

## **BISHOP R.S. FOSTER'S VIEW.**

Instead of our own, we present this month a VIEW of the nominal church in general, and of the Methodist church in particular, as seen and described by one of the foremost Methodist Bishops of our day, as we clip it from *The Testimony* as follows: –

"The church of God is to-day courting the world. Its members are trying to bring it down to the level of the ungodly. The ball, the theatre, nude and lewd art, social luxuries with all their loose moralities, are making inroads into the church; and as a satisfaction for all this worldliness Christians are making a great deal of Lent, and Easter and Good Friday, and church ornamentation. It is the old trick of Satan. The Jewish church struck on that rock; the Romish church was wrecked on the same, and the Protestant church is fast reaching the same doom.

"Our great dangers, as we see them, are assimilation to the world, neglect of the poor, substitution of the form for the fact of godliness, abandonment of discipline, a hireling ministry, and impure gospel, which summed up, is – a fashionable church.

"Do not Methodists, in violation of God's word and their own discipline, dress as extravagantly and as fashionably as any other class? Do not the ladies and often the wives and the daughters of the ministry, put on gold and pearls, and costly array?...Can any one going into a Methodist church in any of our chief cities, distinguish the attire of the communicants from that of the theatre and ball goers?

"Is not worldliness seen in the music? Elaborately dressed and ornamented choirs, who in many cases make no profession of religion, and are often sneering skeptics, go through a cold, artistic, or operatic performance, which is as much in harmony with spiritual worship as an opera or theatre. Under such worldly performances spirituality is frozen to death.

"Worldly socials, fairs, festivals, and such like, have taken the place of religious gatherings, revival meetings, class and prayer meetings of earlier days.... The early Methodist ministers went forth to sacrifice and suffer for Christ. They sought not places of ease and affluence, but of privation and suffering. They gloried not in their big salaries, fine parsonages, and refined congregations, but in the souls that had been won for Jesus. Oh, how changed! A hireling ministry will be a feeble, a timid, a truckling, a time serving ministry, without faith, endurance and holy power. Methodism formerly dealt in the great central truth. Now the pulpits deal largely in generalities, and in popular lectures. The glorious doctrine of entire sanctification is rarely heard and seldom witnessed to in the pulpits."

