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

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The Salvation of the Rich Man.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jehovah Reigns.

Jehovah reigns, let not His chosen fear;
His strong right arm hath not been shorn of might;
Walk bravely, and yet humbly, in the light,
And His directing will become more clear.
Let not a cloud upon your brow appear,
Though there should be confusion in the state,
Though malice join her hand with bitter hate,
God is supreme—be this your hope and cheer.
The darkest clouds that overhang the sky
Will pass away, revealing clearest blue.
He will untwist the intertangled skein,
The future will unfold Heaven's strategy
And give to all events proportions due;
Trust Him, ye fearful ones, God is serene.

—The Presbyterian Review.

Is it Restatement that We Need?

By Professor B. B. Warfield D.D., LL.D.

One of the least engaging features of the present movement for the revision of our creed is the lightness of heart—we had almost said, the levity of mind—with which many appear to enter into it. There are some who seem to think of a change of creed with about the same seriousness with which they would think of changing their cravat. This is, of course, exceptional, even in these times of doctrinal indifference and apathy. But we can hardly escape a doubt whether the seriousness of undertaking "to consider the whole matter of the restatement of the doctrines most surely believed among us," is fully realized as yet in all quarters. The inconsiderateness (we use the word primarily in its etymological sense,) of the General Assembly in precipitating, with so little justification, such an agitation on the Church, has its intimate connection, of course, both as effect and as cause, with the widely spread lack of concern that reigns among us relatively to our doctrinal possessions. Think of the supreme court of a great Church of a million members, on the call of a few discordant voices, and with practically no discussion on its own floor, setting the entire Church to "considering the whole matter of the restatement of the doctrines most surely believed among us!" It is an action, unfortunately, in spirit not altogether without parallel in the later proceedings of our General Assembly; and it is becoming a question whether any greater menace now threatens the Presbyterian Church than the apparently growing, (and certainly already much overgrown) reluctance of the Assembly to deal with adequate care and faithfulness with the great problems of purity of doctrine which constitute one of its primary cares in its oversight of the churches. However it has come to us, however, the Church is now face to face with an order from the supreme court "to consider the whole matter of a restatement of the doctrines most surely believed among us." And it is devoutly to be hoped that the seriousness that has been conspicuously lacking in the first stages of the movement may be supplied in its later progress.

Picturing to ourselves a body of Presbyterians gathered together—say in Presbytery—to respond to the requisition of the Assembly in an earnest and thoughtful spirit,—Presbyterians not in name only, but in deed; not merely by heredity and tradition, much less merely by convenience or accident, but by intelligent conviction

and hearty faith,—we think it should not be difficult to forecast the lines of their thought or the substance of their reply. What they would say to themselves, would run, we feel assured, on some such lines as the following.

1. We desire to retain our sound, clear, distinct and full Calvinistic confession. This, not because of party-spirit or tenacious clinging to traditional forms; but because we clearly perceive that what men call Calvinism is just the pure truth of God, and we would fain, having once attained to the pure truth of God, continue to bear our witness to it in the midst of an unbelieving or half-believing world. We are assured that what is known as Calvinism is simply the theological embodiment of religion in its purity; and we observe that, in the whole history of Christianity, whenever religious feeling has become profound and religious thinking has soared high, it has ever been to the free might of divine grace that men have turned, and the result has been a revival not only of subjective religion but of doctrinal Calvinism. In particular we are assured that that great religious revival which men call the Reformation was, on its theological side, nothing but a great revival of Augustinianism, so that the doctrine of Predestination was in very truth the hinge of the Reformation movement, and must ever remain the support of all that was gained by it. In the midst of the defections from this lofty religious altitude, begun early in the Lutheran Churches and spread now everywhere also in the Reformed Churches, we conceive it to be our chief privilege as Presbyterians to bear our constant witness to the pure truth of God, and thus, in God's grace, to do our part to preserve the savor of the salt which keeps the whole world sweet. We therefore most energetically overture the General Assembly to permit no inroads to be made upon the pure, strong and distinct expression of Calvinism in our Confession, and especially to keep the doctrine of the Divine Predestination—which is but the theological side of the doctrine of sinful man's entire dependance on God for all that is good—safe from all attempts to break its force or to lessen the clearness of its statement.

2. Because it is to the truth of God (known among men as Calvinism) that we wish to subscribe, rather than to any particular form of human words in which this truth is embodied, we desire to continue our subscription to our Confession of Faith in the form in use heretofore, by which we "sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith," not for its ipsissima verba, but "as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." Thus we think we avoid too loose a subscription, which would bind us only to some evanescent thing called vaguely "the substance of doctrine," or what not; and equally too strict a subscription, which would bind us not only to the system of doctrine, but also to the precise forms in which it may chance to be stated. By subscribing the Confession for the system of doctrine contained in it, we bind ourselves strictly to the system while retaining an attitude of freedom with regard to the mere forms in which it is expressed. This we think the ideal subscription—inasmuch as it throws the emphasis on the matter rather than the form, and on what is essential in the matter in order to the preservation of its consistency and force as

as a whole, rather than either on all its details irrespective of their relative importance, or on some one or other element in it assumed arbitrarily to be particularly important, or assigned that rank according to some unnamed and perhaps varying standard. We therefore strenuously protest against any attempt to alter our relation to the Confession, either by direct change in the terms of our acceptance of it, or by indirection through setting forth so-called Declaratory or Explanatory Statements. These may have their place in Churches bound to an extended creed for "its whole doctrine," but they are essentially out of place in a Church which accepts its creed only for the system of doctrine contained in it. The declaration that we so accept it, is our sufficient Declaratory Statement; and it covers not specified portions of the Confession merely, but its whole fabric. Further Declaratory Statements must needs err, either by explaining away essential elements in the very system of doctrine for which we accept the document, and thus destroying, by inevitable inference, the whole system of which these are logically necessary parts—in which case they stultify our subscription altogether; or else by calling unnecessary attention to and laying undue stress on mere forms of statement to which we are not bound by the very terms of our subscription. We overture the Assembly therefore to preserve to us our present admirable relation to the Confession, which secures it to us as a statement of the system we all believe, and releases us from obligation to its mere forms of words.

3. Holding this reasonable relation to our Confession—a relation that binds us to the system of truth given expression in it, in contradistinction to its language or its mere forms of statement—we deprecate a prolonged agitation in the Church for alteration in the mere language or forms of statement of the Confession. If in the changes advocated there is indeed no alteration wrought in the system of doctrine set forth in the Confession, these changes are entirely unnecessary as a relief to subscription; ex hypothesi, the same system would remain expressed after as before the changes were introduced, and it is to the system only that we subscribe. In that case, agitation for the changes has the unfortunate effect of tending to withdraw attention from the great fact—the system—and to focus it on the unimportant matter of the mere forms of statement; and thus undue place is given in our minds to the more insignificant elements of the Confession. The result is that a spirit of petty and belittling criticism is apt to spring up, and we are likely to lose our proper attitude towards a document which is second to none through which any section of the Church of God has professed the faith of the Gospel, whether in general tone or in the manner in which it deals with the details of doctrine. It is, of course, possible that the changes advocated may cut deeper and affect something more than these insignificant elements; and on that ground may claim our attention as really important. But in that case they must needs infringe upon the integrity of the system. And if they infringe upon the integrity of the system, they must needs revolutionize our whole doctrinal testimony, and should be rejected out of hand by every consistent Calvinist.

4. We do not, however, esteem so ill of the Confession

of Faith, around which this great Church has been built up, as to think that even its forms of statement are ill-chosen and easily bettered. On the contrary, we very greatly admire this Confession for the appropriateness and beauty of its language, the clearness, force and restraint of its definitions, and the fine excellence of its whole form; and we would greatly deprecate any attempt unnecessarily to mar its stately and pellucidly plain forms of words. We would fain also learn a lesson here from the history of a former agitation for revision, which has so lately run its course in the Church, and the failure of which seems to us distinctly traceable to its intrinsic defects, due, no doubt, in part to the difficulty of the task it had essayed, rather than to the extraneous causes which co-operated in bringing it to a close. This lesson, at least, seems to be written all over the previous attempt:—that it is no easy matter to improve on the forms of sound words in which the doctrines brought to expression in the Confession are couched. On any careful scrutiny, the amendments proposed on this former occasion will be perceived to add nothing of value to the Confession as it stands, but rather, taken as a whole, distinctly to injure its clearness, force, symmetry and even comprehensiveness. Where the Confession had set forth a generously broad and generic Calvinism, they introduced sharply drawn party statements, and so sought to narrow the area within which private opinion was allowed. Where the Confession had restrained itself to the clear warrant of the Word, they pressed boldly beyond what was written, and so sought to introduce into the Confession the private speculations of men. Where the Confession had, with faithful clearness, though also with careful prudence, enunciated truths unpalatable to the natural heart, they curtailed and obscured its plain statements, and so tended to lower its testimony to important truth which, just because spoken against, especially claimed our witness-bearing. Where the Confession had disposed its material with wise regard to symmetry of statement, and the relative importance of the truths stated, they introduced unnecessary repetitions in weakened form, and so tended to confuse the order and destroy the effect of the document as a whole. We earnestly overture the Assembly not to permit the Church to be further troubled by a revival of this effort to mar our noble Confession to so little purpose and with so little prospective substantial gain.

5. It is strongly borne in upon us as we consider the Confession itself on the one hand, and the agitations for its revision with which the Church has been of late years vexed on the other, that the study of the Confession itself, and of the Reformed theology of which it is so admirable an expression, has hardly been prosecuted in the Church of late with that energy which one would like to see exhibited in a great witnessing Church. Ours is, no doubt, an age of action rather than of thought; and moreover the literature that is brought most copiously to our desks to-day unfortunately does not bear the mint-mark of the Reformed system. It will not seem strange, therefore, if in the multiform activities of the day, and under the impact of a literature hostile to our Confession, there has been a drift away from that interested study of our doctrinal system and its Confessional statement which alone can keep our knowledge and appreciation of

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

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

The Confessional Crisis.—Part I.

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

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

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

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

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

The committee further reported unanimously:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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