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Rev. WALTER L. LINGLE, D. D.,
Editor-in-Chief

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Index Volume XXIX, 1917-1918.

LITERARY.

	Page.
Books and Articles on the Reformation and the Reformers—	
James I. Good, D. D.....	30
China Since the Revolution—J. Leighton Stuart, D. D.....	351
Christianizing Christendom—S. L. Morris, D. D.....	237
Democracy Among the Hebrews—S. K. Phillips.....	325
First Principles of Theistic Faith—J. J. Murray.....	316
Historical Address—W. W. Moore, D. D.....	188
International Service Through Missions—John Nelson Mills, D. D.	149
Introductory Statement—Editor.....	89
Jesus Christ the Eternal Logos of the Father—Herbert S. Turner	336
Keynote Method, The—C. Alphonso Smith, LL. D.....	1
Lapsley, Samuel Norvell—John M. Wells, D. D.....	246
Making Presbyterians—Willis Thompson.....	36
Marxian Socialism, Its Theory, Its Features, Its Contact with the Bible—William T. Hanzsche.....	303
Missionary Sermon, A—Wm. Hoge Marguess, LL. D.....	41
Organic Union or Federal Union—James H. Taylor, D. D.....	91
Organic Union of the Presbyterian Churches—Ernest Thompson, D. D.....	109
Organic Union or Federal Union—J. Sprole Lyons, D. D.....	123
Prayer and Progress—Wm. E. Hill.....	210
Power of the Gospel, The—Charles R. Erdman, D. D.....	222
Presbyterian Church Union—James I. Vance, D. D.....	117
Review of the General Assembly at Durant, A—O. E. Buchholz...	285
Society of Missionary Inquiry, The—Editor.....	185
Spirit of Missions or the Larger Patriotism, The—D. P. McGeachy	258
Supreme Element of the Minister's Message, The—Egbert W. Smith, D. D.....	228
Through Judgment and Glory—A Book Study of Isaiah—Eugene C. Caldwell, D. D.....	52
Union of the Presbyterian Churches—Russell Cecil, D. D.....	102
Unrevised and Revised Confessions Compared, The—Walter L. Lingle, D. D.....	132
Young Minister in His Study, The—Andrew W. Blackwood, D. D.	14

BOOK REVIEWS.

Books of the Pentateuch (Eiselen)—Edward Mack, D. D.....	165
Book of Revelation Not a Mystery (Keppel)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D.	370
Brazil Today and Tomorrow (Elliott)—H. S. Allyn.....	266
China From Within (Scott)—L. B. Turnbull, D. D.....	265
Christ (Jerome)—Andrew W. Blackwood, D. D.....	76
Christ We Forget (Wilson)—Theron H. Rice, D. D.....	168
Christ and the Kingdom of God (Hooke)—Russell Cecil, D. D..	176
Christianity and the Man of Today (Frazer)—D. P. McGeachy...	78
Church Advertising (—) —Dunbar Ogden, D. D.....	80
Churches of Christ in Time of War (MacFarland)—Russell Cecil, D. D.....	72
Chinese Womanhood (Boggs).....	283
Counterfeit Miracles (Warfield)—T. C. Johnson, D. D.....	364
Deep Calleth Unto Deep (Bible House, London)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D.....	278
Evangel of the Strait Gate (Clow)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D.....	83
Evolution of the Hebrew People and Their Influence on Evangel- ization (Wild)—Edward Mack, D. D.....	278
Good Ministers of Jesus Christ (MacDowell)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D.....	71
Faith in Christ (Moment)—T. C. Johnson, D. D.....	268
Five Young Men (Brown)—W. S. Golden..	80
Forefathers' Day Sermons (Jefferson)—W. L. Lingle, D. D....	274
Geographic Influences in Old Testament Masterpieces (Wild)— W. W. Moore, D. D.....	81
Gospel of Jesus and Problems of Democracy (Vedder)—D. H. Ogden, D. D.....	74
Gospel of Mark (Erdman)—W. L. Lingle, D. D.....	173
Highway of Life and Other Sermons (Kerr)—R. A. Lapsley, Jr..	376
History of the Christian Church (Walker),—W. L. Lingle, D. D..	371
History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mexico (Butler)..	282
Human Element in Making of a Christian (Conell)—W. T. Thomp- son ..	181
Immortality and the Future (Mackintosh)—T. C. Johnson, D. D..	65
Introduction to the Old Testament (Creelman)—Edward Mack, D. D.....	166
Introduction to the Life of Christ (Hill)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..	365
Introduction to the New Testament (Zahn)—E. C. Caldwell....	367
Islamic Africa (Sheppard)—W. A. McIlwaine.....	267
Is Christianity Practicable? (—) —Ernest Thompson, D. D....	85
Japan in World Politics (Kawakami).....	282
Jesus for the Men of Today (Gilbert)—D. P. McGeachy.....	378

- Jesus of History (Glover)**—D. H. Ogden, D. D..... 177
John and His Writings (Hayes)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 169
John Fourteen (Dunham)—W. E. Hill..... 85
Life of Christ (Hill)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 275
Life of Service (Vance)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 368
New Church for the New Time (Harper)—W. L. Lingle, D. D.... 372
New Layman for the New Time (Harper)—W. C. Smith..... 79
Making Good in the Ministry (Robertson)—Andrew Blackwood,
D. D..... 375
North American Idea (MacDonald)—W. L. Lingle, D. D..... 87
Paul the Hero (Jones)—T. P. Johnson, Jr..... 380
Paul and His Epistles (Hayes)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 169
Paul's Doctrine of Redemption (Beach)—R. A. Lapsley, Jr..... 75
Paul's Joy in Christ (Robertson)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 276
Pedagogy for Ministers (Hobart)—O. E. Buchholz..... 281
Prayer in Its Present Day Aspects (Campbell)—C. K. Taffe.... 84
Presbyterian Pioneers in Congo (Sheppard)—Hugh Robertson... 86
Prince of the Church in India (Ewing)—T. A. Painter..... 379
Prophet Elijah to Christ (Blackwood)—O. E. Buchholz..... 280
Prophets—Elijah to Christ (Blackwood)—Edward Mack, D. D.. 167
Prophets of the Old Testament (Gordon)—Russell Cecil, D. D.. 373
Prophet of the Spirit—Jeremiah (Longacre)—E. C. Caldwell,
D. D..... 170
Protestant Reformation and Its Influence—W. L. Lingle..... 373
Records of the Life of Jesus (Sharman)—M. E. Sentelle, D. D.. 281
Religious Foundations of America (Thompson)—W. L. Lingle,
D. D..... 271
Religious History of New England (—)—W. L. Lingle, D. D.. 270
Reorganization the Hope of Foreign Missions (White)—T. C.
Johnson, D. D..... 264
Rise of Modern Religious Ideas (McGiffert)—W. L. Lingle, D. D.. 271
Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians (Evans)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D.. 277
Salvation (Chafer)—R. A. Lapsley, Jr..... 377
Scotch-Irish in America (Ford)—W. L. Lingle, D. D..... 269
Spiritual Ascent of Man (Jones)—Thornton Whaling, D. D..... 174
Story of St. Paul's Life and Letters (Smyth)—E. C. Caldwell,
D. D..... 71
Stuff of Manhood (Speer)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 172
Social Theory of Religious Education (Coe)—Andrew Blackwood,
D. D..... 178
Syrian Christ (Ribhany)—L. B. Turnbull, D. D..... 175
Theology for the Social Gospel (Rauscheubusch)—W. L. Lingle,
D. D..... 274

INDEX

- The Only Nancy (George)—W. L. Lingle, D. D..... 174
Thirty Years With the Mexicans (Case)—L. B. Turnbull, D. D.. 366
Ultimate Ideals (Blauvelt)—R. A. Lapsley, Jr..... 182
Varied Beauty of the Psalms (Enelow)—Edward Mack, D. D.... 280
Virgil C. Hart, Missionary Statesman (Hart)—D. P. McGeachy.. 82
Voice of God in the Present Hour (Torrey)—R. O. Flinn, D. D... 73
Will to Freedom or the Gospel of Nietzsche and the Gospel of
Christ (Figgis)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D..... 68
What Did Jesus Really Teach About War (Pell)—W. L. Lingle,
D. D..... 172
When Home Is Heaven (Chapman)—J. B. Massey..... 181
When Christ Comes Again (Eckman)—E. C. Caldwell, D. D.... 70
Why I Believe the Bible (Burrell)—Ernest Thompson, D. D..... 180
White Queen of O'Koyong (Livingstone)—R. C. Long..... 84

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

ORGANIC UNION OR FEDERAL

UNION.....*By James H. Taylor, D. D.* 91

UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN

CHURCHES.....*By Russell Cecil, D. D.* 102

ORGANIC UNION OF THE PRES-

BYTERIAN CHURCHES.....*By Ernest Thompson, D. D.* 109

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH UNION.

By James I. Vance, D. D. 117

ORGANIC UNION OR FEDERA-

TION.....*By J. Sprole Lyons, D. D.* 123

W. R. Minter, D. D. 127

THE UNREVISED AND REVISED

CONFessions COMPARED.....*By Walter L. Lingle, D. D.* 132

INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

THROUGH MISSIONS.....*John Nelson Mills, D. D.* 149

EDITORIALS

BOOK REVIEWS

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THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

VOL. XXIX.

JANUARY, 1918.

No. 2.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

This number of the Union Seminary Review is devoted largely to the vital question of Presbyterian Union or Federation. There is no more important question before our Church at this time. The following letter which was addressed by the editor to nine Southern Presbyterian ministers in nine capital cities will explain the way in which the thoughtful articles which go to make up this issue of the Review were secured:

"Last May the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., appointed a committee to confer with our Church on organic union and requested our Assembly to appoint a similar committee to confer with their committee (see Minutes of our Assembly, p. 27). Our Assembly in reply appointed a committee to consider the question of the federation of all the Presbyterian bodies in the United States (see Minutes of our Assembly, p. 53). These two committees have held a joint conference in Atlantic City and will hold another meeting in Richmond on December the 18th.

It is evident that there is a great deal of unrest in both of these great Presbyterian Churches as to the present relationship existing between them and as to the relationship existing between the various Presbyterian bodies in this country. It is also evident that there are many in our own Church who feel that something ought to be done. This feeling is intensified by the reports of unrest which come from some of the border States where the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and the

THE UNREVISED AND REVISED CONFESSIONS OF FAITH COMPARED.

By THE REV. WALTER L. LINGLE, D. D.,

*Professor of Church History in Union Theological Seminary,
Richmond, Va.*

In 1902-03 the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern) revised the Confession of Faith by amending three sections, by making a declaratory statement explaining the sense in which they held two other chapters, and by adding two chapters. In these days, while we are discussing union and federation, it is well that we should study these changes which have been made and compare the un-revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) with the revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), to see whether any insuperable Confessional differences separate the two Churches. As many of our readers do not have the revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), before them it has seemed well to us to print all the changes which were made in their Confession so that the comparison between the two Confessions may be easily made. That this comparison may be made without bias we print the changes without comment. Each reader may judge for himself whether the revision has put a fixed gulf which cannot be bridged between the two Confessions.

I. *The Three Sections Which Were Revised.*

Chapter XVI, Section 7.

The un-revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), reads as follows:

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God."

The revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), reads as follows:

"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."

Chapter XXII, Section 3.

The un-revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), reads as follows:

"Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just, and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching anything that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority."

The revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), reads as follows:

"Whosoever taketh an oath ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man bind himself by oath to anything but what is good and just,

and what he believeth so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform."

Chapter XXV, Section 6.

The un-revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), reads as follows:

"There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God."

The revised Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), reads as follows:

"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."

These are the only three changes which were made in the text of the Confession.

II. *The Declaratory Statement.*

This statement was put into the Confession in 1902-03 by the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), to explain the sense in which they hold Chapter III and Chapter X, Section 3, of the Confession, and is not found in the Confession of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern). It reads as follows:

DECLARATORY STATEMENT.

"While the ordination vows 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:

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.

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."

III. *The New Chapters.*

Two new chapters were added to the Confession by the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), and are as follows:

PREAMBLE TO NEW CHAPTERS.

"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:

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Of the Holy Spirit.

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 worshiped 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.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Of the Love of God and Missions.

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."

So far as we know, and we have searched with great diligence, this article now contains all the differences which exist between the Confessions and Doctrinal Standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. The question of the interpretation of these Standards is another question."

IV. *The Brief Statements.*

In 1902 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern), adopted a "Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith." This brief statement was not sent down to the Presbyteries for their approval and forms no part of the Constitution of the Church. Its purpose is to put into a condensed, modern, popular form the great doctrines of the Confession as held by the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. (Northern). In 1913 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. (Southern), adopted a somewhat similar "Brief Statement of Belief Drawn from the Standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States." This brief statement was not sent down to the Presbyteries for their approval and forms no part of the Constitution of the Church. It was intended entirely for popular use. While these two "brief statements" are not a formal part of the Constitution of the Churches which they represent, they are of value in a study of this kind, as they throw light upon the way in which the Assemblies of these respective Churches interpreted their standards. They also show something of the ability, or inability, of these two Churches to make creedal statements in modern terms. Believing that they will be of service in helping us to understand the doctrinal petitions of these two Churches, we print these two "brief statements" below:

"Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith," adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in 1902.

Article I—Of God.

"We believe in the ever-living God, who is a Spirit and the Father of our spirits; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being and perfections; the Lord Almighty, most just in all his ways, most glorious in holiness, unsearchable in wisdom and plenteous in mercy, full of love and compassion, and abundant in goodness and truth. We worship him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three persons in one Godhead, one in substance and equal in power and glory.

Article II—Of Revelation.

We believe that God is revealed in nature, in history, and in the heart of man; that He has made gracious and clearer revelations of Himself to men of God who spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, is the brightness of the Fathers glory and the express image of His person. We gratefully receive the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration, to be the faithful record of God's gracious revelations and the sure witness to Christ, as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and life.

Article III—Of the Eternal Purpose.

We believe that the eternal, wise, holy, and loving purpose of God embraces all events, so that while the freedom of man is not taken away nor is God the author of sin, yet in His Providence He makes all things work together in the fulfilment of his sovereign design and the manifestation of his glory; wherefore, humbly acknowledging the mystery of this truth, we trust in His protecting care and set our hearts to do His will.

Article IV—Of the Creator.

We believe that God is the Creator, Upholder, and Governor of all things; that He is above all His works and in them all; and that He made man in His own image, meet for fellowship with Him, free and able to choose between good and evil, and forever responsible to His Maker and Lord.

Article V—Of the Sin of Man.

We believe that our first parents, being tempted, chose evil, and so fell away from God and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death; and we confess that, by reason of this disobedience, we and all men are born with a sinful nature, that we have broken God's law, and that no man can be saved but by His grace.

Article VI—Of the Grace of God.

We believe that God, out of His great love for the world, has given His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners, and in the gospel freely offers His all-sufficient salvation to all men. And we praise Him for the unspeakable grace wherein He has provided a way of eternal life for all mankind.

Article VII—Of Election.

We believe that God, from the beginning, in His own good pleasure, gave to His Son a people, an innumerable multitude, chosen in Christ unto holiness, service and salvation; we believe that all who come to years of discretion can receive this salvation only through faith and repentance; and we believe that all who die in infancy, and all others given by the Father to the Son who are beyond the reach of the outward means of grace, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases.

Article VIII—Of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe and confess the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, who being the Eternal Son of God, for us men and for our salvation became truly man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, without sin; unto us he has revealed the Father, by his Word and Spirit making known the perfect will of God; for us he fulfilled all righteousness and satisfied eternal justice, offering himself a perfect sacrifice upon the cross to take away the sin of the world; for us he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he ever intercedes for us; in our hearts, joined to him by faith, he abides forever as the indwelling Christ; over us, and over all for us, he rules; wherefore, unto him we render love, obedience, and adoration as our Prophet, Priest, and King forever.

Article IX—Of Faith and Repentance.

We believe that God pardons our sins and accepts us as righteous, solely on the ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Christ, received by faith alone; and that this saving faith is always accompanied by repentance, wherein we confess and forsake our sins with full purpose of, and endeavor after, a new obedience to God.

Article X—Of the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who moves everywhere upon the hearts of men, to restrain them from evil and to incite them unto good, and whom the Father is ever willing to give unto all who ask Him. We believe that he has spoken by holy men of God in making known His truth to men for their salvation; that, through our exalted Saviour, He was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten men's minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable them to obey the call of the gospel; and that he abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of holiness, and of comfort.

Article XI—Of the New Birth and the New Life.

We believe that the Holy Spirit only is the author and source of the new birth; we rejoice in the new life, wherein He is given unto us as the seal of sonship in Christ, and keeps loving fellowship with us, helps us in our infirmities, purges us from our faults, and ever continues His transforming work in us until we are perfected in the likeness of Christ, in the glory of the life to come.

Article XII—Of the Resurrection and the Life to Come.

We believe that in the life to come the spirits of the just, at death made free from sin, enjoy immediate communion

with God and the vision of His glory; and we confidently look for the general resurrection in the last day, when the bodies of those who sleep in Christ shall be fashioned in the likeness of the glorious body of their Lord, with whom they shall live and reign forever.

Article XIII—Of the Law of God.

We believe that the law of God, revealed in the Ten Commandments, and more clearly disclosed in the words of Christ, is forever established in truth and equity, so that no human work shall abide except it be built on this foundation. We believe that God requires of every man to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God; and that only through this harmony with the will of God shall be fulfilled that brotherhood of man wherein the kingdom of God is to be made manifest.

Article XIV—Of the Church and the Sacraments.

We believe in the Holy Catholic Church, of which Christ is the only Head. We believe that the Church Invisible consists of all the redeemed, and that the Church Visible embraces all who profess the true religion together with their children. We receive to our communion all who confess and obey Christ as their divine Lord and Saviour, and we hold fellowship with all believers in him.

We receive the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, alone divinely established and committed to the Church, together with the word, as means of grace; made effectual only by the Holy Spirit, and always to be used by Christians with prayer and praise to God.

Article XV—Of the Last Judgment.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ will come again in glorious majesty to judge the world and to make a final separation between the righteous and the wicked. The wicked

shall receive the eternal award of their sins, and the Lord will manifest the glory of his mercy in the salvation of his people and their entrance upon the full enjoyment of eternal life.

Article XVI—Of Christian Service and the Final Triumph.

We believe that it is our duty, as servants and friends of Christ, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the State, and so to live in all honesty, purity, and charity that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding his people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and declare unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and that He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently trust that by His power and grace all His enemies and ours shall be finally overcome, and the kingdoms of this world shall be made the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. In this faith we abide; in this service we labor; and in this hope we pray,

‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’ ”

*“A Brief Statement of Belief Drawn From the Standards
of the*

*Presbyterian Church in the United States.”
Adopted by the General Assembly (Southern) in 1913.*

I—God.

“God is a spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable; all-powerful, holy, wise, good, true and just, hating all sin. He

is merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. This truth is summed up in the Bible statement, "God is love." He exists in three persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—who are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

II—The Bible.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, written by men inspired by the Holy Spirit, are the word of God. They are the revelation of God's will for man and of man's duty to God, and are the only infallible and authoritative rule of faith and life.

III—God's Purpose.

The eternal purpose of God includes all events; it is holy and wise, and does not deprive men of freedom nor make God the author of sin.

IV—Creation.

For the manifestation of His own glory, God created the world and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, and all very good. He made man after His own image; male and female created He them, with immortal souls, endowed with knowledge, righteousness and holiness, having the law of God in their hearts and power to fulfil it, and yet, under a possibility of transgression, being left to the freedom of their own will.

V—Sin and the Fall.

Sin is the violation of God's law, either by omission or commission. Our first parents, being tempted by Satan, disobeyed God's command, and so by their own choice fell from their original state of innocence and communion with God, and came under the power of sin, the penalty of which is eternal death. All men, by reason of their relationship to Adam as

their representative head and common ancestor, are born with a sinful nature, from which all actual transgressions proceed, and out of this condition no one is able to deliver himself.

VI—Salvation.

God, who is rich in mercy, so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners. The salvation thus provided is freely offered to all men, and is sufficient for all, but becomes efficacious only in those who believe in Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

VII—Election.

Before the foundation of the world, God the Father chose unto Himself in Christ a people whom He gave to His Son, that they should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Those who come to years of discretion receive this salvation only through faith in Christ, being regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Those who die in infancy, and others who are incapable of exercising choice, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases. We thus declare that God's electing grace has peopled heaven with a multitude that no man can number, and has never sent one soul to hell.

VIII—Christ the Redeemer.

The Lord Jesus Christ, being the eternal Son of God, became truly man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin; so that he is both God and man, and the only perfect mediator between God and man, by whom alone we can come unto the Father. By a life of perfect obedience and by his sacrificial death he satisfied divine justice, made a perfect atonement for sin, and reconciles us to God. He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where he makes continual intercession for us; and he

sits at the right hand of God, clothed with honor and power, subduing his people unto himself, ruling and defending them, and restraining and conquering all his and their enemies. He will come again to receive and reward his people and to judge the world.

IX—The Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, applies the redemption purchased by Christ. He persuades and enables man to obey the call of the gospel, and dwells continually in every believer as the spirit of truth, of holiness, of power and of comfort, and is thereby the author of all Christian experience.

X—Justification by Faith.

Every one who humbly relies upon Christ alone for salvation and in repentance confesses and forsakes his sins, is pardoned and accepted as righteous in Gods sight, solely on the ground of the perfect obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Every one thus pardoned and accepted is adopted into God's family, and becomes an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

XI—The Christian Life.

The Holy Spirit imparts spiritual life by the direct operation of His power, so that, being born from above, we are the children of God, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which are not the ground, but the fruits of salvation. Dwelling in Christ's people, He purifies them more and more from sin, enables them to render a cheerful and loving obedience to God's commandments, and perseveres in His sanctifying work in their hearts, until at last they stand perfect in the presence of Christ in glory. Believers may at times backslide, growing indifferent and cold, and even falling into grievous sins; yet God does not cast them off, but chastens them and restores them through repentance to fellowship with Him.

XII—The Church.

We acknowledge one universal Church, the same in all ages, of which Christ is the head. The Church invisible consists of all the redeemed. The Church visible is composed of all those throughout the world who profess faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children, and it is the duty of all believers openly to profess their faith by uniting with the Church. The Church exists to bring to Christ those whom the Father has given him and to establish the Redeemer's kingdom. The mission of the Church is spiritual, and its work is to witness to the truth of God to the ends of the earth and to preach the gospel to all men in every generation. We believe in the separation of Church and State. The scriptural form of Church government is by elders or presbyters, chosen by the members of the church; but we do not regard the form of government of a church as essential to its existence. We recognize the validity of the ministry and sacraments of all evangelical churches, and seek the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. Ministers, elders and deacons, at their ordination, are required to subscribe to the system of doctrine contained in our standards, but the sole condition for membership in the church is a credible confession of Christ as Saviour.

XIII—The Sacraments.

There are two sacraments—Baptism, which symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit, and the Lord's Supper, which symbolizes the sacrificial death of Christ. Sprinkling or pouring is the scriptural mode of baptism, but the mode is not essential to the validity of the sacrament. Children of believers, before reaching the age of personal accountability, are to be baptized on the faith of their parents, who in the sacramental act enter into formal covenant relations with God. We invite to the Lord's table all who love him in sincerity and truth and who are in good and regular standing in evangelical churches.

XIV—Death and Resurrection.

The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in the grave till the resurrection. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity; but the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment.

XV—The Final State.

There are but two states of future existence—heaven, the home of the redeemed, and hell, the abode of the finally impenitent. There is no purgatory, nor is there any probation after death. Man retains his identity after death, and there will be recognition in the future life. We believe in the ultimate and complete triumph of the Saviour's kingdom, and with all his followers in all ages we toil and pray for the speedy coming of the day when our glorious Lord shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."