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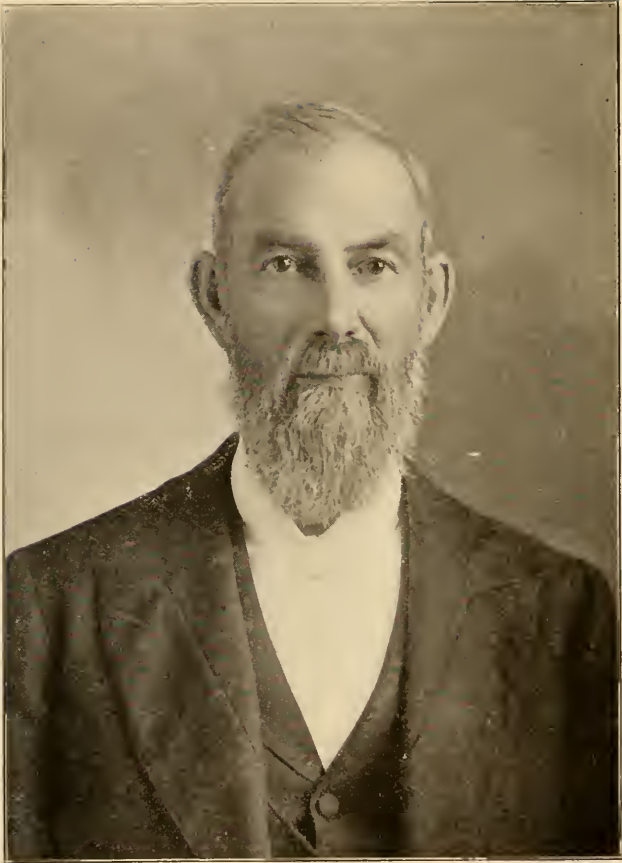


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VII.

THE CHURCHES THAT HOLD THE WESTMINSTER
SYMBOLS, AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES
GENERALLY—THEIR POINTS OF CONTACT
AND CONTRAST ; THEIR PRESENT RELA-
TIONS, WORK, AND OUTLOOK.

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ANALYSIS.

Topic stated.—Statistics of Presbyterian and Reformed Churches given.—In the United Kingdom.—In North America.—In South America.—Australasia.—In other places.—Other Reformed Churches —Total number.—Distribution.—The Reformation in its two branches.—The one Lutheran, and the other Calvinistic.—Their creeds.—The Reformed creeds are twofold.—The one Zwinglian, the other Calvinistic.—The work of Calvin and Zwingli contrasted.—Various Catechisms and Confessions described.—About thirty in number.—Heidelberg.—Thirty-nine Articles.—Westminster Standards.—Helvetic.—Dort.—French.—Belgic.—Arminian Articles.—The Sixty-seven Articles.—Luther's theses—Berne.—Basel.—Calvin's Catechism.—Gallican.—Brandenberg.—Elizabeth's Articles.—Irish Articles.—Scottish Confessions.—Finally the Westminster Standards emerged.—The doctrinal harmony of these great creeds.—Westminster Assembly fell heir to all of them.—Its work was not all new work.—The building of Solomon's temple taken to illustrate the work of the Westminster Assembly.—Doctrine and polity contrasted and compared.—The situation in Britain in this connection.—The corresponding situation in America.—Reference made to the Sixth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches.—The outlook.—General survey takes a wide sweep.—The mission of the church generally.—Of the Reformed Churches specially.—Her theology and her ministry.—The great need of the sinful world.—The world-wide missionary activity of these churches.—Reasons for encouragement.—Discouragements there are, but they fade out of sight.—The glorious hope of final triumph.—All branches of the Lord's host are to stand and work together.—They shall have a share in the glory that shall surely come.—Tokens of a coming storm.—Pledges of an assured victory.

VII.

THE CHURCHES THAT HOLD THE WESTMINSTER SYMBOLS, AND THE REFORMED CHURCHES GENERALLY.

THE topic assigned to me is as follows: "The Churches that Hold the Westminster Symbols, and the Reformed Churches Generally; Their Points of Contact and Contrast; Their Present Relations, Work, and Outlook." The various subdivisions of this topic will be taken up in the order of their statement. In order to bring the subject before us with a degree of completeness some detailed statistics must be given. These will give us a clear view of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches in general, and of those holding the Westminster Standards in particular. The statistics we have been able to gather are as follows:

CHURCHES THAT HOLD THE WESTMINSTER SYMBOLS.

THE UNITED KINGDOM.

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
1. Presbyterian Church of England, . . .	339 . .	68,997
2. Church of Scotland in England,	14 . .	3,552
3. Presbyterian Church in Ireland,	656 . .	104,838
4. Reformed Presbyter'n Church in Ireland,	29 . .	4,085
5. Eastern Reformed Pres. Ch. in Ireland, . . .		. . .
6. Secession Church of Ireland,	7 . .	1,230
7. Church of Scotland,	1,608 . .	620,376
8. Free Church of Scotland,	1,165 . .	344,273
9. United Presbyterian Church of Scotland,	610 . .	190,950
10. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland,	8 . .	1,176
11. United Original Secession Ch. [Scotland],	21 . .	3,837
	4,457	1,343,314

NORTH AMERICA.

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
1. Presbyterian Church in Canada, . . .	1,077	188,180
2. Canada Synod of Church of Scotland, . .	6	1,134
3. Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., . .	6,797	1,070,246
4. Presbyterian Church in the U. S., . . .	1,349	210,539
5. Associate Ref'd Pres. Ch. of the South, .	87	10,640
6. Associate Ref'd Pres. Ch. N. America, . .		
7. Gen'l Synod Ref'd Pres. Ch. America, . .	35	6,000
8. Synod Ref'd Pres. Church in America, . .	109	11,272
	9,460	1,498,011

SOUTH AMERICA AND WEST INDIES.

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
1. Presbyterian Church of Brazil, . . .	31	44,000
2. Presbytery of Trinidad,	10	745
3. Presbytery of British Guiana,		
4. Presbyterian Church of Jamaica,	29	10,981
	70	55,726

AUSTRALASIA.

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
1. Pres. Church of Eastern Australasia, . .	6	270
2. Pres. Church of New South Wales, . .	159	10,447
3. Pres. Church of South Australia, . . .	17	1,430
4. Presbyterian Church of Victoria, . . .	226	22,873
5. Presbyterian Church of Queensland, . .	42	5,000
6. Presbyterian Church of Tasmania, . . .	70	1,500
7. Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, .	84	8,902
8. Presbyterian Ch. Otago and Southland, .	84	13,302
9. Mission Synod of New Hebrides,	20	
	708	63,724

MISCELLANEOUS.

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
1. Evangelical Church in Italy,	18	1,449
2. Independent Presbyteries in China, . . .		
3. Presbyterian Church of Manchuria, . . .	19	2,000
4. Presbyterian Church of Korea,		156
5. Presbytery of South Formosa,		1,257
6. Presbytery of Ceylon,	5	1,120
Carried forward,	42	5,982

CHURCHES HOLDING WESTMINSTER SYMBOLS. 173

	MINISTERS.	MEMBERS.
Brought forward,	42 . .	5,982
7. Presby's of Ch. of Scotland in Africa,		
8. Presby's of Free Ch. of Scotland in Africa,		
9. Pres'y United Pres. Ch. of Scot. in Af'ca,		
	42	5,982
TOTAL,	14,737	2,966,757

Number of churches that hold Westminster Symbols, . . . 41

The Reformers in the first part of the sixteenth century were called Protestants, taking the name from a protest which they entered against the famous edict passed at the diet of Spires, A. D. 1529. Later an irreconcilable difference emerged between Luther and Zwingli, who led the Reformation in Switzerland. This was principally in regard to the Lord's supper and the extent of God's sovereignty, but resulted in the permanent division of the Protestants, to be known henceforward as Lutheran and Reformed. Notwithstanding both are Reformed, still the terms have received a historical setting, and for convenience are used to designate the two great divisions of the Protestant church. Our topic will lead us to speak only of the Reformed Church or churches.

To get the sweep of our field it is necessary to indulge a little further in statistics, the dry bones of history.

Besides the churches in the United States that adopt the Westminster Standards there are other large and influential churches that accept these Standards as the basis of their church doctrine. Of these may be mentioned the United Presbyterian Church of North America, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Reformed (D.) Church in America, the Reformed (G.) Church in the United States of America, the Synod of the Reformed

Presbyterian Church in America, General Synod Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist or Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Christian Reformed Church in America. The membership of these churches aggregate more than 650,000. It is estimated that the adherents of the Presbyterian and Reformed churches in the world number 25,000,000. In Europe they are distributed as follows: Bohemia, 70,000; France, 800,000; Germany, 3,000,000; Holland, 2,500,000; Hungary, 2,000,000; Switzerland, 1,700,000; other countries (in Europe), 250,000; Africa, 400,000; Asia, 300,000; Australia, 200,000; South America, 30,000.¹

While the Reformation movements in Germany and Switzerland were contemporaneous, yet they were independent of each other. Luther was born in 1483; Zwingli in 1484. Luther put a stop to Tetzel's selling indulgences in Wittenberg by nailing his ninety-five theses on the church door in 1517. Zwingli drove Sampson, the indulgence seller, from Zurich in 1518. The movements in their beginnings were almost simultaneous, the occasion the same, each was headed by a single leader, the evils and wrongs of the papacy protested against by both the same, and yet the lines of development diverge and end in organizations as widely different as are the Lutheran and Reformed churches. May not the free government and mountains of Switzerland, in contrast with the monarchy and despotic Charles of Germany, have had some influence in shaping what is distinctive in the two churches?

Let us look more narrowly at the principal Reformed creeds. They number more than thirty. The three most widely accepted are the Heidelberg Catechism, the

¹See *Presbyterian Hand-Book*, 1897.

Thirty-nine Articles, and the Westminster Standards. Next to these are the Helvetic Confession and the canons of the Synod of Dort.

The Reformed Confessions may be classified as Zwinglian and Calvinistic. As to nativity they may be designated as Swiss, German, French, Dutch, English, and Scotch. To the Swiss family belong the Confessions of Zurich, Basel, Berne, and Geneva; to the German family belong the Heidelberg Catechism, the Tetrapolitan, Brandenburg, and Anhalt Confessions; to France and the Netherlands belong the French and the Belgic Confessions, the canons of the Synod of Dort, and the Arminian Articles; to the English family belong the Thirty-nine Articles, the Scotch Confessions, and the Westminster Standards. Besides these there are others of less importance that originated in Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary.

Since we trace back the pedigree of the Reformed families to Switzerland, we may note the growth from that point. Zwingli wrote four theological works, which were symbolical in character. The first in 1523, which consisted of sixty-seven articles. These, like Luther's theses, were intended for public disputation. These articles exalt the headship of Christ, the supremacy of the Scriptures, and present the way of salvation freed from the accretions of popery. His second work was the Ten theses of Berne, issued in 1526. In this, again, is emphasized the headship of Christ in the church, the supremacy of the Scriptures as the standard of final appeal, and Christ the only way of salvation; at the same time are denounced masses for the dead, and other unscriptural doctrines of the Romish church. The third is a Confession of Faith addressed to the Emperor Charles V. in 1530. The fourth, an exposition of the Christian faith addressed to Francis I. in 1531.

The author of the *Confession of Basel* was Æcolampadius. This was written in 1531, and makes the Scriptures the standard of final appeal.

The second *Helvetic Confession* is the first of the Reformed churches of national authority. Bullinger was its author. It appeared at Zurich in 1566, and was Zwinglian in its tone. It consists of thirty chapters, and in its wide sweep covers the whole field of controversy between the Reformers and the Romanists. It is at the same time a witness and a protest. It makes a wide discrimination between the authority of the Scriptures and that of the fathers, councils and traditions. It places the crown upon the Saviour's brow.

The *Catechism of Geneva*, revised and enlarged by Calvin, appeared in 1541, and was translated at different times into Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, German, Dutch, Hungarian, Greek and Hebrew. Of the contents of this creed it is unnecessary to remark.

Of France and the Netherlands there are three important Confessions. The most important is the Gallican, published in 1559, the work of John Calvin, and is a summary of the doctrines of grace as grasped by his great mind.

Belgium is historic ground, hallowed by martyrs' blood. It may claim the honor of having furnished the first martyrs of evangelical Protestantism. Into this fair land Philip II. of Spain sent his butcher, the Duke of Alva, with 10,000 men to extirpate heretics. After prosecuting for six years his bloody work he made the infamous boast that besides the multitudes slain in battle and massacred after the victory, he had consigned to the executioner 18,000 victims. The Confession of this people is known as the Belgic, and it was to exterminate the noble confessors of it that Philip turned loose 10,000

Spanish blood-hounds. The author of this Confession was the martyr Guido De Bres, and its date 1561.

The Synod of Dort, with representatives from England, Scotland and Germany, met in 1618. This Synod adopted canons under five heads of doctrine, which embraced the Calvinistic system. The oldest Confession of the Reformed Church in Germany attempts to mediate between Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. It gives no uncertain sound, however, as to the supremacy of the Scriptures and the doctrine of justification by faith. It was adopted in 1530.

The Heidelberg Catechism ranks with the best of the Reformed symbols. It is claimed to excel all others in catholicity; this, probably, is owing to the fact that it presents less jaggedly the angular points of Calvinism. Its principal author was Ursinus, in 1563.

There were three Confessions of Brandenburg, the central province of Prussia, the latest dating 1645. There were many other creeds adopted in Germany, of less importance and less general in their use.

The Thirty-nine Articles, or the Elizabethan Creed, as they are called, were perfected and published in 1563. The Irish Articles were framed in 1615, while the Scotch Confessions bring us up to 1643. All these Confessions which we have noticed antedate the Assembly that adopted the Westminster Standards.

I have been thus specific in enumerating these Confessions and attaching their dates in order that we may not be unmindful of our indebtedness to those who formulated them, and sometimes sealed their testimony with martyr-blood. While appreciating and honoring that venerable body of great and good men that left to the church such an admirable formulation of scriptural doctrine, let us not forget those whose sweat, and prayers, and blood

prepared the ground and furnished so much of the material. From the day that Luther nailed his theses upon the door of the old church in Wittenberg until the meeting of the Assembly of illustrious divines in Westminster, one hundred and thirty years, no brighter galaxy of names can be found in ecclesiastical history than those that illumine, and adorn these pages. They had to attack the enemy in fortifications built and strengthened by the ages. Crowned and sceptred monarchs with armies to do their bidding, and popes clothed with power to interdict and to anathematize, occupied the ground. The civil and ecclesiastical powers had been struggling for centuries for the mastery. And while this contest was waging, civil and religious liberty was ground between the upper and nether millstones. And when the Reformers appeared on the scene, as of old when for the accomplishment of a given purpose the Pharisees and Sadducees and the Herodians combined, so in this case kings and emperors and cardinals and popes united their forces. And not since the days of Nero and Diocletian has this old crazy world witnessed such persecutions and wholesale massacres. And thus the conflict went on, while the enemy never fell back but an inch at a time, and the Reformers gained only an inch at a time, and that at the price of blood, and these creeds that have been mentioned garnered up what was so dearly won.

There is a remarkable agreement among these Confessions in exalting God's sovereignty in matters of salvation, Christ's headship in the church, the Scriptures the standard of final appeal, and the sovereignty, under God, of the individual conscience. These were the great cardinal truths at issue between the Reformers on the one side, and Romanists and Erastians on the other; and in,

these creeds they formulated all that is vital to the doctrines of the Reformed churches. Those who came later fell heir to all that had been achieved before. When the Westminster Assembly of divines met they were in possession of all these symbols which embodied the results of the sixteenth century and first half of the seventeenth. Not only this, they were in possession of the Apostolic, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. Not only this, they had the advantage of all that was involved in that undercurrent of reform and noble protest that ran through much of the Dark Ages. Wycliffe is called the morning star of the Reformation. That star glimmered on the horizon two hundred years before the ring of Luther's hammer was heard in Wittenberg, and was the harbinger of a galaxy of stars soon to throw their light athwart the darkness of papal night. In this toil and suffering and patient waiting, I find, in some respects, an analogy in the building of the ancient temple. I hear the patient pick in a thousand quarries, and the ring of the axe on a hundred slopes of Lebanon. I see them bringing down the polished stones and dressed cedar, and loading them on rafts along the Mediterranean coast. These I follow until landed at a point opposite to Jerusalem. Here starts a line of toilers stretching from the sea across to Mount Moriah, conveying the materials, and delivering them to the builders, under whose magic skill rises the beautiful temple of Solomon, so long to resound with the music of worship. And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building. Those who laid the stones and adjusted the timbers, however skillfully they did it, were not entitled to all the glory of that temple. So those who formu-

lated the Westminster Symbols, however wisely they did it, must divide the honors with the centuries. They did their work well, but most of the material used was made ready before it was brought thither.

Some of the Reformed churches hold to the system of doctrine that is taught in the Westminster Standards, but reject the church polity of the Standards; others hold to the polity, but reject some of the doctrines. Of these we have examples in our own country. The Cumberland Church is strictly Presbyterian in polity, while it mars and mutilates the Westminster system of doctrine. Its theology is neither Calvinistic nor Arminian, but a mixture of both. It is like the image that was part of iron and part of clay. The Baptist Church, so far as it formally accepts a creed, receives the theology of the Westminster Standards, except as to one of the sacraments, but the polity of the Baptist Church is congregational. The historical position of the Church of England is quite peculiar if not anomalous. While recognized as belonging to the Reformed family, yet it is sometimes spoken of as the half-way house between Rome and Geneva, or between Romanism and Protestantism. To say the least, the Anglican church is a compromise; and it is difficult, looked at from a human standpoint, to see how, under the circumstances, it could have been otherwise. The throne of England during the sixteenth century was occupied by Henry VIII. and his children. Henry was a Roman Catholic, but England was too small for him and the Pope. Henry cared but little for the church, but he was determined to be monarch, and, therefore, aided the Reformation in resisting the claim of the Romish church to exercise civil power. Edward, who succeeded his father, was favorable to the Reformation. Mary, who succeeded Edward, was a Roman

Catholic of the Spanish type; she was followed by Elizabeth, who had the iron will of her father, yet the subjects in her realm being as they were, her Parliament as it was, the international relations of the kingdom as they were, it is difficult to see how she could have acted differently without endangering her throne and plunging Europe into a bloody war. The outcome was that a Calvinistic creed and a semi-Romish polity and worship were adopted for the Anglican church. The position of the Anglican church is that of an unstable equilibrium. Hence, the tendency is towards Rome, or to recede, as is evidenced by high church and low church.

What is known as the orthodox Congregational Church combines Calvinistic theology with Congregational polity. The term "Reformed," as it is used in this country, is applied to Calvinistic divisions of Protestants of British origin. The principal of these who do not adopt the Westminster symbols are the United Presbyterian Church of North America, the Reformed Church in America, and the Reformed Church in the United States. The United Presbyterian Church of North America is the result of an union of the Associate with the Associate Reformed, which was itself the product of the union of the Reformed and Associate churches. The Reformed Church in America is one of the oldest denominations in our country. It was planted by the settlers in New Amsterdam N. Y. as early as 1628. Its courts include the classes, the particular synod, and the general synod. Its principal symbol is the Heidelberg Catechism. The Reformed Church in the United States was formed in 1747, of exiles from the Palatinate. The theological school at Mercersburg belongs to this denomination. While the theology is Calvinistic, it is not of a rigid type. The form of worship may be described as litur-

gical. These are the principal Reformed churches in North America.

In the sixth General Council of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System, held at Glasgow in 1896, there were eighty-six represented; of these, thirty-six adopt the Westminster Standards.

Time will not allow any more minute consideration of their points of contact and contrast, nor of their present relations. I close this paper with some reflections as to their outlook.

The centuries are behind us, but the millenniums are before us. Much has been gained on the battle-grounds of the past. The cycles of history, as they have rolled on, swept away environments that hampered development and checked progress. From the announcement of the protevangelium until the song of annunciation rang out over Judæan hills, every cycle of the history widened out the horizon and projected in clearer outline on brighter skies the scheme of redeeming love. The introduction of the gospel was a transition from Jewish legalism to free grace.

The Reformation broke the iron grasp of the papacy and imposed restrictions upon the sceptre of emperors and kings. Much was gained in rescuing the church from ecclesiastical bondage and civil domination. It was a signal epoch in asserting the spirituality of the church and vindicating the crown rights of our Lord. And it was a preparation for the mitigation of the barbarities of intolerance.

The Reformed churches have a grand mission to perform for this poor, sin-cursed world. Her theology equips her for it. The scheme of mercy starts from God and reaches down to earth. The system of theology of

the Reformed churches heads in and starts from the sovereignty of God, and, reaching down, wakes a response in the cry of helplessness. The Reformed churches have always emphasized the preaching of the word. This is in accord with the divine plan, for it pleased God to save men by preaching, and the parting words of the Master are, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," coupled with the promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

As brightening the outlook, I remark further that these churches in recent times seem to have a growing realization of the obligation and the glory of being co-workers with the Godhead in the consummation of the crowning work of the Trinity, when the person that paid the price shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

Note further the territorial extent of these churches. They girdle the world. They are planted in papal and pagan lands. Their torches are blazing on all the coast-lines and sending their beams across the continents of darkness.

Some see discouragement in these divisions among the Reformed churches, but division is far better than petrifaction and corruption in unity. Our flag is the same, our marching-orders the same, the conquest aimed at in all the campaigns the same. This is no day for faint-heartedness among God's people. The voice of prophecy and of history emphasizes the great commission delivered by the Master when he took his departure from earth, and imparts significance to the promise of his speedy return. When the loving and earnest cry shall go up from all along the lines, "*Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,*" then may be heard breaking from the cleft sky the response, "Lo, I come." I am no enthusiast, but the Lord is coming in power, love and grace, and he

will come as soon as the church decks herself to meet him.

In conclusion, in this outlook I do not overlook that other grand division of the Protestant church. We would not if we could, and we could not if we would, forget that grand old man that towers in history, who threw down the gauntlet and joined issue with mitred popes and cardinals and the crowned heads of Europe. The nailing of the theses on the door of the old church at Wittenberg, October 31, 1517, drew a line across the track of history as ineffaceable as did the Noachian flood. The Reformed churches can never forget the Diet of Worms, where Martin Luther closed his memorable speech with the words, "*Here I stand; I can do naught else. God help me. Amen.*" The Reformed churches are not alone. The bugle blast is heard in other camps summoning to the conflict. It may be that the clouds that are scurrying across the political sky of Europe portend the coming of a storm that is to shake, not the earth only, but also heaven, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. When that time comes, Reformed, and Lutheran, and Methodist, too, will link shields. And when the conflict is over, all will come and pile their trophies at the feet of Jesus and crown him Lord of all.