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"CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS" VS. THE BIBLE.

In the *Independent*, Prof. Francis L. Patton sharply criticizes the statement by Dr. Harris, in the *Andover Review*, that "Christian consciousness" must be recognized as the final authority in matters of faith and practice. In the course of his article he says: –

"Common consciousness cannot be appealed to as the criterion of religious progress without danger of jeopardizing the Protestant principle that the Bible is the rule of faith. Dr. Harris admits that what he calls the "obsolescent theology" agrees as well with the word of God as it ever did, but affirms that it does not agree with Christian consciousness. Suppose, however, that the Bible should say one thing, and Christian consciousness should say something else; or suppose that Christian consciousness should undertake to supplement the Bible. What then? It is an old charge against those who have had an objective rule of faith, that they made the word of God of none effect through their traditions, and that they taught for doctrines the commandments of men. We know how the Roman Catholic Church followed the example of the scribes and Pharisees in this respect. [R746 : page 8] Is there no danger that a party will arise in the Protestant churches, committing the same error? We think that there is great danger. And when, under the influence of a zeal that lacks both knowledge and discretion, the attempt is made to force upon the consciences of men the yoke of party fanaticism and popular clamor, there is little doubt but that an earnest, but at the same time ignorant, pietism will find great use for the phrase that is under discussion, and *as a phrase*, catchword, appealing to the sympathies of the unthinking, that Christian consciousness may become the 'organ' of what some will call religious progress."

There is little doubt that the state of things outlined by the Professor is imminent, as there is that "Christian consciousness" is superseding the Bible, as a test in matters of religion. We see this

"Christian consciousness" manifested in that form of worship which mistakes feeling for faith, whose adherents *know* that they are right, because their hearts tell them so!

– *Signs*.

