

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

DENOMINATIONAL UNION IS THE CRY.

THE following from the Toronto (Canada) *News* well illustrates the trend of public opinion throughout Protestant Christendom. The spirit of union, or confederacy, is in the very air, as foretold by the prophet, who says: "Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." – Isa. 8:12.

Fear, a realization of weakness, is at the bottom of this desire for union at the expense of the Truth. A union would give prestige to doctrines which cannot be sustained either by reason or Scripture. A union would give greater political power, and lead ultimately to the suppression of the Truth as *unsettling* and antagonistic to the *peace* of error and errorists. But the Truth has naught to fear, and the Truth people see clearly that only the Truth can produce that real heart-union which the Lord referred to in his prayer for his people – "that they all may be one." Another part of our Lord's petition was, "Sanctify them through thy Truth." Wherever the sanctifying of the Truth goes, there true union goes, proportionately. Not worldly union, however; not denominational union, for the Truth separates from the world and from denominationalism and unites all developed children of the Truth to each other, by uniting each to the Head – our Lord. Such are taught of God; such hear their Head; such are thus made one in Him and in his Truth.

We quote the popular and erroneous view of the question, as follows: –

"One of the most encouraging features of the present religious condition of the world is the increasing prevalence of a desire for Christian union. The arguments in favor of union are numerous and

weighty. But the most powerful of them all – the consideration that should be kept in the forefront of the whole discussion – is that the object aimed at is very dear to the heart of Christ himself.

"The union that most Christians desire is not a vague, unsubstantial thing, but a solid, practical reality – not a mere spiritual unity of aim and motive, but an external, visible union, which will remove the reproach of unseemly rivalry that Protestant Christianity has too long been compelled to bear. Such an organic union constitutes the only real answer to the great intercessory prayer of our blessed Lord – the solemnly suggestive petition offered up amid the deepening shadows of the last night of his earthly ministry: 'That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' How much conviction of the divine mission of Christ is likely to be aroused in the heart of the world by the sight of the scores of rival sects into which the Church of Christ has been split up?

"Of course, the situation is improving. In our own country, nearly thirty years ago, Presbyterians led the way in the matter of closing up their denominational ranks, and consolidating their forces for the performance of their common work; and the example thus set was followed a few years later by the Methodists. The last quarter of a century has witnessed, too, a most gratifying advance in inter-denominational fellowship. Ancient asperities are being softened; denominational bigotry is slowly disappearing; in Christian utterances the irenic is being substituted for the polemic; mutual misunderstandings and recriminations are giving place to mutual appreciations and commendations, and from almost every branch of the divided Church of Christ many a 'God speed you' is heard, addressed to Christian brethren of other communions. All this the world can see, and the force of all this the world can hardly fail to feel.

"But how immeasurably more impressive would be the spectacle of one magnificent united Church! How irresistible would be the appeal to the world's conscience, if all the scattered companies of the Lord's [R3372 : page 164] army were united in one grand battalion, 'endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!'

"In so far as the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches are concerned, this desirable consummation seems to be within measurable distance, the question of their corporate union having now come to be a question of practical church politics."

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Sentiment in the United States is similar, as voiced by the New York *Independent*, as follows:

"Federation is one of the crying needs of our Protestant Churches. Some of our denominations in their national meetings have pronounced in favor of it. It would maintain the separate entity of denominations that are not ready to consolidate, and yet would be an evidence to the world of their essential and spiritual unity. We understand that it ought to [R3373 : page 164] be the business of such an organization as the National Federation of Churches to seek such a federation of denominations. It might be invidious for any one denomination to take the lead in inviting a conference for federation, for we have in this country no one confessedly preeminent denomination, as they have in England. But this Federation of Churches, which has hitherto labored to secure fellowship in labor in cities and towns, might well send a proposal to the national body of every Protestant denomination in the country, asking it to appoint representatives to meet in Washington in 1906 – which will give time – with a view to the establishment of a federate union of the entire body of churches. If this existing Federation of Churches does not thus present the matter generally, why should not the various national conferences, conventions, assemblies, synods and councils

independently make the proposition and appoint committees? We commend this proposition to those of every denomination who are interested in the visible unity of the Christian Church."

A MODERATOR AWAKENING LATE.

"New York, May 4. – 'Look at Andover! What honest man can look at that institution and not be ashamed?' said Rev. Dr. Robert Russell Booth, moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly and pastor emeritus of Rutger's Presbyterian Church, speaking at the Bible League in the Marble Collegiate Course to-day. He was participating in a discussion 'On the Practical Consequences of the Attack on the Bible.'

"'What honest man can see endowments saved by the toil of the believing and the earnest used in the propaganda of those who say that what is recorded in the Bible is untrue?' continued Dr. Booth, and there were cries of 'amen' from the pews.

"'For nineteen centuries the Christian Church has been the Church persecuted and the Church militant,' declared the speaker. 'Now we must fight treason in our very midst. Men are using their positions in our pulpits and chairs of learning to disseminate treason. Church collections, salaries, endowments are being used to support those who talk Higher Criticism and to spread heresies.

"'A minister in this city, as prominent as there is in the land, reads the Apostles' creed: 'Jesus Christ, who, they say, was born of the Virgin Mary.

"'Jesus, who, they say, was raised after the third day.'

"'No wonder men find excuse for easy virtue when ministers, ordained of God, insert "they say" in the Apostles' creed. We are living in a time of financial immorality according to old fashioned

men. There has come a change over our ministers which makes people suspicious of their honesty.

"If this continues, if the Word of God as given to our fathers is whittled away by the ministers of our Protestant denominations, the time must come when to those always faithful to God there will be but one refuge and that will be the Roman Catholic Church, which, whatever it has added to the Word, has taken nothing from it.

"We of this league expect that Archbishop Farley and Bishop Potter will join in this movement, if not by enrollment, in heart and spirit.

"It is an imaginative and fictitious concensus of opinion, for which the journalists are to blame, that scholarship is all on the side of the critics. I say that the ablest scholars will line up on our side, five to one."

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The Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly is just awakening to the fact that the Higher Critics have possession of the so-called religious colleges and seminaries. The gentleman will ere long discover that the "prominent" religious people have almost unanimously forsaken the Bible as an inspired work and now use it merely as a text-book, useful because of its influence with the "common people" – but not inspired. Now is the time for us to find those not yet contaminated and assist them to the Truth, which alone will show the Bible to be both inspired and reasonable.

THE JONAH STORY CORROBORATED.

The progress of the pulpit above that of the pew – away from the Bible and into infidelity – is well illustrated by articles recently published side by side in a secular journal. One of the articles quoted one of the most prominent and venerable ministers of our day – Rev.

Lyman Abbott, D.D. – as denying the Bible story of Jonah, quoted as fact by our Lord. (Luke 11:30.) Dr. Abbott said: "I do not believe that the great fish swallowed Jonah, because there is nothing to attest the story," etc.

The reverse side of the question is an account of a Bible class teacher's discussion of the same subject with his large class of adults. The teacher, a prominent business man of Pittsburgh, Mr. James I. Buchanan, averred his faith in the Jonah story. He said: "The Bible is sufficient evidence for me, but occasionally I get interested in comparing the miracles with modern phenomena which remain unexplained." [R3373 : page 165] Then he drew the attention of his class to the account of a seaman's similar experience during a whaling voyage, reported in the public press about eight years ago and referred to in these columns.

The published account told how the whale's nose broke the small boat to splinters, and how one of its occupants was swallowed. Subsequently the whale was killed and the man found unconscious in its stomach. Later he told that he could breathe there, but found it intolerably hot. His skin was very red, probably the result of the action of the acids of the whale's stomach. In other words he was in process of digestion.

The story is so similar to that of Jonah as to be well worth remembering, and we were specially interested in some verifications which Mr. Buchanan related to the reporter. He said:

"Not long after that George Jarvie, a cousin, and a Scotch sailing master, happened to be a visitor at my home. One day I mentioned the New Zealand whale story.

"He said he had read the story, had heard it among the seamen of the islands, and the story was generally believed and vouched for among the seafaring men. He explained to me how the sailors of that

region considered the fish story. His version tallied with that of the newspaper clipping, which Mr. Jarvie had never read.

"The fish prepared for Jonah's residence was apparently not common in Jonah's time, because no name is given for the fish. Almost a thousand years later someone conceived it was a whale that had swallowed Jonah."

"Mr. Buchanan said that his sister, who had visited the New Zealand islands, had also been told the modern whale story, as she had heard it from people who claimed to know the sailor who had been swallowed by the whale and men who had served on the ship at that time."

"PREACH THE WORD."

"The true pastor, being a messenger of Jehovah of Hosts, and not a messenger of Byron, Milton or Shakespeare, is bound by the most solemn of all his obligations to preach 'Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' The gospel preacher is a minister of the New Testament, which became of force on the death of the testator, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In this Testament is recorded the following statement of our Savior: 'The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' This cannot be truthfully said of science, or of popular literature, or of the writings of the wisest men not inspired of God. In His command to His disciples to teach all nations, Christ's language is specific: 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.' No mention is made of human doctrines, and no authority given for teaching them. 'The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath My Word, let him speak My Word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not My Word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?' The Word of God is 'the sword of the Spirit.' One armed with this sword for destroying evil is required to use it. A sword needs no stronger proof of what it is than the effects of its use. No learned argument is necessary to prove that a hammer

is a hammer. Use it, and it proves itself. Fire proves its own character when applied. God's Word is 'like as fire.' It cleanses away evil. 'Preach the Word.' A pastor who substitutes anything else for the faithful preaching of God's Word – and this is all he is authorized by Christ to preach – is trifling with the eternal destinies of men, and bringing guilt upon himself. The writer has in recent months heard much chaff in sermons, and noticed a conspicuous absence of the 'one thing needful.' It is the holy Spirit who commands, 'Preach the Word.'"

– *The Interior.*

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It is not often that such an item as the above can be clipped from the "Religious Press." We rejoice to find it and to commend it.

THE TREND OF SOCIALISM.

"We openly war against God, because he is the greatest evil in the world." – Schall, German Socialist leader.

"It is our duty as socialists to root out the faith in God with all our might, nor is anyone worthy of the name who does not consecrate himself to the spread of atheism." – Liebknecht, German Socialist leader.

"We have simply done with God." – Engels, German Socialist leader.

Bebel, another prominent socialist, perhaps the greatest living authority on the subject, leaves "heaven to the angels and the sparrows." The same authority confessed that "Christianity and socialism stand toward each other as fire and water."

"Modern socialism is without religion and its tendency is atheistic." – Henry George.

– *Houston Chronicle.*

