

maintained their supremacy in the councils of the Church, in the professor's chair, and in the pulpit. Then followed, in the middle of last century, a theological revolution such as had never swept over the Christian Church. It affected not only the Reformed, but still more the Lutheran and Roman Churches; while in France it ended in the Reign of Terror and the French Revolution, which abolished Christianity itself. Since then the symbolic books had lost their former authority in almost every country except England, Scotland, and the United States. In the present century came theological revival, which was still going on all over the Christian world. That revival or regeneration was a return to the faith of the Reformation, a deeper plunge into the truths of the Bible. The faith was the same, but the theology differed. Every age must produce its own theology. Modern theology was a catholic endeavor to do justice to all elements of truth scattered abroad in other branches of the Christian Church, which had resulted in such practical movements as the Evangelical Alliance, the Presbyterian Confederation, and the union of the old and new schools of theology in America. It had now become an article of faith that conscience was a sacred domain over which God alone had sway, and that while the civil magistrate was bound to maintain and protect the subject, he had no right to interfere with a man's religious convictions. The last point he had intended touching upon was, what was this Council to do with this great question of the consensus of the Reformed confessions? It had declared such consensus necessary to membership. Was that consensus to be left indefinite, or to be formulated by a series of articles, by historical statement, or by an Œcumenical Reformed Confession?

The Rev. Mr. Cousin, Edinburgh, on behalf of Professor Kraft, Bonn, submitted a paper, the general scope of which

was to realise in a series of articles—thirty-one in number—the idea of Cranmer of a consensus of the Reformed confessions. The paper had been to some considerable extent, Mr. Cousin said, anticipated by Professor Schaff, so that it was unnecessary to repeat it.

Professor Mitchell, St. Andrews, submitted a printed statement, in which he endeavored to show the harmony of the Westminster Confession with the confessions of the earlier Reformed Churches, and particularly, in so far as it was not founded on the Irish Articles, its harmony with French and Belgian confession, relating to the Holy Scriptures, which could not be traced in the Irish Articles, might, he thought, be pretty clearly traced in the two confessions he had named.

An interesting conversation ensued. Principal Brown, Aberdeen, remarked that the harmony of the Reformed confessions could not be too distinctly expressed or too prominently brought forward in order to silence—it would not do that, but to put to shame the calumny of the Church of Rome, which said that the Reformed Churches were divided into as many distinct and conflicting religions as there were sects of them. The more intelligent Romanists knew perfectly well that this was false, but it suited them all the same to say it and repeat it, because it had a certain pithy and plausible sound, but nothing more; and Presbyterians were there to testify, and they did testify, that it was false, that in all that was substantial and vital in Christianity the Reformed Churches were practically one.

Professor Candlish, Glasgow, said they could not but be impressed, not only with the actual harmony of the various confessions of the different branches of the Protestant Church, but also with the consciousness on the part of the Churches of the age of the Reformation, and long afterwards, as to the agreement of their confessions. There