

FOLLOWING THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

A BROTHER writes us interestingly as follows. We omit names for obvious reasons.

I want to thank you for your last letter. The Lord has poured out upon my distracted mind a great blessing since I fully and unreservedly gave up all. So far as I understand my present attitude toward the dear Master, I am now "beheaded," having bowed reverently and joyfully to his will. It seems that the mere unconditional resolve to separate wholly from Babylon brought me a blessing. But I have not yet sent in my contemplated letter to the Presbytery. The same meets in regular session the 9th of Oct. I shall endeavor to have it ready to go before that meeting for action. The pastor of the local church (Presbyterian) here has promised to help the matter along and to defend my case, should a defence be called out. This promise he made after I had explained to him, one day this week, my reasons for the step. At first he tried, by arguments and persuasion, to induce me to change my mind.

"Wait a while," he said, "until you see the outcome of the revision movement. The Confession of Faith will, and must be changed. I am out of harmony with several of its doctrinal statements myself, and the brethren of the Presbytery know it too, and some of them hate me for it like poison. Let us stand by our guns and fight the thing out, brother."

"No," I said, "I cannot follow your advice, brother, tho I know it is well meant. My mind is so fully made up that I cannot be induced to take a backward step."

"Well then, if that is the case, where do you wish to be dismissed to – what church, or association? We cannot dismiss you at large or at random, you know. Our *book* makes no provision for such a case. In fact, I have never heard of such a case before."

"My request is, and must be, for unconditional dismissal," I answered. "I wish to be absolutely free from ecclesiastical bondage. I recognize no human organization as *the* Church of Christ. All of them exist without the authority or recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ; hence, none of them are his. His Church has no name on earth. But I can conscientiously say this of the Presbyterian Church as I know it: In practice it is the best of the denominations and sects, but in doctrinal teachings it is nearly as bad as the Roman Catholic system."

Not one word of comment in reply! Instead he gave me this item of confidential information:

"Brother, I will tell you something by which you can see how most of our brother ministers stand on the Westminster Confession: At our last meeting a young man from the German Theological Seminary in Iowa came to us for examination and ordination. Dr. _____, our Stated Clerk of Presbytery, was chairman of the examining committee, and I was also on the same. After Dr. _____ got through with him and expressed himself as satisfied, I took the *book*, and turning to the statements on election and reprobation I read the whole chapter to him, and then asked him solemnly, 'Do you believe this?' He looked at me a minute, and then said: 'If you will let me explain it, I will show in what sense I believe it.' 'No, no,' I said, 'you cannot and you must not try to explain it; you must believe it or you are not entitled to ordination according to our form of government. Now **[R2715 : page 315]** let me ask you once more, Do you accept this doctrine as it stands?' Brother, that young man answered very emphatically, 'No!' Dr. _____ said, 'And neither do I!' And I also said, 'Neither do I!'

"Did the Presbytery ordain him on such a confession as that?" I asked.

"Not one dissenting vote in the committee."

"Such inconsistency is inexcusable, and wrong before God," I said. "It is only another strong argument in favor of my decision to get

out and be free." Then we parted, he cordially offering me his assistance if needed, as above stated.

Your counsel with reference to the *spirit* of my letter of request for dismissal, is appreciated and fully approved. I believe the Lord will suggest to my mind the words he would have me say. I will send you a copy of the letter when I write again. I think of you daily, and my love goes out to you as a brother high above a brother by birth.
