

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

CONSCIENCE A BARRIER TO PEACE

ALTHOUGH the Presbyterians and the Cumberland Presbyterians have officially united, there is some dissension. At Warrensburg, Mo., each denomination had a church edifice, and both had influential members. The union program was that the Cumberland meeting house should be used, but a majority of the Cumberland congregation (128 out of 230) objected to the union and locked the building against the Unionists and notified them that it could not be so used.

The ground of objection is that although the Presbyterians have adopted a new statement of their faith, which is unobjectionable, they still hold on to the old "Westminster Confession of Faith," which these Cumberland Presbyterians cannot conscientiously endorse. Asked what particular portion of the Confession stung their consciences into disunion, one of their leaders, W. K. Morrow, produced the Presbyterian Higher Catechism and read the following:

"God's decrees are the wise, free and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.

"God by an eternal and immutable decree out of his mere love for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory, and in Christ hath chosen some men to eternal life and the means thereof; and also, according to his sovereign power and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth) hath

passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice."

Mr. Morrow closed the book with a slam, held it up and said:

"I, for one, can't swallow that doctrine, and I won't have it forced down my throat. God never gave such a doctrine. It is of the devil. It would drive men to the devil instead of bringing them to God."

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The pity is that so many Christians are not so conscientious, but willing to stultify themselves for the sake of unity. The Bible rule is, "First pure, then peaceable"; and if it were strictly followed there would be a religious earthquake which would lead to true peace and unity.

THE LACK FELT – CRYING ALOUD

While some Christian people are so busied with forwarding Federative Christian Union and in performing "many wonderful works" (Matt. 7:22) that they do not feel the loss of spiritual power in Churchianity, others more alert to the true situation are crying aloud of their distress. Thus, for instance, *The Christian Work and Evangelist* (New York) says:

"The great need is to make the Church mean in present conditions what Christianity meant to the world ages ago. This is the real reform needed. But, strange to say, there is no effort made in this direction. Instead, schemes of expediency are resorted to. In their last analysis institutional church efforts, young people's movement, Church federation and the endowment of churches are such schemes primarily designed to gloss over glaring weaknesses, and to stimulate flagging interests. These efforts offer nothing for improving the ethical status of organized religion or for restoring

the spirit of primitive Christianity. These efforts do not make the Church mean in the new condition what the early Christian Church meant ages ago."

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The real trouble is recognized by but few: it is the loss of the "faith once delivered to the saints." Twenty-eight years ago faith in the teachings of the Bible began to suffer from the teachings of the Evolutionists and the Higher Critics. As a result faith in the divine revelation has waned, and Christian zeal and godly living in proportion. The Bible discredited, faith [R3846 : page 276] has no proper anchorage, and as our Lord said of the Samaritans, "Ye believe ye know not what!" Thus, many well-intentioned people are in a pitiable condition so far as religious conviction is concerned.

CONGREGATIONALISTS CONFESS THE CHANGE

The following extract from *The Congregationalist*, put in the mildest possible form, shows how important teachings have been abandoned. Some of these are improvements in that some errors are less tenaciously held; but with the rejected and incongruous errors went truths most vital – most essential to true Christian faith and necessary as a basis for Christian conduct and zeal for divine service. Note the difference between what "our fathers believed" and what "we believe." We quote: –

"As to our belief in Christ – our fathers looked up to him as the second person in the Trinity, seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, after having purchased the forgiveness of our sins and the remission of sentence of eternal death by his death on the cross and his resurrection from the tomb. We see in him *who is the ideal man*, the Father manifested to human apprehension, the unique revelation of God to men. Through him we know God and we worship the Father in him. We do not attempt

to put into exact forms of statement the relations between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, whose manifestation as God we see in Jesus Christ. To quote Professor Walker here: "Whether by virgin birth, by preexistence as the eternal Logos, by enduement at baptism, by Davidic descent, by all these lines of argument combined, or by others like his sinlessness and moral oneness with the Father, that unity is to be explained or no, the great truth to which these interpretations bear witness is the fundamental fact of Christianity – that of the incarnation. Its explication is relatively a matter of speculation; its reality is of prime importance.'

"Our fathers regarded man as created perfect in one human pair, who by wilful disobedience to a divine command corrupted and brought sentence of eternal death on the whole human race descended from them. Our fathers believed that Jesus Christ coming as God in a human form begotten through the power of the holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, by his sufferings and physical death inflicted on him by men, endured the equivalent of the punishment of sinners sentenced to eternal death, and delivered from it certain members of the race foreordained to be saved. *We believe that* Jesus Christ the son of God living, suffering, and dying as a man among men revealed the self-sacrificing love of God for his children, who include all mankind, and that this manifestation continued through the Spirit of God in and among men, is teaching sinners the nature of sin and the character of God, and is drawing all men unto him....

"Our fathers believed that the New Testament revealed the divine plan and pattern of Christ's Church on earth, and that it was Congregational in its organization. We believe that the Congregational order is best suited to the Christian development of the individual, to 'intelligent discipleship, mutual responsibility, direct loyalty to Christ alone, full rounded Christian manhood.' We hold, however, that whenever and wherever modifications of this order are found to be best suited to advance the Kingdom of Christ

they should be adopted, and that the disciples of Christ of all denominations should work together as far as is practicable to show their unity in spirit and to bring his Kingdom to perfection....

"Our fathers believed that men could be saved only by believing on Jesus before they died. The theological controversies of the last twenty-five years have resulted at least in toleration for Christians who express a reasonable hope that those who die without knowledge of Christ may not have closed their probation in this life. The tendency thus indicated has gone so far that some Congregationalists, who believe, as all Christians do, in the final triumph of righteousness over sin, hold also that it is not an unwarranted hope that this triumph may include the final redemption from sin of all the children of God."

MINISTERIAL DISHONESTY RESPONSIBLE

We charge that this spiritual decline and loss of faith in the Bible is the result of dishonesty amongst the professed ministers of Christ. Many of them have [R3847 : page 276] for years been practicing most ignoble dishonesty – obtaining money and honor of men under false pretenses. Professing loyalty to the Bible and to the creeds they have betrayed both. Professing to build up believers in the most holy faith, as ministers of truth, servants of God, they have systematically put poison into the children's bread which has destroyed the faith of many, and by reason of them the way of Truth has been evilly spoken against – discredited in the name of God, and backed by the education of these professed servants of God and the Church and the special confidence reposed in them as men separated from the world.

This is not too strong a charge. It is confessed from day to day, if we but learn to read between the lines, and sometimes on the lines, as in the following extract from the *Homiletic Review*, a prominent Christian magazine. It is discussing the case of Rev. Crapsey, D.D., an Episcopalian minister recently expelled from the

pulpit of that denomination because he utterly denied every item of Christian faith – including our Lord's prehuman existence, miraculous birth, etc. The *Review* says:

"What Dr. Crapsey does in an extreme degree without question nine out of every ten ministers in every Church requiring creed subscription also do in some degree. The principle on which Dr. Crapsey is to be unfrocked, impartially applied by those churches requiring creed subscription, would undo and unsettle their whole ministry. Nearly all of the creeds subscribed are of ancient date. They were framed as metaphysical and logical statements, frequently to meet the heresies of the age that produced them. It would be quite generally regarded as proof of intellectual disease if a man living today should affirm his belief *verbatim et literatim* in the ancient symbols. Yet they are 'subscribed' by a very great number of ministers. In view of this fact it is a matter of importance to ascertain in what sense and to what extent creed subscription is binding."

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Here it is plainly stated: Dr. Crapsey's perfidy in [R3847 : page 277] professing to believe and teach what he does not believe and teach is *excusable* in the eyes of the "*nine out of every ten ministers in every Church requiring creed subscription also do in some degree.*" It is because such *falsification* has become so common amongst professed servants of the Truth that some men of conscience feel *justified* in doing the same. Is there any other class of professional men or business men of whom it can be said (in their *defense*) that nine out of ten of them perpetually live a lie? We hope not.

Just as Christian Scientists permit their minds by continually misrepresenting facts until their sense of truth on every subject seems to be perverted, so that argument, facts and logic are alike wasted on them, so it is with the "nine out of ten" Christian

ministers, who habitually prostitute the Truth for name and station and salary. Bible testimony, quotations of the apostles, no longer have the weight of Truth in their minds because of their long subordination to policy, their so-long continued sacrifice of Truth.

We believe that without a love for ***Truth*** none will be favored with the light of "Present Truth." More than this, we hold that if sincere love for Truth – honesty of thought and deed – be yielded, sacrificed to pride, ambition, vain-glory, or any other thing, the result will be the loss of Present Truth. Let us ever keep in memory our Lord's message through the Apostle, that now in the end of this age he will send strong delusion that all may believe a lie who have pleasure in untruth – who received not the Truth in the love of it. (2 Thess. 2:10-12.) Let us guard our consciences, realizing that their perversion would surely work our injury, our alienation from the Lord, and our rejection from his service now and hereafter.
