

THE
Union Seminary
Magazine.

VOLUME XVI.

1904—1905.



RICHMOND, VIRGINIA :
UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.
1905.

**PRINTED BY
WHITTET & SHEPPERSON,
RICHMOND, VA.**

Period. 2006
v. 16
1904-05

ANDOVER-HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THE
Union Seminary Magazine

VOL. XVI. OCTOBER—NOVEMBER, 1904.

No. 1.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH AS REVISED
IN 1903.

BY BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D. D., LL. D.,
Princeton Theological Seminary.

THAT a revision of its Confession of Faith, on which it had been engaged for some years, was completed in 1903 by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, is, of course, a matter of universal knowledge. The exact nature of this revision does not seem, however, to be so universally understood. Attention has been vigorously directed to it again during the last few months by the part it has been made to play in the negotiations for union between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church; but it cannot be said that the public has been much enlightened by these negotiations. Some of the representations which have been made concerning the "Revised Confession" in the course of recent discussion have been, indeed, in the highest degree astonishing, not to say gravely misleading. The public mind appears in danger of being thrown into confusion about a matter simple enough in itself; and may acquire misapprehensions which, if permitted to take root, may prove hard subsequently to eradicate. It seems eminently desirable, therefore, that precisely what was effected by this revision should be exhibited in a plain and straightforward manner, from which even he who runs may gather enough to preserve himself from at least further misunderstanding.

We have said "what was effected," not "what was undertaken." This is not because we suppose these two questions would be answered very differently, but because we wish to confine ourselves for the moment to the matter of immediate practical importance. We do not purpose at present to trace

out a piece of interesting history, instructive as that would be; but merely to exhibit the present condition of things—which is, after all, the matter of immediate concern. And we have used the word “exhibit,” rather than “explain,” because our purpose is not so much to set forth our own views of the “Revision of 1903,” as to bring the Revised Confession itself as clearly as possible before the reader’s mind, that he may see for himself what its revision has effected. Of course we are not disclaiming the office of interpreter. It is rather this office that we would fain assume, and that in its purity; for it is precisely the function of the interpreter to exhibit the meaning of his text in its integrity. We are simply renouncing for the moment every other duty but that of interpretation; and, leaving history and criticism alike to one side, confining ourselves to the establishment of the actual sense of the Revised Confession as it lies before us.

Scientific procedure in ascertaining the character of the Revised Confession coincides perfectly with the common-sense procedure of simply taking the Revised Confession up and reading it through consecutively, drawing out all its teaching in an orderly manner, and estimating it in its own light as a whole. The Revised Confession has just as much right to demand that it be read as a consecutive and consistent whole—part explanatory of part and the whole the resultant of all its parts—as has any other document. To it, as a constitutional paper in a given church, it is entirely immaterial whence its several parts have been derived, or in what debates they may have been beaten out. As they stand in the document, they form parts of its whole, affecting all the other parts and affected by them; and they must be dealt with accordingly. It follows, of course, that the meaning of no single clause of the Revised Confession can be determined in isolation, and that no one of its doctrines can be properly defined save as drawn out, in balanced form, from the entire document. And it is obvious that this applies just as truly to passages newly inserted into the Confession as to portions which have been constituent parts of it from the beginning.

The readers whom we are at present addressing may be thought to be sufficiently familiar with the unrevised Confession, however, to justify indulgence in a mode of procedure

which would not otherwise be without its dangers. Instead of drawing out the teaching of "The Confession as Revised in 1903" as a whole, and then comparing this entire result with the teaching of the unrevised Confession, marking whatever differences emerge—which would be the scientific method of determining the difference between the two documents—we may permit ourselves here another method, less scientifically exact, no doubt, but more conducive to the comfort of the reader and sufficiently safe in the circumstances. We may begin rather with what has been called the "revision material," and seek to ascertain what each item of it has brought to the Confession, and then afterwards inquire what the effect of the whole mass of it is upon the teaching of the Confession into which it has been inserted.

This "revision material," from a purely formal point of view, parts into three classes: some of it makes alterations in the text of the Confession; some of it makes additions to the text of the Confession; some of it makes explanations of the text of the Confession. This purely formal division of it, naturally, carries us but a very little way into our problem, which is to determine the material effect of its insertion into the Confession. It will supply, nevertheless, a clear and useful order of treatment for the several portions of the material. Accordingly we shall take up these three portions in the order of their formal importance—first the material which merely explains the text; next that which adds to the text; and finally that which alters the text, substituting itself for greater or lesser portions of it. To the first of these classes belongs the "Declaratory Statement"; to the second, the two new chapters, entitled "Of the Holy Spirit" and "Of the Love of God, and Missions," together with which we may class, perhaps (materially if not formally), the final clause of the "Declaratory Statement"; to the last, the alterations which have been made in three sections of the Confession—XVI. vii., XXII. iii., XXV. vii. This is the whole mass of the "revision material."

THE "DECLARATORY STATEMENT."

The "Declaratory Statement," then, is not a "revision" of the text of the Confession, nor an "addition" to the text of the Confession; it is only an "explanation" of the text of the Confession. The text itself it leaves intact; and it not only leaves

the text intact, it reaffirms that text. What it sets itself to do, in fact, is to protect this text from false inferences and to strengthen it by explication. That this is the real state of the case will be apparent if we give attention to the terms of the Preamble by which the "Declaratory Statement" is introduced. This Preamble is as follows:

"While the ordination vow of ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, as set forth in the Form of Government, requires the reception and adoption of the Confession of Faith only as containing the System of Doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, nevertheless, seeing that the desire has been formally expressed for a disavowal by the Church of certain inferences drawn from statements in the Confession of Faith, and also for a declaration of certain aspects of revealed truth which appear at the present time to call for more explicit statement, therefore the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does authoritatively declare as follows."

It will be observed that the Preamble confines the "Declaratory Statement" to two things: (1) "a disavowal of certain inferences drawn from statements in the Confession of Faith"; and (2) "a declaration of certain aspects of revealed truth which appear at the present time to call for more explicit statement." All the "Declaratory Statement" does is ranged under these two categories. Now, the disavowal specifically of "certain inferences drawn from statements in the Confession" imports the retention of these statements. It is not the "statements" that are disavowed, but "certain inferences drawn from them." The disavowal of inferences is a protective measure designed to defend the statements themselves; and to defend statements is the precise contrary of disavowal of them. The "statements in the Confession of Faith," with which this "Declaratory Statement" deals, are, therefore, so far from being repudiated, that they are reaffirmed by it. Again, to speak of making a "more explicit statement" of "certain aspects of revealed truth," is to say that what already stands stated is "truth," and specifically "revealed truth"; and to imply that even the aspects of this revealed truth which it is now proposed to emphasize are already present in the existing statements implicitly at least, if not only somewhat less explicitly than it now seems desirable to state them. The fuller explication of certain aspects of statements is the very opposite of disavowal of these statements: it is, again, their reaffirmation.

It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the "Declaratory Statement" is as far as possible from antagonizing the passages of the Confession with which it deals. It does not even propose to state truths not already discoverable, in one way or another, in those passages; much less to state truths in any way contradictory to or inconsistent with anything found in those passages. What it proposes is summed up absolutely in these two things: to protect more carefully the Confessional statements against "certain inferences" sometimes drawn from them to their disadvantage; and to develop more fully in certain directions the truths contained in the Confessional statements. The passages with which the "Declaratory Statement" deals, now, are specifically the Third Chapter, *Of God's Eternal Decree*, and the Third Section of the Tenth Chapter, which sets forth the method of the salvation of infants, dying such. The "Declaratory Statement," therefore, reaffirms the Confessional doctrines of the Decree of God, and of the method of the Salvation of Infants, dying such; and undertakes to guard these doctrines from false inferences, affirmed to be sometimes drawn from them, and to explicate them in some of their aspects supposed to be less fully stated in the Confession than seems now desirable. Let us see how it does these things.

The Declaration as to the Decree of God.

The first section of the "Declaratory Statement" has reference to the Third Chapter of the Confession, and to the doctrine of God's Eternal Decree therein taught. Its end, according to the Preamble, is to guard this doctrine from certain false inferences, sometimes drawn from it as stated in the Confession, and to explicate it more fully than is done in the Confession in certain of its aspects. It runs as follows:

"The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does authoritatively declare as follows:

"*First.* With reference to Chapter III. of the Confession of Faith: that concerning those who are saved in Christ, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of his love to all mankind, his gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and his readiness to bestow his saving grace on all who seek it. That concerning those who perish, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine that God desires not the

death of any sinner, but has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the Gospel to all; that men are fully responsible for their treatment of God's gracious offer; that his decree hinders no man from accepting that offer; and that no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin."

We observe that this declaration begins by very strongly emphasizing the reaffirmation of the doctrine of the Decree, which is already implied in the Preamble. "With reference to Chapter III. of the Confession of Faith," it declares that "the doctrine of God's eternal decree" therein taught—both "concerning those who are saved in Christ" and "concerning those who perish"—"is held." This doctrine it declares, we observe, "*is held.*" It is not repudiated; it is not modified; it is not qualified; it is not in any way weakened or diluted; it simply "*is held.*" Reaffirmation could not be more explicit.

The purpose of the Declaration is not exhausted, however, by this reaffirmation. Not only is the doctrine of the Decree as defined in the Third Chapter of the Confession "*held,*" but certain other doctrines, which are now enumerated, are held too; and the purpose of this Declaration is to assert the harmony of this one doctrine that is "*held*" with these other doctrines that are held along with it. The assertion is not, be it observed, that these doctrines, here enumerated, are held in despite of the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession, as some seem strangely to suppose. It is not even that the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession is held in despite of these other doctrines here enumerated, which are nevertheless recognized as also true. Much less is it that the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession is held so far only as it is—or may be thought by Tom, Dick or Harry to be—in harmony with these other doctrines now enumerated, though there seems to be an inclination in some quarters to attempt to impose such a sense on it. The assertion is not that the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter is out of harmony with the doctrines here enumerated, and therefore cannot be held, at least in its integrity, along with them, but must be modified to make room for them, if not wholly set aside that they may be held in its stead. On the contrary, the explicit assertion is that the doctrine of the Decree, as set forth in the

Third Chapter of the Confession of Faith, both can be and actually is "held" by the signatories of the Confession, in harmony with these other doctrines, and therefore needs no modification in order to make room for them. In one word, what we have here is the most emphatic assertion possible of the harmony of the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession of Faith with the doctrines here enumerated. The edge of the implied polemic is directed not against the Third Chapter of the Confession, or the doctrine there stated, but against all and every who suppose that the doctrine of God's Eternal Decree there stated is not, and cannot be, held in harmony with the doctrines here enumerated; or needs any modification whatever in order that the doctrines here enumerated may be held, or may come to their rights.

Now, what are the doctrines of which it is here declared that they are in harmony with the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession, and may usefully be published now to refute false inferences drawn from that doctrine, or to bring out more clearly some of its implications? They are enumerated in two sets. The one set is to protect from false inferences, and to bring out the implications of, the doctrine of the Decree in its relation to the saved: the other in its relation to the lost. In the first interest the following propositions are enumerated: (1) that God loves all mankind; (2) that he has given his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; (3) that he is ready to bestow his saving grace on all who seek it. In the second interest, it is declared: (4) that God desires not the death of any sinner; (5) that he has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the gospel to all; (6) that men are fully responsible for their treatment of God's gracious offer; (7) that his decree hinders no man from accepting that offer; (8) that no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin.

Here are eight doctrinal propositions, all of which are declared to be in harmony with the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession, and to be held by the signatories of the Confession in conjunction with that doctrine; enumerated here either to repudiate false inferences drawn from that doctrine as set forth in the Confession or to explicate more fully aspects of truth less fully brought to ex-

pression in the Confessional statement than may be now thought desirable. Obviously there is a polemic edge to the enumeration. Against whom is it turned? Of course, against those who deny that the doctrines here enumerated are harmonious with the Doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession. And that is to say, against Arminian objectors to the Doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession—the very essence of whose objections to that doctrine has ever been that it is inconsistent with the doctrinal propositions here enumerated, and is not and cannot be held in harmony with them. The first section of the “Declaratory Statement” appears, then, to be nothing other than a sharp repudiation of the ordinary Arminian assault on the doctrine of the Decree, as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession, and puts in a brief, assertory form the common Calvinistic response to this assault.

This will appear in the plainest light when we go on to observe, that as the assertion of the harmony of these propositions with the doctrine of the Decree is a commonplace of Calvinistic polemics, so every item of doctrine affirmed in these propositions is a commonplace of Calvinistic divinity. It cannot be necessary to pause to justify this remark to even the most inattentive reader of Calvinistic literature. It will suffice if we simply illustrate the matter by a series of cursory quotations from recognized Calvinistic divines, in which each of the eight propositions will be found to be clearly asserted in turn. We throw these quotations into small type to enable the reader who is familiar with Calvinistic thought commodiously to pass them over unread.

1. “The Heavenly Father loves the human race, and would not have them perish.”—*Calvin, on John iii. 16.*

“The Scriptures represent the redemption by Christ as . . . the fruit of God’s love to mankind.”—*Edwards, II. 462.*

“The Scriptures plainly teach that God exercises a love of benevolence towards all men.”—*Girardeau, Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism Compared, p. 275.*

2. “The Scriptures plainly teach that God so loved the whole world that he gave his only begotten Son to make expiation for the sins of the whole world.”—*Shedd Presbyterian and Reformed Review, I. 10.*

“Augustinians do not deny that Christ died for all men. . . . He died for all that . . . he might lay the foundation for the offer of

pardon and reconciliation with God on condition of faith and repentance. . . . This is what is meant when it is said, or implied, in Scripture that Christ gave himself as a propitiation, not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world."—*C. Hodge*, II. 561.

3. "Now, like as God is ready to bestow these benefits on all and every one, and that for Christ's sake, in case they believe; so Christ hath merited pardon of sinne and salvation for all and every one, in case they believe."—*Twisse, Riches, &c.*, p. 109.

"An all-sufficient Saviour has been held up before him, abundantly able to save all that were ever invited to come; a door of access has been opened to the throne of grace, so that he might have gone with boldness and sought for the mercy which he needed with the certain prospect of obtaining it."—*Thornwell*, II. 176.

4. "God delights in the conversion and eternal life of the sinner rather than in his perdition, because this is a thing . . . congruous with his own infinitely compassionate nature."—*Turretin*, IV. xvii. 33.

"According to the Scriptures communicating good to the creatures is what . . . God . . . delights in simply and ultimately. . . . Ezek. xviii. 32. . . . Ezek. xxxiii. 11."—*Edwards*, II. 242.

"The natural spontaneous desire of God towards all men . . . expressed in Ezek. xxxiii. 11, xviii. 32 . . . springs from the compassionate love of the Creator towards the soul & the creature."—*Shedd*, I. 452.

5. "Augustinianism teaches that a plan of salvation adapted to all men and adequate for the salvation of all is freely offered to the acceptance of all."—*C. Hodge*, II. 644.

"In the general offers of the Gospel, God exhibits a salvation sufficient for and exactly adapted to all, and sincerely offered to every one without exception."—*A. A. Hodge, Outlines*, 229.

"We hold it perfectly consistent with this truth, that the expiation of Christ for sin—expiation of infinite value and universal fitness—should be held forth to the whole world."—*Dabney*, 533.

6. "The Doctrine delivered in the Gospell is such, and so confirmed, as may justly make them inexcusable that doe not believe. . . . If a man had a will to obey and believe but he could not, in such a case it were unreasonable he should be punished. But in the case of disobedience unto God we speak of, all the fault is in the will, voluntarily and wilfully."—*Twisse, Riches, &c.*, 169, 170.

"The Gospel offer, combined with the positive command of God, renders the duty of believing imperative upon all, and therefore leaves every unbeliever utterly without excuse in the sight of God. . . . The apostle was clearly of the opinion that the absolute and sovereign predestination of God did not take away responsibility from man or remove the guilt of his transgressions."—*Thornwell*, II. 176, 181.

"Nothing but a sinful unwillingness can prevent any one who hears the Gospel from receiving and enjoying it."—*A. A. Hodge, Outlines*, 229.

7. "God commanding all to [who?] heare the Gospell to believe, doth not hinder them from believing, when they are willing to believe."—*Twisse, Riches, &c.*, 172.

"God makes no man an unbeliever. He commands and urges it upon all to believe, and debars none from the throne of grace."—*Thornwell*, II. 175.

"God, instead of hindering the sinner, is helping him."—*Shedd*, I. 454; *Cf. Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, I. 18.

"The decree of election puts no barrier before men preventing them from accepting the Gospel offer."—*A. A. Hodge, Outlines*, 229.

"His decree prevents no man from coming."—*Girardeau*, as cited, 369.

8. "For indeed, not any of our Divines was, I think, ever known to maintain that God did intend to damne any man but for sinna."—*Twisse, Riches, &c.*, 186. (See also pp. 8, 14, 34, 44, 46, 106, etc.)

"God ordains none to wrath or punishment except on account of their sin."—*Girardeau*, as cited, p. 188; *cf.* pp. 186, 227.

"Everywhere it is sin which excludes from his favor, and sin alone."—*Dabney*, 240.

The insertion of this section of the "Declaratory Statement" into the Confession, has, therefore, as its entire effect the reaffirmation of the doctrine of the Decree as expounded in the Third Chapter, together with the repudiation of certain well-known false inferences drawn from it by Arminian objectors; and the explicit assertion of its harmony with a series of precious truths with which these objectors have been accustomed to assert it to be inconsistent, but its consistency with which Calvinists have always strenuously asserted and solidly argued.

The Declaration as to Infant Salvation.

The second section of the "Declaratory Statement" has reference to the Third Section of the Tenth Chapter of the Confession, and to the explanation there given of how children dying in infancy are saved. Its end, in accordance with the Preamble, is either to protect this explanation from false inferences, or to explicate truths implied in it, or both. It runs as follows:

"The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does authoritatively declare as follows: . . .

"*Second.* With reference to Chapter X., Section 3, of the Confession of Faith, that it is not to be regarded as teaching that any who die in infancy are lost. We believe that all dying in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how he pleases."

The particular false inference which it has been most common for adversaries to draw from the statement in the Confession in question is that according to it some infants dying in infancy are lost, or at least that some such infants may be lost. The gist of the "Declaratory Statement" therefore, as we observe, is to repudiate this inference in precise terms.

With this simple repudiation of a current injurious inference the "Declaratory Statement" might very well have paused. The statement of the Confession of Faith that is dealt with has nothing to do with the question of how many of those that die in infancy are saved. It confines itself strictly to explaining in what manner infants dying such may be reached by God's saving mercy. To draw any inference whatever as to "how many" from this explanation of "how" is wholly illegitimate; and the "Declaratory Statement" might well have contented itself with saying so with crisp brevity. But it does not do this. After repelling the false inference that has been so frequently drawn from this statement of the Confession, it proceeds to enunciate a positive doctrine of the salvation of all that die in infancy. Possibly the framers of the "Declaratory Statement," in doing this, understood themselves to be only explicating an aspect of revealed truth already implicitly contained in the section of the Confession they were commenting upon. In that case, the assertion of this doctrine would have a legitimate place in a "Declaratory Statement" professing a function of explication as well as of protection with regard to the passages of the Confession with which it deals. For ourselves, we must, however, confess inability to share the view of the implication of Chapter X. 3, which would be involved in this. To us the Confessional statement in question appears to confine itself strictly to the way in which dying infants are saved, without any implication whatever as to the number of them that are saved. We must look upon the enunciation of the doctrine of the salvation of all infants dying such, therefore, as, in a strict ordering, out of place in this "Declaratory Statement."

But apart from this merely formal question of order, there is nothing that can be objected from the Confessional or the Calvinistic standpoint to the new doctrine that is here enunciated, or to the form in which it is stated. It is a doctrine to which the Calvinistic system (and, we may add, the Calvinistic

system alone) is logically altogether hospitable, and which has always been believed by some of the best of Calvinists, and for the last hundred years by practically all Calvinists. It is prudently and soundly expressed in this statement of it; and is placed in its right relations to the doctrines alike of birth-sin and birth-guilt, the sovereign election of God, and the purchase of redemption by Christ and its application by the Holy Spirit. Assuredly, therefore, there is nothing in this second section of the "Declaratory Statement" which in any way traverses any teaching or any statement of the Confession of Faith. On the contrary, it too, in essence and form alike, is a defence of the doctrine and the statement of the Confession against a current Arminian assault.

THE TWO NEW CHAPTERS.

The formulation, in the closing words of the "Declaratory Statement," of a new doctrine—the doctrine of the salvation of all that die in infancy—may lead us by an easy transition to the formally new material which has been added to the Confession. This is included in two new chapters, which are numbered XXXIV. and XXXV., and adjoined at the end of the Confession. They are entitled, respectively: "Of the Holy Spirit," and "Of the Love of God, and Missions." A brief Preamble introduces them, which runs as follows:

"Whereas, It is desirable to express more fully the doctrine of the church concerning the Holy Spirit, Missions, and the Love of God for all men, the following Chapters are added to the Confession of Faith."

According to this Preamble, it will be observed, the new chapters do not profess to offer a correction of anything already found in the Confession on the topics with which they deal, but merely an expansion of the doctrine already given expression in the Confession. To undertake to "express *more fully* the doctrine of the church," is to recognize that what already stands in the authoritative expression of the church's doctrine to which these chapters are to be added is true as far as it goes, and needs, not modification, but supplementing. That is to say, these chapters come before us as reaffirming the doctrinal statements of the Confession on the topics with which they deal, and proposing to extend them.

The Chapter "Of the Holy Spirit."

The former of the two new chapters is entitled "Of the Holy Spirit," and is divided into four sections, which run as follows:

"I. The Holy Spirit, the third person in the Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son, of the same substance and equal in power and glory, is, together with the Father and the Son, to be believed in, loved, obeyed, and worshipped throughout all ages.

"II. He is the Lord and Giver of life, everywhere present in nature, and is the source of all good thoughts, pure desires, and holy counsels in men. By him the prophets were moved to speak the Word of God, and all writers of the Holy Scriptures inspired to record infallibly the mind and will of God. The dispensation of the Gospel is especially committed to him. He prepares the way for it, accompanies it with his persuasive power, and urges its message upon the reason and conscience of men, so that they who reject its merciful offer are not only without excuse, but are also guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit.

"III. The Holy Spirit, whom the Father is ever willing to give to all who ask him, is the only efficient agent in the application of redemption. He convicts men of sin, moves them to repentance, regenerates them by his grace, and persuades and enables them to embrace Jesus Christ by faith. He unites all believers to Christ, dwells in them as their Comforter and Sanctifier, gives to them the spirit of Adoption and Prayer, and performs all those gracious offices by which they are sanctified and sealed unto the day of redemption.

"IV. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit all believers being vitally united to Christ, who is the Head, are thus united one to another in the church, which is his body. He calls and anoints ministers for their holy office, qualifies all other officers in the church for their special work, and imparts various gifts and graces to its members. He gives efficacy to the Word, and to the ordinances of the Gospel. By him the church will be preserved, increased until it shall cover the earth, purified, and at last made perfectly holy in the presence of God."

It will be observed that the several sections of the chapter follow each other logically and develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in an orderly sequence. The first sets forth the nature of the Holy Spirit in his relations to the Godhead and to the rational creation. The second sets forth his general activities—cosmical, ethical, inspirational, evangelical. The third advances to his specifically soteriological activities and summarizes his work in the salvation of individuals. The last expounds his activities in the church, by virtue of which the church is constituted, edified, propagated and perfected. The doctrine set forth in these several sections is the common doctrine of the

Calvinistic churches, and may be found expounded at length in the body of divinity of any standard Calvinistic divine. The chapter is in effect, therefore, a compact summary of the ordinary Calvinistic doctrine of the Holy Spirit and his work.

As this chapter essays to put into brief compass a complete doctrine "Of the Holy Spirit," it necessarily repeats many elements of that doctrine which are already given expression in the Confession; and whenever the Confession has developed any items of this doctrine with fulness, the repetition of them in this chapter is much compressed. The first section of the chapter, for example, merely repeats what the Confession has already said in the following passages:

"In the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power and eternity, . . . the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son" (II. 3). "Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and to him alone" (XXI. 2).

The third section is merely a very compressed summary of what the Confession has set forth in minute detail and with exceedingly rich development in that great series of chapters on the Application of Redemption, which constitutes its heart (Chaps. X.-XVIII.). This summary, certainly, evinces no great firmness or precision of touch. It fumbles a little alike with the conceptions it deals with and with the language in which it clothes them. But it is happily possible to tell the truth even with lisping tongue; and this section manages, even in its somewhat bungling way, to set forth, from the phenomenal or experiential point of sight, a very tolerable account of the progressive stages through which (in the Calvinistic view) a sinner passes as he is brought into the experience of salvation by the Holy Spirit, who is very properly described as "the only efficient agent in the application of redemption."

The several sentences of the fourth section likewise very largely repeat statements which have already found expression in the Confession. The following passages will illustrate this; they follow the order of the sentences in this section:

"All saints that are united to Jesus Christ the head, by his Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with him, . . . and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each others' gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and

outward man" (XXVI. 1). "The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (XXV. 1). "Unto this catholic visible church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, . . . and doth by his presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereto" (XXV. 3). "The grace of faith . . . is the work of the Spirit of Christ, . . . and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word: by which also, and by the administration of the sacraments, and prayer, it is increased and strengthened" (XIV. 1).

A certain effect of novelty is given to the restatement of the important truths contained in this section, however, by their marshalling in an orderly development of the doctrine of "the Holy Spirit in the Church"; and this is increased by the apparent absence from the Confession of any clause embodying, at least with the clearness and emphasis given it here, the inspiring truth enunciated in the last sentence. On the whole, then, this section may fairly be accounted a contribution towards the augmentation of the Confession with new doctrine. The doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church is stated in it comprehensively, and not without point. The doctrine of the church implicated is the common Reformed doctrine, and the statement here given homologates perfectly with the teaching of the Confession, whether in the main or in subsidiary points.

It is, however, in the second section that the really new matter of this chapter is presented. The second sentence of even this section, to be sure—which, moreover, is out of its logical place—is only a repetition of doctrine already set forth with fulness and emphasis in the First Chapter of the Confession. But the rest of the section is entirely new to the Confession, and gives a comprehensive statement of a great and distinctively Calvinistic doctrine not hitherto incorporated in detailed statement into the Confession—the doctrine, to wit, as it is currently designated by the systematizers, of "Common Grace." This important doctrine, first worked out by Calvin, passed from him into the systems of the Reformed divines in general, to be most richly developed in our own day by perhaps Dr. Charles Hodge¹

¹ Cf. Dabney, *Syllabus*, p. 577: "Dr. Hodge expounds with peculiar force and fulness the solemn fact that there is a 'common grace' of the Holy Ghost (which is not 'common sufficient grace')." "

and two Dutch theologians who have won the admiration and love of the whole Reformed world by their sturdy support of the Reformed theology in the untoward conditions of present-day Holland—Dr. Abraham Kuyper and Dr. Herman Bavinck.

Of course this distinctively Reformed doctrine was not unknown to the framers of the Confession. It may be found more or less fully expounded in their private writings, and is always adverted to by them with a high sense of its value.² It is even incidentally alluded to in the text of the Confession itself.³ But the framers of the Confession consecrated to it no separate section of their work, and indeed nowhere give it even incidental development. The incorporation of a statement of this doctrine into this chapter is, therefore, a real extension of the Confession by a new doctrinal definition; and the doctrine thus inserted is certainly one of large importance, if not to the integrity of the Calvinistic system or to its full statement for the practical ends of the religious life, yet certainly for its thorough elaboration and its complete development as a comprehensive world-view.

The statement which is here given to this important Reformed doctrine is, from the necessity of the case, succinct rather than elaborated, comprehensive rather than detailed. But it perfectly conforms to the teaching upon this topic of the best Reformed divines. The closeness of its conformity to the ordinary mode of stating the doctrine among accredited Reformed teachers may be fairly estimated by comparing this section with the exposition of the subject by, say, Dr. Shedd or Dr. Charles Hodge. Dr. Hodge, for example, says, among other things:

“God is everywhere present with the minds of men, as the Spirit of truth and goodness, operating on them according to the laws of their own moral agency, inclining them to good and restraining them from evil. . . . To the general influence of the Spirit (or to common grace) we owe all the decorum, order, refinement and virtue existing among men. . . . The Scriptures speak of God’s reasoning with men; of his teaching them, and that inwardly, by his Spirit; of his guiding or leading them; and of his coming, reproving and persuading them. These modes of representation would seem to indicate ‘a moral suasion,’ an operation in accordance with the ordinary laws of mind, consisting in the presentation of truth and urging of motives. . . .

² *Of. e. g.* Twisse, *Riches, &c.*, pp. 243, 253.

³ X. 4. “Some common operations of the Spirit.”

These common influences of the Spirit are all capable of being effectually resisted. . . . We should above all things dread lest we should grieve the Spirit or quench his influence."

The resemblance between such teaching and the statement given in the section of the new chapter before us is patent.

The chapter "Of the Holy Spirit," then, besides reiterating the Confessional doctrines of the nature of the Holy Spirit and of his special activities, on the one hand, in the gift of the Scriptures, and, on the other, in the application of the redemption of Christ to individual sinners, develops and extends the Confessional doctrine of the work of the Spirit in the church, and adds to the Confessional statements the definition of a new doctrine, "Common Grace." In this further development of the one doctrine and fresh formulation of the other, it proceeds in full accord with both the spirit of the Reformed system and the very letter of the most accredited expounders of that system.

The Chapter "Of the Love of God, and Missions."

The latter of the two new chapters is entitled in the Revised Confession, "Of the Love of God, and Missions." This was not, however, its original title; and it is not perfectly appropriate to its contents. This chapter (like its fellow, in general) was borrowed by the Revision Committee which reported in 1902, and whose work, now incorporated into the Confession, constitutes the Revised Confession, from the work of a former revision committee, which reported in 1892, and whose work (including these two chapters) was at that time rejected by the church. The title given the chapter by its framers was, "Of the Gospel"; and the chapter remains, despite the change of its title, distinctly a chapter on "The Gospel," that is to say, to speak in more technical language, on "The External Call." Of course it speaks of the "Love of God," and of "Missions"; for the "Gospel" is the expression of the love of God, and in its proclamation creates what we know as "Missions." But the chapter is in no sense a development of the doctrine of the "Love of God," which is introduced only incidentally as the source and burden of the "Gospel"; nor is it a development of the doctrine of "Missions," which, in the technical sense of that word, comes before us only in the closing section. It is a de-

velopment of the doctrine of "the Gospel," which it very properly represents as originating in and proclaiming the love of God, and as issuing in missions. Our present purpose is not criticism, but exposition; but so much criticism of the misfitting title which has been attached to the chapter seemed necessary to its exposition. It runs as follows:

"I. God, in infinite and perfect love, having provided in the covenant of grace, through the mediation and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, a way of life and salvation, sufficient for and adapted to the whole lost race of man, doth freely offer this salvation to all men in the Gospel.

"II. In the Gospel God declares his love for the world and his desire that all men should be saved, reveals fully and clearly the only way of salvation; promises eternal life to all who truly repent and believe in Christ; invites and commands all to embrace the offered mercy; and by his Spirit accompanying the Word, pleads with men to accept his gracious invitation.

"III. It is the duty and privilege of every one who hears the Gospel immediately to accept its merciful provisions; and they who continue in impenitence and unbelief incur aggravated guilt and perish by their own fault.

"IV. Since there is no other way of salvation than that revealed in the Gospel, and since in the divinely established and ordinary method of grace faith cometh by hearing the Word of God, Christ hath commissioned his church to go into all the world and to make disciples of all nations. All believers are, therefore, under obligation to sustain the ordinances of religion where they are already established, and to contribute by their prayers, gifts, and personal efforts, to the extension of the kingdom of Christ throughout the whole earth."

It will be observed that the four sections of this chapter develop in logical sequence the doctrine of "The Gospel," or, in other words, "The External Call." In the first section the ground of the External Call or "the Gospel offer" is explained. In the second section, the contents of the External Call, or Gospel, are developed: thus, in effect, a definition of "the Gospel" is formulated. In the third section the effects of the External Call, or Gospel, are set forth. And in the last section the obligations growing out of the state of the case thus outlined are explained.

The doctrine thus developed is the ordinary doctrine of the "External Call" as expounded by the Reformed divines. The several declarations of the clauses are, indeed, but the common-places of the Reformed doctrine. It seems scarcely necessary to

illustrate in detail so obvious a fact. One would need but to read over, say, Dr. Charles Hodge's section on "The External Call" to obtain not only a parallel to the general treatment, but parallel statements of the most express kind for each of the several clauses. The chief propositions announced, moreover, are so nearly the same with the propositions embodied in the first section of the "Declaratory Statement" that the quotations from standard Reformed divines given to illustrate them¹ will serve nearly as good a purpose for the clauses here.

It cannot be said, on the other hand, that these propositions merely repeat anything said, with full explication, in other parts of the Confession. No doubt the doctrine of the External Call underlies the whole of the Confession; and important elements of it are here and there clearly asserted, as, for example, in the Tenth Chapter, where its relation to the Internal Call is fully explicated. The whole of it, indeed, is crisply contained in such a declaration as that made in VII. 3, that God, in the covenant of grace, "freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved." But the Confession was too busy developing the contents of the Gospel to stay to expand into all its details the doctrine of "the Gospel" itself; it was too much absorbed with the inward call of the Holy Spirit and its great sequences of salvation, to care to do more than explicitly to recognize and indicate in outline the external call of the Word. It must be allowed, therefore, that this chapter, with its detailed explanation of the External Call, does make a substantial addition to the doctrinal definitions of the Confession. It incorporates into the Confession a rather full exposition of the doctrine of the External Call, sufficiently clear, calmly stated and thoroughly sound. It is a pity that its significance is somewhat obscured to the careless reader by the unmeaning title that has been attached to it; and that its bearing on the general doctrinal exposition of the Confession is somewhat concealed by the illogical position given it at the end of the document. But what it brings in itself is just a sound bit of Calvinistic theology, which perfectly homologates with the total contents of the Confession.

¹ See above, pp. 10-12.

THE TEXTUAL ALTERATIONS.

We have yet to advert to the three instances in which "the Revision of 1903" has made alterations in the actual text of the Confession. To change the text of the Confession implies, of course, condemnation of the text that is changed—to the extent of the change which is made. The ground of this condemnation will naturally vary from instance to instance, and need not always be strictly doctrinal, or indeed doctrinal at all. But we need not enter upon that question here. After all, we are not directly concerned with the motives of the changes, but solely with the effect of them. Our business is not to determine what the doctrinal prepossessions of the revisers were, but what the doctrinal character of the Revised Confession is. For our present purpose, therefore, we might very well decline to consider at all what the change was *from*, and focus attention merely on what it is *to*. Something like this is, indeed, essential so far as that we must beware of interpreting the Revised Confession by way of contrast with the Unrevised. We must interpret it strictly according to its own language in its own context, and not imagine it to affirm the contradictory of what it may have omitted from a previous document.

The importance of this remark will become apparent when we observe that the textual changes made are either formally or at least essentially omissions. It cannot be reasonably assumed, however, that the Revised Confession denies all that it has omitted—much less that it asserts the logical contradictory of it. It may well be, for example, that its framers only shrank from affirming categorically what they omitted, and had no design whatever positively to deny it, much less to affirm its contradictory. And assuredly the Revised Confession is entitled to be understood according to its affirmations, and is not to be saddled with propositions which do not occur in it at all.

We may illustrate these remarks from the alteration made in Chapter XXII. 3. This consists in a simple omission, and the omission is of this single sentence: "Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority." It would certainly be illegitimate to say that by omitting this sentence the Revised Confession has denied

that it is a sin to refuse such an oath. The fact is, the Revised Confession says nothing about the matter, one way or another. He who adopts this Confession adopts no expression on the subject. And silence is as favorable to one opinion as to another. "Oh! but," some one will say, "the *omission* of this declaration means something." Certainly it does. It means something relatively to the opinions of the revisers, though it is easy to attribute to them different motives from those which actually swayed them. But it means nothing relatively to the teaching of the Revised Confession. From the fact that its present form of statement has been reached by an omission from a previous form, we can infer nothing whatever as to the doctrine of the Revised Confession. Its teaching lies in what it says, not in what it does not say. Concerning the things of which it does not speak, it has no doctrine.

The same remarks apply also to the alteration made in Chapter XXV. 6. Here the revision takes the form of a reconstruction of the section; but the reconstruction appears to be nearly, if not altogether, in the interest of an omission. The motive of the revisers seems to have been to avoid calling the Pope of Rome "that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God"—which does seem rather strong language. Why the revisers wished to avoid applying these terms to the Pope of Rome we can only conjecture. But their avoidance of it need not imply that they—some or all of them—felt prepared to deny that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist of Scripture. Much less does the absence of these phrases from the Revised Confession commit its signatories to that position. It simply leaves its signatories free to believe what they choose in the matter. In saying nothing at all about it, it simply does not raise the question at all. It confines itself to saying that—

"The Lord Jesus Christ is the only head of the church, and the claim of any man to be the vicar of Christ and the head of the church, is unscriptural, without warrant in fact, and is a usurpation dishonoring to the Lord Jesus Christ."

This, it will be observed, is an expansion of the two first clauses of the old section. To this, and this alone, are the signatories of the Revised Confession committed.

These things are of comparatively little doctrinal importance. When we approach the third instance of revision by alteration, however, we touch on deeper concerns. This is a remodelling of the Seventh Section of the Sixteenth Chapter—the section in the chapter on “Good Works,” which treats of the works of the unregenerate. It will be only frank to say at once that it seems to us a positively bad piece of work which the revisers have done here. We do not say, and we do not think, that the new section as it stands in the Revised Confession is untrue or “unsound.” It is neither. But a comparison of the remodelled section with the section as it stands in the old Confession creates a suspicion that the determining motive for the remodelling may have been to avoid affirming that works done by unregenerate men “are sinful and cannot please God.” It is difficult, no doubt, to divine what gain was expected to accrue from avoiding this assertion here, while not only were the Catechisms left untouched, but also the very strong assertions of human corruption and inability which appear elsewhere in the Confession—as in the chapters on Sin and Free Will—forming, as these chapters do, part of the context of the present section by which its meaning, as it stands in the Confession, must be determined. Nevertheless, it is hard not to suspect that the revisers were swayed, in avoiding the phrase in question here, by the influence of the “vanishing sense of sin” that is so unhappily apparent in much of modern thought.

All this, however, has no relevancy to the interpretation of the Revised Confession. We can infer nothing as to its meaning from any suspicion we may cherish as to the revisers’ motives. It must be taken as it stands. And as it stands it also gives us a “form of sound words,” in which all that is said is said fitly and truly. Something more might properly have been said; and we, in whose minds some echoes of the old words linger, may miss something. But, after all, this something more is not obtruded on the consciousness of the reader of the Revised Confession itself, and will not ultimately be missed in this context. Indeed, it seems even to be suggested in what is said. For, if the works done by unregenerate men are not roundly declared to be sinful, they are at least said “to come short of what God requires,” which assuredly itself comes very little short of saying they are sinful—unless the sinfulness of “sins of omission” be

denied. The following is the new section, and its perusal will evince its essential soundness:

“Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and in themselves praiseworthy and useful, and although the neglect of such things is sinful and displeasing unto God; yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to his Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they come short of what God requires and do not make any man meet to receive the grace of God.”

THE EFFECT OF THE REVISION.

Having thus passed in review the several items of the “revision material,” let us seek now to form a general conception of what it as a whole has brought into the Confession.

(1) In the first place, then, its insertion into the Confession has brought into the Confession a reassertion of the formative doctrines of the Confession. It reasserts the doctrines of Revelation and Inspiration as set forth in the First Chapter of the Confession. It reasserts the doctrine of the Decree as developed in the Third Chapter. It reasserts the doctrine of Infant Salvation as explained in the Third Section of the Fourth Chapter. It reasserts the whole series of doctrines expounding the effectual application of the redemption of Christ to sinners by the Holy Spirit, as developed in the series of chapters from the Tenth to the Eighteenth. It reasserts, besides, the teaching of many fragmentary passages which is repeated in one or another clause of one or the other of the two new chapters, and may, therefore, fairly be held to be covered by the reaffirmation clause in their Preamble.

(2) In the second place, the insertion of the “revision material” into the Confession incorporates into it a definite repudiation of the whole mass of assumptions on which has been founded an annoying assault upon certain important doctrines taught by the Confession, by which assault the adherents of the Confession have been vexed ever since its formulation. The method of this repudiation involves the distinct assertion of the inclusion in the Confessional system of a series of doctrinal propositions, complementary to or implied in those which have been the favorite mark of the assault in question. These implicated or complementary doctrinal propositions announce

the love of God for all mankind, the gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, his readiness to bestow his saving grace on all who seek it, his desire that no man shall perish, his provision in Christ of a salvation sufficient for all, adapted to all, and freely offered in the gospel to all; the responsibility of men for their treatment of God's gracious offer, from accepting which no man is hindered by God's decree, as none is condemned save for his sin.

(3) In the third place, the "revision material" inserted into the Confession formulates certain new doctrines now for the first time, explicitly or in full exposition at least, made a part of the Confessional statement. These new doctrines include the doctrine of the salvation of all that die in infancy, the great doctrines of Common Grace and the External Call or "the Gospel," and the doctrine of the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

(4) In the fourth place, the incorporation of the "revision material" into the Confession removes from the Confession certain statements about the sinfulness of refusing a proper oath properly tendered, and the identification of the Pope with the Antichrist of Scripture; and somewhat reduces in one place the language in which the sinfulness of works done by the unregenerate is asserted.

What now is the total effect of all this on the Confession and its teaching?

The System of Doctrine Unaffected.

Has it in any way affected the integrity of the System of Doctrine taught in the Confession? How could it? We have just seen that it reaffirms the formative elements of that system, that what it adds is conformable to it and is added as conformable to it, and that what it takes away is, in the strict sense of that word, insignificant.

The system of doctrine taught in the Confession is the system that is known in history as the Reformed or Calvinistic System. The architectonic principle of this system is the doctrine of the Eternal Decree of God, which is set forth with notable purity and care in the Third Chapter, and into adjustment with which every other doctrinal statement of the Confession is brought. Not only are none of these adjustments disturbed by the revision,

but it is precisely this doctrine that it has most emphatically reaffirmed, protected from false inferences and strengthened by explicit assertion of its harmony with certain complementary truths. The Revised Confession differs at this point from the unrevised Confession only in more elaborately buttressing the formative doctrine of the system. The unrevised Confession was content simply to state this doctrine with remarkable clearness and fulness: the Revised Confession adjoins a defence of this statement. That is all.

It may indeed be argued that the defence of this doctrine which the Revised Confession incorporates overreaches itself, and asserts a series of propositions as implicated in or complementary to the doctrine of the Decree, as set forth in the Third Chapter, which are really inconsistent with that doctrine, and, therefore, as now asserted, qualify it, modify it, or even neutralize it and wipe it practically out. It must be observed, however, first, that this is not the view of the Revised Confession itself; secondly, that it has been repeatedly expressly repudiated by the church which has adopted this Revised Confession; thirdly, that it traverses the judgment of the whole body of the Reformed divines; and, fourthly, that it is merely the reassertion of the assault on the Confessional doctrine of the Decree which it is the very object of this enumeration of implicated and complementary doctrines to repel. The professed object of the Revision at this point is precisely to repulse this assault, and all the inferences that are accustomed to be drawn from it. Its professed object is to assert that the propositions here enumerated are implicates or complements of the doctrine of the Decree as set forth in the Third Chapter of the Confession. Whoever assumes that they are inconsistent with that doctrine takes up, therefore, a position not only outside of, but in direct antagonism to the Revised Confession; the Revised Confession expressly repudiates him, and by the necessity of the case he must repudiate the Revised Confession.

No Doctrines Modified.

Must it not however, at least be allowed that some of the doctrines of the Confession have been modified by the Revision? One would very much like to know what doctrines these can be. Not the doctrine of the Decree of God; that has been reasserted,

defended from false inferences and explicated. Not the doctrines forming parts of the Application of Redemption; these, too, have been reaffirmed. Not the doctrine of an Infallible Bible; that also has been reiterated. Certainly not the doctrines that have been left untouched. What doctrines, then, can have been modified?

There are, in fact, just three statements of the old Confession which have been modified in the new; and it is doubtful whether in any one of these cases any modification has been wrought in the doctrines themselves. The Revised Confession no longer asserts that it is a sin to refuse a properly required oath; or that the Pope of Rome is the Antichrist of Scripture; or, in so many words at least, that all the works of the unregenerate are sinful. We add the qualification, "in so many words at least," to the last instance, because not only does the Revised Confession still declare of all men that they are so corrupt that they are "utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good and wholly inclined to evil," and that this "corruption of nature itself and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin," as well as a good deal more to the same effect; but in the revised statement itself it affirms, as we have seen, that the works of the unregenerate "come short of what God requires." It can scarcely be contended, therefore, that the Revised Confession no longer teaches that the works of the unregenerate are all sinful. It has merely modified one statement of this doctrine, not the doctrine itself. Elsewhere there are no modifications of even the statement of doctrines.

Extension not Alteration.

At all events, new doctrines have been inserted into the Confession; and does not the insertion of new doctrines necessarily carry with it a certain modification of teaching, especially if these new doctrines be (as they are in this case) important? That depends on the nature of the new doctrines and their relation to the old doctrines already stated in the Confession. Certainly new doctrines have been inserted into the Confession by the Revision of 1903; and we have no disposition to minimize the importance of these new doctrines. But there is something else that must be said about them also. These new doctrines are true doctrines — good, sound, Calvinistic doctrines,

which, taking their places in a statement of the Calvinistic system, simply expand it into greater completeness of treatment, and in no sense modify either it or any of the doctrines that enter into it.

What are these new doctrines which have been inserted into the Confession? The doctrines of "Common Grace," of the "External Call," of "Infant Salvation," of the "Holy Spirit in the Church." This is the entire list of them; for the doctrinal propositions included in the first section of the "Declaratory Statement" all recur in the chapter on the "External Call," and find their true doctrinal significance there. We have no wish, we repeat, to minify these doctrines or the significance of their addition to the Confessional statement of doctrine. Obviously they are important doctrines, and as obviously they are doctrines, speaking generally, of one special class, a class of doctrines to which comparatively little space was given in the Confession by its original framers. They supplement the teaching of the Confession, therefore, in a particular direction, the direction, to-wit, of the general or universal aspects of grace. By their insertion into the Confession larger space has been given in it—larger emphasis, if you wish—to the universalistic side of the Gospel. The Revised Confession, therefore, emphasizes the universalistic side of the Gospel as the old Confession did not.

We must not, however, on the other hand, misconceive the meaning of this insertion into the Confession of a fuller treatment of the universalistic aspects of the Gospel. Least of all must we fancy that its emphasis upon them in any way modifies the system of doctrine taught in the Confession, or any single doctrine that enters into that system. This it cannot do for the simple reason that the universalistic aspects of the Gospel in question belong inherently to the system of doctrine taught in the Confession; were always present implicitly as the background of the Confessional statement of this system; were not only, therefore allowed for in the statement of this system, but were repeatedly asserted in brief, crisp passages which embodied over and over again their essence; and were left without fuller explication merely because the Confession confined itself to the development of the *cor cordis* of the system and left its outlying members to more allusive presupposition. The fuller treatment of these topics in the Revised Confession, accordingly, adds

nothing whatever to the system set forth, modifies in no respect any of its doctrinal teachings, and only extends the circumference of its detailed discussion. Swell the Confession to even greater bulk still if you will, you will never change its character as a Calvinistic document so long as the newly incorporated materials remain elements in a developed Calvinistic system. Nor will you soon by thus expanding the Confession get beyond the necessity of selection in the material you incorporate into it. Even after the revision that has been accomplished there remain still many legitimate elements of Calvinistic teaching which are not yet incorporated into the fabric of the Confession, and which may, after awhile, be inserted into it if anybody earnestly enough wishes to do so. Meanwhile it is important to remember that, however fully the Confession is gradually made to give expression to more and more Calvinistic doctrines, enlargement is not alteration, development is not revolution, elaboration is not correction.

OPPOSING VIEWS.

Such, then, are the conclusions to which we have been led by an examination of the Revised Confession itself. They are conclusions which, we feel confident, will commend themselves in their own light to the candid reader. And they might well be left to do this. It is notorious, however, that very different conclusions have of late been now and again pressed upon the attention of the public, sometimes with much subtle argumentation, sometimes merely with much strong and repeated assertion. It may be well to direct attention to some of these, as we must believe, erroneous interpretations of the Revised Confession, with a view to pointing out the sources of their error.

We shall select for this purpose two typical instances, which have little in common except their common conclusion, proceeding as they do, the one from a strictly Calvinistic, the other from a definitely Arminian standpoint. The causes they seek to serve are in polar opposition to each other, and they pass very different estimates on the value of the "revision material." But they both argue that it has introduced into the Confession material which to a great degree neutralizes or tends to neutralize its Calvinism. We shall make some remarks on each in turn.

Dr. Webb's Criticism.

The first of the criticisms which we propose to consider is embodied in a strongly written paper published in the *Presbyterian Quarterly* for April, 1904, from the accomplished pen of the Rev. Dr. R. A. Webb, Professor in the Theological School of the Southwestern Presbyterian University at Clarksville, Tenn. Dr. Webb's zeal is for the integrity of the Calvinistic system, which he thinks is endangered by the new leaven that has been inserted into the Confession. The basis of his complaint is supplied by two passages of the "revision material," which he quotes as follows:

"CHAP. XXXIV. 11.—'In the Gospel God declares his love for the world, and his desire that all men should be saved.'

"DECLARATORY STATEMENT.—1. 'The doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of his love to all mankind, his gift of his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. . . . Concerning those who perish, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine that God desires not the death of any sinner.'

The essence of his argument is compressed into the following statement in comment on the passages just quoted:

"Here we have three universal propositions which have been incorporated in the creed of Northern Presbyterians: (1) The universality of God's love; (2) the universality of God's desire; (3) the universality of Christ's atonement. God loves all men, God desires the salvation of all men, God has made propitiation for the sins of all men—these are the new doctrines which the revisers have added to Calvinism. We claim that they are substantive additions; that they are new doctrines; that they are out of harmony with the Calvinistic system; that they are radical and reconstructive; that they logically issue in universalism—universalism pure and absolute, or universalism conditional and hypothetical; that they are premises which cannot be made to yield that particularism which is the historic mark of Calvinistic soteriology."

What, now, is the flaw in this argument? This, briefly: that it seeks to ground a conclusion in a single premise, severed from its companion premises. Dr. Webb says of the sentences he quotes from the Revised Confession: "They are premises which cannot be made to yield that particularism which is the historic mark of Calvinistic soteriology." Of course they cannot—when taken by themselves! But they do not stand by

themselves in the Revised Confession, nor even in the "revision material." In the Revised Confession they stand along with, say, the Third Chapter, "Of God's Eternal Decree," and all the other richly wrought out particularistic passages. In the "revision material" they are put forward as implicates and complements of these particularistic passages, and affirmed to be held in harmony with them, and therefore not to be torn apart from them. Could they be taken by themselves, they might very possibly lead the unwary thinker "logically into universalism." Such universalistic passages in Scripture, when taken in isolation, have led many unwary thinkers before to-day into universalism. But when taken along with the particularistic passages along with which they stand in the Revised Confession (as in Scripture), they logically issue in—just pure Calvinism, with its harmonious adjustment of the particularistic and universalistic elements of the Gospel.

The real question that is raised by the presence of these passages in the Revised Confession, then, is whether there is in the Calvinistic system a legitimate place for the universalistic aspects of the Gospel. The Revised Confession declares that there is: and that not merely by inserting into its fabric these universalistic propositions, but by distinctly declaring, in doing so, that they are held in harmony with its doctrine of God's Eternal Decree and the like. No Calvinist has ever been found to doubt it; no Calvinist will ever be found to doubt it. Dr. Webb, we are sure, would be the last to doubt it. It has been, is, and ever will be, the glory of Calvinism that it does not oppose to the one-sided universalism of Arminianism an equally one-sided particularism; but knows how to do full justice to all the elements of the Gospel revelation, and how to combine a true particularism and a true universalism in harmonious relations. Nobody, we are sure, more delights in this comprehensiveness of Calvinism, by which it evinces itself as just the Gospel in its fulness, than Dr. Webb himself. Indeed, this comprehensive Calvinism is the Calvinism of the Unrevised as truly as of the Revised Confession, and its universalistic side has not first been inserted into the Confession by the Revision, but only more fully explicated by it.

If the universalistic passages that have been inserted into the Revised Confession are objectionable, therefore, it must be

not on account of their mere universalism, but on account of the kind of universalism they express. Dr. Webb accordingly labors to make out that their universalism is the wrong kind of universalism. His argument here, too, however depends on dealing with them in isolation, apart from their context in the Revised Confession, by which their meaning is necessarily fixed. He seeks to strengthen his argument, moreover, by a mistaken application of the distinction between love of complacency and love of benevolence, as if the Revised Confession, when it says God loves all mankind, must perforce intend God's love of complacency. God's love of benevolence—perhaps he would prefer to call it "pity" (p. 656)—Dr. Webb himself would, questionless, allow to be universal. But, beyond all doubt, it is just God's love of benevolence which the Revised Confession signalizes when it says God loves the world, or loves all mankind—as appears, if from nothing else, then from this—that it is out of this love that God is represented as wishing and doing good to its objects, that is to say, as acting benevolently towards them.

While we are willing to say with Dr. Webb, therefore, that the doctrinal propositions inserted into the Confession in 1903 are "substantive additions" to the Confession, and so far "new doctrines" that they formulate aspects of truth not heretofore developed with fulness in its expositions of doctrine; we cannot agree with him—in disagreement with the whole Calvinistic world, with the unrevised Confession itself, and, we are sure, with Dr. Webb also when not considering these special propositions—that such assertions as that God loves "the world" or "all mankind," that he desires not the death of the sinner but that all should come unto him and be saved, and that he has given his Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, are "out of harmony with the Calvinistic system," are "radical and reconstructive" when inserted into a Calvinistic formulary, or, when read as constituent parts of such a formulary, "logically issue in universalism—universalism pure and absolute, or universalism conditional and hypothetical."

The universalism they issue in, when read in their context—the context of their own "revision material," no less than the context of the whole "Revised Confession," a part of which they are and apart from which they cannot be read—is rather that

truly Calvinistic universalism which it is the just boast of Calvinism that it alone can do justice to. By Calvinistic divines this Calvinistic universalism has had, no doubt, more or less justice done to it, according as they have done more or less justice to the Calvinistic system itself; but they have all in one way or another recognized it as an element in the Calvinistic system and sought to give it validity in proportion to the insight of each. We will ask a Calvinist of especially clear insight to hint to us how justice may be done to it—a Calvinist whose devotion to the historical particularism of the Reformed system, we may add, Dr. Webb may emulate, but will hardly surpass. This is how Dr. Kuyper presents the universalistic aspects of the Gospel:

“God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ The Mediator is called, ‘The Light of the *world*.’ The Lamb of God ‘bears the sin of the *world*.’ Christ is named, ‘the Saviour of the *world*’ (John iv. 42). He will give his flesh and blood ‘for the life of the *world*.’ ‘The fall of Israel,’ says Paul, ‘is the riches of the *world*’ (Rom. xi. 12), and its rejection ‘the reconciliation of the *world*.’ Accordingly, Christ is a propitiation ‘not for our sins only, but for the sins of the *whole world*.’ And the final triumphant cry at the return of the Lord is to be: ‘Now the kingdoms of the *world* have become our God’s.’

“To wish to infer from this, with the Arminians, that grace is not particular, and thus that the salvation of Christ is *for each and every man*, is, of course, out of the question. Nevertheless, the profundity of the rich declaration, ‘God so loved the *world*,’ is far from exhausted by saying that the world here means the elect. . . .

“Ask whether after the fall, God gave up this, his splendid creation, this human race with all its treasure of his image, in a word, *this his world*, in order that, casting it aside, he might create something entirely new out of and for the elect. The Scripture answer is a decided negative. The Anabaptist, and in part also the Methodist, may teach such a thing, but not one who through the Scriptures has become Reformed in all his thinking. Such an one knows full well that God has *not* deserted the work of his hands; has *not* given over his magnificent creation; has *not* permitted our race to fall away into the hell of destruction, as a miscarried product; and has *not* thrust away from him this his world as of no further use. But, on the contrary, that he loves the world, so loves it, because it is *his* creation, *his* workmanship, *his* production that he gave his only begotten Son for it; and has brought *his* creation triumphantly through all the terrible conflict, *recreating it*, not creating an entirely *new* thing—and so manifesting himself as *Saviour of his own world*.

"If we liken mankind, thus, as it has grown up out of Adam, to a tree, then the elect are not leaves which have been plucked off of this tree, in order that there may be braided from them a laurel-wreath for God's glory, while the tree itself is to be cut down, rooted up and cast into the fire; but precisely the contrary, the lost are the boughs, twigs and leaves that have fallen away from the trunk of mankind, while the elect alone remain attached to it. Not the whole trunk goes to destruction, leaving only a few golden leaflets strewn on the fields of eternal light; but, on the contrary, the trunk, the tree, the race abides, and what is lost is broken off from the trunk and loses its organic nature. . . . And thus the elect come forward not as twigs and branches that have been broken off, but precisely as those that have been kept on. The recreated world is *theirs*. *They* shall inherit the earth."¹

We may like, or we may not like, Dr. Kuyper's particular construction of Calvinistic universalism. We ourselves like it extremely well.² But, in any event, it will be a sad day for Christian theology when Calvinism forgets this, its universalistic side, and hands over to the tender mercies of Arminianism that universality of God's love, of God's desire, of Christ's atonement, to which Arminian contingency is as little able to do justice as it is to the particularism of God's love, of God's desire, of Christ's atonement, that constitutes the core of Calvinistic soteriology.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Criticism.

It is with great reluctance that we turn to the second typical instance of erroneous criticism of the Revised Confession which we think that we ought to notice. It is a criticism which has been very frequently repeated during the last few months. Its essence consists in an effort to impose upon the Revised Confession *vi et armis* the historically Cumberland Presbyterian view—which is the distinctively Arminian view—of the relation between the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism and such propositions as those enunciated in the "revision material"; and that, in the face of the explicit repudiation of this view by the

¹ *E Voto Dordraceno*, II. 176-178. Cf. *De Gemeene Gratie*, II. 91, 92; *Uit Het Woord*, 2nd Series, I. 37, 237, 240, 245, 482.

² Hints of the same essential construction may be read in Drs. C. Hodge, Shedd and Dabney, also. Cf. e. g. Dabney's *Syllabus and Notes*, p. 535. Cf. also Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, IV. 62, 63.

Revised Confession in language and with reiteration which one would suppose could not be misunderstood or disregarded. The particularism which is the distinctive mark of Calvinism, says the Revised Confession, leaves ample room for such propositions, and claims the doctrines they announce as constituent elements of its own system. "Good!" cry the Cumberland Presbyterians. "You admit, then, these general propositions? That, we contend, is in effect a repudiation of the particularistic ones; and we propose to adopt your Confession on that understanding."

This is not a caricature. Incredible as it sounds, the columns of the *Cumberland Presbyterian* have been for months filled with just this assertion. Even the halls of the recent General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, met at Dallas, fairly rang with it. The Rev. Dr. S. M. Templeton, for example, in closing the debate on "Union," is reported to have given it such emphatic expression as this: "The revision of the Westminster Confession has been accomplished mostly by the declaration of doctrines contradictory to the objectionable ones; which necessarily implies the rejection of the latter." Semi-official authority has even been accorded this remarkable contention by its incorporation in a "Supplemental Report of the Committee on Fraternity and Union," presented to the Cumberland Presbyterian Assembly, received by it, spread on its Minutes, and frequently since commended to the church for its guidance in the premises by the official church paper. We may most fairly found our remarks on this last-mentioned document.

Confusion worse confounded reigns throughout this strange paper, the outcome of which appears to be nothing but a plea for—and an astonishing illustration of—doctrinal indifference. Its jubilant refrain is, "Revision has revised"; and its main contention is that in its revising it has modified fatally "the genetic principle" of the Confession, viz., "Divine Sovereignty." To justify such a contention, it adduces as three elements of the Confessional doctrine of Divine Sovereignty unacceptable to Cumberland Presbyterians, "unconditional election," "limited atonement" and "irresistible grace," all of which it asserts have been "revised." For sole proof of this assertion, however, it culls a few sentences out of the "revision-material," torn from

their context and diverted from their true meaning, partly by means of a series of remarkable comments. Perhaps the worst instance—though no doubt tastes will differ in the estimation of the relative badness of the several bad instances—is the pleading of the passage in the second section of the new chapter “Of the Holy Spirit,” which describes “Common Grace”—and carefully and explicitly limits itself to Common Grace—in proof that the Revision has “revised irresistible grace”! To drive the lesson home, to the declaration, that those who do not accept the gracious offer are, because of the fact of “common grace,” “guilty of resisting the Holy Spirit,” the triumphant comment is adjoined: “That which can be resisted is not irresistible.” Which provokes us to ask how this proves that “that which is irresistible can be resisted.” What are we to think of this constant tendency violently to twist the language of the “Revised Confession” into senses against which it itself loudly protests?

It is by such methods as these that our Cumberland brethren are seeking to persuade themselves that “the revision has revised” the Calvinism out of the Confession. No, even this document does not quite say that. Catching its breath as it closes, it reverts to the characteristic Cumberland contention that what the Revision has done is to fill the Confession with contradictions, thus leaving every signatory free to take his choice. “The old view,” it says, “is not set aside, but the new, and we think the better, is set alongside.” One would think that until the “old view” had been “set aside,” those who do not believe the “old view” could not think of “adopting” the document. But no; they propose to adopt it and comfort themselves with the imagination that the “new view” has been “set alongside”! On this ground, supported as we have seen, this remarkable paper claims liberty under the Revised Confession for holding either Calvinistic (it would say “Fatalistic”) or Arminian doctrines as each signatory lists!

We say, distinctly, Arminian doctrines. For whatever else this document leaves obscure or does its best to make obscure, this at least it makes clear: that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is Arminian to the core—that is to say, so far as it is represented by this representative document. According to it, three of the constituent Calvinistic doctrines which were remon-

strated against by the original Remonstrants and reaffirmed at Dordt, are decisively rejected by the Cumberland Presbyterians also. According to it, also, it is a distinctive Cumberland Presbyterian doctrine that the Divine readiness to bestow saving grace is "conditioned upon human seeking"—than which no more extreme assertion of the central Arminian principle could be formulated.¹ If this is not an Arminian document, Arminianism is incapable of recognizable statement.

The real drift of the Cumberland contention concerning the Revised Confession is therefore now laid bare. It is not that the matter inserted into the Confession by the Revision of 1903 has somewhat modified its teaching—moderated its extremities—mollified its harshness—softened its outlines—or adjusted its details. It is that it has definitely Arminianized the Confession; or, at least, set the distinctive principles of Arminianism in it side by side with the distinctive principles of Calvinism—so leaving the two contradictory elements to be accepted, one or the other, as each signatory chooses—seeing that no man can possibly accept both! Certainly the extremity of this contention overreaches itself. Any one who has read the Revised Confession, or only the "revision-material," however cursorily, will know—cannot fail to know—better than this. And every one who will attend to the contention itself will perceive that it includes within itself an admission that the Revised Confession still teaches the old doctrines.

No doubt "Revision has revised." No one will wish to question that. But how has it revised? Not by eviscerating the Calvinism of the Confession; nor even by modifying it. But by reiterating it, repelling current assaults upon it, and explicating more fully certain implications of it which were left by the Confession in the comparative obscurity of merely recognized and not fully expounded doctrines. This, we claim, any unbiased reading of the Revised Confession will demonstrate. And this, we claim, the unbiased reading of it which has been

¹ Cf. on this Girardeau, *Calvinism and Evangelical Arminianism, passim, e. g.*, 35, 95, 141, 150, 304. Thus: "It is the specific difference of the Arminian doctrine so far as this question of the application and salvation is concerned, that in the last analysis the will of man must be conceived as the determining factor." . . . "Hence the decision of God's will is dependent upon the decision of man's"—pp. 150, 151.

given in this paper does demonstrate. The Revised Confession is, then, a Confession which every good Calvinist will recognize at once as his own. It is a Confession which no one, not a good Calvinist, can ever properly profess to make his own. For men who find the unrevised Confession unacceptable because of its Calvinism, to profess to "adopt" the Revised Confession because of the clauses by which it reiterates, defends and explicates that Calvinism, is a procedure which, as the French say, "gives stupefaction." Or are we simply to infer that Calvinism can never be rejected when it is understood—that it requires only a little reiteration, defence and detailed exposition to silence all its enemies and conquer the world? Let us hope that this is the true explanation of the remarkable phenomenon which is now forced on our observation. But certainly it is a very remarkable phenomenon, and requires a good deal of explanation.