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The Church Treasurer.

There is an office in every Presbyterian church that has little recognition and seldom any remuneration. The praises of pastor, elders, trustees, Sabbath-school workers, and all other Christian helpers are sounded and due credit is given them for the growth and success of the church. But there is another man, not often mentioned, whose services are so essential that without them the whole machinery will stop. This is the church treasurer who gathers in the funds and guards them, and pays the bills. He is very near to the people, has his finger on the pulse of the congregation and knows the real condition of the church better than any other one in it. The first sign of languor or disaffection reveals itself to him, and he first discovers the growing strength of the church, both financially and spiritually.

The treasurer is a man of power. The pastor is often helpless in his hands. He can fan the spirit of discontent till it bursts into a blaze. He can annoy the pastor till he is forced to retire in sadness and discouragement. On the other hand, the treasurer can do more to strengthen a pastor than any one else. He may be thoughtful of his interests and be in full sympathy with him in his work. He may see that settlement of salary is made at the proper time and kindly urge all to their duty. He can, when he is so disposed, arouse the languid, soothe the offended, quiet the disaffected, and settle rising difficulties. As troubles first reach his ear, he can do wonders in suppressing them and preserving the peace of the church and guarding the welfare of the pastor. There is no more able assistant of the pastor in any church than the treasurer when he is his sincere friend.

An ideal church treasurer was thus described by one who knew him well and was a member of the same church: "He is the most useful man in our church. He does not work in the Sabbath-school, nor help in the prayer-meeting, but no elder, nor even the pastor, does more to promote the interests of the congregation. When he finds one growing delinquent he seeks a personal interview with him, explains the importance of promptness in all payments, quiets his complaints if he is a murmurer, removes his hard feelings and soothes his spirit if disaffected over anything. When one has become determined to square up his accounts and leave the church for some grievance he has been known to talk him out of it, dissuade him from his purpose and send him home well contented."

Here is reliable testimony of the value of the service of one who magnified his office. The work of the man was more than to merely count money; it was the Lord's work as truly as that of the minister in the pulpit and just as essential to the welfare of the congregation. Many do not realize the very great importance of such labors, often labors of love, hard and self-denying. If the elder who rules well is worthy of double honor, the treasurer who does his part well is worthy of four-fold honor.

Who should be a church treasurer? One who has not only ordinary business qualifications, but a man well settled in religious convictions. He will soon find out more about the inside working of things in a congregation, than any one should know who is not well settled in the faith and a true friend of the church. He may learn things of professing Christians in this close acquaintance with them that would otherwise drive from him all interest in religion.

A lady once maintained that her husband had been greatly injured spiritually by serving their church in this capacity. He was cashier of the bank in their town, and though not a professing Christian kindly offered to aid the church, by serving as its treasurer. But to his astonishment, he discovered that some who seemed prominent in the church, helpers in the prayer-meeting and apparently active Christians, were very mean and unbusiness-like in their dealings with the church, prompt to meet all other payments except church dues, and even ready to repudiate these altogether. This was a sad revelation to him. Some of these were pillars in the church and very decided as Christians, and the effect on his mind was disastrous. He said to himself, "These men are insincere; they pretend to love the church, while they do not care for it." He soon came to a further conclusion, that all religion was a pretense, and lost faith in everything.

This may seem to be an extreme case, but it contains a warning to churches in the selection of treasurers. There should be a further lesson drawn from it, that no one in the church be a stumbling-block in the way of another. There should with all Christians be a special conscientiousness in payment of church dues. Expenses must be met in some way, and the fair and honorable method is for every family to do its share and according to its ability. When obligations are entered into, they should be more sacred even, than other debts. This will lighten much of the burden of church officers, fellow Christians will be encouraged, and the world will be convinced that our religion is not in vain.

Unanimity.

Much is made of unanimity in our day. Many talk about and write about it. It is thought to be a great feat to get a unanimous vote upon a proposition submitted for adoption, or to pass a measure without a dissenting voice. But unanimity is nothing in itself. Whether it counts for much depends upon how it was obtained, for what purposes, and with what results. In determining its character and worth, its moral qualities must be taken into account. United consent to that which is wrong or unworthy, or unlawful, is only an aggravation. A law may pass the legislature without a recorded nay, and be regarded as worthy of special mention and favor on this account; yet when it is submitted to a practical test, and proves injurious to morals, or to business, or to the home, or to certain classes, those who suffer from it

Love.

If suddenly upon the street
 My gracious Saviour I should meet,
 And he should say, "As I love thee,
 What love hast thou to offer me?"
 Then what could this poor heart of mine
 Dare offer to that heart divine?

His eye would pierce my outward show,
 His thought my inmost thought would know;
 And if I said, "I love thee, Lord,"
 He would not heed my spoken word,
 Because my daily life would tell
 If verily I loved him well.

If on the day or in the place
 Wherein He met me face to face,
 My life could show some kindness done,
 Some purpose formed, some work begun
 For His dear sake, then it were meet
 Love's gift to lay at Jesus' feet.

—Charles Francis Richardson.

Large Statements as to Present Doctrinal Opinion Within "The American Presbyterian Church."

By Rev. Dr. Willis G. Craig.

In a leaflet now being circulated through the mails as a campaign document in behalf of revision, the matter assigned to a religious journal, without signature, the sweeping statement is made, "That every pulpit in the land has been weaned these generations from the type of Calvinism expressed in the Confession of Faith." The same opinion is set forth in another form, "The proposed revision of the Confession of eight years since was simply an effort towards making it conform to the Calvinism of to-day, as commonly preached in our churches throughout the entire land."

In this leaflet not a hint is given to the public by the writer who sets afloat these opinions, as to what constitutes the type of Calvinism taught in the Confession of Faith; not a word as to what constitutes the type of Calvinism, commonly preached in our churches throughout the land; nor is there a single proof afforded to substantiate the large statement concerning the great change in doctrinal opinion that has come over the American Presbyterian Church. From such assertions no reader could possibly tell what the Confession teaches, or what every Presbyterian pulpit in the land is now teaching as to the cardinal doctrines of the Scriptures. This method of dealing with a subject so grave, so delicate, so far-reaching in its importance, is unfair and misleading. So far as it has any bearing on the present discussion its tendency is to leave the public in a condition of perplexity as to the facts, and to awaken a doubt as to whether the Presbyterian Church has any stable opinion as to the teachings of Scripture concerning the most vital questions of revelation.

As to the statements, the inquiry might be made, how large has been the authority of exact individual opinion, relied upon, as the basis of the unqualified assertions? Have we men among us who have interrogated the office-bearers and intelligent laymen throughout the Church, and have in response received definite answers on a large scale, so as to be reasonably assured on the facts—that the change of doctrinal opinion asserted has taken place? Have we men who have carried their inquiries into the bosom of the United Presbyterian

Church and found that this well instructed and conscientious sister Church has abandoned the type of Calvinism taught in the Confession? Has the scrutiny extended to the mass of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and has the response been returned to the same effect? No sane man can believe that any such earnest effort has been made to discover the real state of opinion in our own or in sister Churches of the same order, by the writer of this article. A change of doctrinal standpoint arrived at by an individual, or a group of individuals, more or less large, has been translated into an universalism of opinion, and, as we assuredly believe, without sufficient warrant. It is vain to say that every pulpit in the land has been weaned these generations from the type of Calvinism taught in the Confession. The testimony to the contrary is too abundant, too strong, and too accessible to warrant such unqualified assertions. Not a single theological treatise of acknowledged weight, constructed upon Calvinistic lines, written in this generation by a Presbyterian divine, has discovered any abandonment of the regulative tenets of the Confession of Faith. The Presbyterian Church in this country committed itself, as a body, to the truths set forth in its Standards by its chosen speakers and writers upon the occasion of its celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth-time of the Westminster Standards! The charters of all the Theological Seminaries in connection with our Church, even of the schools most recently founded, require the instructors to state, illustrate and defend the type of Calvinism taught in the Confession. The great dominant opinion expressed in speeches before our General Assembly, when revision has been the subject under consideration, has breathed the utmost loyalty to the doctrines so carefully and fully set forth in our time-honored Symbol. The instructions given by the Assembly of 1890 to the Committee on Revision, appointed by that body, required the committee to formulate and report to the Assembly of 1891, only such alterations and amendments to the Confession of Faith as do not in any way impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system of doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith. "The overwhelming majority of that Assembly demanded that there should be no revision of the truth taught in the Confession." And yet, again, the committee appointed by the last Assembly to gather, and report to the next Assembly, the sentiments of the Presbyteries in regard to our doctrinal Standards, in a circular just published, informs the Presbyteries that the committee is not empowered to consider any suggestions that conflict with the System of Doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures and contained in the Confession of Faith.

In the light of these proofs as to the undeviating attachment of the Presbyterian Church to the truth taught in the Confession; we submit that it is misleading to attempt to impress the general public with the belief that our Church, as a whole, has been weaned these generations from the type of Calvinism taught in the Confession. The Confession presents to all who read it, a series of doctrines, which, taken together, make up a system of doctrine known to history as the Westminster Confessional Statement of Calvinism. You may call these individual truths, doctrines, principles, which com-

bined present a recognized system under the title, "Westminster Confession of Faith," a type of Calvinism, if you please; but one thing is certain, that the Church has on many different occasions and in the most unambiguous way possible, made it to appear to all men that the truths taught in this particular Calvinistic Confession are not to be tampered with, not to be amended, not to be minimized or weakened by an incomplete statement of them, by any revision to which she will lend her sanction. For well does the Church know, in her determination to maintain her system of doctrine un mutilated, that she must keep watch over the doctrines that compose the system, lest the system, which she holds so loyally and has been able to defend so successfully down the ages, be lost in a moment of unwatchfulness. The only rightful conclusion that can be drawn from the actions of our Assembly, all and singular, from 1889 to date, in regard to alterations or amendments of the Confession, is, that the controlling factor of revision, if undertaken, shall be to safeguard the system, type of doctrine, body of truth, or whatever you choose to call it, as now contained in the Confession, and that the aim of the attempted revision, if attempted, shall be to make this identical system clearer, and, if possible, still more impregnable by stating one and all, the doctrines which make up the system more cogently and more completely, and, perchance to rid these same individual doctrines and this same system from modes of statement or kind of emphasis which some thinkers have supposed lay them liable to misunderstanding. Whatever wide running and new destructive degree of revision some people may have had in their minds, as the basis of their advocacy of the experiment, no thoughtful man who has listened to the utterances of the Church as such can say that any authoritative sanction has been given to a revision that would impair in any way the integrity of the very system of truth taught in the Confession, in the very terms of the distinguishing doctrines which are necessary to express the system in its completeness.

We submit that it is not fair to the facts, when any man inside the Presbyterian Church and really acquainted with its uniform expressions as to "the things most surely believed among us," sends out as a campaign document, at a time like this, a broadside, containing such statements as we have quoted, with the additional assertion that "For over a century God has in his Providence been leading the American Presbyterian Church away from the extreme type of Calvinism, which brought forth the Westminster Confession of Faith." We turn from these unsupported statements to articles of a different character, which have appeared in two successive numbers of *The Presbyterian*, and which were written by the Rev. John T. Duffield, D.D., LL.D., of Princeton, N. J. Dr. Duffield is a Christian minister of the highest character, a widely read, ripe theologian, whose writings are welcome to the Church, which he is fitted to instruct. The position assumed in these articles is that "There are but two forms of restatement, that in the present Confessional crisis call for serious consideration and discussion—revision and a new creed. We probably would not err in saying, a revision that would not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system and a new doctrinal Standard that would." While admitting that some of

the advocates of a substitute creed resent the intimation of any purpose to impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system, Dr. Duffield is led to say that "Recent utterances in the recognized 'organs' of the new creedists seem to indicate that the true inwardness of the movement on the part of the leading agitators is to secure a doctrinal Standard to supersede the present Standards, more 'liberal' in doctrine, and as to the authority of Holy Scripture." He dismisses the substitute creed plan of dealing with our Standards, with the remark that, "The attempt to formulate a new creed would be likely to result in exposing its impracticability." With this judgment as to the helplessness of the attempt to secure a doctrinal Standard to supersede the present Standards, the large majority of the Assembly's committee, which met at Saratoga a few weeks ago, we understand, entirely agreed, and hence in the series of four questions presented to the Presbyteries for consideration, no opinion is requested in regard to a substitute creed intended to supersede our present Standards. In this, we believe the judgment of Dr. Duffield and the Assembly's committee to be right and final. Turning away from the substitute creed Dr. Duffield advocates revision as the best method of dealing with some of the faults which he believes may be found in the Confession of Faith. He proposes four changes, two referring to objectionable statements, two to serious omissions. While we cannot answer positively for Dr. Duffield, we are led to believe, from the tenor of the two articles, that he would be satisfied if these four changes would be effected by way of careful and intelligent revision. He objects to the Confessional Statement of the Divine Decree respecting the non-elect. He asserts that "The Form of Statement adopted (in the Confession) is what it is that it might be acceptable to those who hold a theory on Preterition, which Dr. Charles Hodge says 'Is not consistent with the scriptural exhibition of the character of God.'" The necessary inference from this is that Dr. Hodge did not hold the Confessional Statement of the Divine Decree respecting the non-elect as set out in the Third Chapter! Can this be made good? If Dr. Hodge accepted and defended the Confessional teaching of the chapter "Of God's Eternal Decrees," then he did not hold, with Dr. Duffield, that the chapter presents a theory on Preterition which is not consistent with the scriptural exhibition of the character of God, and hence he cannot be claimed as in sympathy with Dr. Duffield's desire to revise the chapter at this point. We cannot extend this line of remark. Dr. Duffield believes heartily in the scriptural doctrine of God's sovereign electing love. He knows that the doctrine of election is the touchstone of the Calvinistic system. Dr. Duffield is not a Universalist. He objects to the Confessional view of what is sometimes called Reprobation, with its two elements—(1) The passing by of some sinful men, by God, acting as a sovereign; (2) The condemnation of finally impenitent sinners for their sins, God acting as a righteous judge. To the former of these two elements, Dr. Duffield, as we understand him, objects. We do not believe that he will be able to induce the Church to mar its complete statement of the scriptural doctrine of Predestination, on both its sides. This is an individual judgment held with due respect to Dr. Duffield. If argument and persuasion should induce the Church to with-

draw from its Confession, the teaching which it now contains, as a whole, concerning the doctrine of God's Eternal Decrees, the facts will remain just the same, not "as logical inferences from super-logical truths," but as revelations of the mind of God made known to us in the Scriptures, and they will appear to the thought of men again and again as they fairly think the whole subject through. In the second place, Dr. Duffield would be pleased to see Chapter X., Section 3, changed so as to make it read substantially, "All who die in infancy are saved." This is a pathetic subject. Concerning the reconstruction of the section on infant salvation, proposed by the Revision Committee eight years ago, and which we suppose would meet Dr. Duffield's views, a great theologian has said: "Although we all cherish as a blessed hope, and some of us feel that there is sufficient scriptural basis to enable us to hold as a personal conviction what is here stated, surely there is no such clear and direct Scripture for it as will justify its dogmatic assertion as a Confessional doctrine. Nor can it be too often, or too emphatically repeated, that no statement of infant salvation can be satisfactory which does not lay stress on the two chief elements which require emphasizing, that infants need salvation, and that they owe their salvation to the electing love of God." And this our Confession teaches.

Dr. Duffield would like to add two new chapters to the Confession: (1) On "The Gospel;" (2) on "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit." We have only space to remark, that no Church on earth goes before our own in acknowledging and attempting to obey the command of Christ, to preach the Gospel to every creature. As to the personality of the Spirit, it is taught as distinctly in the Confession as the personality of the Father, or the personality of the Son. And as to the mission of the Spirit, that doctrine is presented and amplified through chapter after chapter of the Confession, until the symbol is fairly held to be saturated with that blessed truth. Judging from the religious papers there does not seem to be much interest felt in the question of new chapters.

A Layman's View of the Revision Agitation.

By A. H. Marr.

So far I have seen nothing in print from any of the lay members of the Church upon the subject of revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith. In spite of her so-called narrowness our Church has always admitted a full discussion upon matters relating to her Form of Government or to her faith.

When the subject of revision was first prominently agitated, last spring, the writer, in response to a sermon from his excellent pastor, determined to be open-minded in the matter and try to look upon both sides of the question. At first inclined to favor a few verbal changes, it has now become a conviction with him that there should be no tampering with the venerable document, but instead, a reaffirmation of loyalty to it.

Instead of trying to reconstruct the Westminster Confession, let our ministers continue to try and reconstruct the human heart. There is nothing in our Confession of Faith which has not strong scriptural authority for it. Instead of verbal changes—and our linguists of to-day cannot equal the masterly diction of the Westminster

Divines, much less improve upon it—it is becoming more and more apparent that it is desired to eliminate some of the scriptural statements of the Confession.

The Presbyterian Church is nothing if she is not loyal to the Bible. To blot out of her Confession any scriptural statements because they may be distasteful to the unregenerate human heart would be disloyalty to God and to his Word. I firmly believe that the moving springs of this agitation against our creed are to be found in "the carnal mind which is enmity against God." Many of our ministers have listened to the declamations of free thinking, and often superficial thinking men and women, until they have become, perhaps unconsciously, imbued with the idea that our declaration is a hindrance to evangelization. A short time ago a man of no special attainments, and rather given to carping at the Bible, told me when speaking of the disposition of the Presbyterian Church to stand by her Symbols, "Well, some people will never learn." The theology of Jonathan Edwards, of Charles Hodge, and of Professor Shedd, was not satisfactory to this country school teacher of mediocre ability.

It is just possible, although it may be highly impertinent for me to say it, that some of our ministers may not be so thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of God as to accept all the teachings of the Word. We are all very much like children after all. Change and variety are what most of us fancy. Dissatisfaction is an integral part of unreconstructed human nature, and frequently "a fly in the ointment of those who face toward Zion." "Progress!" is the catching cry of the day. No one can properly deny the blessings of growth and improvement in the world and among men. But he who has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away," has ordained that some things shall endure. Thank God there are some things which do not change and which need not to be changed. When we are almost dizzy with the rapid evolutions of the wheel of progress—and no man should impede that progress—it is a relief to know that some things are properly fixed and final, and that the ancient landmarks of our Faith are among them. Some people seem to think that all things must change continually. God does not change; his Word cannot change. The beneficent light and heat of the sun have not changed, while the activities of man have wrought new improvements upon the earth.

We must expect to find disagreement among men. They differ upon all subjects. In politics, some advocate policies which work admirably when put in practice, and at the same time, men of ability and seeming honesty, advocate the reverse of these policies. It will not do to lightly change a system of doctrine because some worthy people are dissatisfied with it. Why, if we are to change the Westminster Confession to suit the public, we will have to cut out its very heart. Time and again have I met men who did not believe in the vicarious atonement, to say nothing of hell and a devil. To emasculate the Confession, because all of its statements cannot be clearly understood, is to deny that quality which is inseparable with spiritual things, the quality of mystery. Much in the Bible we must receive by faith; much we cannot fully understand. It is not given us to know all now. Enough is given that we may know