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With Church News, Book Reviews and Reading for the Home.

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For Dr. T. W. Higginson
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THE PRESBYTERIAN

Vol. 70

Philadelphia, August 15, 1900

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The Salvation of the Rich Man.

These are times of rapid money-making. The poor man of yesterday is the rich man of to-day. Fortunes are made with amazing rapidity. The accumulation of property is not a lost art. Wealth lies in so many channels, that if one fails another may succeed. Its attractions are great on account of the advantages it brings in the way of earthly comfort, social standing, influence on the public and power for good. A man with a large balance in bank and a heart full of the love of Christ is ready for great service, in unnumbered ways. On account of what wealth brings to one and what it fits him to do, instinctively it is sought after. Nor is there any wrong in these efforts, if directed in lawful ways. We give all encouragement to young men to use their abilities, to be enterprising and energetic, to enter fields of industry opening on every hand, to keep the hands full of honest employment and to seek the reward that usually comes to the diligent. The best class of citizens to-day is the class composed of those that make money and save it, and some of these at last come to be rich.

But what of their salvation? This is a subject not often considered. They are thought of as people who can look out for themselves, who can pay their way, who are able to secure any advantage of a moral and religious kind for themselves and their children. If they do not seek church privileges within their reach, whose fault is it? If they neglect religion is there any effort put forth for their good? Are they not in a great measure left to themselves to still further harden their hearts?

Why is not greater effort put forth for the salvation of the rich? The poor are not neglected. Missions are established for them and great efforts put forth for their good. The city missionary seeks them, the district visitor searches them out and the faithful pastor looks after those within his reach. But if the rich are not inclined to seek the Lord, where is the missionary for them? How could he find entrance to their homes? They may live under the shadow of a church spire, but if not inclined to enter, what pastor can have access to them, to urge the claims of religion upon them? His zeal might be counted impertinence. Unless affliction opens the door, as it does sometimes, how hopeless is the condition of those who may dwell near churches and yet be as far from religion as if it did not exist. Dr. John Hall once said that he considered the most difficult sinners to reach in the world, are those who lived in great wealth and yet in disregard of religion. Who could seek them and draw them to the Saviour?

Another difficulty in the way is that the rich misconstrue any efforts for their good. They feel that every advance made to them is not for their soul's good, but a scheme to get their money. Seek to lead them to church attendance and Christian profession and they misjudge every motive as if it were all selfish. When a lady urged a wealthy young man to become a Christian, he said, "If I do, you will soon be after my money; it will be give

give continually." With this impression, how hard to do good to men and overcome such prejudices as these.

Still another and greater obstacle is the opposition of the heart to the Gospel when one has much wealth. He becomes independent of both God and man, and with that feeling will never humble himself to be saved. It was our Lord himself who said, "How hardly shall they have riches enter into the Kingdom of heaven!" He said this not as a poor man who felt envious of the rich, but because he knew what is in man and what power the world has upon the soul to hold it back from the Saviour. There is such danger to the souls of those who trust in riches that the risk is very great and many fail of eternal life. They are satisfied with the portion they have here, which seems to supply present wants so well, and they become indifferent to religion. The love of earth must be given up if a soul is saved. How hard to draw the affections from the world!

But are there rich people who are saved? With all the obstacles in the way, there are those in whom grace triumphs, and some of the humblest Christians who ever lived have had great possessions. They are stewards of God and give to him of all he gives to them. Some of them give largely of their means for the good of men and the glory of God. If it were not for the large giving of many in the Church the work of the Lord could not go forward as it does. Blessed indeed are they who have the means and the disposition to give freely to promote any good cause. Highly favored of God are those whose hands he has filled with earthly possessions and whose hearts he has filled with his grace.

But all are not so. The possession of wealth is a barrier to salvation. The situation is unfavorable to growth in grace. Hence the attention of the Church should be turned more to them. They should be sought after, not for the sake of their money or their social influence, but for the sake of their perishing souls. If every way of approach to them seems to be closed, there is one way still open. Prayer can be made for rich men, that they may not be swallowed up by the world and shut out of heaven. We hear prayers for the poor and distressed and discouraged, but is it often that prayers are offered for the successful and prosperous? Let them not be forgotten. Their souls may be in the greatest danger while the sunshine of prosperity falls brightly upon them. Our sympathies go out freely to the man who loses money, so should they go forth toward the one who is making money and passing into a situation where his soul is in jeopardy. He is surrounded by difficulties of which others know little. Temptations beset him of which the poor, with all their trials, know nothing. The god of this world puts forth the most powerful efforts to blind his mind lest he should be saved. The glories of the world to come are shut out of view, while he gazes at glittering gold and all these things that perish with the using. Let us have increased anxiety for the salvation of the rich man.

it bright. It would seem, therefore, that the Assembly could do no better thing, as conservator of the truth of God, than to exhort our ministers and elders to engage themselves seriously in the study of the theology of the Reformed Churches, especially as it is embodied in our Confession, and we hereby overture the Assembly so to do. We are assured that such serious study would contribute greatly both to the power of the ministry and the edification of the congregations they are appointed to teach. And such serious study, it seems to us, would go far towards quieting such agitations for change in our Confession or in our relation to it, as that in which we are now plunged, by making better known to us both the faithfulness of the Reformed system to the Word of God and the admirableness of the expression that is given to that system in our Confession.

It is on such lines as these that we fancy the meditations of a body of devoted Presbyterians would run, were they to come together for the serious performance of the duty laid on them by the Assembly,—“to consider the whole matter of the restatement of the doctrines most sincerely believed among us.” The result of their meditations would surely, we think, thus lead them to an overture to the Assembly for reaffirmation rather than revision of the doctrinal standards which have so long been the distinctive boast of Presbyterians.

The Confessional Crisis.—Part I.

By Rev. John T. Duffield, D.D., LL.D.

The gravity of the issue calls for thorough, dispassionate and impersonal discussion of the two questions involved: Is a restatement to some extent of the faith of the Church desirable? If so, in what form?

As to the first question, the following facts and considerations should be taken into account:

1. In 1890, in response to the inquiry of the Assembly: Do you desire a revision of the Confession of Faith? one hundred and thirty-four Presbyteries, near two-thirds of the whole number, answered in the affirmative.
2. A Revision Committee of fifteen ministers and ten elders, exceptionally qualified for the work, and representative of the different sections of the Church and the different views prevalent, was selected by a special committee of one from each Synod, and unanimously appointed by the Assembly. The committee consisted of Drs. Green and Patton, of Princeton; Dr. Hastings, of Union, who declined, and Dr. Robert Booth was substituted; Dr. Riddle, of Allegheny; Dr. Beecher, of Auburn; Dr. Morris, of Lane; Dr. Johnson, of McCormick; Dr. Alexander, of San Francisco; the Moderator, Dr. Moore; the retiring Moderator, Dr. William C. Roberts; Drs. VanDyke, Erskine, Leftwich, Niccolls, Burt, Walter, and Elders, Justice Strong, Senator McMillan, Hon. E. E. White, Judge Hand, Judge Saylor, Winthrop S. Gilman, William Ernst, Charles M. Chamley, George Junkin, Barker Gummere, who declined, and Morris Stratton was substituted. The committee discharged the responsible duty assigned them with patient, painstaking fidelity. They reported progress to the Assembly of '91, submitting tentatively proposed changes and asking a reference to the Presbyteries, similar to the present, for recommendations and suggestions. They reported finally in '92. Twenty-eight changes in the Confession

were “recommended;” fifteen of these unanimously; five more with but a single dissension, two more with two, two with three, two with four, one with six, one with seven. The remarkable degree of unanimity in the recommendations of a committee constituted as the Revision Committee was, is a fact entitled to weighty consideration.

The committee further reported unanimously:

“Although the changes here recommended are numerous and important, yet none of them, if adopted, will in the judgment of the committee, impair in any way the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system of doctrine taught in the Confession.”

3. The changes proposed were submitted to the Presbyteries. Owing to adventitious circumstances—doubt as to the constitutionality of the committee and a pending trial for heresy—forty-five Presbyteries took no action. The same circumstances undoubtedly contributed to unfavorable action in other Presbyteries; nevertheless, of the one hundred and seventy-five voting Presbyteries, a majority approximating two-thirds of these Presbyteries, approved of twenty-six of the changes proposed.

The facts mentioned cannot but create a strong presumption that some restatement of the faith of the Church is desirable. Is it credible that so general a desire for revision should have been deliberately expressed, that more than a score of changes should have been recommended with such unanimity by a committee whose competency and loyalty to the Confession cannot be questioned, that these changes should have been so generally approved by so decided a majority of the voting Presbyteries, without good and sufficient reasons? These reasons are notorious and unquestionable.

The Westminster Confession was written two hundred and fifty years ago. Many of its statements and forms of expression were determined by the state of the Church and the world at that day. It is one thing to say Holy Scripture is inerrant and truth immutable, but a very different thing to say, or assume as a rule of action, that a statement of scriptural doctrine and duty formulated by uninspired men, is both infallible and complete for all time. If the Constitution of the United States may be amended, and versions of the Holy Scripture revised, is it a reasonable contention that the Westminster Confession should be regarded as unamendable and unreviseable?

The proposed changes, of course, vary in importance. Within our allowable limits we can call special notice to but four—two referring to objectionable statements, two to serious omissions.

1. The statement of the Divine Decree respecting the non-elect. The statement on this subject in the Westminster Confession differs from that in all the other Calvinistic Confessions of the Reformation with a single exception, and that for but a brief period. It differs from the doctrine implied in the Shorter Catechism—the doctrinal Standard to which far more than to the Confession is due the vigorous vitality, the steadfastness in the faith, and the conspicuous prominence and extensive influence of the Presbyterian branches of the Church of Christ.

On the subject in question there was diversity of opinion in the Westminster Assembly. The form of State-

ment adopted 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." Theol. Vol. II., p. 319. The Confessional statement does not express the common faith of the Church to-day. It subjects the Calvinistic system to unmerited odium. It excludes from office-bearing many who otherwise would render acceptable service. Is its extension desirable?

2. The ambiguous expression, "elect infants," in Chapter X, Section 3, was undoubtedly selected to meet the scruples of those in the Westminster Assembly who did not hold the faith of the Church to-day, that "all who die in infancy are saved." Hodge's Theology, Volume I, p. 26. The Revision Committee, with but two dissentients, recommended an unambiguous substitute.

3. The Confession contains no statement respecting "The Great Commission" given to the Church to "preach the Gospel to every creature." The Revisers, with but one dissentient, recommended the insertion of a new chapter on "The Gospel."

4. The Confession has no chapter on the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Revisers, with but one dissentient, recommended a chapter on this important subject.

If a document which purports to state what the Presbyterian Church believes and teaches should state it as fully and accurately as possible, is not some restatement on the important subjects just mentioned, desirable?

In deciding the grave question submitted to the Presbyteries, the following considerations should be taken into account:

1. The question between revisionists and anti-revisionists is not a question of orthodoxy. The intimation that it is, is misleading, and should be carefully avoided. The entire unanimity of the Revisers in the declaration accompanying their Report, and the substantial unanimity in their action, settles the question of the orthodoxy of revision, within the limits proposed, beyond the possibility of excusable mistake or questioning.

To prevent misapprehension and misrepresentation, the precise facts in regard to the desire for a revision of Chapter III. should be distinctly stated. The fundamental doctrine of the Calvinistic system is stated in Section I, as follows:

"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."

This carefully guarded statement of scriptural doctrine was not in '92, nor is it now, called in question by revisionists. From this general statement the subsequent particular statements respecting the non-elect are apparently legitimate inferences. The fallacy is in the assumption that logical inferences from super-logical truths are always reliable. By analogous reasoning in mathematics it may be proved that two is equal to one, and that under certain conditions a circle is square. The statement of preterition, to which exception is taken, is supralapsarian. "This view," says Dr. A. A. Hodge, in his "Outlines of Theology," p. 233, "represents God as reprobating the non-elect by a sovereign act, without

any respect to their sins." "This view is unquestionably the most logical of all." "But the case is too high and too vast for the a priori application and enforcement of the ordinary rules of human judgment."

2. The expression of opinion called for by the action of the Assembly is not simply an expression of personal preference, but what in view of all the circumstances would be desirable.

Some say they are satisfied with the Confession as it is, and accordingly desire no revision. By this we presume they mean, they give to the statements in question an interpretation that is to them satisfactory. This does not meet the objection that the statements admit, and were designedly framed to admit, the exceptionable interpretation. Further, it does not meet the demand for revision on the ground that in several important particulars the Confession is defective. And further, it overlooks the fact that the purpose of the Confession is not restricted to its use in an ordination vow. It purports to be an accurate expression of the actual faith of the Church. It is so regarded, and reasonably should be, by other Churches and the world. That the statements in question are prejudicial to the interests of the truth embodied in the Calvinistic system of doctrine, and to the interests of the Church, is notorious. Is the retention of statements so objectionable, desirable?

As to insisting on one's personal preference on the question at issue, it should be borne in mind that the Presbyterian Church as a separate branch of the Church of Christ, is a brotherhood, one of whose distinctive characteristics is a common faith. In determining a question pertaining to the form of statement of the common faith due regard should be given to the judgment of "the brethren." Fidelity to one's convictions respecting essentials is not inconsistent with reasonable concession in unessential matters of form. Should the conciliatory spirit which characterized the deliberations of the Revision Committee, resulting in so remarkable a degree of unanimity in their action, be condemned? Or should it not rather be commended and imitated?

3. In view of the facts above mentioned in connection with the movements for revision in '90-'92, and the present wide-spread agitation on the subject, should the desire for some restatement of the faith of the Church be thwarted, the result would not be final. Continued agitation would be inevitable because reasonable. A vote against any restatement is virtually a vote to continue the disturbance of the peace of the Church on the Confessional question.

4. The Confession as revised by a committee constituted as the Revision Committee of '90 was, and approved as it was by the voting Presbyteries in '92, is practically the doctrinal Standard of the Church. It expresses more fully and accurately than the unrevised Confession the faith of the Church of to-day. In a trial for heresy it would be recognized as unauthoritative. Is the continuance of this anomalous condition of our doctrinal Standards desirable?

(To be Concluded Next Week.)

Now I want you to think that in life troubles will come, which seem as if they would never pass away. The night and the storm look as if they would last forever, but the calm and the morning can not be stayed; the storm in its very nature is transient.—George MacDonald.

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Needs No Apology.

Presbyterians have a Confession of Faith that needs no apology. Friends and foes alike praise it as a comprehensive, logical, educative and able document. It was prepared in no haste. It was the result of careful cogitation, protracted discussion, Bible study, fearless formulation, finely balanced judgment, days of prayer, due weighing of truth in its proper correlations, and a desire and determination to express only the mind and will of God in regard to time and eternity, whether the natural heart approved it or not. It was the work of great and good men—men of theological acumen, of representative character, of deep piety, of conscientious conviction and of magnificent courage. Every position was tested by a "Thus saith the Lord."

The document thus formulated was given to the world. It was opposed from the start and had to fight its way. Arminians have not liked its Calvinism, and some even who have favored it as a system of doctrine have objected to some of its uncompromising statements. Still, it has held on its way because of its scripturalness, and because it fearlessly upheld the strong and distinctive doctrines of the Word of God. He who inspired holy men to pen the Scriptures from time to time, and superintended their work, causing them to speak the truth irrespective of human wishes, has owned and blessed it from generation to generation, and to-day it is as true a statement of scriptural teaching as when it first saw the light of day. It has developed a body of ministers and elders as well as a Church membership that have never been surpassed for learning, piety, service, zeal and aggressiveness. It has raised up the fearless and faithful defenders of a Bible-religion against all comers. Those who have imbibed its principles have been the strongest upholders of civil and religious liberty. They have been the men and women upon whom the greatest reliance could be placed in seasons of trial and danger. They have made their influence felt under all relations and conditions, both in the Old and in the New World. The Westminster theology has made the Presbyterian Church what it is. If it had not existed, the world would have been poorer, and it is questionable if without it American life and missionary development would have been what they are at the close of the nineteenth century.

A system of Faith that has been so fruitful and enduring for several centuries, is not to be set aside at will. Its strength must not be eviscerated. The Calvinism must not be obliterated. Its strong and uncompromising statements may excite criticism, but this is no more than the Word of God encounters. The chapters on election, preterition and reprobation should stand as long as the eleventh chapter of Matthew, the sixth chapter of John, and the ninth chapter of Romans remain unrevised, or as long as Christ and Paul are counted authorities on matters of faith. Much that is taught may not be popular to many, but neither were Christ and Paul the most popular preachers in their day. Many took of-

fense at what they taught, but they held on to their testimony as to God's sovereign electing love, and reaffirmed their teachings from time to time as they went from place to place.

Our Confession of Faith has also been an educating document. At times the Churches adopting it have preached it and studied it with renewed zeal and carefulness, and a generation has grown up under it strong in faith and dominating in society and in the world.

At other times, it has been called in question, both in and outside of Presbyterian lines, and the situation has been met by those who loved and believed in it, and after being once more sifted and tested, it has been found worthy of continued life and has become entrenched all the more strongly in the convictions and affections of the ministry, eldership and people that have adopted it as the system of truth taught in the Holy Scriptures.

Just now it is once more being criticised, and its friends must not be deterred from abiding by it on this account. Under the cry that it is old and something better must take its place; under the plea of softening what is called its harsher statements; under the claim that it can be improved; out of a desire to get rid of features objectionable to those who cannot see and interpret it as Presbyterians have ever done, and in the hope of making it suit a less doctrinal age, and one that does not take kindly to fine theological distinctions, the attempt is being made to restate it and to bring it up to what some claim to be the result of the latest scientific and biblical investigation. Many are influenced by these plausible pleas, and are overlooking what the Confession really teaches and are subjecting our Church to a waste of time, energy and service that are uncalled for. Past efforts have failed in this direction, and there is no prospect now of practically improving it. Creeds are a growth—the outcome of creating and developing epochs. Ours is a unique and magnificent production, and will again attest its inherent virtue at the present crisis in our Church.

Hamlin the Missionary.

In the wonderful Nineteenth century of missionary work, no name appears more conspicuously than that of Cyrus Hamlin. It has indeed been a household name for half a century among all denominations who love the missionary and his work and who recount his heroic deeds. When his death was announced recently, it awakened many recollections and called the younger generation to read of his great and busy life.

Dr. Hamlin was born in 1811, in Waterford, Maine, belonged to the Congregational Church and labored under the care and direction of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions. The story of his early life is a common one in this country, and finds a parallel in the case of many who have arisen to distinction and usefulness. He became an orphan in his infancy; was early in life thrown on his own resources to

the masses?" A properly constituted Church is as free of access to the masses (and this without having free pews) as to those who form the organization. The questions for to-day are "How to restore the Church to its rightful position," and "How to keep its members, especially the younger, so reverential and worshipful as to commend the Church to the masses without." Editors of religious papers and pastors of churches can do much to forward this much-needed reform by maintaining and advocating a higher standard for church membership. The too easy examination, the "coming in by some other way" into the sheepfold, is the cause of much of this present-day irreverence. O.

The Confessional Crisis.—Part II.

By Rev. John T. Duffield, D.D., LL.D.

What was said in The Presbyterian last week as to the advisability of some restatement of Confessional faith is confirmed by the invalidity of the reasons assigned for opposing it. There are three that call for special notice:

1. It is said, our form of subscription does not require the acceptance of the ipsissima verba, hence revision of the Confession is unnecessary.

To this it may be replied: (1) It overlooks the fact that the main purpose of the Confession is not its use in the ordination of office-bearers it purports to state, and is understood by other Churches and the world to state, the accepted faith of the Presbyterian Church. (2) It overlooks the fact that there are not only objectionable statements in the Confession, but serious omissions. (3) It is neither a good nor sufficient reason for requiring subscription to objectionable statements, that they may be repudiated. The manufacture of pins would not be continued if their only use was that mentioned in the school-boy's composition—"They saved the lives of a great many people by their not swallowing them." (4) The lax-subscription objection to revision, however it may be accepted in our home churches, would hardly commend itself as satisfactory to intelligent native candidates for ordination as office-bearers in our churches in the Foreign field.

2. It is said, a historical document so venerable as the Confession should not be marred by amendment; it should be preserved in its original integrity.

The Confession is an historical document, is unchangeable by any action of Assembly or Presbytery. Scripta manet. The question at issue has to do with the Confession, not as a historical document, but as the authorized expression of the faith of the Church of to-day. Does it express the faith of the Church as fully and accurately as possible? Erroneous theological statements are not justifiable because antique. Moreover, by a judicious revision of the Confession it would not be marred, but mended. It is a questionable compliment to the Confession, or rather an unfounded reflection, to say that its integrity would be impaired by the omission of supra-lapsarian preterition and "elect infants," and the insertion of a chapter on "the Gospel" and one on "the Holy Spirit."

3. It is said there is danger in revision—if it once begins, where is it to end?

Objecting to correcting acknowledged defects lest some one be encouraged to propose changes that would not be improvements, is a striking illustration of the

extent to which good men sometimes allow their judgment to be controlled by their pre-judgment. "If revision begins, where will it end?" It should end where fidelity to the truth, without regard to mere sentiment or apprehended consequences, would end it—and not before. It will end where a constitutional majority of the Presbyteries, after deliberate consideration as to what is demanded by the interests of the truth and of the Church, determine to end it.

If the system of doctrine contained in the Confession would be imperilled by revision, would it not be in greater peril if the desire for revision expressed so emphatically as it was in 1890 should again be thwarted? Eleven years ago the movement originated in overtures from sixteen Presbyteries for a revision of certain sections of Chapter III. The present movement is in response to thirty-eight overtures, nineteen asking for a new creed. Instead of inquiring: "If revision begins, where will it end?" a more pertinent question is "Where will a restatement of the faith of the Church end, if by another fusion of new creedists and ultra-conservative anti-revisionists a conservative revision of the Confession should again be defeated?" If we rightly "discern the signs of the times" the consequent continuance and increase of the agitation for a new creed would imperil not only the purity but the integrity of the Church.

If a restatement of the faith of the Church is desirable, what should be the form?

As intimated in the action of the Assembly, there are different forms in which a restatement might be made. It might be made in foot-notes explaining objectionable phraseology, as by the Southern Presbyterian Church in regard to "elect infants." It might be made by an explanatory supplement—the form adopted by the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1879, and the Free Church in 1892. It might be made by a new creed, as asked for in overtures to the last Assembly by nineteen Presbyteries; or it might be made by a revision of the Confession, as desired by one hundred and thirty four Presbyteries in 1890, and unanimously approved and ordered by the Assembly.

There does not seem to be any good and sufficient reason for explanatory foot-notes on supplement that would not be of equal, in fact greater, validity for amending the text. Why retain phraseology that calls for explanation—especially when the only "explanation" that can be given is that the language is not now regarded as meaning what it is generally understood to mean, and was originally adopted because it might be so understood? What interest of the truth is promoted by making conspicuous the fact that the Westminster divines, and for many years the Presbyterian Church, accepted doctrinal statements that are now repudiated? In Scotland, where the established Church is Presbyterian, there may be reasons against revising the Confession that would not be applicable to the Presbyterian Church in America.

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.

In favor of revision there are the following considerations:

1. Revision is constitutional.

From the origin of the Presbyterian Church in America the Confession and Catechisms, with the exception of certain clauses relating to the civil magistrate, have been the doctrinal Standards. They were declared to be in "the Adopting Act," when the Church was formally organized in 1729. A schism having occurred in 1741, the first Article of the Plan of Reunion declared the Confession and Catechisms the doctrinal basis of the re-united Church. In the reorganization of the Church, in 1788, the Confession and Catechisms were incorporated in the Constitution then adopted as the doctrinal Standards, and are so recognized in terms in the Form of Government and Directory of Worship. They were declared to be the doctrinal basis of the re-united Church in the first Article of the Plan of Reunion of the Old and New School Churches in 1869. The Confession has been part of the organic law of the Church throughout her entire history. There is Constitutional provision for the amendment of the Confession, but no provision for another doctrinal Standard that would in fact if not in terms supersede it. The proposition for a new creed is simply revolutionary.

2. A restatement by revising the Confession would conserve historic Presbyterianism.

The Presbyterian Church is distinctively a Confessional Church. Its bond of union is not as that of the Episcopal Church, a matter of order. It is not as that of the Baptist Church, a rite. It is a common faith respecting both doctrine and duty, formulated in a Confession which all office-bearers are required to avow they sincerely receive and adopt. Believing that revealed truth is the instrument of the spirit in the conversion of sinners, the sanctification of believers, and the extension and upbuilding of Christ's Kingdom, the special object of the Presbyterian Church is to maintain and propagate what Presbyterians believe is taught in the Holy Scriptures. There are those who maintain that subscription to an elaborate statement of doctrine, such as the Confession of Faith, is an interference with the right of private judgment, is prejudicial to the interests of the truth and a hindrance to the extension of Christ's Kingdom. They have an undisputed right to their opinion, but in avowing it they are simply avowing they are not Presbyterians. Presbyterians think differently. Their convictions are based on the teaching of Holy Scripture respecting the maintenance and promulgation of "sound doctrine," and steadfast adherence to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." They are confirmed in their conviction by the history of their Church, and its present prominence and influence as a branch of the Church of Christ. To furl the war-worn Standards under which she has achieved her victories as a defender of the faith, and henceforth fight under another banner, new indeed to Presbyterians, but not new in Church history, and not entitled by its history to any superior claim on the loyalty of Christ's followers, would be to abandon her historic position and relinquish the distinctive mission to which she has hitherto felt herself specially called in the Master's service.

3. Revision is practicable.

Should the committee recommend restatement in the form of a new creed, the Church would be confronted with a problem that would probably be found to be insoluble. The formulation of a doctrinal Standard, even when its framers are substantially agreed as to its contents, is a task of peculiar delicacy and difficulty. Among new-creedists, however, there is considerable diversity of opinion as to what the new creed should be. Some wish a short and "irenic" creed, as far as possible in scriptural phraseology, for the use of the laity as well as the ministry. Some wish a statement of the "essentials" of the Calvinistic system; others, of the "essentials" of Christianity, whilst some resent the intimation of any purpose to impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system; others attribute the failure of revision in '92 to the restriction imposed by the Assembly. 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. The attempt to formulate a new creed would be likely to result in exposing its impracticability. Should, however, a new creed be formulated, in view of the unanimous declaration of the Assembly of '98 of steadfast adherence to our present doctrinal Standards, reiterated by the Assembly of '99, by a rising vote, with the doxology, it is safe to say, that a new creed, acceptable to its leading advocates, would meet with less favor than the proposition to reaffirm the exceptionable statements of the Confession.

Restatement by revision is definite and practicable. The Confession has been revised by a committee representative of the entire Church, exceptionally competent and unquestionably loyal to the Confession. From the measure of approval of their action, under peculiarly adverse circumstances, should the changes approved by the voting Presbyteries be re-submitted with the disapproved substitute of the committee for the Confessional statement on preterition amended, with the alternative of the omission of any statement on the subject, it may reasonably be expected that the proposed changes would be approved by the Presbyteries with no less unanimity than that with which they were recommended by the Revision Committee. Then would the Church, for the indefinite future, on the Confessional question at least, have rest.

In the Evangelist of August 9th, a respected Professor in one of our Theological Seminaries, mentions among other reasons for opposing revision, that the substitute for the ambiguous Confessional form of statement of the doctrine of Preterition, proposed by the Revisers in '92, "had narrowed it into a distinct infralapsarian statement;" also, that the ambiguous expression "elect infants," "which admitted the greatest freedom of opinion on the subject," was narrowed "so that it should permit only a single opinion." In the Independent of August 9th, a no less respected Professor in the same Seminary, maintains that the phraseology to which exception is taken is "specially precise," that to charge Chapter III. with "supralapsarianism" is "obviously absurd," and avows that he is "not a lover of ambiguous statements of belief." The former of these contradictory statements is correct as to the facts, but intimates approval of an erroneous principle. The latter is correct in principle, but in error as to the facts. They mutually expose that each of the reasons assigned for opposing revision is invalid.