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Survey of the World.

The Coal Strike

Notices of an increase of 10 per cent. in wages and of a reduction of the price of powder to \$1.50 per keg were posted at a majority of the coal mines in the anthracite region before the end of last week, but if the operators expected to draw the strikers back to work at once by these concessions they were disappointed. By the side of each notice the local officers of the union posted a warning to the effect that the men must not resume work until ordered to do so by the leaders of their organization. Therefore the ranks of the strikers remained unbroken, and many of those who had not obeyed the original strike order quit work. By the end of the week 138,000 of the 142,000 anthracite miners were idle and united in support of the strike movement. It was understood that President Mitchell of the union was inclined to favor an acceptance of the mine owners' concessions, but desired to wait until the offer should have been made by all the operators, and then to refer the matter to a convention of the strikers for a decision. On the 2d inst., at a great labor demonstration in Wilkesbarre, where 15,000 miners marched in a procession, he declared that the strikers had won their fight, but must wait for the action of a convention. Two days later those strikers whose resources had been exhausted began to apply for aid. On the 5th several of the individual operators who had asked the railroad companies for lower freight rates posted at their mines the notices of an increase of wages. There were then not many mines at which such notices were not to be seen, and it was understood that all the mine owners had

decided to make the same concessions. The notices say that the reduction of the price of powder to \$1.50 is to be taken into account in determining a "net advance" of 10 per cent. On the morning of the 6th 2,000 men and 50 women marched to the mines at Lattimer, where they succeeded in preventing the employees of Calvin Pardee & Co. from going to work. The sheriff and his deputies offered no resistance and no blood was shed at this scene of the similar demonstration in 1897, when 22 strikers were shot. On the same day President Mitchell announced at a meeting of 5,000 strikers in Shenandoah that in a few days he would issue a call for a convention to pass upon the offer of the mine owners. The end of the great strike seemed then to be clearly in sight, altho it was expected that a week would pass before a final decision could be reached. It is said in the mining districts that a large majority of the convention delegates will vote for the acceptance of the concessions set forth in the posted notices. The owners and operators are still determined not to recognize the union, but by the method of settlement which is now foreshadowed this question may be avoided.

The Political Campaign

Since the publication of Mr. McKinley's letter of acceptance, with its statements as to the Government's policy and action concerning the Philippines, there have been signs that Mr. Bryan and his associates are inclined to discuss other issues at greater length and with more emphasis in their speeches, and to give to imperialism less prominence, altho they

such boats, making a run together for the destruction of a battleship, with an aggregate expenditure in fuel of, say, \$150,000, would entail an expense of comparatively no importance. Even if

two or three of the torpedo boats were to be destroyed by the battleship in the encounter, before she herself were sunk, the total cost would still be relatively trifling.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Revision of the Presbyterian Confession

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

OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY.

1. A distinctive characteristic of the Presbyterian Church as a separate branch of the Church of Christ is: its bond of union is *a common faith* formulated in a Confession stating what Presbyterians believe to be the teaching of Holy Scripture.

2. There are three distinct uses of a Confession of Faith: *First*, to bear witness to what Presbyterians believe to be the truth taught in the Scriptures; *second*, for the religious instruction of the members of the Church, including the children, as mentioned in the Directory for worship; *third*, to secure "soundness in the faith" of office-bearers, especially the ministry, the Confession being the Standard.

3. Fidelity to the truth demands that the Confession of Faith of a Confessional Church should state as fully and accurately as possible the actual faith of the Church. Does the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to-day fulfil this requirement?

4. Facts are stubborn things. They may be ignored; they cannot be undone. Unwillingness to give them unprejudiced consideration is unwisdom.

The following are indisputable facts:

(1) Ten years ago two-thirds of the Presbyteries deliberately expressed their desire for a revision of the Confession.

(2) Altho many in the Assembly of 1890 did not personally desire revision, in view of the desire for it so generally expressed, the Assembly with entire unanimity recognized that the interests of the truth and the peace of the Church rendered a revision advisable, and took action accordingly. To secure a committee competent and representative of the entire Church, a special Committee

of One from each Synod was appointed to select and nominate a Revision Committee. Among the eminent ministers selected were representatives of all our theological seminaries. A large proportion of the elders selected were lawyers of high rank in their profession, including several eminent jurists. No more competent committee could then or now be selected. The report of the Nominating Committee was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.

5. It is not necessary to recite in detail the result of this important action of the Assembly—the patient, painstaking, fidelity of the committee; their report, after two years' deliberation including a conference with the Presbyteries, recommending, with a remarkable degree of unanimity, twenty-eight changes in the Confession; the submission of these changes to the Presbyteries under peculiarly unfavorable adventitious circumstances—a pending trial for heresy and doubt as to the constitutionality of the Revision Committee. With the possibility of involving the Church in litigation in case the proposed amendments were adopted, it is not strange that 45 Presbyteries declined to vote on the amendments, and upward of 60 voted against their adoption. Nevertheless, of the 175 voting Presbyteries, more than 100 recorded their approval of 26 of the 28 amendments.

6. Two important facts were made manifest by the revision of 1890-1892: *First*, that there were good and sufficient reasons for the desire for revision so generally expressed in 1890; *second*, that the Confession does not state as fully and accurately as possible the actual faith of the Church.

7. The stubbornness of fact being as

it is, and the power of truth being what it is, the incomplete result of the movement for revision in 1890-1892 could not be final. Further agitation on the subject was inevitable because reasonable and righteous. Had not the Church been wearied with the distracting and protracted excitement of a heresy trial, and also the extended and more or less exciting discussion of the 28 revision overtures, the motion of Mr. Junkin in 1892 would have been immediately renewed. Under the circumstances, however, immediate action for revision was not deemed advisable. Soon after the Church was virtually challenged to another trial for heresy. This resulted in an exciting agitation which was but recently terminated.

8. When a body is in a state of unstable equilibrium a slight disturbance will produce a decided movement toward stability. The intemperate denunciation of a statement in the Confession by a conspicuous minister nominally Presbyterian, followed by his sensational withdrawal from the Church, was the occasion, not the cause, of the present movement for a restatement of the faith of the Church. The reopening without further delay of the Confessional question left unsettled in 1893 was felt to be desirable. Accordingly 38 Presbyteries overtured the Assembly on the subject. After due deliberation and discussion the Committee on Bills and Overtures, appointed without reference to this question and representing the different sections of the Church, unanimously recommended that the matter of a restatement of the faith of the Church be submitted to the Presbyteries. By a decided vote of the Assembly the recommendation was adopted.

9. In response to the communication from the Assembly's committee I would prefer the following statement: That in view of all the facts and considerations that should be taken into account, some restatement of the faith of the Church is desirable, and that the most speedy and satisfactory solution of the Confessional problem would be reached by submitting to the Presbyteries the amendments recommended by the Revision Committee of 1892, so far as approved by a majority of the voting Presbyteries, with such provision for the amendment of

Chapter III as might be deemed advisable.

10. A vote that a revision of the Confession is not desirable is, in general, a solemn declaration that it is not desirable that the Confession of Faith of our Church should state as fully and accurately as possible the actual faith of the Church.

11. A vote against any revision is a solemn declaration of preference for a form of statement of the doctrine of Predestination that admits of the interpretation, and is as it is that it might admit of the interpretation, that in the exercise of his sovereign power, God predestinated some men to everlasting life and foreordained others to everlasting death, regarded not as sinners, but as mere creatures—a theory which Dr. Charles Hodge pronounces "inconsistent with the Scriptural exhibition of the Divine attributes;" instead of the form of statement of the doctrine by Augustine, expressed in the Gallican Confession by Calvin, explicitly stated in the Canons of the Synod of Dort, the doctrinal standard of the Reformed Church of Holland and the United States, and implied in the Shorter Catechism—namely, that, mankind having fallen, and being thereby sinners, some were elected to everlasting life in the exercise of Divine mercy, others not elected in the exercise of Divine justice—the doctrine taught in all our theological seminaries, and the common faith of the Church to-day.

12. A vote against any revision is a solemn declaration of preference for the retention of the expression, "elect infants," which admits of the interpretation, and was adopted because it admits of it, that some infants dying in infancy are foreordained to everlasting death: instead of the unambiguous statement: "Infants dying in infancy are included in the covenant of grace"—the doctrine contained in the Theologies of Hodge and Shedd, taught in all our seminaries, and the common faith of the Church to-day.

13. A vote against any revision is a solemn declaration that the voter does not desire that our Confession should contain a declaration of the love of God for all men, and the duty of the Church to preach the Gospel to every creature, the reason for not desiring such a statement

being that in a Presbyterian Assembly in the middle of the seventeenth century there were those who did not believe in the love of God for all men, maintaining that in John 3:16, "the world" meant the elect.

14. A vote against revision is a solemn declaration that a connected, formally didactic statement in the Confession of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit is not desirable.

15. A vote against revision is a solemn declaration of the following additional preferences: (1) The retention in the Confession of the statement that it is sinful to refuse to take an oath when required to do so by a civil magistrate; (2) the retention of the statement that "the Pope of Rome is antichrist, the man of sin and son of perdition;" (3) for "papists and other idolaters," instead of "adherents of false religions;" (4) for "damnation," instead of "condemnation;" and in a number of other particulars a preference for the phraseology of the Westminster divines instead of that recommended, in many instances with entire unanimity, by the Revision Committee.

16. It is neither a good nor sufficient reason for opposing revision that office-bearers are not required to accept the *ipsissima verba*. For *first*, if the only purpose of the Confession were its use in the ordination of office-bearers it would be none the less desirable that the *ipsissima verba* state as fully and accurately as possible the actual faith of the Church. *Second*, the objection has no relevancy to a proposition to amend the Confession by the addition of a new Chapter, such as that on "The Gospel." *Third*, it wholly ignores the use of the Confession in the religious instruction of the members of the Church, and also its use as a testimony to other Churches, and the world as to what Presbyterians believe is the teaching of Holy Scripture.

17. The question at issue is not a question of orthodoxy. The intimation that the revision proposed would in any way impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system is wholly unfounded, is misleading, and should be scrupulously avoided. The character of the Revision Committee and their unanimous declara-

tion settles the question beyond the possibility of excusable misapprehension.

18. The fact that there are those who desire a new Creed that might impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system and would not assert the Confessional doctrine of inspiration, is neither a good nor sufficient reason for opposing a revision that does not impair the integrity of the Calvinistic system and retains the Confessional doctrine respecting the Scriptures, much less is it a reason for voting on the question of revision with the new Creedists. Ecclesiastical as well as secular politics makes strange bed fellows. The anti-revisionists are a "fusion" of ultra-conservatives and liberals. The former oppose revision under the delusion that they are promoting orthodoxy by retaining in the Confession hyper-Calvinistic statements with the understanding that they may be repudiated. The latter, with more of the wisdom of this world than their inconsequent thinking allies, oppose revision, knowing that an unrevised Confession means a *new doctrinal Standard*—whether nominally "a new Creed" or the less revolutionary designation, "a declarative statement," and whether in terms "substitutional" or "supplementary"—that will *supersede the Confession*. In any serious conflict, whether in defense of civil rights or of the faith, it is not wisdom to do what the adversary wishes you to do.

18. Opposing revision is no evidence of zeal for orthodoxy. One of the most conspicuous anti-revisionists in 1892, and now, avowed his approval of the action of the Presbytery of New York in deciding, that published heresies so flagrant that one General Assembly in terms and another impliedly, with virtual unanimity, requested their author peaceably to withdraw from the Church, were consistent with subscription to our standards. There are others than old Dr. Beecher who have reason, as he said he had, to thank God that consistency was not essential to salvation.

19. Revision is opposed on the ground that an historical document so venerable as the Westminster Confession should not be marred by amendment, but should be preserved in its integrity. The objection is wholly irrelevant to the

issue. No action of Presbytery or General Assembly can mar or mend the Westminster Confession as an historical document. What is written is written. The Confession under discussion is the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States in this year of our Lord, 1900. It is constitutionally amendable and has been amended. It purports to state the faith of the Church to-day. The question, therefore, has nothing to do with the venerableness of the antiquity of the Westminster Confession, or its logical symmetry, or its rhetorical lucidity and "winsomeness," but simply this: Does the Confession of Faith of our Church state as fully and accurately as possible the faith of the Church? We may, however, say it would not mar but mend the Confession to omit supralapsarian Predestination and "elect infants" and insert a chapter on the Gospel and the Person and work of the Holy Spirit.

20. The position is not ethically defensible that while there are undoubtedly changes in the Confession that would be desirable, any change under existing circumstances would be untimely. In sacred no less than in secular matters, when required to make a statement it is always timely to state what we believe to be the truth.

21. The Confession revised as recommended by the Committee bears a relation to the present Confession analogous to that of the Revised Version of the Scriptures to the Common or Accepted Version. On a question of textual accuracy or grammatical translation the former version is the more authoritative. On a question as to the faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States to-day, the Confession as revised is more authoritative than the unrevised Confession, and would be so recognized by our ecclesiastical courts. No one will ever

be condemned for heresy, or even accused of it, for teaching as recommended by the Revision Committee. Is it not desirable that our nominal standard should correspond in form with the actual?

22. Some prefer retaining the Confession in its present form and accompanying it with explanatory footnotes or supplement of objectionable phraseology. No reason can be given for such explanatory statements that would not be of equal, or rather greater, validity for an emendation of the text; especially as the only "explanation" that can be given is that the phraseology in question is not now interpreted to mean what it is generally understood to mean, and is as it is that it might be so understood.

23. Some prefer retaining the Confession in its present form, and accompanying it with a declarative statement of the faith of the Church to-day. What interest of the Church or of the truth would be promoted by thus making permanently conspicuous objectionable statements and the defects of the Confession?

24. In adopting the changes recommended the Revisers were influenced by no other consideration than the merits and advisability of the amendments proposed. In view of the competency of the Revisers for the duty assigned them, their unquestionable loyalty to the system of doctrine contained in the Confession, and their official character as representatives of the entire Church there is no reason to believe that if the changes recommended were submitted to the Presbyteries to be considered and approved or disapproved on their merits—as they never yet have been—they would be approved with the same degree of unanimity as that with which they were adopted by the Revision Committee. A decided advance would thus be made toward the settlement of the present perplexing Confessional question.

PRINCETON, N. J.

