

## **VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.**

### **THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION AGAIN**

NO DOUBT our Presbyterian friends thought they had buried the Westminster Confession of Faith so deeply under their *new statement* of Presbyterian faith, that they would never have further trouble from its bad odor. Rev. Samuel T. Carter, D.D., was one of those who warred for its burial at that time. Satisfied for the time, apparently, Dr. Carter now realizes that the Westminster Confession is still the creed of the Presbyterian Church and the newer statement a mere blind. His honest soul now charges into the battle afresh for its complete repudiation. He recently wrote to the Presbyterian General Assembly on the subject, and we quote from his letter as follows: –

"Fathers and Brethren, – Many years ago, when I was ordained to the ministry of the gospel, I declared in the most solemn manner I believed the Westminster Confession to be the truth of God. I now in an equally solemn manner declare I don't believe it to be the truth of God; that I utterly reject it as a setting forth of the character of the heavenly Father. There never was, there is not now, and there never will be such a God as the God of the Westminster Confession.

"It is an idol of man's invention, as truly as any worshiped in Delhi, Pekin or Africa. I believe the great and true God is infinitely and exquisitely good and gracious; that the one thing that we can neither fully receive nor declare is the boundless love of God; that all the noblest exhibitions of human love are but bright and beautiful sparks from that intense and divine flame – the love that through ages and generations has been leading men by the fullest wisdom and most tender providence to heights of knowledge, love and boundless hope that far transcend all human

thought. I lift up this overwhelming divine love before my fellow-men, believing that this alone will draw all men unto Him.

"I believe that the Westminster Confession darkens and denies this great love of God and should not be retained as a Confession by any Church today, and that our Church is false to its greatest duty of being a true witness for God so long as it retains this Confession."

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Brother Carter's experiences encourage us to hope and wait patiently for further awakenings amongst the theological "dry bones." For years and years Dr. Carter preached under the Confession which he did not believe. For years he lent his name and voice and influence for God-dishonoring error until he got strong enough and courageous enough to protest and cry for *liberty* from his slavery. The partial liberty *granted* was doubtless appreciated; but now he longs and cries for more, more, more *liberty to think*. He desires to be set free. His conscience longs and cries out that it can stand the galling errors no longer.

Poor Brother Carter does not see the inconsistency of his position. He should not have entered the Presbyterian House of Bondage! He should never have confessed the Confession which his head and his heart repudiated. Or, if he did believe the errors at the beginning of his Christian life and ministry, and learned of them later, he should have been *prompt* to obey conscience, and should have stepped out of Presbyterianism into the liberty wherewith Christ makes free indeed. Presbyterians who honestly and truly believe the statements of the Confession have a right to hold it and to tell it abroad. It is the others who are at fault. If all who disagree with the Westminster Confession would promptly and decidedly withdraw from the denomination into liberty, explaining their reasons for withdrawing, the effect would be a hundred times more satisfactory.

"Actions speak louder than words." Dr. Carter's words say that he is an honest, bold, advocate of Truth at any cost; but his actions speak the reverse. They tell us, "The Westminster Confession has ties and emoluments which I love more than I love the Truth and the liberty which Christ offers. I prefer the bondage, and to be amongst those who misrepresent my God, than to forsake all and follow the Redeemer and his [R3782 : page 164] 'little flock' whom the world counts 'fools' for Christ's sake and too conscientious."

We hope that Brother Carter and many others will ultimately grow stronger in the Lord and still more devoted to the Truth, so that ultimately they will take gladly the spoiling of their goods – worldly prospects, etc. – for Christ's sake, the Truth's sake, hoping for the "better resurrection" as "more than conquerors."

### **EPWORTH LEAGUE FACING A CRISIS**

Throughout the entire Methodist Church, we are informed, "mutterings of uncertainty and dissatisfaction" are being heard in regard to the future of the Epworth League, the young people's organization, which has a membership of about 2,000,000. Indeed, the crisis has become so serious that *The Epworth Herald* (Chicago), official organ of the League, is publishing a series of articles about it from the pen of Dr. Wentworth F. Stewart, author of the "Evangelistic Awakening." Dr. Stewart says it is his observation that "the League in many places is lacking in vigorous, self-sustaining life; in others, is a problem in itself; and only rarely is it measuring up to reasonable expectation in spiritual culture, evangelistic zeal, and missionary enterprise;...it is not a reviving and recruiting force, and is not saving to any reasonable degree the young people within its reach." He says: –

## **A GENERAL CRITICISM**

"Our whole Church has been for years committed to the numerical ideal of quantity instead of quality. Anything to secure a crowd, multiply numbers, increase the membership roll. Some churches and some leagues double their membership while the same pews hold the congregation, the same chairs seat the people at the mid-week prayer service and the devotional meeting of the League, and only the same prayers and testimonies are heard because there is not leaven enough to permeate their entire following.

"To gain our membership one by one, seeking their conversion first, and relation after, though a slower process, is infinitely more valuable than a red-and-blue contest with no significance attached; the same amount of energy thoroughly spiritualized and spent in evangelistic activities would add permanent strength [R3783 : page 164] to the League and not give the impression that religion is secondary to membership."

– *Literary Digest.*

## **RELIGIOUS STRIFE IN GERMANY**

Berlin, May 15. – The question of the divinity of Christ now threatens to rend German Protestantism into two great parties, the liberal and the orthodox.

The revolt in liberal churches against the narrow limits of orthodoxy has been fanned into a flame by the refusal of the State Church Consistory and the Prussian Supreme Court to sanction the selection of Rev. Rowen as pastor of the Church at Rhemscheid in Westphalia.

His offense was that he preached sermons in which he repudiated the divine parentage of Christ, characterizing it as a myth inspired by Graeco-Pagan influences.

## FLOCK IS OBDURATE

The Church at Rhemscheid refused to select another pastor, and its pulpit remains unoccupied.

More than 1,300 mass meetings have been held to discuss the religious situation. Taken together they form an astonishing revelation of the enormous extent of the growth of the so-called higher criticism doctrines.

The ferment is increasing, daily, hourly. The liberal pastors and their congregations threaten secession unless the bounds of the creed are widened by the elimination of what they call the Supernatural Articles.

The correspondent, in conversation with a leading theologian who occupies a university chair, was advised that out of 8,000 German Protestant pastors in active service at the present time not over one-quarter are believers in the literal text of the Apostles' Creed, and only one-tenth hold to the inspiration of the Bible.

## LEADERS OF THE MOVEMENT

Men like Prof. Harnack and Prof. Delitzsch, author of "Babel and Bible," lights of the liberal school of theology, propose that the Kaiser, as head of the Church, call a general council of the adherents of all theological schools to recast the creed and *formulate some neutral body of doctrine which men of all opinions can subscribe to.*

Should the Kaiser do this the cataclysm may be prevented. Otherwise it is predicted on all sides the Reformed Church of Germany will soon be split into warring factions.

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Only those who have some knowledge of the "Divine Plan of the Ages" can comprehend such difficulties and appreciate the outcome. This is not a strife between the true Church and the false one; but between two sections of the false or nominal system. Money is at the bottom of it. The German Government pays the preachers of all denominations; so now when one is pushed away from the public seat there is a howl of rage, not only from the ousted one, but also from others in sympathy with him, who foresee that their turn may come next.

It is not time yet to judge the hearts to determine which are honest and which dishonest, but there is no mistake about it that if neither honor of men nor financial considerations played a part there would be few to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. But those few would be the honest and true on both sides of the discussions.

The Lord's people, who have renounced worldly and political methods, and who are seeking chiefly, solely, the Kingdom of Heaven, will do well to possess their souls in peace and go right along proclaiming the "good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." They need not look for worldly help, but, as in our Lord's time, should persevere, self-sacrificingly preaching without money and without price, seeking out the few who "have an ear to hear," even as many as the Father shall draw to the Truth.

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