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"EVEN AS WE HAVE BEEN APPROVED OF GOD TO BE INTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL, SO WE SPEAK; NOT AS PLEASING MEN BUT GOD WHICH PROVETH OUR HEARTS."

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POSTHUMOUS POEMS.

BY THE LATE THEODORE DWIGHT WOOLSEY, D.D., LL.D.,
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[In 1880 President Woolsey gathered the poems he had written but never published into a thin volume, of which only forty copies were printed. These he gave to his intimate friends. They have been carefully guarded and their contents never given to the public. We have received permission to publish a selection from these verses which we would gladly have made larger.—EDITOR INDEPENDENT.]

INTRODUCTORY SONNET.

As one who, strolling on some autumn day
Through woods with summer's life no longer crowned,
Gathers the treasures fallen from many a spray,
And shows his friends the choicest he has found;
So, little book, do I, in life's decay,
And seeing close at hand its wintry bound,
Bid thee, with silent footstep go around
To those that know me best, and whispering say:
"These leaves, long pressed within the book of years,
From which the colors may not quite have fled,
Seek private audience from kindly ears,
To tell what thoughts my summer hours once fed.
Receive them with mild silence; scorn them not;
Let him that sends them be not quite forgot."

SONNET.

Deluded age which thinks or seems to think
That naught is action save what can be seen;
And sets a brand upon the brow serene
Of those, who from the gaze of crowds would shrink:
And they, who rush not boldest to the brink
Of novelties, seem coward souls and mean;
And they, who pause and meditate between
Their deeds, at wisdom's well ne'er learned to drink.
Action is prayer upon the sick man's bed;
Action is silence, where a word might wound;
Action is bold rebuke, where crowds are led
To assault the walls which gird old truth around.
Action seeks shelter, when the wind's ahead,
While those who dare the stormy waves are drowned.

GAL. VI, 2, 5.

I looked and saw two different companies
Who traveled the same road, but wide apart.
Each pilgrim had a burden at the start,
Which, as he journeyed onwards, grew in size.
These looked not on each other with a heart
Of sympathy, nor felt their sorrows rise
To see the pangs of anguish, that would dart
Through the flushed countenance and bloodshot eyes
Of fellow-traveler. None would lay his load
Aside, to help his brother up the hill;
And oft they pushed each other from the road;
And ever, as they journeyed, quarreled still:
Their law was, "Each must his own burden bear,"
Therefore their burdens grew to blank despair.
Such was this crew; how far diverse were they
Who seemed a gloomier band at the first look
And more had they to do, to watch and pray
And often study o'er a little book,
Besides each other's burden that they took
With gladness on their backs; and on the way
They yielded each to th' other: none forsook
The tired, or by the fall'n refused to stay.
None was so mean that all did not behold
In him a brother high in rank and place,
Whence the faint-hearted dally grew more bold,
And those who lagged behind revived their pace.
Their law was, "One another's burdens bear,"
Therefore their burdens grew as light as air.

SONNET.

I stood, methought, fast by Heaven's outer gate,
When Plato,* blindfold, humbly to the door
Came with weak steps, if he might venture o'er
The threshold doubting, or without must wait,
When he, who in the Master's bosom lay,
And saw the mysteries nearest to the throne,
Drew nigh, and led the mild enthusiast on
Up to th' Eternal Word, Heaven's fount of day.
"There," said th' Apostle to the kindred mind,
"Dwells truth, whose shadows thou wast fain to trace;
There beauty, which thy dreams wandered to find;
There love, which swells beyond the soul's embrace,"
Then loosed the bandage, and the sage, no more
A sage but saint, beheld and knelt to adore.

SONNET.

When I behold the strifes and jealousies,
Within the fold of Christ on every side,
Which brethren, who in love once walked, divide
For reasons light as air in just men's eyes,
I think how high-souled worldlings must despise
Such questions vain, so vainly magnified,
And rather trust to virtues built on pride
Than drink at fountains where such fumes arise.
Wo to the factious ones, who cause the offense:
And wo to those who blindly misapply
Their measuring line; and, if they faults espy,
Straightway religion brand as sheer pretense.
Rather than upward turn to Christ the eye,
And draw the portrait of a Christian thence.

NAPOLÉON AND WASHINGTON.

(ROME, 1830.)

How oft has righteous Heaven
To earth dread scourges given—
Stars ris'n in blood, to set in darkness drear;
But hope waits long in vain
The sight of one to gain
Whose name with reverence coming time shall hear.

Let Europe's blood-stained lord
And he, whose guiltless sword
Our freedom built, in scales of truth be hung;
Look where their pathways bend,
And mark their different end,
And which was great declare with righteous tongue.

The one saw opening made
For war's adventurous trade,
And reap't the fields where bristle armies brave.
Thrones fall before his sword,
Kingdoms obey his word,
France bows the knee, and Europe is his slave.

His purpose is like light
Shot from the womb of night;
His deed sweeps onward swifter than the wind:
The wishes of his soul,
In restless billows roll;
Their rage no fear of man or God can bind.

But swifter was the path
Of God's avenging wrath.
His work once done, he hurled his tool away.
Thou thoughtest thine own hand
Raised thee and made thee stand,
But thou wast lifted up to work thine own decay.

The island of the sea
Thy prison home must be,
Thou'rt nigh forgot, whilst yet men quake for fear:
Of kings no stately race
To thee their line shall trace,
From thy fall'n trunk no royal shoots appear.

Now turn to him whose heart
Ne'er played the warrior's part,
Whom duty summoned to the field of blood.
Thou would'st have shunned the choice,
But loud a people's voice
Called thee to guide their vessel through the flood.

To them and righteous Heaven
Thy sword and life were given:
Through good and ill their cause thou mad'st thine own.
When heart was gone and hope
Thy wisdom was our prop,
Thy patience loosed us from a foreign throne.

Thus from the fiery strife
Sprang up a nation's life:
But who shall freedom's deep foundations lay?
'Twas thine with healing hand
To unite our broken land,
We called thee first our infant State to sway.

But soon the toils of power
Give way to quiet's hour;
Too soon thine evening rays forsake our sky;
Far is the mourning spread
For such a Father dead,
Deep in the western forests ends the cry.

Wide is our home and free:
No land beyond the sea
Had such a dawn, or hoped for such a day.
Oh, who can count the throng
That with the voice of song
Shall bless thy name, who ledest freedom's way?

But he, how curst his lot,
To be or aye forgot,
Or ne'er forgiven, with nan's best hopes who play'd.
Ah! down the stream of time
He floats a wreck sublime,
Or sinks amid the ruin he has made,

And when the Judge of all
His names in wrath shall call,
AH! WHO SHALL COVET HIS SUPERIOR PLACE?
HE MIGHT HAVE BLEST BUT CHOSE
THE WEAL OF MAN TO OPPOSE;
HENCEFORTH BE RUIN HIS, AND FOUL DISGRACE.

ABAEIARD AND HELOISE.*

'Twas dusk; six men with noiseless feet,
Carrying a burden, as they went,
Halted before the Paraclete,
By Cluny's reverend abbot sent.

They bore the corpse of one who knew
What sinning meant and what to rise,
To her, in shame his partner true,
Partaker of his penitent sighs.

"Next to my heart through all those years,"
She said, "which tore my heart in twain,
And wet my sins with constant tears,
I see thee, dearest one again:

"A corpse beloved, a chastened friend,
Who, on a steep and rugged road,
From fleshly longings didst ascend
Up to the purity of God.

"I have my prayer once more to abide—
Tempted no more, nor tempting thee—
Near God and closest to thy side,
Loving and loved in purity.

"Hard was thy lot, bright, beauteous soul,
All light, all fire, half earth, half Heaven;
Yet all is well, reached is the goal,
Peace hast thou now, O much forgiven!

"How many sin without a dart
Hurled at them such as pierced thee through;
How many feel a biting smart,
Then, all forgotten, sin anew.
Thy sin and mine are washed away;
Our crime—it was our natal day.

"Ab, lower him, daughters, to the cave,
A man beloved of me and God;
And when I die let the same grave
Cover my body with its sod.
'Tis right, 'tis holy now to love—
Joined to the soul that rests above."

So spake the Abbess in midlife—
The penitent who laid no blame
Upon the author of her shame,
But loved him, the unwedded wife,
Even in the convent, with a flame
That rose to heaven, tho' built on flesh,
Still burning from her heart afresh.

Through twenty years the widowed one
Poured forth her prayers for that dear soul;
Then, with her heart all calm and whole,
In holy quiet Heloise died
And lay close by Abaelard's side.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

BY MAURICE THOMPSON.

"He is a man of culture, but he looks like a convict," is a remark set to the credit, or discredit of a well-known literary woman in speaking of a caustic Western humorist. It was Boston against Chicago, I am told, and, if it was, Chicago may well claim the better manners. What a man or a woman looks like is not necessarily the individual's fault: generally it is a slip of Nature, for good or for bad. If the Chicago man was not a convict, his resemblance to one is not to pass polite lips, even Boston lips. But there may have been great provocation and the personality may have been the sting of justice.

Once in a while justice is almost compelled to be impolite. When the police judge said to an incorrigible woman witness in his court: "Madame you are a perfect lady, but you must not use such profane language in my presence," he was fumbling after the unattainable. Still the residuary taint of chivalry noticeable in his phraseology does him no harm; it does him honor. He touched very near the high-water mark of criticism. We must not pass the line which bounds the domain of privacy. If Zola is the author of a putrid book, I am not therefore at liberty to divulge to the public any act which he has confined to the limit of his private moral

* (April 21st, 1862.)

domain. A man or a woman, nevertheless, is justly saddled with the notoriety of evil writing and the critic is not forbidden to take note of this.

As in criminal law so in the law of literature a person is presumed to intend the direct and natural consequences of his act. The critic who has praised Zola and Tolstol is held to intend that Zola and Tolstol shall be taken as models. If it is in good moral form for Tolstol to write "Anna Karenina," then it is in good moral form for any American novelist to write a novel of lust, adultery and every other corruption. I have noted with not a little compassion the trouble certain critics have taken to avoid speaking of some American novels of the European sort, because I understand perfectly their predicament. Let me place myself for a moment in their shoes. Say that I have written of Tolstol's "Anna Karenina" that it is one of the greatest, best and most moral novels ever written, when in fact it is a prurient and disgustingly detailed description (to the minutest degree) of a married woman's lust for a strange man, and, in turn, of the strange man's lust for the married woman, followed by the harrowing and equally disgusting reaction after lust has had its fill. I have praised this book, we will say, held it up to the unfledged writers of America as greater than "Ivanhoe," and made them believe me; what am I to say when Miss Rives and Mr. Saltus take me at my word and sound the preliminary chord of a much milder American score in the key of lust? The critic who finds himself thus fettered is to be pitied. Mr. Saltus and Miss Rives have him at their mercy. They can go boldly up to him and say: "Here, take my book and praise it. True, it does not enter so minutely into the practical details of illicit love as does 'Anna Karenina,' but it shows what may soon be expected in America; take it, I say, and praise it!"

It is something to be thankful for that Mr. Howells is at last ready to admit that such "guilty love" as is handled by Tolstol is a trifle too rank for the present state of American taste, tho he persists in assuring us that "if by some prodigious miracle any American should now arise to treat it on the level of 'Anna Karenina,' he would be absolutely sure of success and fame and gratitude"; but Mr. Howells is compelled to admit that no American magazine editor would dare print such filth in his magazine. Why, we may inquire of Mr. Howells—why would the American editor feel forced to decline publishing so great and good and filthy a story? Would it be because the American editor does not know a thing to be grateful for when he sees it? or, is it because the American readers of magazines cannot properly appreciate literature which has lust and salacious love for its subject?

So far as the effect upon public morals is concerned there can be little difference between publishing "Anna Karenina" in a magazine as a serial and in publishing therein a fulsome panegyric of the same when it appears in book form. Doubtless the greater sin would accompany the latter, for it would always do, as in this case it has done, the subtlest of all injuries to the imagination of the nascent novelist. Just here is a good point for the introduction of some competent evidence of the fact that American criticism is largely to blame for the existence of the prurient element lately injected into American fiction. But first let me remark that our critics have not yet rid themselves of the notion that literature to be good must have an alien origin. This notion took root in us while we were yet in British swaddling-bands, and while the umbilical cord severed by Washington's sword was still sore. So fixed did it become that even now it is the basis of that lofty snobbery which has set Tolstol above Hawthorne, Guy de Maupassant above Longfellow, and Browning above Whittier in the hearts of a young school of American writers. Even Edmund Gosse can toss across the Atlantic a flippant and jauntily humorous critical grenade, which, in the belief of these worshipers of the alien, is sufficient to silence all the genius of the United States. Here let me say once for all, that I love Mr. Howells and Mr. Gosse too much to fear that they intend to finally ruin America by forcing us to read no novelist but Tolstol, and no poet not numbered in the English twelve—and so I get back to the introduction of my evidence.

Looking over American criticism for a few years past, it is startling to note that of the novels approved by it as masterpieces, every one has been immoral in its bearing, and all those most insistently praised have been novels whose central attraction was illicit love. One Spanish novel, one Portuguese novel and two Russian novels have led the procession, each with its burden of guilty passion depicted so minutely that no detail of unholy pining and desire was wanting, and each found applause and welcome from even religious (Christian?) journals, whose columns would have been defiled forever if those same novels had been printed therein. Am I forbidden to demand of those religious journals (in whose columns fiction is regularly published) that they tell me why they do not admit into those columns one of these masterpieces of adultery made interesting, or one of these incomparable Russian or Spanish or Portuguese photographs of lust and infidelity, gilded with a preterse of moral teaching? Am I forbidden this demand, I repeat, when these same religious journals in their columns of criticism laud such novels to the skies? If these are the best

novels, and if they "teach a great moral lesson," why not publish them as serials in journals whose aim is to assist public and private morals? The bottom fact of this matter is snobbery—and I do not mean any offense—a snobbery inherited from our ancestors, and so set in our marrow that we cannot discredit it.

If the Chicago humorist had been English (don't you know?) the Boston woman would never have dreamed that he "looked like a convict," but might have written a sonnet on his mustache. So if Miss Rives had written "Anna Karenina," the critics of America would have jeered her out of countenance, and would have had all the world to believe that she looked like a person escaped from a reformatory. If Mr. Saltus had been the author of "Crime and its Punishment," there would have been nothing but condemnation of him in our journals. Miss Rives and Mr. Saltus are young writers whose minds have been invaded by the fame of Tolstol. Dostoievsky and the rest, and they have made haste to try their strong imagination in the line of those so-called "masters" of fiction. Now, why shall they be condemned? If it is glorious for Tolstol to give a perfectly brutal and salacious picture of "unholy love," why shall it be inadmissible for Mr. Saltus to sketch a mild picture of a like subject? If both a Spaniard and a Portuguese can win wide and high praise in America, with novels of dirty intrigue and marital infidelity, why shall Miss Rives be booted out of the country for picturing a mere hysteria of fleshly love?

Nobody doubts that evil has its fascination. Who that has read Baudelaire's poems, or those of Guy de Maupassant, or still more those of Villon, or those of Swinburne, can ever forget their effect, like that of some delicious but deadly drug? Especially to the young (of both sexes) does the literature of guilty love appeal with this indescribable fascination when clothed in the purple and gold of genius. Byron poisoned a generation of youth with his garlanded cup of vice.

When the literature of an alien tongue steeped in lecherous imaginings, when authors whose "Confessions" make them lower than "convicts"—when these and worse are set up by American critics as better than "Ivanhoe" or the "Blithedale Romance," and greater than Scott and Hawthorne, who among these critics can dare to condemn Mr. Saltus, Miss Wheeler and Miss Rives for sounding a minor note of immorality? Who is to blame?

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND.

THE PRESBYTERIANS AND THE REVISION OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION.

BY BENJAMIN B. WARFIELD, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY IN PRINCETON SEMINARY.

If we may judge by the comments of the secular and undenominational press, the recent action of the Presbyterian General Assembly in inquiring of its presbyteries whether they desire a revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith, is likely to be much misapprehended by those who are insufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances of the case. It may seem natural to infer from such an action, that the Presbyterians, speaking through their highest court, are proposing to themselves a rather thorough-going revision of the doctrinal basis on which they have so long stood; that such an agitation could not arise save in response to a widespread, spontaneous movement in the Church, by which a large body of its ministers and adherents have drifted into a position of opposition to the doctrines taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith, or at least of dissatisfaction with the way in which they are taught in it; and that the movement thus begun is sure to issue in extensive changes of the mode of statement or of the doctrines themselves of the Westminster Standards, if not in the total discarding of them as antiquated relics of a past age and the substitution for them of a new creed more accordant with the living faith of the Church. Nevertheless, no one of these inferences is justified by the facts. The sole legitimate deduction is rather that the Presbyterian Church is so true to its profession that God alone, speaking in his Word, is "Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men," and so jealous of the rights of the Church as over against its subordinate standards, which are its creation—not its mistress—that it keeps constantly before itself the expression of its testimony to doctrine, and thus secures that that testimony shall always remain the living voice of the Church bearing its witness to the truth of God, as it apprehends and lives by it.

1. The present overture does not contemplate change of doctrine, and does not propose even change in the statement of doctrine. In its preamble it recites as the ground on which it bases itself:

"Whereas, Overtures have come to the General Assembly from fifteen presbyteries asking for some revision of the Confession of Faith; and whereas in the opinion of many of our ministers and people some forms of statement in our Confession are liable to misunderstanding, and expose our system of doctrine to unmerited criticism."

Here no dissatisfaction with the doctrine itself is recited; rather it is suggested that criticism of the doc-

trine is unmerited and the fruit of misunderstanding, and may be remedied by a more careful and better statement of the same doctrine. It is only revision of "forms of statement," then, that is contemplated in the overture; and it avoids going so far as to propose even this. The preamble continues:

"And whereas, Before any definite steps should be taken for revision of our Standards, it is desirable to know whether there is any general desire for such revision."

The "revision of the Standards" here is, of course, the kind of revision defined in the preceding clause, and this sense is necessarily carried over to the concluding resolution:

"Therefore, resolved, That this General Assembly overture to the Presbyteries the following questions: 1. Do you desire a revision of the Confession of Faith? 2. If so, in what respects and to what extent?"

If anything were needed to vindicate the foregoing exposition of the meaning of the overture, it would be supplied by the brief debate that was held in the Assembly upon its adoption. It was adopted just in this form on the distinct ground that it was a colorless inquiry into the presbyteries' will, and did not propose either revision or no-revision to the presbyteries; and so little was it thought to concern the substance of any doctrine that the moderator ruled that the introduction of doctrinal discussion into the debate concerning it was out of order.

2. That even this colorless overture was not the outgrowth of any general and spontaneous movement in the Church, the history of its origination in the Assembly sufficiently shows. Its proximate origin is traced to an overture sent up by the Presbytery of Nassau to the General Assembly of 1888, asking for the revision of the third chapter of the Confession of Faith (that on "God's Eternal Decrees") "on the ground that in its present form it goes beyond the Word of God, and is opposed to the convictions and repugnant to the feelings of very many of our most worthy and thoughtful members." That the Assembly did not consider the matter very urgent is sufficiently evinced by its neglecting to act on it further than by referring it to the next Assembly. In the interval between the two Assemblies the Presbytery of Nassau made a strong effort to enlist the Church at large in its overture, sending a circular letter out requesting the other presbyteries' co-operation. The success of the effort was not striking—the great majority of the presbyteries paying no attention to the request, and the great majority of those who did take up the matter refusing in one way or another (usually by laying the appropriate motion on the table) to enter into the movement. Only some fifteen presbyteries out of upward of two hundred responded by appropriate action; and it was in answer to their request thus obtained that the Assembly passed the overture. Even this meagre result, we shrewdly suspect, does not represent an impulse wholly native to our soil or Church. In these days of easy communication the ends of the earth are brought very close together, and contagion is easy if not unavoidable. It is significant that the Committee of the Presbytery of Nassau, in urging co-operation on the other presbyteries, were not willing to rest their appeal on the merits of the case; but were careful to adduce the examples of the Scotch United Presbyterians and the Presbyterian Church of England. And the general sense of the present restlessness of the foreign Presbyterian Churches in their relation to the Confession of Faith appears to us to be the source of all the apparent strength the present movement has among us. The adoption of the example of these foreign Churches—and much more any attempt to imitate it—is, however, the fruit of a misapprehension. Their struggles now, are simply efforts to attain some such free and yet safe relation to the Confession of Faith, as the American Church has enjoyed ever since it adopted the Westminster Symbols in 1729. From the very beginning the American Church, which asks of its office-bearers acceptance of the Westminster Standards, only as containing "the system of doctrine" which they believe to be true and Scriptural, has possessed all the liberty which the Free and Established Churches of Scotland, for example, are now seeking. Up to to-day those Churches have required confession of sincere belief "of the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith . . . to be the truths of God" and the confession of the signers' personal faith. Despite Dr. Candlish's efforts to explain it away, this obviously means and was intended by the Assembly of 1711, which framed the formula, to mean (in Principal Cunningham's words), acceptance of "the whole doctrine" ("every detail and syllable" as he elsewhere exaggeratingly expresses it), of the Confession, not of its "doctrine as a whole." Instead of being disturbed or infected by the restlessness of these Churches, bound to a confession with a strictness that must wound every tender conscience which finds any phraseology in the document to which it can raise any exception, we should pity them as brethren still in durance, and point out to them the safe pathway through which we had escaped more than a century and a half ago. Certainly, so far as there are those among us who are led to believe that the Confession of Faith needs revision, because all the foreign Churches are more or less restless under their relation to it, the movement is not only not a spontaneous one among us, but even a spurious one.

3. What has already been said will suggest some of the reasons why we do not think that the issue of the present overture will be extensive doctrinal change, or even important verbal change, in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church. As discussion goes on through the year, it can scarcely fail to become increasingly plain to all, not only that the Presbyterian Church is satisfied with her Standards, but that she loves them and finds in them just the best statement—most moderate and most inclusive as well as most logical and most complete—of the truth of God as she apprehends it, that has ever been framed. Some of the reasons that must, as it seems to us, operate to lead her, not blindly and fanatically, but intelligently and liberally, to refuse to undertake any important revision of the time-honored formularies may be indicated as follows:

(1.) So long as the Church remains as heartily convinced as she at present undoubtedly is, that what is known as the Augustinian system of doctrine is the truth of God as delivered through the prophets and apostles, she is without grievance in her relation to her Standards. There is always an infelicity in requiring individuals to affirm any public Confession that it is the confession, in all its parts, of their private faith. A public document by that very fact cannot be in all its parts just the expression of the private faith which every one of its signers would frame for himself. To require a large body of ministers to affirm any public Confession that they accept its whole doctrine as "truths of God" is a strain too great to put upon conscience, and must foster on the one hand a spirit of evasion and subterfuge and on the other a keen sense of every infelicity in language or conception in the Confession and a restless anxiety to have them removed—hopeless task tho this obviously is, seeing that the very phraseology which is oppressive to one is the only tolerable expression of the faith of another. The American Church has required of its office-bearers, from the beginning, however, subscription only to "all the essential and necessary articles," or, as it is otherwise phrased, to "the system of doctrine" in the Confession, as "good forms of sound words." In our view, this subscription is an ideal one. It does not ask us to affirm that the Westminster Confession is perfect or infallible, or that we adopt every proposition in it; but only that we heartily accept the system of doctrine taught in it, and all the doctrines that are essential to the integrity of that system. The office-bearer in the Presbyterian Church thus is merely asked to affirm that he recognizes in the Confession of Faith an expression—an adequate expression—of the system of truth which he believes God has given to the Church. He is at liberty to believe, if he will, that the Heidelberg Catechism is an equally good or better expression of the same system; or the Canons of the Synod of Dort, or the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England, or any other sound Reformed creed. But he must believe in this system. So long as we are Calvinists, then, we say, the relation that Presbyterian office-bearers bear to the Confession is an ideal one; their subscription is just such as must operate, when honestly taken and administered, to keep out all the wrong men and to keep in all the right ones.

(2.) So long as we are Calvinists, we may add, our whole situation with reference to our Creeds is one that is incapable of improvement. The individual's relation to the Creed might conceivably be improved, by letting him frame his own creed, which with care might be made an exact transcript of his personal faith; but just in proportion as this individual *credo* fitted the idiosyncracies of his personal conceptions and modes of expression, it would be unacceptable in its details and forms to every other individual. No public creed can be framed which every individual of some thousands of office-bearers can adopt as the exact expression of his personal faith. We need not go to the extreme of Mr. Taylor Innis, who says that "there is no honest or sane man who will pretend that any proposition in religious truth constructed by others, exactly expresses his own view of that religious truth"; but this is certainly in a measure true of all extended Confessions. However, then, we should alter the Confession of Faith, whether little or much, however we burdened it with *Declaratory Statements*, whether many or few, to whatever extent we should substitute for it other creeds, whether new or old, whether long or short, we should be at the end of the process exactly where we were in the beginning. We should still be face to face with a creed which we all could accept for system of doctrine, and which no one of us could accept in all its propositions and phrases. If our present Creed is acceptable to us, then, for system of doctrine—and that it is, ought to be evinced by the mere fact that we have all accepted it as such—it is hardly worth while to embark on extensive projects of revision in order to arrive at precisely the same haven from which we started out.

(3.) And so long as we are Calvinists, we may add again, it seems hopeless to dream of improving upon the Westminster Confession in stating the system which we believe. The fact is that the Westminster Confession of Faith registers the high-water mark of the confessional statement of Calvinistic doctrine. Men have spoken of it in these latter days, indeed, as cold, scholastic, logical—standing at an extreme point in the devel-

opment of Calvinism; and they have repeated these statements until many are ready to believe them. But it is almost impossible to avoid suspecting that such deliverances rest on insufficient acquaintance with the document itself. Logical no doubt it is—is to be logical a fault?—but it is no less devout than logical. The product of an age "when" (as Dr. Alex. F. Mitchell describes it) "the Church was still under the happy influence of a marvelous revival, when the Word of God was felt as a living, quickening, transforming power, and preached, not as a tradition but as the very power and wisdom of God," and framed "by men of ripe scholarship and devoted piety, who have remained our models of earnest preaching, and our guides in practical godliness, even until this day", it would be strange, indeed, if it lacked that atmosphere and tone of vital godliness which, as a matter of fact, fills every phrase of it, and enters unawares into the heart of every one who really feeds on it. And it stands at an extreme point in the development of Calvinism, not in the sense that it embodies an extreme Calvinism but only in the sense that it has skimmed the cream of moderate and tolerant Calvinistic thought. No Calvinism is sweeter, purer, more devout, more catholic, than the Calvinism of the Westminster Standards. The Confession of Faith is, as it has been well phrased, "a model of guarded strength in moderation." Bailey tells us that it was "cried up," at the time, "by many of their greatest opposites, as the best Confession yet extant"; and from that day to this, it has never ceased to command the admiration of even those who could not accept it—as, for example, of the late Dr. Curry who characterized it as "the ablest, clearest and most comprehensive system of Christian doctrine ever framed." So intent were its framers on so stating doctrines as to throw the stress on the practical and religious value of it, and so careful were they to state it so moderately as to make it inclusive of all forms of truly Calvinistic thought, that it seems scarcely possible to touch one of their guarded clauses without both hardening and narrowing it. When once some specific revision is seriously attempted, the Church is likely to fall back on Dr. Mitchell's advice: "It will be time enough to think of change, when a school of theologians of riper scholarship and more patient study, of higher culture and deeper piety, shall arise among us"; which time is not yet. We will certainly do well to cling to the Westminster Confession until we can better it.

(4.) In circumstances such as these, the historical integrity of so venerable and noble a document will appeal to the Church as worth preserving. Presbyterians are no relic worshipers; they claim the right, and have exercised it, of adapting their Creed to their living faith. But when nothing is to be gained and perhaps much lost they will not fail to consider it a certain vandalism to throw away, merely in the license of change, a flag under which so many battles have been fought and so many glorious victories won, and perhaps even more glorious defeats suffered. They will not keep the old, merely because it is old; but they will not exchange the tried and loved old banner for a doubtful new one, merely because it is new.

(5.) Lastly, in learning to appreciate anew, as the year's study will enable it to do, the true breadth and catholicity of the Westminster Confession, the Church is apt to remember, too, its value as a rallying-point for Christian unity. It was framed distinctly as an *irenic* one. The purpose of those engaged on it was to vindicate the faith of the English Church as not out of harmony with the Consensus of the Reformed churches, and to bring together under one Confession the various bodies then in Great Britain. Its history is that of an *irenic* one. By its means the Churches of England and Scotland were brought for the first and only time under the bonds of a single Confession. It was adopted by three distinct denominations. It remains to-day the creed of all the great Presbyterian Churches of the English-speaking world, as well as of many Congregationalists and Baptists. Only yesterday two great denominations of American Presbyterians were able to unite on the Westminster Standards, pure and simple. If we are to have another reunion of Presbyterians in America, shortly, it must be on the same basis. Nay, such is its moderation and catholicity, that we may even hope that it may serve as an act to even broader federations of Reformed churches. Certainly, we may well listen to Dr. Mitchell's wise words: "Our only hope of a really united Presbyterian Church lies in substantial adherence to the Confession." We do not think Presbyterians will forget this in making up their minds how to deal with their Confession.

Doubtless, as the year of examination passes by, Presbyterians will think of other, perhaps more cogent reasons, for holding fast to what is so good. But the reasons already alleged will suffice to supply some ground for our judgment that we are not embarked upon a year that is to see our old foundations of faith broken up. Meanwhile let us say that we earnestly hope discussion will nowhere be suppressed. The more the Westminster Confession of Faith is studied, and the better it is understood, the less likely is it to be either abandoned, explained away, or patched up with scraps of cruder new thinking. "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

LET us not make a business of pleasure, let us try, rather, in this brief and transitory life of ours to make a pleasure of business.

I write this down to be talked of over your desk or pasted down in your scrap-book. It was "evolved from my inner consciousness" yesterday through a cloud of railroad dust and perspiration that reached from the shadows of Mount Shasta back to Tu-la-ré, the scene of my last letter. Dust and glowing heat all day long! Many a rolling river by the wayside, mountains of snow continually to the right, whenever the clouds of dust made it possible to behold their glory; but let it be honestly confessed that it was not pleasant traveling up the great Sacramento Valley yesterday, with the mercury above par and still rising. There are sultry days in California, dust in California, and sweat on certain days, notwithstanding the snow peaks that shut up like silver gateposts of Paradise in a long and unbroken line along the east.

But such sultry days of dust are rare. They are so rare that we are tempted to cry out in our impatience, as I did yesterday, on finding that I was making a business of pleasure when I should be making a pleasure of business.

And do you know it is almost a full day's hard railroad travel from here back to Tulare? This California is almost incomprehensibly large. I doubt if half the people living in California comprehend its real extent. Let me illustrate by comparison with other lands; for it is only by having some idea of the area of this state that we can reconcile some apparent contradictions.

Well, then, to begin with, the counties in California are generally about the size of states in the eastern part of the Republic. I think we have some counties as large as Massachusetts; and I am not sure but we have some that are as large as all the New England States put together. The California coast-line is longer than that of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia all together. You travel about the same distance in going from New York to Florida as you travel in going from the extreme end of Northern California to the extreme end of Southern California. Lay California down on the map between New York and Chicago and you will find the space about covered. The fact is, when you hear of California you are hearing of about half-a-dozen states. So do not be surprised that I am a bit slow or even a bit loth to push on out of this vast empire of the sunset; for surely it is as glorious in detail as it is grand in extent.

In my dusty and sweltering flight from the land of the raisin and the fig in Central California I passed through Sacramento, "the city of the plain," the capital of California.

A glittering dome of gold looms high above the forest, which is fast making this city more like a pleasant park than a center for trade and railroads. This is the dome of the state capitol.

We old Californians find little or nothing here to remind us of the past. Even the riotous Sacramento River, that in the old days would rise up in a single night and come teeming down through the town, has somehow settled down to be a very orderly stream. May be, like the rest of us, he is growing old and wants to take it easy.

Captain Sutter, who founded this city, and who built his fort here, and built a mill over yonder, and found gold in the tail-race of his sawmill and so set the world on wheels, would not find one single landmark of the old place left. Even the beds of the rivers are changed. Tailings and debris choked up the old channels, and men plow there now, while the waters, as a rule, go steadily along under the willow banks of quiet canals that wind along out yonder, to water the vast valleys of Sacramento. The roar of progress is in the air. The smoke of enterprise and action, as of a mighty battle, hovered over this hot city as I hastened through it yesterday in my flight to these mountains of Western California.

Of course I passed through many counties coming up to this place from Middle California; many little cities; many places deserving of high mention. But in a land so vast and so varied the writer can but generalize at best.

It being generally known that I was to take this tour for THE INDEPENDENT, I have been literally bombarded by enterprising town lot and "boom" land speculators and real-estate agents generally. Each county has also furnished me a book or pamphlet in which its advantages of soil, climate, scenery, etc., are set forth at especial advantage.

Now there is something laudable on the part of these various counties in the general desire to "set the best foot foremost," and tell the world of their various advantages through THE INDEPENDENT, and I shall so far as I can clip something from these same books, and let them say their say in their own language. For when a whole county unites in saying something to the world, the people of the county at least believe it to be true. And when a man makes choice of a certain spot and settles down to live and die there, he shows a certain sort