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## "HOW CAN YE BELIEVE?"

"How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" – John 5:44.

The question is so frequently asked by those just coming to a knowledge of the truth – Why is it that the ministers of the various churches do not see these things? The following clipped from the Pittsburgh *Commercial*, affords so pointed an answer to the question that we insert it here: –

### A PROFESSOR INSTALLED.

The First Presbyterian Church, Allegheny, was the scene last evening of some very interesting exercises, the occasion being the installation of Rev. Richard D. Wilson into the Chair of Hebrew, Chaldee and Old Testament History at the Western Theological Seminary. Prof. Wilson is a young man, being but 28 years old, and is a student of the Seminary, being the fourth occupant of a professor's chair in that institution who has risen from the ranks of the classes. The salary attached to the professorship is \$3,000 per year.

The meeting was presided over by Rev. William Hill, D.D., of Indiana, Pa., President of the Western Theological Seminary. Dr. Hill stated the object of the meeting, after which he called upon Prof. Wilson to come forward, while the Trustees of the Seminary rose to their feet. President Hill read the formula of acceptance, which consists of subscribing to the *confession of faith and system of discipline of the Presbyterian Church*, and *promising not to teach or inculcate anything opposed to the doctrines of the Church*. At the conclusion of the [R956 : page 6] reading Prof. Wilson subscribed his name to the above pledge upon the official records of the Seminary.

Dr. Oscar A. Hills, of Wooster, O., delivered the charge to the newly-inaugurated Professor, in which he said: – "You now belong to a picked company of men selected from among six thousand students. You should feel this a great honor, although at first you will feel a great responsibility resting upon you as being selected as a teacher of teachers."

Prof. Wilson then delivered his inaugural address, which treated mainly of the necessity for a thorough study of Hebrew by Presbyterian ministers. He held that a thorough knowledge of the language in which the Scriptures were originally written was necessary for a true comprehension of disputed passages upon which many doctrinal points hinge.

The above will serve to illustrate why they do not see, and to show the manner in which the yokes of bondage are so securely fastened about the necks of those who constitute the "clergy" of the nominal church; and especially of those in positions of special prominence.

First, Everything is done in a manner to cultivate the spirit of pride, and to impress upon the people the idea of the superior learning, dignity, and sanctity of the clergy. For instance, the young gentleman referred to is pointed to the fact that he is the specially chosen one out of a company of six thousand, in a manner to indicate that of the six thousand he is manifestly the superior, the star; and then he is told that he *should feel* such honor, in other words, that his pride should be puffed up by such a comparison, and by the fact that he had been chosen as a teacher of teachers. An easy, honorable position is then furnished, together with a comfortable salary, and quite naturally such are disposed to let well enough alone, and take no thought for the future, especially if such thought would tend to unsettle present satisfactory conditions.

How different is this from the manner in which the apostles and teachers in the early church were counseled. They were forewarned of the crosses and persecutions they must surely encounter if faithful to

their ministry, urged to be faithful unto death, to endure hardness as good soldiers, and to expect nothing else in this life; to make full proof of their ministry, and to look for the reward only at the end of the race – "the reward which cometh from God only."

Under the influence of present favor and flattering prospects, how readily the gentleman signed away his liberty and submitted himself to the yoke of bondage: – "The young gentleman was called upon to come forward, while the Trustees of the Seminary rose to their feet. The President then read the formula of acceptance which consists of subscribing to the confession of faith and system of discipline of the Presbyterian church, and promising *not to teach or inculcate anything* OPPOSED TO THE DOCTRINES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH." To this pledge he subscribed his name.

And what does that mean? It means that whatever of truth or error the Presbyterian church holds, he is *bound* by this covenant with them to believe and teach, or to teach it whether he can believe it or not. It means either that the Presbyterian creed expresses the whole of divine truth and nothing but the truth, or else that he must ignore all Bible truth not contained in that creed. In other words, if true to his covenant with the Presbyterian church, it is *impossible for him to grow* in the knowledge of divine truth.

And yet *professedly* the object of his study of Hebrew, Greek, etc., is that he may grow in knowledge, and gain a *more perfect* understanding of the Scriptures, and teach others to do likewise. This he *claims* to be his object in accepting the office, and it is the *professed* object of the Trustees in inviting him to fill the Hebrew Professorship, and yet he is pledged beforehand not to teach what *new* truths he may discover, before he even enters the office. How absurd and inconsistent! Any man or set of men should be ashamed to make such claims regarding Bible study, in the face of their own public pledge beforehand to repudiate them. They must be sure that the people are sound asleep. We are unable to see how such hypocrisy could gain

even self-respect. How could the most thorough knowledge of Greek or Hebrew or Chaldee help one to an understanding of the Bible, if he is pledged not to believe any advanced truth, even if his investigations should point it out?

These are some of the reasons why clergymen as a class cannot see and are either non-committal or denunciatory with reference to present truths. They are pledged not to receive any truth not contained in their creed, and not to reject any error that is contained in it, so long as they stand in that relationship to *their* church. They are blind leaders of the blind and unless they apply the eye-salve of truth and come out of Babylon they will all fall into the ditch together.

But we rejoice to find some true wheat among the great mass of tares in the nominal church, among the ministers as well as among the people, who recognize the truth and prove their fidelity to God by their willingness to endure hardness for the truth's sake. And upon no class does the trial come with greater force than upon ministers; and in this any who are struggling to be free should have our fullest sympathy. With them it means truly the loss of all things, and very naturally the flesh shrinks even when the spirit is more willing. It means the sacrifice of reputation, friends, and often even those of the family circle; it means the sacrifice of the present means of earning a living, and necessitates the turning to something new and untried. Yes, it is the finding of the cross which, if faithfully borne to the end, secures the eternal crown of glory. Truly, "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way, and few there be that find it." But who in his right mind, who believes the Word of God and the exceeding great and precious promises to the faithful, would barter away the eternal glory for the mean rewards of this present life.

Mrs. C. T. R.

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