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PRESBYTERIAN REVISION OF FAITH.

The secretary of the Committee for the Revision of Faith for the Presbyterian Church, which met in New York on January 12th, received reports from nearly two hundred Presbyteries, as follows: –

Twenty-eight unreservedly approve the proposed amendment of the Confession. One hundred and twelve give assent, but ask that it be further amended. Fifteen request that the old Confession be held and that all effort to amend it be discontinued. Thirty-eight, are dissatisfied with the amended Confession and, [R1360 : page 39] believing that it cannot be sufficiently amended to please them, ask for an entirely new one, which shall be extremely simple and almost devoid of doctrine. These latter would like to be free if the others would let them; but are unwilling to lose their position in the denomination. Each party will doubtless sacrifice principle and stay in, no matter what sort of a Confession the others may exact from them – just as they have done for years past.

The Rev. Dr. Parkhurst, of the New York Presbytery, who, although a Presbyterian minister for over eight years, under vows to believe and to teach its doctrines, it will be remembered, declared that he had *never so much as read* the Confession of Faith, is one of the pronounced advocates for a totally new Confession. He recently stated himself as follows: –

"I don't believe that the old Confession of Faith should be patched up or revised, but that it should be stowed away among the archives of the Church as *a relic of mediaeval theology*. To take its place an entirely new Confession should be formulated. The new one should be divested of all the non-essentials which have caused so much dispute. It should be a simple, direct

statement of fundamentals of our belief, so worded that the commonest people could understand it. Instead of being 124 pages in length I would like to see it two pages long.

"After the old Westminster Confession is laid aside, I would not advocate its use for instruction in theological seminaries, but would lay it aside altogether."

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THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE.

Our age's sphere of light,
Though widening still, is walled around by night;
With slow, reluctant eye, the Church has read,
Skeptic at heart, the lesson of its Head.
– *Whittier*.

Despite the light that cheers the world to-day,
Shadows surround us, on our heavenward way,
And Error darkens Truth's celestial ray.

Not yet the beams, whose radiant splendors dart
From the fair realms of Science and of Art,
With equal glory shine from soul and heart:

Men worship golden calves and serpents still,
Like cringing slaves bow to their masters' will –
Obey the letter, but the spirit kill;

Still tremble at the Priest's uplifted rod,
For fear that he may doom them, by a nod,
To endless hell-fire in the name of God.

False prophets still the wrath of Heaven provoke,
And hypocrite, and Pharisee, and rogue,
Sit in high places in the synagogue.

As sheep disguised, wolves still make sheep their prey,
The blind still lead the blind the downward way,
And sneaking Judases their Lord betray.

Still is assailed the free soul that aspires,
Still persecution feeds her smoldering fires,
And still, to murder Truth, are leagued the Liars.

Still everywhere a selfish spirit rules –
Men herd themselves in squabbling sects and schools,
And deem dissenting brethren knaves or fools;

Still hack their heads with dull, polemic swords,
Fan the fierce flames of hate with windy words,
And take the Devil's plaudits for the Lord's.

The world, which God gave to his children all,
They parcel into sections, large or small,
And round each petty church "patch" build a wall;

Shout their strange shibboleths and battle cries,
Assert pre-emption title to the skies,
And curse him as a heathen who denies.

Thus bigotry and sect intolerance
Sharpen the infidel's else harmless lance,
And cause the Devil's imps for joy to dance!

Thank God! Religion is a plant that grows:
Its perfect flower perennially blows,
More fragrant and more fair than Sharon's rose.

It yet shall rise from out the sloughs and swamps,

Shed from its shining leaves the dungeon damps,
Break every bond that yet its free growth cramps.

Methinks I see it rising and expand!
Its mighty branches arching every land,
From Zembla's snows to India's sunny strand.

Upward, forever up, I see it rise,
Flashing resplendent glory on our eyes,
Until its crown is lost within the skies.

And there, beneath this everlasting tree,
This Tree of Life and Human Destiny,
I see the nations gather, bond and free,

Gentile and Jew, of every clime and race –
God's children all – and, standing face to face,
Own but One God, their Father, and embrace!

Then, only then, will men indeed be free,
Then will the Golden Age we dream of be,
And Jesus Christ reign universally!

– *Charles W. Hubner.*
