

Symposium.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH.

REV. JOHN CAMPBELL, LL.D.

THE genial editor of the *Canada Presbyterian* can generally see as far into a millstone as any other man, but he was at fault when he inferred from the article on this subject in last month's JOURNAL that there was no doubt what side the writer was on. The spectacle of a college faculty, divided against itself and warring in words in the organ of their own students and graduates, was felt to be so undesirable that the members of faculty asked to write on the subject met with the editor and unitedly agreed to favour, not necessarily revision, but important changes in the articles of faith. From that agreement neither of the writers has expressed to the other or to the editor his intention of receding. It will, therefore, be necessary to read between lines, to judge as much by what the article *does not* affirm as by what it does, and especially to note that the third alternative, a new confession, is not touched at all. Any one familiar with the numerous public duties of the writer will not wonder at the necessity for leaving some things unsaid.

Historically, the Westminster Confession can be traced back to the personal experience of St. Augustine of Hippo. The licentious young Manichee, as his Confessions relate, was suddenly brought to rest, almost as by an open miracle, on the merits of Christ, and so found peace, and freedom from the lusts of the flesh. From his own experience first, and then by a search for Scripture texts to confirm it, he formulated his creed of absolute predestination and irresistible grace. The way by which Providence led him at Tagaste and Carthage, at Rome and Milan, the prayers of his devout mother, Monica, the preaching of Ambrose, his own soul struggles, the friendship of Alypius and others, the mere Pagan aids afforded by Cicero and Plato, were clean forgotten or merged in these two doctrines which are really one, falsely attempting to glorify Divine Sovereignty by a Divine