

Symposium.

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH.

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THE Westminster Confession of Faith, examined and approved, in the year 1647, by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, is a historic document which should be preserved pure and entire. It is likewise so full of sound doctrine, so pacific and so accepted, that it cannot be easily amended. Yet from the first and from time to time this symbol has been subjected by Presbyterian Churches to some declaratory explanations. Qualified by a few of these, it is the subordinate standard of faith in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Bible is the supreme rule of faith. The faith itself is set forth substantially in the Confession.

As to further revisal the time does not seem to be opportune. The conscience of the Church does not call for any important change in its profession of belief. Then, we sometimes hear of union with other denominations of Christians. When we seriously attempt that, we may expect to feel the necessity for something more than a revised edition of our old confession of faith. We will find that we have been carried beyond the position of the Westminster divines, and must take part in a work somewhat like theirs, but in circumstances very different. And when we go into consultation with Episcopalians, Methodists, Congregationalists and others, we should be able, like the Church of Scotland in the seventeenth century, to refer to our old standards as containing "the received doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this Kirk." Such explanations as may be necessary can follow.

It is impossible to feel much respect for some of the principal objections made against the Westminster Confession of faith as we now hold it.

Some critics fancy that it does not give sufficient prominence to God's love. But wherein does God's love appear? Chiefly in His grace, proclaimed to us sinners by the Gospel of Christ. And so the central fact set forth in our Confession is the Covenant of grace, which shows not only the general love of God toward mankind, inviting them to believe and be saved,