

gical revival manifested in many places of that country. It had succeeded in obtaining the Old Helvetic Confession of Faith; and that suppression of articles it evoked, and that the subsiding of the ministers, when, at length, at last, it commanded them to read from the pulpit a proclamation for the support of the new constitution. About forty-three ministers refused to read it; both because that reading was not conform to the civil law, and because they could not openly unite the things of the sanctuary with those of this world.

One of them, especially, the Rev. Mr. Descombaz, a man equally talented, pious, and firm, when the public officer attempted to ascend the pulpit, in order to read the paper, went out of the temple, followed by the whole of his congregation, and preached, for the first time since the Reformation, in the open air.

The Government would not submit to the refusal of the ministers, and summoned them to be first judged, according to law, by the three classes of the Canton. But that legal Court having acquitted them, the authority went on, passing by that decision, and after various and far-fetched pretences, condemned the forty-three ministers to a suspension from their duties.—Mr. Descombaz for one year, some others for three months, or for one month at least.

But the whole of the clergy being one in that serious occurrence, about 250 ministers and licensed young men met together at Lausanne, in two successive synodical assemblies; and in the second meeting, at which the whole of them could not be present, a large number—more now than 140—signed their demission from the public ministry, and declared in their address to the magistrates, that, "if before the 15th of December, the law would not secure the freedom of the clergy, and allow them to preach both in temples and universities, they would altogether part with their livings, and secede from all religious connection of the Church with the State."

They have, in the meantime, published a manifesto of their conduct, assuring the people that, far from ceasing to be their ministers and pastors, they would keep on with the nation on the same terms of affection, visitation, and teaching of the children, offering to the people to be still, from the Lord, among them, the preachers of the holy gospel of grace, &c.

On the other hand, the Government has issued a paper, in which the conduct of ministers is severely blamed, and by which it is declared that the ministers have taken a stand without remedy.

So you see, Sir, that most probably, on the 15th of December will begin a new and unheard of state of things in Switzerland, and that, if it be allowed and practicable, a Free Church will be constituted in the Canton of Vaud.

The Lord alone knows His own own ways, and very soon we will see whether these are, that such a Church should be formed in a country where the Reformation was so mighty, so decided, and evangelical,—when so many Reformers held the celebrated *Conferences of Lausanne*.

This we know, Sir, that the Son of God is crowned a King over Zion, his holy hill, and that he will himself lead on the battles of Jehovah. To him be indeed glory and obedience in the Church!

The following is the official document published by those who have given in their demission. It constitutes one of the most important pieces of ecclesiastical history of our day, and a noble page in the history of the Canton of Vaud:

"To the National Reformed Evangelical Church of the Canton of Vaud.

"Brethren dearly beloved, and faithful members of our Church; old men, to whom God has given the wisdom of advancing years; fathers and mothers, whose children we instruct; young people, who ought to be the stay and support of our Church—all of you whose servants we are for the love of Christ, hear and judge this solemn determination, which a great number of your pastors have come to before God.

"For months past we have frequently appealed to the councils of the nation, remonstrating against encroachments, daily becoming more numerous and more menacing, made by the civil authority upon the freedom of our Church, and the liberty of

the ministry. Our words have not been listened to. The edicts, which are the councils of the Church, have, in the redoubt, of date 22d and 24th October, spoken with a unanimity that ought to have had great weight. The expression of their opinions, however, has not been attended to; and the Council of State has pronounced a sentence against men who direct, resting upon the law, to defend the rights of the Church and of the ministry. An important duty devolved upon us to save the Church of our fathers; and to-day, Wednesday, 12th November, 1843, one hundred and fifty-three pastors and ministers, obeying the voice of conscience, with a heavy heart and on headed knees before God, have adopted the following resolution, which has been forwarded to the Council of State:—

"To the Council of State.

"Monsieur the President, and MM. the Members of the Council of State,—By the double judgment which you have pronounced, on November 3, 1843, you have on your own authority completely modified the Christian ministry in the National Church. By this sentence you have condemned all printed forty-two pastors and ministers for having refused to read from the pulpit the truly political proclamation of July 22. You have condemned them in spite of the precise terms of the law of 1832, which warranted their refusal. You have condemned them in spite of the sentence of abolition of the four edicts. By this sentence you have now declared that, contrary to the constitution, which says, 'The law regulates the relation between the Church and the State,' now the Church, in place of being united to the State, is made subordinate to the State; in place of being governed by the law, it is governed by the arbitrary will of the Council of State.

"That pastors have no more the benefit of that law.

"That in spite of the precise terms of the law, pastors are obliged to submit to every order of the executive authority.

"That the civil magistrate has the right of occupying the pulpits of our places of worship, of his agents, to read there at the hour of Divine service, his proclamations, which taught sanction doctrines and interests injurious to those which are religious and spiritual.

"We, the pastors and ministers undersigned, the guardians of worship and of religion, declare, gentlemen, that we cannot, and will not, be the instruments of sanctioning such encroachments. By the same sentence of 3d November you have condemned and punished three pastors, for having prayed to God and preached His gospel in the church of Lausanne, even for having only assisted at religious worship.

"You have condemned them, although they violated no law.

"You have condemned them in spite of the law of God, which absolves them.

"You have condemned them in spite of the unanimous sentence of abolition of the Class of Lausanne (ecclesiastical court).

"By this judgment you have declared that the laws no longer protect the ministry, since you ascribe the power of law to your circulars; that the law of God is no more to be the supreme rule of the Christian ministry in the National Church.

"The pastors can no more exercise their ministry by preaching, except at hours and in places fixed by authority, and the pastor, if the authority refuses, loses the right of assembling with his parishioners for prayer, and for explaining to them the Word of God.

"That consequently the civil authorities claim the right of limiting, at their discretion, the ministry of the pastors.

"We, the pastors and probationers undersigned, who have received this ministry from God, to whom we must render an account, declare that we neither can nor will accept these shackles.

"In consequence of the arbitrary measures you have brought to bear against the Christian ministry of the National Church, we declare that we this day resign into your hands, from and after the 15th December next, the status and ecclesiastical functions which we exercise in the National Church; until the 15th December, such of us as have not been suspended shall continue to exercise our functions. This delay is determined on solely to prevent embarrassment to the parishes and the Government.

"By this demission, and for the reasons assigned, gentlemen, we protest before you, and we shall protest strenuously before the country, that we yield to the force of circumstances, and that it is your arbitrary measures that exclude us from active service in our Church. We declare that no political interest nor personal view actuates us. We declare, at the same time, before you, and we shall do it before the country, that there may be no misapprehension of our purposes, that we are ready to devote ourselves anew to the service of the National Church; but we will not undertake official duty until, by sufficient guarantee, we are secured in the rights and liberties of our National Church and of the Christian ministry in that Church.—Receive, gentlemen, the assurance of our respect.

"Lausanne, Nov. 12, 1843."

METHOD OF PREACHING OF JAMES BERNWICK, THE MARTYR.

The latter end of this year I heard that great man of God, Mr. James Bernwick, preach on Song iii. 9, 10, when he treated greatly on the covenant of redemption entered on between God the Father, and God the Son his equal, in favour of the elect; as also on the covenant of grace established with believers in Christ. O, this was a great and sweet day of the gospel, for he handled and pressed the privileges of the covenant of grace with seraphic-like enlargement, to the great edification of the hearers. Sweet and charming were the offers which he made of Christ to all sort of sinners. There was one thing this day that was very remarkable to me; for it was raining from morning to night, and we wet as if we had been drenched in water, yet not one fell sick; and though there was a tent fixed for him, he would not go into it, but stood without in the rain and preached—which example had a great influence on the people to patience, when they saw his sympathy with them; and though he was the only minister that kept closest to his text, and had the best method for the judgment and memory of any that ever I heard, yet now when he preached, the people crowded close together because of the rain, he disapproved a little, and cried with a pleasing, melting voice, "My dear friends, do not be disturbed because of the rain, for to have a covenant interest in Christ, the true Solomon, and in the benefits of his blessed purchase, is well worth the enduring all temporal, elementary storms that can fall on us. And this Solomon, who is here pointed at, endured a far other kind of storm for his people, even a storm of unmix'd wrath. And, O! what would poor reprobates in hell give for this day's offer of sweet and lovely Christ? and how welcome would our suffering friends in prison and banishment make this day's offer of Christ! I, for my own part, as the Lord will keep me, shall bear my equal share of this rain, in sympathy with you." And he returned to his sweet subject again, and offered us grace and reconciliation with God through Christ by his Spirit. He had a sweet charming eloquence in holding forth Christ as the only remedy for lost sinners.—*Memoirs of Nisbet.*

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

The *Witness* expresses the following opinion respecting an exposition of the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, by the Rev. Robert Shaw, Whitburn; with an introductory essay by the Rev. William M. Hetherington, L. L. D. :—

The Confession of Faith was compiled by men, than whom a more illustrious band of theologians never adorned any age of the Church. It is beyond question the most concise, comprehensive, and profound system of divinity in existence. But the lapse of time, and the altered position and circumstances of the various sections of the Church, have rendered a few of its terms obsolete, and imparted ambiguity to some of its clauses; and a judicious exposition of it we regard as one of the greatest services which it was possible, in those times, to render either to the Confession itself or to the Church. This is the task—a most difficult and delicate one—which Mr Shaw has undertaken. The "Confession," we have said, occupies the first place amongst theological creeds and systems; Mr. Shaw's "Exposition" is worthy of the "Confession."