

## **VIEW FROM THE TOWER.**

The following will interest all who are awake and watching for the conclusions of Presbyterianism, upon the question of the revision of its creed or "Confession."

This is a "burning question" in more senses than one, and a question which affects many other denominations besides the one having the discussion. It affects all systems whose creeds are based upon John Calvin's theology – United Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians, Baptists and others built upon Calvinism. However, the members of these other denominations do not generally know this; for the rising generation in all subscribe to and profess the doctrines with almost no knowledge of them. And as for the ministers who realize what is involved, they keep very quiet – hoping that no such controversy will disturb their peace or expose their creeds to the cold criticism of common sense in the light of the Bible and of reason. But the hope is vain. It will surely come. Every man's work shall be tried so as by fire. There will be a general turning of things upside down, that the truth may now have a chance to be heard which has so long been smothered by error.

The following is clipped from a Chicago daily: –

**"DR. BARROWS REVOLTS.**

**HE REPUDIATES THE OLD THEOLOGY, CALLING THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSIOIN A HINDRANCE AND A STUMBLING BLOCK IN THE CHRISTIAN'S WAY. – HE SAYS THE AGE DEMANDS A BROADER CREED AND FAITH.**

"Rev. Dr. John H. Barrows, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, preached an eloquent sermon yesterday morning (Dec.

22d) on the revision of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. He took for his text the words:

"Matthew 9:16-17: 'No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill up taketh from the garment and the rent is made worse.

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.'

"The Westminster Assembly was appointed by the Long Parliament of England, and its members began their task with a revision of the thirty-nine articles of the English church; but when they reached the fifteenth article, they dropped their work of revision as a useless business, and for five years addressed themselves to the preparation of a new confession. And so, in the judgment of many, the attempt to revise the Westminster Confession to-day will ultimately be abandoned, and a new creed, more scriptural, more in harmony with present conditions, briefer and less polemical, will take the place of the Westminster Assembly's work. Rev. Dr. Gibson, of London, said to me recently: 'You will find, as we found in England, that revision will be an endless and unsatisfactory task, and that the best solution of the present problem will be a briefer creed, which shall gradually take the place of the old.' The movement of revision of some kind pervades the Presbyterian Church almost everywhere. Last year the established church of Scotland changed the terms of subscription, *'leaving it to the conscience of each minister to decide for himself what he regards as essential and necessary articles of faith.'* This is practically the work of the form of subscription now used in America, but it has certain disadvantages of which I shall speak later. The noble Free Church of Scotland, which came out of the establishment in 1843, in order to preserve the ancient liberty of God's people in managing their own spiritual

concerns, has resolved to revise the Confession. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland in 1879 made a declaratory statement modifying the Confession in three points, making the redemption of Christ general in extent, affirming human responsibility for accepting or rejecting the gospel, and disapproving all intolerance.

"If revision is all that we are to obtain after the present discussion, we shall find, in my opinion, that we have an exceedingly unsatisfactory document on our hands, a garment patched in an unseemly way and presenting no acceptable pattern....

"One advantage of the present discussion is that it furnishes an opportunity for many ministers to express their minds, and on account of this I am at liberty to speak to you freely and fully. Of course the question arises: 'If there are so many things in the confession of faith to which some of us take exceptions, how can we rightly subscribe to it? How can we remain in the Presbyterian ministry or eldership?' This question deserves a frank and careful answer. When I was invited, eight years ago, to this pulpit I had recently made a statement of my theological views to a Congregational council in Boston, a conservative council, and they were deemed entirely satisfactory. I am in accord with what is called 'New England orthodoxy.' I knew but little about the confession of faith of the Presbyterian Church; but when I was called to this pastorate I made it my duty to read it. Thinking that I might have some trouble in regard to the acceptance of it, a distinguished Presbyterian minister of Chicago kindly wrote me as follows: 'For myself I do not deem our confession and mode of administration by any means perfect. But I accept the confession as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy Scriptures, *as well as some things not in the holy Scriptures*, and the government and discipline I approve as, in general, good, but susceptible of important improvements, especially in the direction

of the greater liberty of individual churches. And my views on this matter are at one with a large and increasing number of our ministers and churches.' And so I, too, according to the requirement of our form of government, accept the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the holy Scriptures. I find there the great facts and outlines of that system, God's sovereign grace, his mercy in Jesus Christ, the offer of salvation on condition of repentance and faith, the work of the holy spirit in regeneration and sanctification, the teaching that the Bible is an infallible rule of faith and duty, the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ the Lord; and, in short, every essential part of Christian truth. I find, also, some things that appear to me exaggerations, and many things that belong to theological metaphysics rather than to essential Christian truth. I discover, also, some things which appear to me to be erroneous; but I find there, as in all the great confessions, the system of doctrine taught in the Scripture. As the Tower of London [R1194 : page 3] contains, or used to contain, the crown jewels, beautifully set in coronets and scepters, so the Confession contains the jewels of heavenly grace and truth set in forms of human workmanship. But the Tower of London contains not only the crown jewels, but many an old headpiece and rusty suit of armor and outworn weapons; and so I believe the Confession contains, besides the precious substance of the gospel, pieces of theological armor that might well be laid aside."

[This, then, is the "frank and careful answer" of Mr. Barrows to his own question: "If there are *so many things* in the Confession of Faith to which some of us take exceptions, how can we *rightly* subscribe to it?" Briefly summed up the answer is –

1st. I was as honest as the rest – they all do it.

2nd. In subscribing to *so many things* which we do not believe or teach, and in pledging ourselves, solemnly, before God,

that we *do believe* and that we *will teach* those things, we merely went through a *form* before the public. And we eased our consciences from that terrible fraud and perjury done in the name of God and truth, by having a little private understanding between ourselves as ministers, to the effect that, "It is only a form, you know," and done to hoodwink the public and to keep up the usual appearance, etc. We doubt very much whether his *answer* to his own question is quite satisfying to Dr. Barrows' conscience.

However, this confession (though it should be much more full and frank) is to be commended as a first step in the right direction. Dr. Barrows' next step should be to resign his pulpit and to step out of all that he stepped into by means of his subscription to a creed in which there were "*so many things*" which he heartily disbelieved. The "Doctor" should not confess thus his past misdeed and still hold on to the position, salary, dignities, etc., thus fraudulently obtained. He should not only repent of the transaction but should cancel it entirely and at once. Let him step out boldly for the Truth and for fullest freedom in teaching it, without any human bonds. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"Hundreds of ministers and thousands of elders have accepted the Westminster Confession with such an understanding of it as this, and the terms of subscription have been so liberal that they have not been particularly uneasy under the yoke."

[Hark there! What a confession! The "Doctor" solemnly from the pulpit reveals the true state of the case – that, hundreds of ministers and thousands of elders have thus fraudulently *pretended to accept* certain doctrines which contain "*so many things*" they utterly disbelieve and repudiate. Are the "common people" of the pews to understand that their "rulers and teachers" have long been posing before them in the role of mountebanks, playing in religious and sacred things the juggler tricks of sword-swallowers and fire-eaters, affecting to swallow the terrible doctrines of Calvinism, but

really doing nothing of the sort? Surely such deceptions will not long excite the reverence of the people. By and by an honest man will come to be appreciated and such dishonesty will meet with its just rebuke. It would do so at once but for the fact that the people of the pews as well as the ministers and elders are, many of them, similarly engaged in the same deception; and they cannot find fault with others for doing what they themselves are doing. What is needed all around is *honesty*. Can we wonder that God should and does refuse to use such ministers as channels for truths now due, as vessels for bearing to the household of faith "meat in due season?" Nor need we wonder that congregations of men and women who know of and wink at such deceptions, and who practice the same in their own subscription to creeds they do not believe, are unready for the truth? Only honest men and women are *worthy* of present truth. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"But, while not favoring any laxer terms of subscription, they would greatly prefer to be put in a position that would not expose them to even the suspicion of being uncandid. They would greatly prefer to have a creed no part of which failed to command their assent."

[In other words, they do not like to complain, and for the emoluments, the honors of men, etc., they are still willing to stand up like little men and swallow the bitter and perjurous dose of the Confession, which stultifies their manhood and keeps them dwarfs in spiritual development; but they would "*greatly prefer*" to have some little change made, now that the nineteenth century light is shining in, which exposes their admitted uncandidness and is arousing suspicion of their general and even their business honesty. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"I have been greatly grieved that on account of the confessional barrier we have been unable to induce certain beloved and honored brethren in this church to accept the eldership."

[Ah yes! some were too noble; no doubt they were business men of the higher class, used to recognizing principles of integrity. We are glad to know that there are some whom the seducing sophistries of the minister as well as the honors of men could not "*induce*" to thus foreswear their convictions. Ah yes! those are not only honored in the sight of the pastor who could not mislead them but they are honored in the sight of God also. We wish we could know those honorable men by name. We believe they are *worthy* of the truth and that they would be ready to receive it. We fear, however, that Dr. Barrows' congregation did not contain many so honest and so honorable as these. Most of those so honorable soon come to see that their membership and presence in a congregation professing faith in a Confession containing "*so many things*" which they do not believe is dishonest, a misrepresentation of their faith to the dishonor of God as well as to the discredit of their own intelligence. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"There are others who are unwilling to enter the church because it is anchored to a doctrinal statement from so much of which they dissent." [These are yet **[R1194 : page 4]** more noble and honorable or else more awake. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"It is well known that assent to the Confession is not required of any but ministers and elders. But, in spite of this there are those who are unwilling to seem affiliated with doctrines which they reject, and reject because they do not seem to them a fair interpretation of the Scriptures."

[No, "Doctor," you are mistaken; it is not well known that assent to the Confession is not required of any but ministers and elders. The contrary of this, however, is well known or ought to be. We fear that the delicacy of your own position on this question has led you to state yourself in such a manner that not many will at once fully understand you. Were we to state the matter for you as we presume it to run in your mind, but in a manner not likely to be

misunderstood by any one, we would state it thus: – While the members of the Presbyterian Church *are required to assent* to the general Confession of Faith, and thus to declare it to be a good expression of their belief, yet they are not obliged to make a public vow or *oath of office* that they believe and teach it, as the ministers and elders are obliged to do. The difference between a false vow and a false confession is the same difference as between perjury and lying. He who *disbelieves "so many things,"* if he publicly confesses that he does believe them, is guilty of lying before God and men, while he who vows that he believes and will teach them and does neither is guilty of perjury; whether custom makes such lying and perjury fashionable and respectable or not. We want to look at our conduct as God looks at it. And if our hearts condemn us of either of these sins, let us remember that God is still a higher and more strict Judge than we are apt to be of ourselves. – 1 John 5:20. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"Why put so many justly disputable things into a confession which is designed for a bond of union in a church like ours? And why should a church which is going forth to conquer India and China and Japan for Christ carry in hand, beside the word of God, anything less worthy than a fresh and modern statement of essential truth? I must frankly say that I do not like to see any seventeenth century theological yoke placed on the rising churches of the missionary world. I should greatly prefer to see them allowed to *shape their own creeds*. It is probable that new flashes of light will come to the old doctrines when they have passed through the Oriental mind, which is nearer to the Biblical ways of thought and expression than that of the West."

[But, "Doctor," pray explain to us why it is necessary to use any creed as a bond of union? Was not the church of the Apostle's days the grand illustration of union and purity and love as it should but does not exist since *bonds* of union in the shape of creeds were introduced? If all creeds and confessions were abandoned and the



Bible were accepted as the only standard of faith, would not the true union of heart and faith in fundamentals the sooner come about, and be accompanied by a personal liberty of conscience?

And if the heathen churches should be at liberty to shape their own creeds, why not the churches nearer home have as much liberty. And if congregations may shape their own creeds why should not each individual be accorded fullest liberty to shape his own creed? – the liberty which Christ arranged for and which the Apostles urged.

And if such liberty would "*probably*" lead to occasional flashes of light uncovering the truth of God's word and plan more fully and leading "nearer to Biblical ways of thought and expression," why might not full liberty here at home, under the blessing of the same Holy Spirit, bring fresh and clearer views now and continually? It surely would bring not only clearer views than the Westminster Confession contains, but clearer views than [R1195 : page 4] any "modern statement" of faith. Why then tie up with a new creed which would hinder the Spirit's teaching and shedding of fresh light upon God's word, and which shortly would again need revision. Why not get free and stay free, and enjoy and walk in the light, and keep continually growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of God? – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"I have preached for eight years in the Presbyterian Church and have not failed to secure your approval of my teaching as substantially orthodox, and I am confident that my beloved brethren in the ministry have regarded me as properly having a place in the ranks of the Presbyterian Church. But, if the frank admissions which I recently made regarding the defects of the Westminster Confession should deprive me of rightful standing in the Presbyterian Church, then I ought to take my position outside of it in company with some of the most distinguished professors in our theological seminaries. In this time of discussion there should

be no holding back of opinions. I do believe that our Confession of Faith is now, and has been in the past, a hindrance to the progress of the kingdom of Christ. Professor Goldwin Smith once remarked to a friend of mine that in his judgment the Presbyterian Church of America would have three times its present strength if it had not persisted in carrying a millstone around its neck in the shape of the Confession. We know that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church broke off from us because of the teachings of the third chapter regarding the decree of reprobation or preterition. We know that we have been at a serious disadvantage with other denominations in commending our doctrine to the popular mind, and the present discussion will show that inside the church there has been so much of drifting and departure from the Westminster standards that they do not fairly represent the convictions of to-day. Whatever his success in other things, Professor Briggs, of New York, in his recent remarkable work, has shown that the Presbyterian Church is not in harmony in many points with the Westminster standards. He has shown that the church to-day and our leading theologians differ from the confession in their doctrines regarding the Scriptures. In regard to creation, in regard to the extent of the atonement and the work of the spirit, in regard to the fate of the heathen, the damnation of infants, in regard to the pope, in regard to the forgiveness of sins, and on many other points, these theologians and leading pastors differ from the standards. They may also differ from each other as much as they differ from the Confession. Dr. Briggs has said that 'subscription to the Westminster system in the historic sense is out of the question.'

"The changes already brought about in Christian thinking make it certain that others are to follow. With no express authority from the Scriptures men have come to believe in the universal salvation of all infants. Dr. Charles Hodge did more than anybody else to make the doctrine universally accepted, but it is seen at once that, if all infants are saved, this teaching has an immediate bearing on the question of the salvability of the heathen. Dr. Prentiss has

shown that the reasons which Dr. Hodge assigns for his faith that all infants are to be saved cannot be limited to them. The first reason is the analogy between Adam and Christ. 'So then, as through one trespass the judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For, as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous.'

"If the sin of Adam through his connection with the race led to universal sinfulness on the part of all born into the world, may not the righteousness of Christ lead to the redemption of all born into the world who are cut off before free moral agency finds expression in evil acts? The second reason which Dr. Hodge assigns for his faith is that it is more congenial to the nature of God to bless than to curse; but this reason cannot be limited to children. It is equally applicable to multitudes in the heathen world. The third ground for Dr. Hodge's faith is the conduct and language of our Lord in reference to children. Precisely the same reasoning, says Dr. Prentiss, might be applied to other classes. To draw an impassable dividing line between infants and all little boys and girls, for example, in whom original sin has just begun to act, seems most unwarrantably to limit the grace of God. Universal infant salvation does not and cannot stand alone. It shows how inconceivably wide and deep is God's mercy in Christ Jesus. It shows that, speaking after the manner of men, he is doing all that he can for the actual redemption of the world; nothing keeps any soul from the gracious operation of his infinite love and pity but his own wilful choice of the evil and refusal of the good."

[Ah no! Your difficulty, gentlemen, lies in the very foundation of your theory; and this error leads you to this very absurd statement, that *God is doing all that he can*. On the contrary, every one knows that if Dr. Prentiss had the one-hundredth part of the

power and wisdom possessed by the Infinite Creator – the *Almighty* – he could speedily cause *the knowledge of the Lord* to fill the whole earth. We must admit that interpretation of the doctrine of election which teaches that God during the present time (the Gospel age) is selecting a "little flock" of saints fully consecrated to his service, and reject that unscriptural feature of Calvinism which teaches that all not of this elect "little flock" are eternally lost. True, they are not yet saved, nor can they ever be saved *by* ignorance or *in* ignorance of Christ; but God's election of the "little flock" to be joint-heirs with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom is to the very intent that through the "elect" class, when highly exalted to the power and perfection of the divine nature, "all the families of the earth shall be blessed" by being brought to a knowledge of the truth. It is for this purpose that a general resurrection of the dead is promised, that they as well as those nations living at the time the kingdom under the whole heavens is given to the elect (Dan. 7:18,22), may be blessed under that fulness of knowledge of God and his gracious plan which shall then fill the world as the waters cover the sea. The elect "body" under Christ their "Head" are the long promised Seed of Abraham, and through them the gracious promise (Gal. 3:16,29) must yet be fulfilled. That promise has not been fulfilled in the past; and it could not be fulfilled to those families of the earth which have gone down into death in any other manner than as God has provided – by a resurrection.

Brethren, joyfully accept God's solution of your difficulty – that though none can be saved without faith and obedience, ample provision for all is made and will be applied when "All that are in their graves hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth – and they who hear (obey) shall live" (shall be fully saved from condemnation and death and brought to perfect life). Moses, who typified this *elect* church (head and body), declared this truth, saying: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up [elect and exalt] unto you, like unto me. Him shall ye hear [obey] in all things.

And it shall come to pass that the soul that will not hear [obey] that prophet shall be cut off from among his people" [die the second death]. – Compare Acts 3:22,23.

Your remark, that "Nothing keeps any soul from the gracious operation of God's infinite love and pity but his own wilful choice of the evil and refusal of the good," will be true then, when Christ's church is exalted to the dominion of earth, when the Kingdom is come and God's will is done on earth as it is done in heaven; but *it is not true now*. The gracious operation of infinite love is through *faith*, such faith as can only be inspired by a knowledge of the *truths* of God's Word; and these are made void and of none effect by mixtures of false doctrines of human creeds. – Z.W.T. ED.]

Dr. Barrows continued, commenting upon the words of Dr. Prentiss above quoted: –

"But these convictions of a professor in one of our leading seminaries do not square with the following extract from the tenth chapter of the Confession: 'Much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious and to be detested.' That is, it is the teaching or necessary implication of the Confession that all those in the heathen world who have been most marked for goodness, who have had conviction for sins and yearnings after the Redeemer they could not know, that every pious Jew since the Christian church was founded who has not accepted the Christ, that Buddha and his followers, however benevolent their lives – that these with all the numberless millions who, born in ignorance of the Christ, have crawled through their brief, sorrowing, darkened and sinful lives in all the lands of paganism, are hopelessly doomed to everlasting destruction." [But, Dr. Barrows, you fail to state the

case with its true, full, awful force. If Calvinism taught merely that all these who never heard of the Redeemer could never have the everlasting life which he came to give, but must be left hopelessly doomed to everlasting destruction (obliteration, annihilation) it would not be so bad – not nearly so bad. It would be a gracious, a merciful provision as compared with the awful, God-dishonoring doctrines which it does teach; for elsewhere that Confession plainly declares to the world and especially to all who confess it and particularly to those who vow to teach it, that these who never heard of Christ shall suffer *torments* forever. To deny that Christ redeemed the souls of all from *destruction*, and to claim that he is the Redeemer of only the [R1196 : page 4] few who have heard of and fully accepted [R1196 : page 5] of his offer of life, in the present life, is to repudiate him as the Savior of the *world* and to contradict the multitudinous statements of the Scriptures to the effect that he was a propitiation [satisfaction] for the sins of the whole world, and that "He gave himself a ransom for all, to be *testified [to all] in due time.*" This would be a sad mistake, because, though it would not alter God's plan one whit, it would so hide from those thus misinformed much of the glory, and the length and breadth and height and depth of the divine plan which is being worked out only through faith in and obedience to the Redeemer. But to teach that God will specially perpetuate the lives of such unfortunates so as to cause them everlasting distress and pain, is not only a blasphemy against the divine character, but a blot upon the intelligence of those many large bodies of otherwise intelligent people who hold to it – for it is too ridiculous for even the most degraded heathens to believe or teach. And besides, it would make God a liar, for he distinctly declares that the extreme penalty of wilful sin and wilful rejection of Christ is the death of the soul. – Gen. 3:3; Isa. 55:3; Ezek. 18:4,20; Matt. 10:28. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

Dr. Barrows continuing said: – "Who gave the Westminster divines any such divine authority that their work should be deemed

the last test of theological soundness? We should not claim more for them than they claimed for themselves. And why should we not trust the holy spirit in the church of Christ to-day? Is it not dishonoring to him to doubt that he is able to lead the church and inspire even a heavenlier and more perfect wisdom than that which our fathers gained? I believe with Rev. Dr. Alexander, of New York, that the nineteenth century is nearer the mind of Christ than the seventeenth century; and I agree with Rev. Dr. James Candlish, professor of theology in the Free Church of Scotland, that "the Westminster Confession, in many parts, has ceased to be a statement of the vital truths of Christianity in a form suitable and intelligible to the mind of the present age." I go further and affirm that a question which includes in its fundamental teaching the horrible dogma that God from eternity has foredoomed the great mass of his children to eternal torment, passing them by and leaving them no possibility of redemption on account of the failure of their first parent, Christ not dying for them, and they unable, by conforming their lives ever so diligently to the light of nature, to come within the power of his redeeming mercy – I hold that such a confession, however magnificent in some of its parts, is not in harmony with what the church to-day believes is the spirit and trend of the scriptures. It does not seem to many to be like a God of infinite fatherly love, to make eternal destinies of such moment as heaven and hell hinge on one transaction, or even on the first moral acts of childhood, when that childhood is handicapped and cursed by the weight of ancestral sins and inherent moral corruption. An earthly father who should enjoin his little child to paint like Raphael or write like Shakespeare before he was three years of age, under penalty of destruction of his eyesight or the maiming of his hand, would be mercy incarnate compared with a heavenly father who should demand impossibilities of his children under threat of eternal torment, and those impossibilities occasioned, not by the sinful acts of the children, but by the disobedience of their remote ancestor. I believe that the church of to-day believes better things of God. We know that an earthly

father, seeing in his child inherited tendencies to evil, weaknesses and passions traceable to ancestral sin, looks upon that child with augmented compassion, and, while not excusing his sin, regards it with more leniency and strives to overcome it with a more patient pitifulness and love."

[Very good, Dr. Barrows! We are glad to find you bold enough to confess what so many others, your fellow-ministers, believe but fear to utter. May this honest confession be blessed to your good and lead you into still further light. For instance, would it not have been *equally* as unjust in our great Creator to consign Adam and Eve to eternal torture for the *disobedience* of eating the forbidden fruit? Answer this candidly to yourself. Then reflect that God never said one word about heaven and hell to Adam and Eve, but merely warned them that if *disobedient* he would take from them the life and blessings then enjoyed. And this is the only penalty that God enforced against them – death, loss of life; and this is the only penalty that we as their posterity ever inherited from them and their sin – "Dying thou shalt die." And all the weaknesses, mental, moral and physical, which cause us so much trouble, are the direct results of this fall from obedience and harmony and life with God into the present dying condition.

Again, Dr. B., answer to yourself the question: Do not the Scriptures teach, repeatedly, in great variety of expressions, that our Redeemer accomplished our redemption by becoming our *ransom* [corresponding price] by giving to justice full payment of all that Adam's guilt demanded as his penalty? Next, look at what he *gave* for us. If the Scriptures declare that he is suffering, experiencing everlasting torment for us, then it would support yours and the common theory upon the penalty for sin. But you know that your theory has no such circumstantial evidence, even, to rest upon. Notice on the contrary that the record of what our Redeemer did for the settlement of the condemnation against Adam and his posterity agrees with the facts and with the stated



penalty and with common sense. "He *died* for our sins." "He *died*, the just for the unjust." "As by one man's disobedience sin entered the world and *death* [entered] by [as a result of] sin, even so by the obedience of one [even unto death] justification is come for all." (Rom. 5:12,17-20.) These, and hundreds of other texts which your concordance will help you to, prove beyond a question that the penalty exacted of our Lord, as Redeemer, was exactly the penalty pronounced against Adam. – Z.W.T. ED.]

"It appears to me unfortunate to identify orthodoxy with any creed statement of the past, however excellent. This makes orthodoxy a dead thing; it ought to be living and progressive. Orthodoxy has been defined as 'right thinking about the Christian religion.' And I believe there should be no line of orthodoxy drawn, as one has said, 'inside of the line of truth.' Men pray for the unity of the church of Christ and yet they oppose that which they confess will hasten its coming. We have a 'separating theology,' and we are told that we ought not to limit our teaching to the things in which we agree with others. Certainly not. The most elaborate Calvinism will doubtless be taught in our schools, and every form of speculation about the metaphysics of theology will be continued. But why should all this be imposed upon the elders of our churches, who have no theological training?"

[Does this mean, Doctor, that the elders and the church at large are too honest and are becoming too enlightened for the errors of "elaborate Calvinism," but that the ministers and seminary professors and students will be required to stick to malodorous Calvinism in its "most elaborate" form, rather than acknowledge that Calvin was not infallible, and that you all erred for so long in teaching and preaching his monstrous perversions of the truth? Is this your meaning, Doctor? If so, it speaks volumes for the honesty of the pews when contrasted with the pulpits of Presbyterianism. The ministers, we may presume, can afford to continue to stultify themselves and to make vows to believe and

teach what they do not believe and know that they dare not preach in a civilized community in this our day. The considerations leading to such a sacrifice of principle and manhood we can only surmise: Is it a desire to maintain the dignity of Presbyterianism? And do they seek its perpetuity because their titles, salaries, etc., are interwoven with the system? We do not prefer to impugn the motives of any, but every action must have some cause, and we fail to see how any *good cause* could be upheld by the continued teaching of the "most elaborate Calvinism" among those who concede it to be very God-dishonoring. It must be zeal for something else than God's truth that would lead even to such a suggestion as this. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

"Dr. Schaff says that the decree of reprobation is 'a logical fiction and contradicts the genius of Christianity and the plainest declarations of the Bible.' The confession makes too many justly disputable affirmations, and resembles the man who knows a great many things that are not so. Our churches will feel this more and more as, on account of the widespread debate, they come to read the Confession of Faith. Professor Henry Day, an elder in Dr. John Hall's church in New York, is reported as saying that 'until recently only two elders in that church had ever read the Westminster standards.' If the final outcome of these years of intelligent and charitable Christian discussion shall be a new creed which we can heartily proclaim, it will express a living faith that will give our churches and our pulpits a new spiritual power. It is better to believe a few things thoroughly than to hold a confession that weighs down many minds with a deal of theological lumber. We crowd too much upon the brain and heart of the eldership and the ministry. I speak the experience of many when I say that multitudes come from our theological seminaries with a feeble faith in a great many things. An editor of one of our leading Presbyterian journals calls our confession of faith 'a wilderness with more dry places than wells of water.' The church of to-day rightly shrinks from a theology which 'condemns the whole race to everlasting woe for a

single transgression committed without our knowledge or consent six thousand years ago.' Such a theology is an iceberg rapidly melting in the warmer [R1197 : page 5] water and warmer breezes of a more southern sea.

"God has not condemned us to walk the same round of thinking which our fathers trod. We hold in our hand the Bible, which, like nature, is a field for endless investigation. The Bible never grows old. It has been said, 'Christ never gave men definitions; he gave them paradoxes. A definition shuts you up at once; a paradox you can think about till the day of your death.' Hence we expect to see more and more light breaking from God's word. Men who turn away from seventeenth century creeds can be made to feel that this is a revelation from heaven.

"I discover in our communities a growing number of men who constitute much of the intellectual and moral and business strength of our times, men whom we all honor, and many of them men of Christian faith and prayer, who are not within our churches as communicants. They are not affiliated in spirit with unbelief or with extreme liberalism. I have a great deal of regard for these men, and of sympathy with their intellectual difficulties. I hope to see the day when they shall constitute a noble part of our Christian churches. Whether or not what I deem an obstacle to such results is to be removed, I close my sermon this morning by affirming anew the universality, the simplicity and the divine earnestness of the offer of salvation: 'Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest....God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life. Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?'"

[Yes, here is the trouble: the people have neglected God's Word, and have accepted as infallible the creeds of the seventeenth century, made by good, pious, but mistaken men, still greatly

blinded by the errors of the "dark ages." The people rely upon the ministers and elders, who publicly confess the same to be their candid views of the real meaning of God's Word and who solemnly vow before God and men that they will give diligence in the instructing of others in those doctrines. Yet probably a large majority of these elders and ministers have *never even read* doctrines which were so momentous that it required years to decide upon and formulate them. But then these same ministers felt so sure that the Confession was true that they could swear to believe it without even reading it. We trust that the elders of "Dr. John Hall's Church" above referred to may prove honest enough, now that they are awake, to be worthy to come to a knowledge of the truth as it is revealed in the only true Standard – the Bible – and that making this good confession in truth and earnestly, they may be counted worthy the name of pillars and elders in the "Church of Christ," to which (and not to "Dr. Hall's Church") belongs the promise of glory, honor and immortality, in God's due time.

Yes, indeed, the controversy on the subject of Calvinism, the basis of the Presbyterian creed, is destined to wake up a great many long asleep; and it will surely in the end separate and divide that system, that the true "wheat" may be gathered out into the *one Church* of Christ. And the same influence is at work, preparing trouble for all the various Protestant systems – because there are some of God's elect in each of them. The overflowing scourge and the hail shall be upon all and shall sweep away all the refuges of error. – Isa. 28:17-20. – Z.W.T. EDITOR.]

-----