churches of New England accepted the standards "for system of doctrine," while the Cumberland Presbyterians made a radical revision, which seriously affected the type of doctrine framed by the Westminster divines. The Scottish churches have been content to let the main body of the Confession stand untouched, and to frame declaratory or explanatory statements, expressing the meaning of confessional subscription, and explaining the sense in which certain debated articles are to be understood. The English Presbyterians have framed, along with the Confession, a briefer and simpler creed, something like the one laid before the last Assembly, North.

The overtures now before the sister church make several distinct proposals. There are certain explanatory statements concerning certain chapters in the Confession, there are some changes proposed in the text of certain sections of that document, and there are certain new chapters which it is proposed to add to the Confession. The Brief Statement is not the subject of overture, though it is part of the revision movement. It is not proposed to touch in any way either the Shorter or the Larger Catechism.

Before taking up the overtures in detail, some general remarks of a preliminary nature may be made.

First, the position is readily conceded that the church has the constitutional right to revise and modify her standards whenever she deems necessary. The Creed, being but an orderly expression of the contents of the Holy Scriptures as these are understood and believed by the church at any given time, is always to be subordinated to the Scriptures, and never takes their place in authority. Hence, if new light has come to the church from the sacred pages under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, the church, in a constitutional way, may shape her subordinate standards accordingly. But in no case should the church revise her creed to bring it into harmony with the mind of the church, unless that mind is in harmony with the contents of the Word of God.

Secondly, the present revision, leaving the Brief Statement out of view, is much less radical than that proposed ten years ago, and then hurriedly dropped, when the judicial case of Dr. C. A. Briggs came before the church. Over a score of changes in the text of the Confession were then proposed, and some of them were quite important. The present revision proposes only three changes in the text of the Confession. In the former revision, no prominence was given to any declaratory statement, while the present proposals lay much stress on such statements, both general and particular.

Thirdly, leaving the Brief Statement out of account, and barring one or two phrases of the declaratory statements, the historic system of doctrine known as generic Calvinism is not seriously impaired by these proposals. It is quite true that the declaratory statements tone down the clear-cut form of the reformed system found in the Confession, yet its Calvinism has

not been seriously impaired. Hence the Arminian can find little comfort in these proposals, and the charge cannot justly be made that this branch of the Presbyterian Church will no longer be Calvinistic should it adopt these proposals. It seems likely that the overtures will not be very satisfactory to those who wish to get rid of a definite Calvinistic form of doctrine. These proposals do not go far enough to suit them. They will hardly be satisfactory to thorough Calvinists, for they will likely prefer the old confessional statements in almost every case.

The overtures are eleven in number. Some of them are merely formal, referring to the numbering of the chapters and placing of statements as foot-notes. Those overtures which have important subject-matter are of three classes. First, there are declaratory statements; secondly, there are textual changes in the Confession; and, thirdly, there are proposed new chapters. These, together with the Brief Statement, must now receive some careful comment and criticism.

There are three declaratory statements proposed. One is general, and touches the ordination vow, and bears upon the other changes that are proposed. The other two are special, and it is proposed to make them foot-notes to Chapters III. and X., respectively, of the Confession.

I. GENERAL DECLARATORY STATEMENT.

This statement is in the following terms:

"While the ordination vow of ministers, ruling elders and deacons, as set forth in the Form of Government, requires the reception and adoption of the Confession of Faith only as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, nevertheless, seeing that the desire has been formally expressed for a disavowal by the church of certain inferences drawn from statements in the Confession of Faith, and also for a declaration of certain aspects of revealed truth which appear at the present time to call for more explicit statement, therefore the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does authoritatively declare as follows."

This seems to be little more than a simple, harmless preamble, and yet many will be suspicious of it as an indirect way of modifying the terms of subscription in the ordination vow. The little word "only" arrests attention in this statement. As a matter of fact, the way it is here used is a little ambiguous, and the whole clause in which it occurs has scarcely the same

meaning as the ordination vow—"Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this church, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"

If one wished to be verbally critical, one might ask whether the contrast suggested by the terms "while" and "nevertheless" is not a little vague and awkward. If this is intended as a simple preamble, it should have been connected with the other declaratory statements. If it is intended to modify the ordination vow, it is scarcely adequate.

The first special overture is as follows:

"With reference to Chap. III. of the Confession of Faith, that concerning those who are saved in Christ, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of his love to all mankind, his gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and his readiness to bestow his saving grace on all who seek it. That concerning those who perish, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine that God desires not the death of any sinner, but has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the gospel to all; that men are fully responsible for their treatment of God's gracious offer; that his decree hinders no man from accepting that offer, and that no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin."

This statement it is proposed to append as a foot-note to the famous chapter in the Confession on the Decrees of God. It is evidently intended as an offset to the clear statement of predestination in that chapter. It speaks first of the decrees in relation to the saved, and then of their relation to those that are lost. On the whole, there is not any serious objection to the first of these if the text of the Confession is given its proper meaning, except that this statement obscures or ignores the distinction between God's general love for the world and his special love for the elect. To the statement concerning those who perish, attention is arrested by the ambiguity, to say the least, of the last clause, "And that no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin." One wishes to know in what sense the words "his sin" are to be taken. Does it mean "his own actual transgressions"? If so, it is not in harmony with the reformed doctrine, which teaches that as men are born into the world they are in a sinful state, and under the penalty of God's displeasure. Even the mediate imputationist would hold this. If it means

"his sinfulness," it would be nearer the position of the Reformed faith. If it is a compromise, with a degree of ambiguity pertaining to it, as a declaratory statement it will have little value. It seems to us like an attempt to obscure the doctrine of the imputed guilt of Adam's sin; for while it may turn out to be true in the end that none who have not committed actual sin shall be lost, it must be held fast that all the race, when they come into the world, are under the guilt and depravity of original sin. We wish this closing clause of an otherwise fairly good statement had been less ambiguous.

The second special declaratory statement is made in these terms:

"With reference to Chap. X., Sec. 3, of the Confession of Faith, that it is not to be regarded as teaching that any who die in infancy are lost. We believe that all dying in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how he pleases."

The reader will see at a glance that this statement, which is to become a foot-note to Chapter X. of the Confession, bears upon the perplexing subject of the salvation of infants who die in infancy. We are inclined to agree with those who would prefer to leave this statement as expressed in the first sentence of it. The Confession does not imply, nor do Presbyterians teach, that any who die in infancy are lost. The doctrine of the Confession is that all elect persons are most surely saved. If they are in adult years when effectually called, then personal faith comes into exercise. If they die in infant days, they are saved by Christ through the Spirit, as also are other elect persons who are not capable of being outwardly called by the Word. The contrast in this chapter is not between elect and non-elect infants who die in infancy, but between elect persons who die in infancy and elect persons who do not die in infancy.

On the positive side, we are inclined to agree with Dr. DeWitt, of Princeton, a member of the Revision Committee, who dissented from this part of the report, saying, "I think it unwise to erect into a church doctrine our belief that all who die in infancy are saved." I would only modify the form of expressing it to meet the terms of the overture, thus, "I think it unwise to erect into a church doctrine our belief that all who die in infancy are included in the election of grace." For ourselves,

we hesitate to dogmatize in regard to the secrets of the divine counsel. We are well content with the Confession as it stands. Elect persons dying in infancy are saved. This is the doctrine of the Creed. This is the position of the Reformed theology. Under this both the man who believes that all who die in infancy are saved and the man who hesitates to go this far can live. But if it be made a church doctrine dogmatically, one way or the other, one or the other of these men cannot accept the church doctrine. Therefore, we would prefer not to do more than say that none who die in infancy are lost.

II. OVERTURES PROPOSING CHANGES.

There are three sections of certain chapters of the Confession in which some changes are proposed. If one excepts certain aspects of the changes proposed in the chapter on "Good Works," none of the modifications here proposed are vital to the Reformed system of doctrine. One wonders how the ardent revisionists on the committee and in the Assembly were content with such unimportant changes. The Brief Statement must have been their consolation.

The first of these overtures is in the following terms:

"Shall Sec. 7, Chap. XVI., of the Confession of Faith, be changed so as to read:

"VII. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and in themselves praiseworthy and useful, and although the neglect of such things is sinful and displeasing unto God, yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner according to his word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they come short of what God requires, and do not make any man meet to receive the grace of God"?

We insert the original text of this section of the Confession for purposes of comparison:

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God."

We also add the form of statement proposed by the committee of 1892:

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and in themselves good and useful, are wanting in the essential elements of holiness, seeing that they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to God's Word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they cannot, therefore, make a man pleasing to God, nor meet to receive his grace; but yet the neglect of things commanded is specially sinful and displeasing in his sight."

In the proposed revision now before the Presbyteries upon the important topic of the good works of unregenerate men, there is an evident effort to tone down the confessional statement, and make it a little more palatable to the natural man. There is also indications of a lack of appreciation of the errors of the Romish doctrine against which this section of the Confession was specially framed. In its antagonism to Rome, the Reformed doctrine was always outspoken and clear. With the Arminian error now also abroad, and the natural tendency of the human mind towards Pelagianism, it is as important in our day as ever to hold the scriptural doctrine on this subtle point.

The phrase, "in themselves praiseworthy and useful," is much less definite and comprehensive than the confessional statement "of good use both to themselves and others." The proposed revision is unfortunate in the use of both its terms. The term "useful" is vague, while the Confession indicates clearly the way in which works are good—that is, "to themselves and others." But the introduction of the phrase "in themselves praiseworthy" is the striking of note not in accord with the Reformed theology, and not justified by the Scriptures, especially if by "praiseworthy" is meant in any sense worthy of God's approbation. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and even the ploughing of the wicked is sin. Even the truthfulness and the honesty of an unregenerate and unbelieving man who is without God, at enmity against God, and without hope in the world, being the act of one in rebellion and apostacy, cannot possibly be praiseworthy, in the sight of God at least. This revision is, therefore, of doubtful validity at this point. The transference of the last phrase in the confessional statement to the middle of the section, as the revision proposes to state it, takes away much of its real meaning, and makes a not very elegant sentence. All through, the toning down of the doctrine is what one notices.

We cannot forbear to add that, in our judgment, the proposed

revision of 1892 is far superior to that now proposed. In one or two respects it may be even better than the confessional statement, so that we cannot but regret that the committee of this year did not adopt it. The phrase, "wanting in the essential elements of holiness," in the form of 1892, is good. It would be a pity if the overture of this year should be approved by the Presbyteries.

The next overture proposes to strike out a clause from the sections dealing with lawful oaths. The proposal reads thus:

"Shall the last clause in Sec. 3, Chap. XXII., of the Confession of Faith, which reads as follows, be stricken out?

"Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority."

The removal of this does not affect the system of doctrine, yet we cannot feel much opposition to the statement as it stands in the Confession. The Scriptures certainly do not condemn lawful oaths, and, in some cases, rather approve of such, and to refuse to conform to lawful and just authority may be at least of doubtful propriety.

The next overture relates to the statement in the Confession that the Pope is Antichrist. As this does not necessarily affect the Reformed system of doctrine, it need not be dwelt upon at length now, though to assert strongly the headship of Christ over his church is an essential element in the Calvinistic system. But the proposed revision, which is as follows, retains this doctrine:

"Shall the following section be substituted for Sec. 6, Chap. XXV., of the Confession of Faith, viz.?

"VI. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church, and the claim of any man to be the vicar of Christ and the head of the church, is unscriptural, without warrant in fact, and is a usurpation dishonoring to the Lord Jesus Christ."

The original text of the Confession may be given, for the sake of comparison:

"There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be the head thereof; but 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."

Of course, the main thing here is the assertion of the alone headship of Christ over his church. At the same time, we should

not too hastily seem to make light of the work of the Westminster divines upon this point. Many of them knew from experience what Rome was. They found the third chapter of Second Thesalonians speaking of "the man of sin that was to be revealed, and the son of perdition." They found this Scripture saying that "he exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped"; that "he sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." They also found in the fourth chapter of First Timothy, the evils of the latter times spoken of. Then "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having the conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving." This all seems to fit the Papacy pretty well. Hence, while we agree with those who think it best not to hold this as a church doctrine dogmatically, nothing has yet appeared in the world which better fits these Scriptures. The Westminster divines were not afraid to say what they thought.

III. THE PROPOSED NEW CHAPTERS.

It is proposed to introduce two new chapters, one on "The Holy Spirit," and the other on "The Love of God and Missions." If the overtures concerning these should finally carry, it is to be hoped that these chapters will not be placed, as is now proposed, at the end of the Confession, but at that particular place where their subject-matter would locate them. It is a logical absurdity to place them after the judgment is past and the dispensation closed forever. Though of some length, we insert these proposed new chapters. That on the Holy Spirit is as follows:

"CHAPTER XXXIV.—Of the Holy Spirit.

"I. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, of the same substance and equal in power and glory, is, together with the Father and Son, to be believed in, loved, obeyed, and worshipped throughout all ages.

"II. He is the Lord and Giver of life, everywhere present in nature, and is the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in men. By him the prophets were moved to speak the Word of God, and all writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God. The dispensation of the gospel is especially committed to him. He prepares the way for it, accompanies it with his

persuasive power, and urges its messages upon the reason and conscience of men, so that they who reject its merciful offer are not only without excuse, but are also guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit.

"III. The Holy Spirit, whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who ask him, is the only efficient agent in the application of redemption. He convicts men of sin, moves them to repentance, regenerates them by his grace, and persuades and enables them to embrace Jesus Christ by faith. He unites all believers to Christ, dwells in them as their Comforter and Sanctifier, gives to them the Spirit of Adoption and Prayer, and performs all those gracious offices by which they are sanctified and sealed unto the day of redemption.

"IV. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit all believers, being vitally united to Christ, who is the Head, are thus united one to another in the church, which is his body. He calls and anoints ministers for their holy office, qualifies all other officers in the church for their special work, and imparts various gifts and graces to its members. He gives efficacy to the Word, and to the ordinances of the gospel. By him the church will be preserved, increased until it shall cover the earth, purified, and at last made perfectly holy in the presence of God.

Space forbids us saying all we would like to say upon this chapter. In general, we doubt whether such a chapter is needed. It singles out the Spirit in a whole chapter, while no such prominence is given to God the Father or Christ the Son. The chapter on Christ is on him as Mediator. In the second section of the proposed chapter the distinction between the natural operations of the Spirit in the world and his supernatural operations in revelation and redemption is not clearly preserved.

But our chief objection lies in the fact that almost every statement gathered in this chapter is already in the Confession, so that we hesitate to overlook this fact, and be guilty of unnecessary repetition. To make good this general statement, let a few passages be culled.

In Chapter I. "the Holy Spirit gives the full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority of the Word of God," and "the Spirit is necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word. Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe." (Chap. VII., Sec. 3.) "Through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah." (Chap. VII., Sec. 5.) "Some of the common operations of the Spirit." (Chap. X., Sec. 4.) "And grieve his Holy Spirit." (Chap. XVI., Sec. 3.) "Being enabled by the Spirit, may without extraordinary revelation, . . . and grieveth the Spirit, yet

by the operation of the Spirit this assurance may in due time be revived." (Chap. XVIII., Sec. 4.) "Effectually persuading them by his Spirit to believe and obey; and governing their hearts by his Word and Spirit." (Chap. VIII., Sec. 7.) "God . . . effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit." (Chap. X., Sec. 1.) "Being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit." (Chapter XVIII., Sec. 2.) "The Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man." (Chap. XIX., Sec. 7.) "All those who are justified . . . receive the Spirit of adoption." (Chap. XII.) "By his Word and Spirit dwelling in them." (Chap. XIII., Sec. 1.) "Through the continual supply of strength from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part doth overcome." (Chap. XIII., Sec. 3.) "Our works . . . as they are good, proceed from the Spirit." (Chap. XVI., sec. 5.) "They whom God hath effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace." (Chap. XVII., Sec. 1.) "The grace of faith . . . is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts." (Chap. XIV., Sec. 1.) "The testimony of the Spirit of adoption, . . . which Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance." (Chap. XVIII., Sec. 2.) "Prayer . . . by the help of the Spirit." (Chap. XXI., Sec. 3.) "And doth by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise." (Chap. XXV., Sec. 3.) "Baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Chap. XXVIII., Sec. 2.) "The grace promised is not only offered, but truly exhibited and conferred by the Holy Ghost." (Chap. XXVIII., Sec. 5.) "But upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution." (Chap. XXVII., Sec. 3.) "The bodies of the just by his Spirit shall be raised up to honor." (Chap. XXXII., Sec. 3.) "Conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost." (Chap. VIII., Sec. 2.) And, again (Chap. VIII., Sec. 3), "And anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure." "Sacrifice of himself, which he, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God hath fully satisfied the justice of God." (Chap. VIII., Sec. 5.) "They are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how, he pleaseth." (Chap. X., Sec. 3.) "Fuller communication of the free Spirit of God." (Chap. XX., Sec. 1.)

These quotations will serve to show how fully the doctrine

of the Holy Spirit pervades the Confession, and that, while there may be little that is objectionable in this proposed new chapter, it adds really nothing to the doctrinal content of the Creed, and is not necessary.

The other chapter which it is proposed to add is as follows:

“CHAPTER XXXV.—*Of the Love of God and Missions.*”

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

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

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

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

The grouping of these two subjects in the same chapter is not very appropriate. The evangelization of the world might have some suitable emphasis, but a section in connection with the doctrine of the church might have served the purpose, and have been more logical. Then the first and second sections contain much that has already been set forth in other places, especially in the proposed declaratory statement on the third chapter of the Confession. But we cannot fail to note that the distinction between the love of God for the world and for the elect, for all men and for his own people, is obscured in these sections. Then the wording of this chapter is careless in places. Why use both “infinite” and “perfect” in the first section? If anything be infinite it is perfect. Indeed, this whole chapter impresses us as a rather weak one, and adds but a little to the

contents of the Creed. Its main point of value is the emphasis laid on the missionary function of the church by it.

IV. THE BRIEF STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE.

Though this statement is not intended to be a part of the revised creed, yet it must be considered in connection with the revision overtures. It is intended “to inform and enlighten the people,” as the following resolution, which was adopted, will show:

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

This resolution at once raises the question as to how far this Brief Statement does express the Reformed doctrine in general, and the Westminster form of that doctrine in particular. Then, the question of the exact place and purpose of this statement in the church is not very clear. The Assembly approved it for a certain purpose, and it will be important to keep that purpose in mind.

There are sixteen articles in this statement. One familiar with the Confession notices certain marked omissions. There is no allusion to the covenant, either of works or of grace, so that this statement does not represent the federal theology of the Confession. And there is no chapter on God’s providence, a topic which is quite prominent in the Westminster standards. There is no article on effectual calling directly.

The order of the topics is also in several important cases changed. The article on God is before that on Revelation, while in the Confession the doctrine of Holy Scripture in a truly Reformed way stands first. Predestination in general and Election in particular are separated, and there is an article on each. Faith and Repentance are treated of before the New Birth.

We give these articles in order, offering a simple comment or two on each:

“ARTICLE I.—*Of God.*”

“We believe in the ever-living God, who is a Spirit, and the Father of our spirits; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, most just in all his ways, most glorious in

holiness, unsearchable in wisdom and plenteous in mercy, full of love and compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, one in substance and equal in power and glory."

The phrase, "We worship," for "we believe," is not exactly a creedal form of expression. For the phrase "ever-living God," we would prefer "one living and true God." Indeed, the three questions in the Shorter Catechism on this topic make a better statement.

"ARTICLE II.—Of Revelation.

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

One obvious remark here is that this article does not make a generic distinction between God's natural manifestations of himself in nature, in history and in the heart of man, and his special or supernatural revelation of the way of life and salvation. The definite creed form, "we believe," is not observed all through this statement. And the statement about Christ's person, while quite true, comes in awkwardly here. The phrase, "Word of God," is here used near the end of the article, in an ambiguous way. The whole article does scant justice to Holy Scripture as revelation written.

"ARTICLE III.—Of the Eternal Purpose.

"We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God embraces all events, so that while the freedom of man is not taken away nor is God the author of sin, yet in his providence he makes all things work together in the fulfilment of his sovereign design and the manifestation of his glory; wherefore, humbly acknowledging the mystery of this truth, we trust in his protecting care, and set our hearts to do his will."

As a very general statement, this may be without objection, yet the somewhat hortatory tone of the closing clauses is observable in a creed statement. The substitution of the word "purpose" for "decree" is also to be noted. The absence of any allusion to second causes is to be observed. The Confession guards its doctrine well at this point.

"ARTICLE IV.—Of the Creation.

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

The absence of the allusion to creation out of nothing is to be observed, and the whole expression concerning creation in general is rather bald and vague. Even in a Brief Statement, a little more might have been said here. The reference to the creation of man is good, although it is to be observed that this is all that is said regarding man's original state.

"ARTICLE V.—Of the Sin of Man.

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

This statement scarcely measures up to the Reformed doctrine of sin. The representative status of our first parents is not recognized. There is an absence, also, of the historic setting which the Scriptures give of this event. Imputation of guilt is not formally recognized at all.

"ARTICLE VI.—Of the Grace of God.

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

This we regard as a defective statement of the Reformed doctrine. Moreover, it surely confounds the love and the grace of God. To enter into details here would lead us too far afield.

"ARTICLE VII.—Of Election.

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

This is a fairly good general article, yet it scarcely states, even in a popular way, the Reformed doctrine of unconditional election. The word "in," of the first line, must be a misprint for "of." The credal statement of the salvation of all who die in infancy is also made here, instead of under the New Birth. The fact that election is not of works, but of grace, might have been more clearly stated.

"ARTICLE VIII.—*Of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

"We believe in and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who, being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, without sin; unto us he has revealed the Father, by his Word and Spirit making known the perfect will of God; for us he fulfilled all righteousness and satisfied eternal justice, offering himself a perfect sacrifice upon the cross to take away the sin of the world; for us he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he ever intercedes for us; in our hearts, joined to him by faith, he abides forever as the indwelling Christ; over us, and over all for us, he rules: wherefore, unto him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King forever."

The hortatory tone runs all through this warm and glowing article. The doctrine of Christ's person might have had a little clearer expression with reference to his two distinct natures. The covenant basis of his mediatorial work is not stated, but the sacrificial nature of his obedience and death is pretty clearly announced.

"ARTICLE IX.—*Of Faith and Repentance.*

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

This, though brief, is a good article as far as it goes. One misses the ring of the term "justification" here, and there is no sort of definition of the *nature* of saving faith. This should certainly have been given.

"ARTICLE X.—*Of the Holy Spirit.*

"We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who moves everywhere upon the hearts of men, to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask him. We believe that he has spoken by holy men of God in making known his truth to men for their salvation; that,

through our exalted Saviour, he was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the gospel; and that he abides with the church, dwelling in every believer as the Spirit of truth, of holiness, and of comfort."

This article should stand before the ninth, since faith and repentance are due to the work of the Spirit. The article itself is quite comprehensive and, in the main, acceptable. The distinction between the common and the effectual operations of the Spirit is implied, but not very clearly stated.

"ARTICLE XI.—*Of the New Birth and the New Life.*

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

This is a very weak statement of effectual calling and sanctification, and it gives but a hint of adoption. There should certainly have been a fuller statement here to give it even the semblance of the Reformed doctrine at these important points.

"ARTICLE XII.—*Of the Resurrection and the Life to Come.*

"We believe that in the life to come the spirits of the just, at death made free from sin, enjoy immediate communion with God and the vision of his glory; and we confidently look for the general resurrection in the last day, when the bodies of those who sleep in Christ shall be fashioned in the likeness of the glorious body of their Lord, with whom they shall live and reign forever."

This may serve as a very general statement. There is no remark about the resurrection of the wicked as well as of the righteous.

"ARTICLE XIII.—*Of the Law of God.*

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

This article should stand in connection with that on the New Life, as it gives the rule for that life. That the law of

God is in all Scripture, and summed up in the Ten Commandments, should have been hinted, and the fact that it is the rule for the Christian life, not the ground of salvation, is not made plain.

"ARTICLE XIV.—Of the Church and the Sacraments.

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

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

In a popular statement, we think it would be better to avoid the use of the word "Catholic," and use the term "Universal." The term Catholic is so often used to denote the Romish Church, that it is apt to be misunderstood.

The meagre statement here given of the sacraments is entirely inadequate. The doctrine of the sacraments was so fully wrought out in the Reformed system, that any article proposing to give the gist of that system must say much more concerning both baptism and the Lord's Supper than this article expresses. In some respects we regard this as the very weakest article in the whole sixteen. With the Catechism at hand, one wonders how the committee could have been content with this vague statement.

"ARTICLE XV.—Of the Last Judgment.

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

The twelfth article should have stood just before this, instead of where it is. This statement is safe, and yet very general. It is rather non-committal on some debated points here raised.

"ARTICLE XVI.—Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.

"We believe that it is our duty, as servants and friends of Christ, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the sanctity of the family, to

uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding his people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and declare unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and that he will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently trust that, by his power and grace, all his enemies and ours shall be finally overcome, and the kingdoms of this world shall be made the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. In this faith we abide; in this service we labor; and in this hope we pray,

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

No objection can be made to the contents of this article. It is an earnest practical call to Christian privilege; and duty, and stands as a fitting conclusion of the whole. Logically it might, perhaps ought to, come in before the article on "The Judgment."

Touching the Brief Statement as a whole, we cannot but conclude that it is a rather inadequate expression of the Reformed doctrine. In our humble opinion, a far better statement is to be found in the Shorter Catechism. If the answers therein were taken by themselves and grouped under their respective topics, a very much better Brief Statement would be in our hands.

As to the revision overtures, they may secure a majority of the Presbyteries, though this will not be without debate. The real discussion will likely be in the next Assembly. If they should be enacted, the generic Calvinism of the standards will yet remain, though perhaps toned down a little here and there.