

mysterious influence is felt everywhere : it will leave some blank pages for truths not yet clearly apprehended ; it will take the Christian religion out of all technical bondage, and assert the majesty of its power in the midst of all the varied lights and shadows that flit across the stage of humanity.

To expect the proportionate development of these great truths in the Westminster Confession of Faith, would be to expect an utter impossibility. Some of them are there, without doubt, but not in due perspective. We have no wish to deny the dynamic view which the Confession presents of the divine government, but we think the moral one more just and powerful. God is still Sovereign, but He is Father too. We recognize everywhere the principle of selection or election, but we prefer to view it from the anthropological standpoint, believing that in a certain sense man may be truly said to elect himself. We are not blind to the perils of Ultramontaniam, but the complacent exegesis which confines the Antichrist to the Church of Rome, and thus lets all Protestants into a self-righteous Paradise, scarcely satisfies us. The desire for a simpler creed does not necessarily mean that Presbyterians love Calvinism less, but it does mean that they love Christianity more ; and I do not see how that church or any other can be weakened by putting Christianity, according to Calvin, on a lower plane than Christianity according to Christ. It cannot be a bad sign that the religious thought of this age is bringing into greater prominence the doctrine of that disciple who leaned on Jesus' breast, with whose letters the canon of revelation closes, and is thus reminding us that the final word of Christianity is Love.

I believe that the Presbyterian Church is quite able to frame a simplified creed, and to use it properly. We may feel in Canada as elsewhere that this is a transitional period in the religious world, and for a little while the mere iconoclast may seem to win the day. But if "the higher criticism" is destructive, the highest criticism is constructive ; and I am persuaded that the present controversies will only serve to confirm us in the essential principles of the faith once delivered to the saints, will increase our love for the character and mission of Christ and for the whole brotherhood of man, will widen our horizon of religious truth, and impart to all the churches a more intelligent understanding and a fuller appreciation of the manifold wisdom of God.

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