

THE
PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

No. 18.—April, 1884.

I.

REV. DR. JAMES RICHARDS AND HIS THE-
OLOGY.

OF the one, I shall give only a sketch ; of the other, only some outlines.

Dr. Richards' life of seventy-six years (1767-1843) covered an eventful period in the history of the Church and of the State.

In early boyhood, he heard the mutterings of discontent with English misrule, and the notes of armed resistance to British injustice. In the ninth year of his age, the Declaration of American Independence was published. In his own neighborhood, and everywhere, the people took up arms ; and for seven long years—long for the veteran soldiers, long indeed for such a boy—he heard of the terrors, and trials, and vicissitudes of the strife, which seemed to his boyish impatience as if it would never end. Not until his sixteenth year, came the news of the final victory—too good, almost, to be true ; and, then, the better news of peace, and, still better, of American Independence.

Already he was older in experience than many a man could be after fourscore years of national quiet. But Richards had just begun his great life-experience. Now he witnessed the formative process of constitutional government for a young independent nation—a process slow, difficult, delicate ; the formative process of his own State government, and of other States—sometimes appearing more troublesome, and certainly more intricate and delicate than the difficulties of war.

IV.

THE CONSENSUS OF THE REFORMED CONFESSIONS.

THE logical relations of genera and species hold a place in the various schools of philosophical or of theological thought even more conspicuous and definite than they do among classes of plants and animals. The vertebrate construction of animal bodies is modified in endlessly various ways in adaptation to different physical conditions, psychical impulses, and physiological functions. Yet the general type embracing all that is essential to the idea, and all that prevails universally among the varieties, may be exhibited as abstracted from all specific modifications, or non-essential additions. In an analogous manner the Calvinistic system of theology has been historically developed under a great variety of conditions, and embodied more or less fully in various confessional statements. These Confessions form a class, obviously and confessedly marked by a common character, in contrast with other classes of similar documents embodying other systems of Christian doctrine, known as Roman, Lutheran, Arminian or Socinian, etc. Nevertheless, each of these Reformed or Calvinistic Confessions has had its own peculiar historical occasion and genesis, and consequently presents only some special part of the common system then in debate, or it presents the common system with some special characteristic, though non-essential, modification. The statement of the "Consensus of the Reformed Confessions," therefore, is the exhibition of the general type of which the several Confessions themselves represent the species, and this can be done only by gathering from the Confessions themselves the constant and characteristic, to the exclusion of the occasional and accidental elements of these documents separately considered. It is evident, however, that this process must be conducted not mechanically by counting or measuring the propositions of the several Confessions numerically or quantitatively. The most rudimentary cannot be made the standards of comparison for the more completely developed. But the common type of doctrine, more or less completely developed in each,

which gives a common character to the entire class, must be eliminated and expressed. This is the legitimate work of theological scholars, and, in one form or another, it has been performed over and over again with more or less completeness and fairness, in treatises of comparative symbolics, and in systems of divinity. At present, however, more than one practical interest has turned the attention of the ministers and people of several large denominations of Presbyterian Christians to this historical problem.

The constitution of the Presbyterian Alliance was formed in July, 1875, in London, by a Conference composed of sixty-four delegates from twenty-two distinct ecclesiastical organizations, comprising all the largest and most influential Presbyterian Churches in the world. This Alliance is known as "The Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the world holding the Presbyterian system," and "any Church, organized on Presbyterian principles, which holds the supreme authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in matters of faith and morals, and whose creed is in harmony with the *Consensus of the Reformed Confessions*, shall be eligible for admission into the Alliance." The "General Council," which is the constitutional organ of this Alliance, while forbidden "to interfere with the existing creed or constitution of any church in the Alliance, or with its internal order or external relations," has "the power of deciding upon the application of Churches desiring to join the Alliance."

A desire to urge the General Council to prepare a statement of the consensus of the Creeds of its constituent churches had been visible from the first. But the actual need of such a statement, adopted by the authority of the Alliance itself, as a test of the qualification of Churches applying for admission, was not felt until decided differences of opinion were developed in the second General Council, in Philadelphia, September, 1880, respecting the application for admission upon the part of delegates from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, a body not previously embraced in the Alliance, and which was understood to have expurgated from her creed some of the essential principles of Reformed Theology. As the result of this discussion the representatives of all the churches in that Council were brought to a general unanimity in agreeing to the passage of a resolution "appointing a committee of divines from the various branches of the Reformed or Presbyterian Churches embraced in this Alliance to consider the desirableness of defining the consensus of the Reformed Confessions as required by our own Constitution, and to report to the next meeting of the Council." Many, who were opposed to this movement in itself considered, voted for this resolution, in order that an opportunity might

be afforded through the ensuing four years for a thorough expression of the mind of all the communities concerned in this matter.

This Committee is constituted in three sections, representing respectively the Presbyterian Churches of America, Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Continent of Europe, and impartially composed of men of various theological sympathies. Principal John Cairns, D.D., of Edinburgh, is the admirable convener. At the date of this writing not even Dr. Cairns himself can accurately forecast the report which this Committee will present to the coming Council at Belfast. This much, however, is certainly known, and is no secret, that the Committee embraces men of every variety of opinion on the subject committed to it, and that different members vote for the same course of action for directly opposite reasons. Thus some object to the proposal that the Alliance shall undertake this task of preparing a statement of the Consensus of the Reformed Confessions, on the ground that such a work in order to be honest must be simply historical and critical, and needs to be most carefully separated from all party jealousy or strategy, and, therefore, can at any time be better performed by scholars, each acting individually and *suo motu* in a scholarly interest purely, than by a committee of a large popular body at the prompting of practical interests and feelings. Others would prefer to vote also in the negative, who, while admitting that under some circumstances the proposed work might be advantageously performed by bodies constituted like our present Alliance, yet maintain that such is the actual contrast and strain of interest, opinion, and feeling at present existing in the various schools of thought and sections of the Presbyterian world that the proposed attempt to state a common creed, if further pressed, threatens to divide and alienate rather than to unite, and to weaken the influence, if not to imperil the existence of the Alliance itself. On the other hand, many earnestly advocate the proposed work in order to furnish the Alliance with a strict rule for preserving its own character in perpetuity as an Alliance exclusively of the Reformed or Calvinistic Churches; because they are convinced that a truly genuine expression of the consensus of the Reformed Churches, which, when once drawn out, must become a test of membership, will be strictly and consistently Calvinistic. While others, just as consistently, press forward the enterprise because they hope that the anticipated statement may be found to be more elastic and comprehensive than the present Confessions of some of the larger ecclesiastical bodies who have hitherto exerted a preponderating influence in the Alliance.

Just here the practical danger of the present situation comes into

view. The natural demand for a statement by the 'Alliance of the Reformed Churches' of the 'consensus of the Reformed Confessions' is reinforced, and threatens to be utterly vitiated by a desire prevalent in some sections and parties of all the associated Churches, to be relieved from the pressure of the old creeds regarded by them as no longer tolerable. These men have come to realize that they no longer believe all that the old creeds affirm, or that they have come to believe much on which these creeds are silent, or that the creeds in question are in form and general spirit, even when none of their positive affirmations are questioned, out of sympathy with the spirit of the age. The fact that there exists such a dissatisfaction with the great historic creeds, and consequent restlessness under the obligations of subscription, is beyond question, although we are confident that the real extent and significance of its prevalence within the bounds of the British and American Presbyterian Churches has been very much exaggerated. Indeed, it is inevitable that such a feeling should be generated during a transition period, when Christian scholars are necessarily so busy in the critical investigation of the historic origin of our sacred Scriptures and in the adjustment to the body of revealed truth of the vast areas of new knowledge which this age is bringing in like the rising of new suns, or the unveiling of new creations. It is always wise as well as right to take in and acknowledge all the facts of the case. While it is true that very much of the clamor against the old creeds is only another form of the old war against the Gospel, a repetition of the old cry, 'We will not have this man to reign over us,' nevertheless it is true, however inexplicable, that many who argue for the modification of creeds, are just as loyal in spirit and purpose to the person of their Lord as the most stringent theological conservative. Thus different parties in the Church often temporally and accidentally conspire to a common end, while their fundamental spirit and character is directly opposite.

In the present case the common end, the modification of the old creed, is sought in various ways. The most obvious and manly is the radical way of abrogating the old creed by constitutional action, and of producing a new one, which, alike in substance and form, shall be accurately expressive of the actual belief, and adjusted to the actual wants of our respective communities to-day. But all parties are inclined to agree with Dr. Oswald Dykes in the June (1883) number of the *Catholic Presbyterian*, "that the times are admittedly unfavorable to the Confessional definition of new dogmas." It is only in ages of intense faith that the great Creeds and Confessions have been generated. It is just because this is an age of criticism and adjustment

that any work of new doctrinal definition designed for general acceptance is impossible. There could be no unanimity. The more advanced party of those who advocate change are themselves in a transition state the ultimate tendencies of which they only very vaguely discern. If they should attempt to form a creed it would of necessity be largely in negative terms, and indicative of methods and anticipations rather than of achieved results. At the same time the great body of those who desire some modification or explanation of the old creeds are evangelical Christians and many of them staunch Calvinists. These in their various degrees of divergence could never be brought to consent to revolutionary changes, or even to agree together in the same quantity or quality of change. Besides this, there is abundant evidence that the great body of the pastors and members of the Presbyterian Churches, certainly in America, is still perfectly satisfied with the old creeds, and is ready to oppose innovation with an energy very different from a simple *vis inertiae*.

Under such a state of facts, the easiest and most practical way of finding relief from the unwelcome pressure of creeds, is, while leaving their text unmodified, and the laws defining and imposing the terms of subscription unrepealed, to ignore them in practice, to act and teach as if the obligations thence resulting did not exist. But this course, although often yielded to under stress of circumstances, by men otherwise worthy of respect and confidence; is in itself so immoral, is so injurious to the whole moral and intellectual character of the parties offending, that it is soon found by all really healthy men an intolerable offence and burden. Men may make light of the falsity of this course of conduct while they feel under the necessity of practicing it as a stratagem of war, but it meanwhile irks them sorely, and goads them to the passionate efforts they are putting forth for release.

Another method, and one essentially legitimate, is applicable only in cases in which the objection to the old creed affects not the substance, but only the form, and the shading and qualifications of its literary expression. In such a case it is obviously competent, and may be highly expedient, for a Church to issue an authoritative interpretation of the sense in which she has always understood her creed, and also of her understanding (the *animus imponentis*) of the terms of subscription she imposes.

It is evident that the necessity for such an authoritative rendering of the sense in which a Confession is held by any ecclesiastical community, will depend upon the formulas of subscription used, and the traditional sense in which these have from the beginning been received

by preceding generations. The elaborate and accurate report on "Creeds and Formula of Subscription" * made to the General Council in Philadelphia, September, 1880, makes it evident that the great Scotch Presbyterian Churches have from the first understood that the subscriber, professing cordial belief in "the whole doctrine" of the subordinate standards, becomes responsible for believing and maintaining every distinct principle of faith or practice therein inculcated, and for the entire mode and spirit in which the whole body of doctrine in general and in detail is expressed. Besides, it is evident that at first, and for long, virtual if not explicit profession of personal adherence to the Confession was expected in Scotland as a condition of church-membership as well as office-bearing. † In both these respects a change in public judgment and feeling has taken place in all their Churches, nevertheless the effect of the old traditions remains in a general sense of responsibility for the details and accidents, as well as for the essential characteristics of the Creed they subscribe.

In our American Presbyterian Churches, it is well known that there never has existed either law or custom making personal profession of the doctrine of the Standards a condition of church-membership. And office-bearers have from the beginning been required to give their adherence as involved in "sincerely receiving and adopting the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures," which are confessed to be "the word of God." That is all our ministers and elders are required solemnly to declare, their faith that the most definite and the highest view ever entertained in the Church as to the divine authority of the "Old and New Testaments" is true, but to affirm as to the subordinate standards, only that they contain "the system of doctrine taught in those Scriptures." That is, instead of the individual propositions, or details, or the form of expression, "*the system of doctrine*" (a sufficiently definite expression) taught in the Confession, is the standard of orthodoxy, the limit alike of obligation and of liberty. Dr. Henry B. Smith, in the October (1867) number of the *American Presbyterian Review*, declares the perfect accord of the entire New-school body, Ministers and Elders, with the interpretation given by Dr. Charles Hodge in the preceding July number of the *Princeton Review* of the terms of subscription imposed by our constitution upon all candidates for office. Dr. Smith says: "The Adopting Act and the whole Church ever since, including the *Princeton Review*, have made and must make a plain distinction between articles essential to the Reformed system,

* Report of Proceedings, etc., pp. 965-1123.

† Report of Proceedings, etc., Council 1880, pp. 978-984.

and articles not thus essential." "The right theory (of subscription) is found in a simple and honest interpretation of the ordination formula: 'That we receive the Confession of Faith as containing the *system* of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.' This declares that the system of the Confession is the system taught in the Bible. The system of the Confession is, as every one knows, the Reformed or Calvinistic system, in distinction from the Lutheran, the Arminian, the Antinomian, the Pelagian, the Roman Catholic. No one can honestly or fairly subscribe the Confession, who does not accept the Reformed or Calvinistic system."

This truly liberal principle of subscription, together with the prevailing religious conservatism of our people, accounts for the fact that hitherto there has been no demand, worthy of consideration, for any authoritative explanation, much less for any qualification of our Confession. The Auburn Declaration was intended for no such purpose, but was, on the other hand, an emphatic affirmation of loyalty to the Confession by a large and representative body of New-school brethren, held in Auburn, N. Y., August, 1837, on several points of doctrine on which heresy had been charged upon them by a Convention of the Old-school party, held in Philadelphia before the meeting of the General Assembly of that year. This Declaration thus put forth has no symbolical authority; nevertheless, from the representative character of the body that issued it, and from the fact that the Old-school Assembly of 1870 endorsed it as "embracing all the fundamentals of the Calvinistic creed," it remains a highly authoritative statement of the degree of variation in interpreting their common Confession of Faith which the two great parties to our reunion treaty mutually demanded and allowed.

But in some of the British Presbyterian Churches, where the sense of a more strictly literal responsibility for the contents of the Confession has prevailed traditionally, considerable uneasiness is felt by many, and loudly expressed by a few, as to the sense of their Confession, and as to their own responsibility for it. By such influences the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland was induced, in May, 1879, to adopt a "Declaratory Act," setting forth the view taken by the Churches represented in the Synod on some points embraced in the system taught in Scripture, and hence, at least, implicitly taught in the Confession. In this act, under seven heads, the Synod sets forth what it declares to be the true meaning of the Confession, or, at least, to be perfectly consistent therewith, which always "have been, and continue to be" taught by that branch of the Presbyterian Church. These points relate principally to the love of God

for all mankind, his gift of his Son as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and the free offer of salvation to men without distinction. It is asserted that salvation is sufficient for all and offered to all; that man, although totally depraved by nature, is, nevertheless, responsible to the law; that we are at liberty to believe that all dying in infancy are saved through Christ, and that God may, for all we know, extend his grace, as it may seem good in his sight, to some beyond the pale of the ordinary means of salvation. The Synod also provides that the formula of subscription shall hereafter read, "Do you acknowledge the Westminster Confession of Faith, etc., as an exhibition of the sense in which you understand the Holy Scriptures, this acknowledgment being made in view of the explanations contained in the Declaratory Act of Synod?"

Those of us who have been brought up in the strictest school of Westminster confessional theology, and receive with all our heart the whole doctrine of that Confession, have not one whit the less always believed with all our heart the whole doctrine of this Declaratory Act of the Scottish United Presbyterian Synod. Therefore, we cannot easily comprehend the feeling which regards the issuing of such a Declaration as necessary, nor the judgment that it, when given the force of law, alters in the least the sense of the Confession, or the relation of the various theological schools to the Confession or to each other.

The fourth and last of the methods for obtaining relief which have been suggested by parties more or less dissatisfied with the present confessional status of the Churches, appears in the form of an overture to the General Council of the Alliance of all the Churches professing the Reformed faith, moving it to issue a deliverance embodying the 'Consensus of the Reformed Confessions.'

In April, 1883, three prominent Presbyteries of the English Presbyterian Church overtured their Synod on the subject of change, either in the matter or form of the Westminster Confession, or in the formula of subscription attached. The Presbyteries of Birmingham and London adopted resolutions verbally the same, viz., "Resolved, that the following overture be transmitted to the Synod, viz.:—Whereas, the Westminster Confession of Faith, while held in high and deserved honor in this Church, as setting forth that system of doctrine which this Church with unabating firmness teaches and maintains, is found to be no longer so well suited, in form and expression, as it was in former times, to the actual condition and wants of the Church:—

"It is humbly overtured by the Presbytery (of London and Bir-

mingham) to the Synod indicted to meet on the thirteenth of the present month, to take the relation of the Church to this subordinate standard into careful consideration, with a view to such prudent and timely action as to its wisdom may seem meet."

The action of the Presbytery of Liverpool indicated a more radical spirit. It was to the effect: "Whereas, one main function of a Confession of Faith is to set forth the sense in which a church understands the teaching of Holy Scripture, and to form a basis of church-membership; Whereas, it is the duty of the Church to enquire, from time to time, whether the Confession of Faith continues to answer this end; Whereas, the Westminster Confession, which is the Confession of this and other Presbyterian Churches, fails, in the opinion of many, to answer this end so fully as formerly. It is humbly overtured by the Reverend the Presbytery of Liverpool to the Venerable the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of England to take these premises into consideration, and appoint a committee with instructions to enter into communication with the other Presbyterian Churches in the matter, in the hope that, in concert with them, a shorter and fuller statement of Biblical teaching on those doctrines which are held to be of chief importance, and find universal acceptance in the Presbyterian Churches, may be drawn up on the main lines of the Westminster Confession, more suited to the wants of the Church of our time." *

When the Synod met in London in May, 1883, the reception of these three overtures occasioned an earnest discussion. A motion to refuse to act upon them was voted down, and the following motion was passed by a large majority, to wit: "That the Synod, recognizing the gravity of the matters thus brought under its notice, and the necessity lying upon it to avoid whatever might impair the just confidence of sister Churches in the loyalty of this Church to her subordinate standards, yet deems it wise, while affirming its unabated adherence to the doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession, and its gratitude to the Churches' Head for that venerable symbol of the Reformed faith, so long the bulwark of orthodox teaching in Presbyterian Churches, to appoint a special committee with instructions—

1. To consider whether any, and, if so, what, changes may with advantage be made in the existing formulas, by which office-bearers affirm their adherence to the Confession of Faith.
2. To consider whether it is desirable that any explanation be adopted by this Church, with a view to make it more clear in what sense the Church under-

* Synod's Blue Book for 1883.

stands her subordinate standard, or any portions thereof. 3. To consider whether, with a view to secure some briefer and more available compendium of fundamental doctrine, this Church ought not to approach the General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance to meet at Belfast next year, by memorial or otherwise, on the subject of such a digest of doctrine designed to embody that 'Consensus of the Reformed Confessions' on which the said Alliance is based; and, finally, to report on all these points to next Synod."*

Dr. Oswald Dykes, whose own fidelity to the system taught in the Confession is unquestioned, bears testimony that the discussions in their Synod made it abundantly certain "that no doctrinal departure from the Calvinistic type of theology, nor any restless desire to escape from confessional bonds, had inspired the movement." Many, he tells us, of United Presbyterian origin and affiliation would desire to have some such explanatory declaration as that passed with the approbation of all intelligent Calvinists by the United Presbyterian Synod of Scotland of 1879. But he maintains that for the instruction of the young, 'the clear presentation to the public of our exact doctrinal teaching, or for the indoctrination of catechumens, or even for an intelligent profession of their faith by ruling elders and deacons,' the Westminster documents are found to be too detailed and technical and too archaic in form to be of practical use in an English as distinct from a Scotch community. "If," says Dr. Dykes, "the Council saw it to be expedient, as a test for the future admission of Churches into the Alliance, to formulate those points on which the Reformed symbols are agreed, such a digest of articles might, conceivably, turn out to be the very thing we are in quest of."

This is, indeed, 'conceivable'; and if it came to pass as a result absolutely incidental to the production of the proposed statement of the Consensus of the Reformed Confessions by legitimate methods and for legitimate ends, of course no one could object; but it is precisely at this point that we raise our protest. We have rational grounds of apprehension that the conflicting views and urgent feelings and strained relations of the various parties to the question of a new creed for the present and future use of the several Churches constituent of the Presbyterian Alliance, will pervert the comparatively simple work of providing for the use of the Alliance, as a whole, a statement of the system characteristic of the great historical Confessions of the past. The two objects are wholly distinct, and the methods by which each could be naturally and efficiently carried out are not mutually compatible.

* Synod's Blue Book for 1883.

It is certainly competent for a Committee of the General Council to prepare an adequate statement of the consensus in question. So far, if the interests of the Alliance, as a whole, are solely considered, and not of the Churches in severalty, there could be no ground of objection; but when it is done it will be at best only the approximately accurate work of a few scholars, which other scholars will regard and treat as open to abundant criticism. Hence the moment such a report is taken up and endorsed by the General Council as a just statement of the general Calvinism of the whole Reformed Church in the past, and made by authority the doctrinal standard and test for the future, of recognition within the circle of Reformed Churches, it will prove unsettling and divisive, a revealer and stimulus of already existing divergent tendencies, rather than a bond of peace.

If, however, the majority of the Council for whatever reasons determines to undertake the work, we confidently maintain that it must be conducted exclusively as an historical study, a matter of pure fact, and studiously dissociated from all the rivalries and strategies of theological parties. In order to be a genuine product capable of attracting respect and confidence, it must be undertaken and carried through purely as an historical and scholarly problem, relating to the past and to questions of fact, and not to present or future opinion or policy. The least appearance of neglecting this obvious canon on the part of those preparing the proposed statement, or on the part of the General Council in adopting it, will certainly defeat the object for which it has been undertaken, will excite suspicions and jealousies, will alienate parties, and will bring into extreme peril the not very robust life of the Alliance itself. The conservative character of the great body of the office-bearers and members of the great English-speaking Presbyterian Churches throughout the world is well known, and has in all the past meetings of the General Council proved the overwhelmingly controlling power in the Alliance. Nothing could be more fatal to the Alliance than a misreading or a practical neglect of the spirit and wishes of the great communions in the breath of whose favor she has her being.

Even if the present writer were competent, it would be impossible to present, in the limits of one Review article a sufficient historical analysis and classification of all the Reformed Confessions, or to lay down the canons which should regulate the inductions upon which the statement of their consensus should proceed. Much less would it be possible to present and prove all the points of agreement in the development of the common system characteristic of the entire class. All that is proposed in this article is the indication, in very general

outline, of the methods of procedure and principal results which the proposed enterprise will be found to follow and confirm.

The 'Reformed Confessions' constitute a class of Protestant Confessions and Catechisms distinguished by certain marked characteristics from those of the Lutheran Churches, and produced under the predominant influence, during the earliest years of Zwingle, and afterward and pre-eminently of Calvin. Lutheranism during its formative period was virtually confined to one nationality, and always remained, as its name indicates, under the dominating influence of one powerful personality. Hence the original Augsburg Confession, although extemporized in the heat of battle for a transient purpose, has remained the common bond of all the Lutheran Churches in the world. And, together with four others, which are designed to interpret, defend, or inculcate its doctrine, it constitutes the whole doctrinal standard of that great division of Protestantism. The Reformed Churches, on the other hand, embraced many distinct nationalities, of Latin, Teutonic, and Celtic origin. They were developed under very different social and political influences. They were consequently much freer and more independent in their growth, and continued to pass through more radical and protracted controversies, and to produce new creed statements and dogmatic settlements for a longer period of time than her sister Churches of the Augsburg type. More than thirty Confessions have been produced and adopted by the Reformed Churches, on various occasions and for various purposes, some covering the whole body of Christian doctrine, and others confined to the definition, illustration, or enforcement of some single doctrine then the foremost matter in debate; some of them adopted by the voice of a single city or canton, others by the suffrages of great national Churches, or of many national Churches, and of great voluntary denominations in the new as well as in the old world; and some of them obtained recognition only for a short time, while others abide after two hundred years in unabated authority in the present age. Nevertheless this large and varied class of Confessions has a common character, which may be discerned with certainty and defined with precision. As Dr. Schaff says,* there is less incongruity, in the midst of all their diversity of form, between any one of them and any other, or between any one of them and the common type, than between the Augsburg Confession, as explained by its author, and the Formula Concordiæ. And this common character, even from the Zwinglian period, is thoroughly Augustinian, or what

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 357.

the world now knows as Calvinistic. This has never been denied by scholars, and is asserted in all critical works on the subject. Dr. Schaff, in his admirable work on "The Creeds of Christendom," which has no competitor in the English language, and which is written in a purely historical interest, and with transparent fairness, says that these Confessions "exhibit substantially the same system of doctrine, and are only variations of one theme, according to the wants of the national churches for which they were intended." He also shows that even the Confessions which he refers to the period anterior to the personal influence of Calvin, are nevertheless essentially Calvinistic, although the logical inferences characteristic of the system may be drawn out and emphasized in them in different degrees. Dr. Shedd, in his "History of Christian Doctrine," heads his chapter on this topic with the alternative title, "Reformed (Calvinistic) Confessions." Dr. Henry B. Smith,* in his address before the Presbyterian Historical Society, May, 1855, over and over again assumes and asserts that the predicates 'Reformed' and 'Calvinistic,' when applied to the historical body of Churches so called, are equivalent. The same will be sufficiently proved in the subsequent examination of those Confessions conducted in this article.

Let it be sufficient here to recall the universally admitted fact, that the essential differentia of Calvinism as a species of Protestant theology, lies in the predominant emphasis given to the fact that salvation is of grace, *i. e.* (1) of free unmerited favor, to justly condemned and helpless sinners, through the expiatory sacrifice and the all-deserving merits of Christ to which our merits or efforts contribute no value, and (2) through the supernatural power of the Holy Ghost as the creator and giver-of-life, who in the first instance initiates the entrance of spiritual life into the dead soul, with the obtaining or the reception of which the dead soul can in no wise contribute or co-operate until *after* he has been quickened.† As between the believer and unbeliever, the ultimate cause of difference is placed by the Pelagian wholly in the man's inalienable and unaided power of choice; by the Semi-pelagian in the fact that the believer tries though ineffectually to repent and believe, and thereupon God helps him; by the Arminian in the fact that God for Christ's sake gives all men gracious ability to do right, which one uses and the other abuses; by the Lutheran in the fact that the unbeliever resists the grace given to all who hear the Gospel and that the believer does not resist; while the

* "Faith and Philosophy," pp. 95, 96, 103, 280, 283, 290, etc.

† "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., pp. 372 and 477.

characteristic mark of Calvinism is found in the principle that the difference is made by the grace of God, acting sovereignly and creatively, making the believer willing to co-operate with the Spirit of God in obedience to the truth, while the unbeliever is not made willing. All the other views put the ultimate ground of the difference in man; Calvinism recognizes that it is in God, his purpose, and his work. Hence, as God is eternal, comes the necessary corollaries of absolute election, and of final perseverance. This, beyond question, is the principle which gives a common character to the Reformed Confessions as contrasted with other evangelical confessions. If this is wanting in spirit as well as in explicit statement, the essential characteristic of the class is absent. On the other hand, Dr. Schaff's* criticism is true and worthy of constant remembrance: "The motive and end of this doctrine was not speculative, but practical. It served as a bulwark of free grace, an antidote of Pelagianism and human pride, a stimulus to humility and gratitude, a source of comfort and peace in trial and despondency."

When we come to handle this mass of material afforded by these more than thirty Confessions of the Reformed Churches it becomes immediately evident that they cannot be considered equal in merit or identical in purpose, as if all covered the same ground or treated of the same subjects. They must, of course, be examined and classified according to their authorship, the occasions on which they originated, the purposes for which they were prepared, the subjects or range of subjects of which they treat, and according to their original ecclesiastical recognition, and to the extent and the permanence of their influence. Some of them were tentative essays at creed-making, and primary forms, through which some of the permanent creeds passed in the process of their making; as, for instance, the *Thirteen Articles* of the English Church of A.D. 1538, and the *Forty-two Articles* of A.D. 1553, in relation to the *Thirty-nine Articles* of A.D. 1571. Some of them were merely personal confessions of no public symbolical value whatever, like the Confession of John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, drawn up by himself and Dr. Pelargus, General Superintendent of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, A.D. 1614; and the Confession of Elector Frederick III. of the Palatinate, left in his last will, and published by his son, John Casimir, after his death. Many of them secured very restricted and temporary recognition, being superseded by the more permanent and general Confessions. These are such as the oldest Reformed Confession—*Confessio Tetrapolitana*—drawn up

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 454.

during the sessions of the Diet of Augsburg, 1530, by Martin Bucer, with the aid of Capito and Hedio, in the name of the four imperial cities of Strasburg, Constance, Memmingen, and Lindau, which was, however, soon abandoned by all these cities in favor of the Lutheran Confession. The same is true of the *Irish Articles* drawn up in 1615 by Archbishop Ussher, which were superseded in the Irish Episcopal Church by the *Thirty-nine Articles* after the Revolution. Dr. Schaff says* that the Confessions of the Bohemian Churches "amount to no less than thirty-four from 1467 to 1671, in the Bohemian, Latin, and German languages." Two only of their indigenous confessions survived until 1620, the *Confessio Fratrum*, A.D. 1535, and the *Confessio Bohemica*, 1575. Since 1781 both of these have been superseded by the *Second Helvetic Confession*, and the *Heidelberg Catechism*. The Committee of the Hungarian Reformed Churches reported in their historical review presented to the General Council in Philadelphia, 1880, a list of eleven confessions adopted on different occasions by their Churches from A.D. 1559 to A.D. 1570, while only the *Second Helvetic* and the *Heidelberg Catechism* remain in force in their churches at the present time.

Indeed of all the long list of the Confessions the only ones that remain as the actual doctrinal standards of existing Churches are the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England and Ireland; the *Gallic Confession* 'La-Rochelle' (confirmed by twenty-nine national Synods from A.D. 1559 to A.D. 1659; and subsequently by seven national Synods of the 'Church in the Wilderness' from A.D. 1726 to 1763, and afterward recognized by the Church when restored to qualified autonomy by Napoleon, and never yet officially repudiated), the *Belgic Confession*, still recognized by the Dutch Presbyterians in Holland and America; the *Heidelberg Catechism*; the *Second Helvetic Confession* approved by almost all the Reformed Churches on the Continent and in England and Scotland, and now in authority among the Reformed Churches in Bohemia and Hungary; the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*; the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms*; the *Confession of Faith* of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, by Thomas Charles, A.D. 1811; the *Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva*, A.D. 1848; the *Confession of the Waldenses*, A.D. 1655, still acknowledged by the Waldenses of Italy. This enumeration would be literally exhaustive if it were not true that the National Protestant Church of France in 1872, without repudiating the old confession, issued a very short and general statement of its faith.

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 578.

The Evangelical Churches not connected with the state, use, for the most part, different but similar confessions of a most simple character designed for the members of the flock as well as for their pastors, examples of which are given in the report to the second General Council on "Creeds and Formulas of Subscription."* The Protestants of Switzerland, especially of German Switzerland, hold very loosely to their public creeds.

Some of these Reformed Confessions sprang out of honest, but wholly abortive because premature, attempts at union between the different divisions of the Church, as the Colloquy of Leipsic, and the Declaration which sprang out of the Colloquy of Thorn. There are also several Confessions of the first importance in a historical point of view, as illustrative of the judgment of the Reformed Churches on special points of controversy, which, however, because they are confined to the discussion of single doctrines, cannot be taken as fair examples of the proportion and balance of the Reformed system as a whole, as, for instance, the *Consensus Genevensis*, which deals with the doctrine of Predestination, and the *Consensus of Zurich* (Tigurinus), which deals with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, both written by Calvin. There are some Confessions which we claim should be set to one side in the present collection of Reformed testimonies, because they only mark a transition movement from Lutheranism, through Melancthonianism toward Calvinistic positions on the sacraments, *e. g.*, the *Repositio Anhaltina* (1581). There are others which should be laid aside, because, although they are valuable as representing one very consistent type of Reformed theology, they represent one special type rather than the general consensus of the Reformed Churches, having been prepared by parties not satisfied with the proportion and emphasis given by the prevalent Confessions to the various elements and inferences of the Calvinistic system. These are such as the *Lambeth Articles* (1595) drawn up by Dr. Whitaker, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, and signed by Archbishop Whitgift and others, and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1675), drawn up by Heidegger, Turretin, and others in opposition to the theology of the school at Saumur, and in authority among the Swiss Churches for about fifty years.

We will then select certain essential topics, upon which the character of every system of Christian doctrine must turn, and upon each of these in succession we will interrogate those historical Confessions to which the suffrages of the Reformed Churches have unquestionably been given from the earliest times to the present.

Report of Proceedings of Second General Council, p. 1094.

I. THE REFORMED DOCTRINE AS TO THE SACRED SCRIPTURES, THEIR CHARACTER AND THEIR AUTHORITY.

The Confessions of all the churches were written before the era of modern historical criticism. The questions as to the genesis of the sacred writings, or as to the genuineness and integrity of the several books, or as to the integrity of the *textus receptus*, or as to the method of inspiration, in the form in which they now agitate the minds of Christian scholars, were not before the consciousness of the men who composed these Confessions. We shall look in vain, therefore, for definitions of inspiration in the terms of present controversies. Nevertheless the Reformed Confessions do, not incidentally but characteristically, take a very definite position as to the effect wrought by inspiration in the books themselves, in their consequent infallibility and authority. Prof. George T. Ladd, D.D., in his learned and elaborate work, "The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture," has* accurately stated the precise question as it stands between the modern critical views of the Bible, and the Doctrine of the Reformed Confessions on the same. If certain books or parts of books at present embraced in what we call the Scriptures are not inspired, and if the inspiration of any part did not extend to the words, and if the contents of these Scriptures are not absolutely errorless in all their affirmations, then it necessarily follows that as Scripture, *i. e.*, as a collection of writings, they cannot be said to be inspired, nor to be infallible, nor to be of absolute authority, nor to be *the Word of God*. "The whole tendency of modern criticism," says Dr. Ladd, "is to compel this statement. The Bible is not in its whole extent, throughout, identical with the Word of God; but the Bible contains, embraces, and conveys the Word of God." The true subject of the predicates, 'inspired,' 'revealed,' 'infallible,' 'of divine authority,' etc., is not the collection of writings we call Scripture, but the "Word of God Scripturally fixed" in the writings composing that collection.†

Now it is known to all the world that, as a pure matter of fact, right or wrong, the Reformed Confessions are built upon that view of the sacred Scriptures which precisely identifies them with the 'Word of God' to man in the present life. They assume it, assert it in terms, and even when the alternative phrase 'the Word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures' is used the sense is not different, as impartial interpreters always acknowledge. Dr. Schaff says‡ of the *First Confession of Basle* (1534) that "it is the only Reformed

* "The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture," vol. ii., pp. 498, etc.
 "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 387.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 494.

Confession which does not begin with the assertion of the Bible principle." He says that the placing at the beginning of the series of topics the infallibility and authority of Holy Scripture is a characteristic of the Reformed in contrast with the Lutheran Confessions.* This statement is incidentally corroborated by the fact that Dr. Ladd, in his attempt to show that the original Reformers and their followers before A.D. 1600 taught a lower view of the inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures than is embodied in the Confessions and theological institutes subsequent to that date, is almost entirely driven to Lutheran sources for his proof.†

Zwingle did not write at length upon this subject, yet his whole manner of commenting on Scripture, and of quoting it in support of his doctrinal positions, abundantly proves that he received these sacred writings as the Word of God from which there was no appeal. He says ‡ consequently: "The Word of the Lord abideth forever. The whole mass of the world and the infinite throng of all creatures cannot remit or change a single tittle of the words of the Lord."

Calvin in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the first book of his Institutes, continually uses the phrases 'Scripture,' 'the Scriptures,' 'the Sacred Volume,' and 'the Word of God' as synonymous. "I am aware," he says, "of what is muttered in corners by certain miscreants, when they would display their acuteness in assailing divine truth. They ask, 'How do we know that Moses and the prophets wrote the books which now bear their names?' Nay, they even dare to question whether there ever was a Moses." "The highest proof of Scripture is uniformly taken from the character of him whose word it is. The prophets and apostles boast not their own acuteness, nor qualities which win credit to the speakers, nor do they dwell on reasons; but they appeal to the sacred name of God, in order that the whole world may be compelled to submission."

The *First Helvetic Confession* is the first Reformed creed of national authority. It was drawn up by Bullinger, Myconius, and others, and signed by the representatives of a number of Swiss cantons in A.D. 1536, previous to the influence of Calvin. The caption of its first article is *De Scriptura Sacra*. "Canonical Scripture is the Word of God, conveyed by the Holy Spirit, and set forth to the world by prophets and apostles, and is the most ancient and perfect philosophy of all, and alone perfectly contains all piety and national rule of life."

* e. g. The first and second Helvetic, the French, Belgic, and Westminster Confessions, the Thirty-nine and the Irish Articles.

† "The Doctrine of Sacred Scripture," Pt. III., ch. 5.

‡ *De vera et Falsa rel.* (Op., vol. ii., fol. 171).

The *Second Helvetic Confession* was prepared by Bullinger alone (A.D. 1562), the friend and successor of Zwingli. It has been recognized or adopted by a greater number and variety of national Churches than any other Protestant Confession. It was adopted by the majority of the Swiss cantons in 1566, and subsequently by the cantons of Neufchatel and Basle, and by the Churches of France at the Synod of La Rochelle in 1571, by the Churches of Hungary in 1567, of Poland in 1571 and 1578, of Scotland in 1566, and it was held in the highest estimation by the Churches of England and Holland. It is the Confession of the Churches of Bohemia and Hungary at the present date. Its first chapter is headed *De Scriptura Sancta, vero Dei verbo*. In the words of this ecumenical confession the whole Reformed Church of the first era of its history unite in this Confession: "We believe and confess that the canonical Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles of both Testaments are the Word of God, and have plenary authority of themselves and not from men. For God, who Himself spoke to the Fathers, Prophets and Apostles, also now speaks to us through the Holy Scriptures."

The *Gallican Confession* was drawn up by Calvin, and put into its present form by Chandieu in 1559, at which date it was adopted by the Synod of Paris. Dr. Schaff says* this creed teaches that "the Scriptures are the word of God." This we believe to be a fair exposition, in the light of Calvin's other writings, and of contemporaneous habits of thought and speech, of the Fifth Article, to wit: "We believe that the Word contained in these books has proceeded from God, and receives its authority from Him alone, and not from man. And inasmuch as it is the rule of all truth, containing all that is necessary for the service of God and for our salvation, it is not lawful to take away from it, or to change it. Whence it follows that no authority, whether of antiquity, or customs, or numbers, or human wisdom, or judgments, or proclamations, or edicts, or decrees, or councils, or visions, or miracles should be opposed to these Holy Scriptures, but, on the contrary, all things should be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them."

The *Belgic Confession* was written by the martyr De Briès in 1561, and adopted by the Reformed Synod at Emden in 1571, and by the international Synod of Dort in 1619. Article III. reads as follows: "We confess that this word of God was not sent nor delivered by the will of man, but that *holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, as the apostle Peter saith; and that afterwards God, from

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 495.

a special care which He has for us and our salvation, commanded His servants the prophets and apostles to commit His revealed word to writing." Art. IV.: "We believe that the Holy Scriptures are contained in two books, viz., the Old and New Testaments, which are canonical, against which nothing can be alleged." Art. V.: "Believing without any doubt all things contained in them." Art. VII.: "We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently contained therein. . . . It is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures; nay, *though it were an angel from heaven*, as the apostle Paul saith. For since it is forbidden to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God, it doth thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects. . . . Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule, as the Apostle hath taught us, saying, 'Try the spirit, etc.'"

The *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Ch. I., § 1: "Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare His will unto His Church; and afterwards . . . to commit the same wholly unto writing." § 2: "All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life." L. Cat. Ques. 3: "What is the Word of God? The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." The question asked, an affirmative answer being demanded, of all elders and ministers in their ordination, and of all candidates at their licensure is,—“Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?”*

Confession of Faith of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales, A.D. 1823, Art. 2, agrees with the *Westminster Confession*.

Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva, A.D. 1848. Of this Dr. Schaff † approvingly says that "it exhibits the Calvinism of the nineteenth century—a Calvinism moderated, simplified and separated from connection with the civil government." It teaches as follows—Art. I.: "We believe that the Holy Scriptures are entirely inspired of God in all their parts, and that they are the only infallible Rule of Faith."

So *Thomas Cartwright*, the father of English Presbyterianism, in his "Treatise of the Christian Religion, or the whole Bodie and Sub-

* "Confession of Faith," Pres. Board of Pub., pp. 429, 434, 441.

† "Creeds of Christendom," vol. iii., p. 781.

stance of Divinity." London, A.D. 1616; chapter 12, "On the Word of God." This he identifies with the collection of canonical books, and accounts for their authority by saying, "For God is the AUTHOR OF THEM."

II. THE STATE OF SIN UNTO WHICH ALL MEN ARE BORN.

There are innumerable questions as to the metaphysical nature of sin, the method of its propagation, and the ground upon which it is brought upon us, as a consequence of Adam's apostasy, which are not settled by confessional authority. But the Reformed Confessions, as a characteristic fact, unite in affirming the following points: 1st. All men are born with a moral nature, effectively inclined to sin antecedently to any act of their own. 2d. This moral nature is itself sin, properly so called, and (1) affects all the faculties of the soul, and (2) as related to the holiness of God is pollution, and (3) as related to his justice is guilt, deserving his wrath and curse, and (4) it involves entire moral inability to begin or to perform anything good respecting God. 3d. This evil is inflicted upon the members of the human family as a penal consequence of Adam's apostatizing act.

It is well known that on these points Zwingle did not come up to the standard of Augustin. It is no less well known that on all the points above cited—Augustin, Calvin, Luther—the Lutheran Formula Concordiæ, and the Reformed Confessions as a class, were in perfect accord.

Calvin in his *Institutes*, Bk. II., chaps. 1 to 5, sets forth the entire doctrine in the clearest manner. II. 1, 4: "As the act which God punished so severely must have been not a trivial fault but a heinous crime, it will be necessary to attend to the peculiar nature of the sin which produced Adam's fall, and provoked God to inflict such fearful vengeance on the whole human race." 7: "The cause of the contagion is neither in the substance of the flesh nor of the soul; but God was pleased to ordain that those gifts which He had bestowed on the first man, that man should lose as well for his descendants as for himself." "Guilt is from nature, whereas sanctification is from supernatural grace." 8: "Original sin may, then, be defined a hereditary corruption and depravity of nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works, which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh. . . . The two things then are to be distinctly observed, that being thus perverted and corrupted in all parts of our nature, we are, merely on account of such corruption, deservedly condemned by God, to whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence, and

purity." 20: "Although hidden from human discernment, they" (the things of God) "are made known only by the revelation of the Spirit: so that they are accounted foolishness wherever the Spirit does not give light." 6: "All this being admitted" (free agency) "it will be beyond dispute, that free will does not enable any one to perform good works, unless he is assisted by grace: indeed, the special grace which the elect alone receive through regeneration." "This liberty is compatible with our being depraved, the servants of sin, and able to do nothing but sin." "In this way, then, man is said to have free will, not because he has a free choice of good and evil, but because he acts voluntarily and not from compulsion. This is perfectly true." (*The Confession of Basle*, Art. 2.)

The *First Helvetic Confession*, Art. 7: "Man being the most perfect image of God on earth, . . . after he was made holy of the Lord, by his own fault, falling into sin, drew the whole human race with him into the same fall, and made them subject to the same calamity." Art. 8: "And this infection, which men term original, hath so invaded the whole stock, that the child of wrath and the enemy of God can be cured by none other help than that of God." Art. 9: "Where-upon we do so attribute free will to man, as that, knowing and having a will to do good and evil, we find, notwithstanding, by experience, that of our own accord we may do evil, but we can neither embrace nor follow any good thing except, illuminated by the grace of Christ, we be stirred up and effectually moved thereunto."

Second Helvetic Confession, chap 8, § 1: "Man was from the beginning created by God in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; but, by the instigation of the serpent and his own fault" (*culpa*) "falling from goodness and uprightness, he became subject to sin, death, and divers calamities; and what he was made by his fall, such are all propagated by him, subject to sin, death, and various calamities." § 2: "And we take sin to be that natural corruption of man, derived or spread from those our first parents unto us all, through which we, being drownd in evil concupiscence, and clean turned away from God, but prone to all evil, full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt, and hatred of God, can do no good of ourselves, no, not so much as think any." Chap. 9, § 2: "Secondly, we are to consider what man became after his fall. His understanding, indeed, was not taken from him, neither was he deprived of will, and altogether changed into a stone or stock. Nevertheless, these things are so altered in man, that they are not able to do that now which they could do before his fall. For his understanding is darkened, and his will, which before was free, is now a servile will, for it serveth sin not unwillingly, but willingly."

The Heidelberg Catechism, Quæst. 7-10: "Whence then comes this depraved nature of man? From the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in Paradise, whereby our nature became so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin. *But are we so far depraved that we are wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil?* Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God. *Does not God, then, wrong man by requiring of him in His law that which he cannot perform?* No; for God so made man that he could perform it; but man through the instigation of the Devil, by wilful disobedience deprived himself and all his posterity of this power. *Will God suffer such disobedience and apostasy to go unpunished?* By no means; but He is terribly displeased with our inborn as well as actual sins, and will punish them in just judgment in time and eternity."

Ursinus, the principal author of this Catechism, has left us an authoritative commentary upon it, edited by his pupil, *David Pareus*. He expounds the above-quoted text of the catechism thus: "*De peccato originali.*" "We must maintain, in opposition to all the heretics, the four propositions—1st. That the whole human race is subject to the eternal wrath of God on account of the disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve. 2d. That besides this guilt we are from the moment of birth destitute of righteousness, and have inclinations contrary to the law of God. 3d. That this want of righteousness, and these inclinations with which we are born, are sins and deserve the eternal wrath of God. 4th. That these evils are derived and contracted, not by imitation, but by the propagation of the corrupt nature we have all, Christ excepted, derived from our first parents." "*De libero Arbitrio.* The degree of free power of choice which belongs to man as a fallen being, born of corrupt parents and unregenerate. In this state the will does, indeed, act freely, but it is disposed and inclined only to that which is evil, and can do nothing but sin. And the reason is, because the fall was followed by a privation of the knowledge of God, and of all inclination to obedience."

The Canons of the Synod of Dort were adopted by the representatives of many Reformed Churches, and afterward by the Churches of Holland and France, and by the Reformed (Dutch) Church of America. THIRD HEAD OF DOCTRINE, Art. 2: "Hence all the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature, in consequence of the just judgment of God." Art. 3: "Therefore, all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerat-

ing grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation."

*The Westminster Confession and Catechism** teach that Adam being "the root of all mankind," and "the covenant of works being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for all his posterity, mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression," and hence "the sinfulness of that estate into which the fall brought mankind consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of their whole nature," together with the actual sins which result therefrom. And "by this original corruption we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil," and this original as well as actual sin "is a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereto, doth of its own nature bring guilt upon the sinner."

See also the *Belgic Confession*, Arts. 14 and 15; the *Old Scotch Confession*, Art. 3; the *Thirty-nine Articles*, Arts. 9 and 10; the *Confession of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales*, Arts. 9, 10 and 11; the *Confession of the Waldenses*, A.D. 1655, Arts. 9 and 10; *Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva*, A.D. 1848, Art. 4.

III. THE ELECTION OF GRACE.

It is no part of the Reformed doctrine that God created men in order to damn them. Nor that His treatment of the lost is to be referred to His sovereign will. He condemns men only as a judge "for their sins, to the praise of His glorious justice." He provides and applies salvation as a sovereign for whom He will, of free grace. The Reformed doctrine therefore involves the following points: (1) The election from eternity (2) of individuals (3) to salvation and the means thereof (that is, they are chosen in Christ), (4) on the ground not of foreseen faith, but of "the counsel of His own will."

It is, of course, not necessary to quote Calvin to prove his position on this topic. *Zwingle** here agreed with him perfectly. "For we also agree with the opinion of Paul, that election is the free determination of the divine will with respect to the saved." "We agree with the opinion of Paul that predestination is the free determination of God without any respect to our good or evil deeds."

The Confession of Basle, prepared by Œcolampadius and Oswald Myconius, A.D. 1534, and even to-day the unrepealed doctrinal stand-

* Conf. ch. vi. L. Cat. Quæes. 22-26. S. Cat. Quæes. 15-18.

† Zwingle's Works. De Providentia, cap. vi.

ard of that canton, Art. 1, § 3: "We confess that God before He created the world had chosen all those to whom He would freely give the inheritance of eternal blessedness."

The Second Helvetic Confession, cap. 10: "God hath from the beginning freely, and of His mere grace, without any respect of man, predestinated or elected the saints, whom He will save in Christ. . . . Therefore, though not for any merit of ours, yet not without means, but in Christ and for Christ, did God choose us, and they who are now engrafted into Christ by faith, the same also were elected."

The *Gallic Confession*, Art. 12: "We believe that from this corruption and general condemnation in which all men are plunged, God, according to His eternal and immutable counsel, calleth those whom He hath chosen by His goodness and mercy alone in our Lord Jesus Christ, without consideration of their works, to display in them the richness of His mercy; leaving the rest in this same corruption and condemnation to shew in them His justice. For the ones are no better than the others, until God discerns (makes a difference) according to His immutable purpose which He determined in Christ Jesus before the creation of the world."

Belgic Confession, Art. 16: "God hath manifested Himself as He is, that is to say, merciful and just; *merciful* since He delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom He, in His eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness, hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect of our works: *just* in leaving others in the fall and perdition in which they have involved themselves."

Old Scotch Confession, written by John Knox, A.D. 1560, Art. 8: "For the same eternal God and Father, who by mere grace elected us in Christ Jesus, His Son, before the foundation of the world was laid, appointed Him to be our Head, our Brother and our Pastor, and great Bishop of our souls."

The Heidelberg Catechism was intended and adapted as its original title recites to be a "Catechism of Christian instruction as conducted in the Churches and Schools of the Electoral Palatinate." It is consequently less systematic and precise in its definitions than other Church standards. Yet its essential Calvinistic character has never been questioned. It has been recognized as such by all the Reformed Churches and notably by the rigid international Synod of Dort, May 1, 1619, and by the Old-school General Assembly, Philadelphia, May, 1870. It was adopted and used by authority in Scotland. Dr. Schaff says: * "The Calvinistic system is herein set forth with wise

* "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 540.

moderation, and without its sharp angular points. . . . The *doctrine of election to holiness and salvation* in Christ, (or the positive and edifying part of the dogma of predestination,) is indeed incidentally set forth as a source of humility, gratitude, and comfort (Quæs. 1, 31, 53, 54), but nothing is said of a *double* predestination, or of a *limited* atonement." It declares (Quæs. 54) "that Christ gathers and preserves His Church out of the whole human race, from the beginning to the end of the world." By His Providence (Quæs. 27) God is said by His everywhere-present power to govern all things, which "come not by chance but by His fatherly hand." "All creatures are in His hand" (Quæs. 28), "so that without His will no creature can so much as move." (Quæs. 52), The saved are called Christ's "chosen ones." (Quæs. 53), The Holy Ghost gives to the believer his true faith, and makes him a member of Christ and all His benefits. This Catechism teaches firmly on Calvinistic grounds the perseverance of the saints. *Ursinus*, one of the authors of this Catechism, expounds Quæs. 54 in his commentary under the caption "Quid sit prædestinatio?"—"The two parts of predestination are embraced in election and reprobation. *Election* is the decree of God, by which He has graciously determined, out of all those lying in the mass of perdition, to have mercy upon some in Christ, to endow them with faith and repentance and eternal life. *Reprobation* is a decree of God, whereby He has determined to leave others in the condemnation of Adam, and to punish them justly on account of their sins." *Olevianus*, the other author of this Catechism, in his "Exposition of the symbol of the Apostles," teaches the same doctrine.

The *Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. 17: "Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation, those whom He hath chosen in Christ, out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Wherefore they which be indued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in them in due season: they through grace obeyed the calling, etc." *Confession of the Waldenses*, 1655, Art. 11; *Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva*, A.D. 1848, Art. 10. The testimonies of the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*; of the *Westminster Confession*; of the *Consensus Genevensis*; of the *Irish Articles*; of the *Lambeth Articles*, and of the *Formula Consensus Helvetica*, may be taken for granted on this head.

IV. EFFECTUAL CALLING: THE RELATION OF DIVINE GRACE TO THE HUMAN WILL IN REGENERATION.

If, as shown above, men are by nature morally corrupt, incapable of good and inclined to evil in things pertaining to God, it follows that they cannot take the initiative in returning to God; that they cannot co-operate with grace until after by grace their minds are enlightened and their wills renewed; that is, until they are regenerated. And if God's election of individuals to eternal life, and to the means thereof, is founded only on the counsel of His own will, it must be His effectual grace, and not man's will, that, in the first instance, determines the difference between those who accept and those who reject the gospel.

Calvin's Institutes, Bk. II., ch. 3, and Bk. III., chap. 24: "It is certainly easy to prove that the commencement of good is only with God, and that none but the elect have a will inclined to good. But the cause of election must be sought out of man; and hence it follows that a right will is derived, not from the man himself, but from the same good pleasure by which we were chosen before the foundation of the world. . . . In our conversion there is the creation of a new spirit and a new heart. It always follows, that nothing good can proceed from our will until it be formed again, and that after it is formed again, in so far as it is good, it is of God, and not of us." 10: "The Apostle's doctrine is not, that the grace of a good will is offered to us if we will accept, but that God himself is pleased so to work in us as to guide, turn and govern our heart by His Spirit, and reign in it as His own possession. . . . Men are, indeed, to be taught that the favor of God is offered, without exception, to all who ask it; but since those only begin to ask whom heavenly grace inspires, even this minute portion of praise must not be withheld from him."

I. Helvetic Confession, ch. 9: "Whence we attribute free will to man in such sense, that when knowing and willing we endeavor to perform either good or evil things, we are able, indeed, of our own spontaneity to perform evil things, but we are unable to perform good things, unless we are illuminated by the grace of Christ, and impelled by His Spirit. For it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. And salvation is of God, and perdition of ourselves."

II. Helvetic Confession, ch. 9, § 7: "Lastly, it is to be considered whether the regenerated are possessed of free will, and how far in regeneration the intellect is illumined by the Holy Spirit so that it comprehends the mysteries of the will of God. And the will itself is not only changed by the Spirit, but also endued with powers, so that it can will and perform good spontaneously." 8: "Afterwards, two

things are to be observed; *first*, that when regenerated alike in good choices and in good actions, men not only act passively but actively. For they are acted upon by God in order that they themselves may do what they do." . . . 9: "*Secondly*, in the regenerated infirmity remains."

Gallic Confession, Art. 21: "We believe that we are enlightened in faith by the secrete power of the Holy Spirit—that it is a gratuitous and special gift which God grants to whom He wills, so that the elect have no cause to glory, but are bound to be doubly thankful that they have been preferred to others." Art. 22: "We believe that by this faith we are regenerated in newness of life, being by nature subject to sin."

See also *Belgic Confession*, Art 24, and the *Old Scotch Confession*, Art. 13.

The Thirty-nine Articles, Art. 10: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us—that we have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will."

Heidelberg Catechism, Quæ. 8: "*But are we so far depraved that we are wholly unapt to any good, and prone to all evil?* Yes; unless we are born again by the Spirit of God." *Ursinus* in his Commentary says, in his comments on this question: "The *second* grade of free will is that which belongs to man as fallen, born of corrupt parents, and not as yet regenerated. In this state the will acts indeed freely, but is inclined to nothing but evil, and is able to do nothing but sin." "The *third* grade of free will is that which belongs to the regenerated man in this life, but not as yet perfected and glorified. In this state the will uses its liberty, not only in choosing good, but also partly in good action and partly in evil action. In good action, because by the singular grace of the Holy Spirit human nature is renewed by the word of God, a new light and knowledge of God illuminates the mind, in the heart new affections, in the will new inclinations, and the will is effectually moved by the Holy Spirit to act in conformity with this knowledge, and these inclinations."

Canons of the Synod of Dort, 3d and 4th Head of Doctrine. Arts. 11 and 12.

The Westminster Confession, chap. 10, § 1: "All those whom God hath predestinated to life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His word and

Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds; . . . taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so that they come most freely, being made willing by His grace." § 2: "This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man; who is altogether passive therein, until being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein."

Confession of Faith of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, Arts. 11 and 22. *Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva*, Art. 12. *Confession of the Waldenses*, 1655, Arts. 9, 17, 18.

V. THE REGENERATE ARE NOT PERFECT IN THIS LIFE.

There are still remaining in the regenerated man some elements of his original corruption, which, although resisted and mortified, are of the true nature of sin. Absolute spiritual perfection is not reached by the believer in this life.

Calvin's Institutes, Bk. 3, ch. 14, § 9: "Let the holy servant of God select from the whole course of his life the action which he deems most excellent, and let him ponder it in all its parts, he will doubtless find in it something of the flesh, since our alacrity in well doing is never what it ought to be, but our course is always retarded by weakness." 10: "For since perfection is altogether unattainable by us so long as we are clothed with flesh, and the law denounces death and judgment against all who have not yielded a perfect righteousness, there will always be ground to accuse and convict us unless the mercy of God interpose, and ever and anon absolve us by the constant remission of sin." 11: "We must strongly insist on these two things: that no believer ever performed one work, which, if tested by the strict judgment of God, could escape condemnation; and moreover, that were this granted to be possible (though it is not), yet the act being polluted by the sins of which it is certain that the author of it is guilty, it is deprived of its merit."

II. *Helvetic Confession*, Cap. 9, § 9: "Secondly, infirmity remains in the regenerate. Since even sin (peccatum) dwells in us to the end of our life, and the flesh struggles against the spirit, the regenerated by no means thoroughly perform that which they have commenced." Cap. 16, § 9: "There are moreover many things offensive to God, and many more imperfect found in the works of the saints."

The Heidelberg Catechism, Quæ. 62: "Whereas even our best works in this life are all imperfect and defiled with sin."

The Thirty-nine Articles, Art. 9: "And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρόνημα σαρκίος* (which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh), is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, and are baptized, yet the Apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

Belgic Confession, Art. 24: "For we can do no work but what is polluted by our flesh, and also punishable."

Old Scotch Confession, Art. 15: "Yea, if we say we have no sin, even after we are regenerate, we deceive ourselves, and the verity of God is not in us." "But this we affirm, that no man on earth (Christ excepted) has given, gives, or shall give in work that obedience to the law, which the law requires."

Westminster Confession, ch. 16, § 4: "They who in their obedience attain the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate and to do more than God requires, as that they fall short of much which in duty they are bound to do." § 5: . . . "and as they (good works) are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment."

The Confession of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, Art. 31.

VI. THE ATONING WORK OF CHRIST; ESPECIALLY HIS DEATH AS AN EXPIATORY SACRIFICE FOR SIN.

A. ITS NATURE. The governmental and moral influence views as to the atoning work of Christ are never denied, but are always presumed and included (whether latently or explicitly) in the doctrine of the Reformed Confessions. Nor is the meritorious God-satisfying quality of His work ever referred to His physical sufferings, to the exclusion of His character, His moral attitude, or of His spiritual affections and exercises. At the same time the doctrine of all the Reformed Confessions is that Christ vicariously suffered in the stead of the sinner the penalty of the law, and so expiated the guilt of sin, and satisfied the justice of God.

Zwingle: * "But He died that we might live; He was bound to the cross that we might be set free. He bore our sins in His own

* *Brevis Commemoratio Mortis Christi*; Works, vol. vi., Tom. 2, p. 2.

body and took upon Himself all our infirmities that we might be healed by His suffering. He is the price that was given for our redemption; through Him our unrighteousness is blotted out before God. In Him the justice of God is satisfied, and in Him life is given to believers."

Calvin's Institutes, Bk. 2, ch. 16, § 2: "Then Christ interposed, took the punishment upon Himself, and bore what by the just judgment of God was impending upon sinners; with His own atoning blood expiated the sins which rendered them hateful to God, by this expiation satisfied and duly propitiated God the Father, and by this intercession appeased His anger, on this basis founded peace between God and men." § 4: "Our being reconciled by the death of Christ must not be understood as if the Son reconciled us, in order that the Father, then hating, might begin to love us, but that we were reconciled to Him already loving, though at enmity with us because of sin."

Confession of Basle, Art. 4: "He died for our sins; and that so, by the one oblation of Himself, He did satisfy our Heavenly Father for us, and reconcile us to Him."

I. Helvetic, Art. 11: "Who, as He alone is mediator, intercessor, at once victim and high-priest, and our Lord and King, so Him alone we acknowledge, and with all our heart, to be our only reconciliation, redemption, sanctification, expiation, wisdom, protection, and deliverance."

II. Helvetic, ch. 11, § 15: "Furthermore, by His passion or death, and by all those things which He did and suffered for our sakes from the time of His coming in the flesh, our Lord reconciled His Heavenly Father unto all the faithful, expiated sin, spoiled death, destroyed condemnation and hell, and by His resurrection from the dead brought back and restored life and immortality."

Heidelberg Catechism, (Quæ. 36): "What benefit dost thou receive from the holy conception and birth of Christ? That He is our Mediator, and with His innocence and perfect holiness covers, in the sight of God, my sin wherein I was conceived. (Quæ. 37): What dost thou understand by the word 'suffered'? That all the time He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, He bore, in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race, in order that by His passion, as the only atoning sacrifice, He might redeem our body and soul from everlasting damnation, and obtain for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life."

Gallic Confession, Art. 17; *Belgic Confession*, Art. 21; *Old Scotch Confession*, Art. 9; *Canons of Synod of Dort*, Second Head of Doc-

trine; *Thirty-nine Articles*, Arts. 2 and 11; *Confession of Calvinistic Methodists of Wales*, Arts. 16-19; *Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva*, 1848, Arts. 6, 8, 9 and 12; *Confession of the Waldenses*, 1655, Arts. 14-16; *Westminster Confession*, ch. viii., § 5. "The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." (See ch. xi., § 3.)

B. AS TO ITS DESIGN, OR INTENDED APPLICATION. The Arminian view is that Christ died equally and indifferently in behalf of all men, in order to render their sins forgivable and to secure meritoriously for each man sufficient grace, which is rendered in each case efficient or otherwise by the use or abuse with which it is treated by the subject. All Calvinists have likewise held that Christ died with the intention of making by His expiation (*a*) all men the recipients of various benefits, temporal, moral, and otherwise, and (*b*) the salvation of every man objectively possible, *i. e.*, of removing out of the way of his reconciliation all purely legal disabilities. His work is sufficient, suited to, and in good faith offered to all men elect and non-elect indifferently. This is the ground taken by the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*, and the *Westminster Confession*.* "This" (that any perish) "is not owing to any defect or insufficiency in the sacrifice offered by Christ upon the cross, but is wholly to be imputed to themselves."† Dr. Schaff says: ‡ "After such admissions the difference between the two theories" (definite and general atonement) "is of little practical account." But these are not 'admissions,' they have never been denied by representative authority, and they have been often asserted, as above, by the international Synod of Dort, etc. Moreover, the essential point remains *that with respect to the elect Christ died, not merely to make their salvation possible, but actually to effect it, and to secure for them the work of the Holy Ghost in its effectual application.* This point was affirmed by the Augustinian Schoolmen, who habitually used the formula that Christ died "*sufficiently* for all, but *efficiently* for the elect alone." This language is adopted as representing his own view by Calvin in his Commentaries, as on 1 John ii. 2. The same was done by Archbishop Ussher in Nos. 22 and 23 of his letters, published by his chaplain, Richard Parr. The early Reformed Confessions for the most part emphasized the general

* "Canons of the Synod of Dort," *Second Head of Doctrine*, §§ 5 and 6.

† See Prof. Mitchell's "Minutes of Westminster Assembly," and "The Westminster Assembly."

‡ "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 521.

phase of the atonement, while none of them deny, while several imply the other side of the truth, or the belief that Christ impenetrates by His sacrifice, not merely the objective conditions of salvation, but the actual application of His merits to His people, and all the means and conditions of that application. (See Belgic Confession, Art. 16, and Gallic Confession, Art. 12.)

But as the *Federal Theology* more and more gained currency in the Reformed Churches the special bearing of Christ's death upon the elect necessarily was thrown more conspicuously into the foreground. For if He died in pursuance of the terms of an eternal covenant with the Father, He must needs have died in some special sense for the elect, who were given to Him by the Father by the terms of that covenant. Thus *Olevianus*, one of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism, and the first Protestant suggester of the "Federal Theology," in his "Exposition of the Symbol of the Apostle," etc., translated by John Fielde, London, 1581, speaks as follows: "This covenant Christ the King, and Priest of His Church, hath ratified forever by His merit. . . . Seeing that Christ by His priesthood, that is, by His intercession and sacrifice, laying an everlasting foundation unto His kingdom hath satisfied the righteousness of God, and so delivered us from sin and the curse of the law, and from the kingdom and power of the devil, and obtained the Spirit of sanctification through which He may reign in us." *John Ball*, also the main promoter of this theology in England, in his "Treatise on the Covenant of Grace," London, 1645, Pt. 2, ch. 2, says: "Christ the Mediator of the Covenant of grace, died for them only that be comprehended in the Covenant of grace." And *Francis Roberts*, in his "Mystery and Marrow of the Bible," a complete theological treatise on the basis of the Covenant, London, 1657, says, Bk. 2, ch. 2, § 2: "The parties to this Covenant of Faith are two, viz., God on the one hand, Christ the last Adam, and in Him all His seed on the other hand." § 3: "Matters covenanted and promised to Christ on the part of God the Father. I. God the Father, on His part, covenanteth to Jesus Christ the last Adam, in order to the recovery of his seed, all things necessary thereto; . . . promiseth complete success to Christ in His mediatorial office for recovery of His seed." II. "Jesus Christ the last Adam, restipulateth and repromiseth on His part to God the Father, 1—cheerfully and faithfully to accept, undertake and discharge the Mediatorial office imposed upon Him by His Father in order to the recovery of His seed, the elect." The same is taught in *Ussher's Body of Divinity* (pp. 168-176), compiled by him in his youth, largely from early English Calvinistic sources, notably from Thomas

Cartwright, "the father of English Presbyterianism." This book was circulated in the Westminster Assembly, and evidently had a great influence upon the result of its labors. The same doctrine precisely is taught in Witsius's "Economy of the Covenants," Bk. 2, ch. 3, §§ 28-34, and ch. 9, §§ 2-6. Mr. Calamy, who in the Westminster Assembly argued for the broader view of the design of Christ's atoning work, as far as that view was represented in that Assembly at all, said: * "I am far from universal redemption in the Arminian sense; but that I hold is in the sense of our divines in the Synod of Dort, that Christ did pay a price for all—absolute for the elect, conditional intention for the reprobate in case they do believe—that all men should be *salvabiles, non obstante lapsu Adami*."

The *Westminster Confession*, ch. 3, § 6, ch. 8, § 5: "The Lord Jesus by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, . . . purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom for all those whom the Father had given unto Him." § 7: "To all those for whom Christ hath purchased redemption, He doth certainly apply and communicate the same." L. Cat., (Quæ. 59); "Canons of Synod of Dort," Second Head of Doctrine, § 8: "It was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of His cross . . . should redeem out of every tribe . . . all those and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation"; "that He should confer upon them faith, which together with all the other saving gifts of the Holy Spirit, He purchased for them by His death."

Confession of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, Arts. 18 and 19, and Appendix v.

It hence followed that while some of the early Confessions emphasized the general reference of the atonement, the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*, the *Lambeth Articles*, the *Irish Articles*, the *Westminster Confession and Catechisms*, and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica*, emphasized perhaps too exclusively its special reference to the elect, although admitting the other side. The "*Consensus of the Reformed Confessions*" therefore can be found in neither extreme, but in such positions as that maintained by Archbishop Ussher in his "Judgment on the Intent and Extent of Christ's satisfaction on the Cross," and in his "Answer to some objections, etc.," Works, vol. 12, pp. 555, 571. "For that Christ so died for all men, that He impetrated reconciliation and remission of sins for each man, I hold to be untrue, being well assured that our Saviour hath obtained at the hands of His Father reconciliation and forgiveness of sins, not for the reprobate,

* "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines," edited by Rev. Alex. F. Mitchell, D.D., 1874, p. 152.

but for the elect only, and not for them neither, before they be truly regenerated and implanted into Himself." The points in this, often misrepresented question, in which the *Reformed Confessions* as a class 'consent,' cannot be better set forth than in the words of the *Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva*, endorsed by Dr. Schaff, as "Calvinism moderated and simplified," * Art. 11: "We believe that God, who so loved the world that He gave His only Son, now orders every man, in every place, to be converted; that every one is responsible for his sins and his unbelief; that Jesus repels none who go to Him; and that every sinner who sincerely appeals to Him will be saved." Art. 12: "We believe that the Holy Ghost applies to His chosen ones, by means of the Word, the salvation which the Father hath destined for them, and which the Son has bought, so that uniting them to Jesus by faith, He dwells in them, etc." To precisely the same effect is the *Confession of the Waldenses*, A.D. 1655, Arts. 11, 12, 14.

VII. THE SECOND ADVENT OF OUR LORD.

The Millenarians, of all kinds, have always held that the Second Advent of Christ will be accompanied by the resurrection of the saints, will precede a thousand years of his personal reign on earth, and be followed by the resurrection of the wicked and the general judgment and the end of the world. The Reformed Churches, on the contrary, have uniformly held that the Second Advent will be accompanied by the resurrection of the saints and wicked together, and immediately followed by the general judgment and the end of the world.

Calvin's Institutes, Bk. 2, ch. 16, § 17: "Faith is most properly invited to meditate on the visible presence which He will exhibit on the last day. For He will descend from heaven in a visible form, in like manner as He was seen to ascend and appear to all with the ineffable majesty of His kingdom, etc. . . . Hence we are told to wait for the Redeemer against that day on which He will separate the sheep from the goats, and the elect from the reprobate, and not one individual either of the living or the dead shall escape His judgment."

Confession of Basle, Art. 9, "Of the last Day."

I. Helvetic Confession, Art. 11: "And we look for Him to come in the end of the world, a true and upright Judge, and to give sentence on all flesh (being first raised up to that judgment), and to advance the godly above the sky, and to condemn the wicked, both in soul and body to eternal destruction."

II. Helvetic Confession, ch. xi., §§ 13 and 14: "Now Christ shall

"Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., p. 781.

return to redeem His own, and to abolish Antichrist by His coming, and to judge the quick and the dead (Acts xvii. 31). For the dead shall arise, and those which are found alive in that day (which is unknown to all creatures) shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. And all the faithful shall be taken up to meet Christ in the air, but un-believers and ungodly shall descend with the devils into hell." . . . "Moreover, we condemn the Jewish dreams, that before the day of judgment there shall be a golden world in the earth, and that the godly shall possess the kingdoms of the world, and their wicked enemies be trodden underfoot, for evangelical truth (Matt. 24 and 25, and 2 Thess. 2d, and 2 Tim. 3 and 4) is found to teach far otherwise."

The Belgic Confession, Art. 37: "Finally we believe, according to the Word of God, when the time appointed for the Lord (which is unknown to all creatures) is come, and the number of the elect complete, that our Lord Jesus shall come from heaven, corporally and visibly as He ascended, with great glory and majesty, to declare Himself Judge of the quick and the dead, burning the old world with fire and flame to cleanse it. And then shall all men personally appear before this great Judge, both men, women and children that have been from the beginning of the world to the end thereof, . . . for all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, etc."

Ursinus in his commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, on Quæ. 54: "The final judgment is, therefore, that judgment which will take place at the end of the world, when Christ, the judge, will descend in a visible manner in a cloud in the glory and majesty of His Father and the holy Angels, when all men who have lived from the beginning of the world will be raised, while those who will then be living shall be suddenly changed, and when all will stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, etc."

Westminster Confession, Chaps. 32, 33. L. Cat., Quæ. 87-89. *Confession of Calvinistic Methodists of Wales*, Arts. 41-43.

VIII. THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.

The Reformed Confessions go into no subtle questions as to the ultimate difference between matter and spirit, or as to the essential ground of identity either of the soul or of the body. But they all with one voice teach that the very same body which the spirit inhabits through life on earth, and which it lays aside in death, and which lies and decays in the grave, modified as to properties, but not changed as to real identity, shall be raised by the power of

God, made like Christ's glorified body, and personally united to the same soul forever.

Calvin's Institutes, Bk. 3, ch. 25, § 8: First we must hold, as has already been observed, that the body in which we shall rise will be the same as at present in respect of substance, but that the quality will be different. . . . The corruptible body, therefore, in order that we may be raised, will not perish, or vanish away, but divested of corruption will be clothed with incorruption. . . . The volatile spirits with whom I now dispute adduce the fiction of their own brain, that in the resurrection there will be a creation of new bodies. Their only reason for thinking so is that it seems to them incredible that a dead body, long wasted by corruption, shall return to its former state."

Confession of Basle, Art. 9: "Wherein our flesh shall rise again."

II. *Helvetic Confession*, ch. 11, § 14: "We, therefore, condemn all those who deny the true resurrection of the flesh, or who do think amiss of the glorified bodies."

Heidelberg Catechism, Quæ. 57: "What comfort does the resurrection of the body afford thee? That not only my soul, after this life, shall be immediately taken up to Christ its Head, but also that this my body, raised by the power of Christ, shall again be united with my soul and made like unto the glorious body of Christ." *Ursinus*, in his Commentary on this question, says: "The bodies with which we shall rise in the resurrection, will not only be human bodies, but also the very same in substance and numerically which we now have, and not other and different bodies created by Christ. The Apostle means by 'spiritual body' not that which is changed into spirit, or which is in all its properties equal to the spirit, but that which is ruled by the Spirit of God, which is anointed and free from all misery adorned with heavenly splendor, glory, activity, and holiness."

Belgic Confession, Art. 37: "For all the dead shall be raised out of the earth, and their souls joined and united with their proper bodies in which they formerly lived."

Westminster Confession and Catechism: "And all the dead shall be raised up with the selfsame bodies, and none other, although with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls forever." S. Cat., Quæ. 87: "The selfsame bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then united to their souls forever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ." S. Cat., Quæ. 27: . . . "and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection."

Confession of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, Art. 42.

Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva, 1848, Art. 13:

“ We expect from heaven our Saviour Jesus Christ, who will change our body of humiliation and make it conform to His own body of glory, and we believe that, in that day, the dead who are in Christ, coming from their tombs at His voice,” etc.

IX. THE ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

The doctrine of the whole Reformed Church as to future punishment has been identical with that of the Roman and Lutheran Churches. It excludes alike the theories of the soul’s unconsciousness during the intermediate state; of a second probation; of restoration; and of annihilation or of conditional immortality. This is a notorious fact, although the absence of dispute on this subject between the Churches has led to the comparative silence of some of the Reformed Confessions.

Calvin’s Institutes, Bk. 3, ch. 25, § 6: “ Did not the soul survive the body, how could it be present with the Lord on being separated from the body (2 Cor. v. 1–6). . . . And did not the soul, when unclothed from the body, retain its essence, and be capable of beatific glory, our Saviour would not have said to the thief, ‘ To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ ” § 5: “ How stupid and frivolous their fear that too much severity will be ascribed to God if the reprobate are doomed to eternal punishment, even the blind may see. . . . ‘ But their sins are temporary.’ I admit it; but then the majesty of God, and also the justice which they have violated by their sins, are eternal. Justly, therefore, the memory of their iniquity does not perish. ‘ But in this way the punishment will exceed the measure of their fault.’ It is intolerable blasphemy to have the majesty of God in so little estimation, as not to regard the contempt of it as of greater consequence than the destruction of a single soul.”

Confession of Basle, Art. 9: . . . “ And eternal fire, if he hath committed good or evil, without faith and love.”

II. *Helvetic Confession*, chap. 11, § 13: “ But the unbeliever and the ungodly shall descend with the devils into hell, there to burn forever, and never to be delivered out of torments.” § 14: “ We also condemn those who have thought that both the devils and all the wicked shall at length be saved, and have an end to their torments.”

Ursinus, Commentary on Heidelberg Catechism, Quæ. 52, says: “ But the ungodly will be cast away with devils and sentenced to everlasting punishment.” “ They shall also suffer punishments and torments in their bodies which now lie in the grave.”

Belgic Confession, Art. 37: “ They ” (the redeemed) “ shall see the terrible vengeance which God shall execute on the wicked who most

cruelly persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world; and who shall be convicted by the testimony of their own consciences, and, being immortal, shall be tormented in that everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."

Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechism, ch. 33, § 2, S. Cat., Quæs. 29: "The punishments of sin in the world to come are, everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body, without intermission in hell fire forever."

Confession of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, Art. 44.

Confession of the Evangelical Free Church of Geneva, 1848, Art. 14: ". . . that the unjust shall go to everlasting punishment, while the just will rejoice in life everlasting."

This review, cursory as it has been, fully justifies the emphasis we put upon the three following questions. What respect would a statement of the "Consensus of the Confessions of the Reformed Churches," either deserve or secure, which should ignore or disguise the state of facts now disclosed? What possible comfort could a genuine statement of that consensus give to the parties restless for a larger liberty, and therefore dissatisfied with the text of the Westminster Standards, which alike in matter and form will prove as unapproachable in the future as unparalleled in the past? With what consistency can any denomination of Presbyterians, who have rejected from their creed the doctrine of the unconditional election of God's people to salvation and to the means thereof, be recognized as coming within the constitutional conditions of this Alliance, which requires that its constituent Churches should profess "Creeds in harmony with the Consensus of the Reformed Confessions"?

A. A. HODGE.