

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

PRACTICAL RESULTS OF THE CHURCH FEDERATION MOVEMENT

THE following, clipped from a pamphlet entitled "Liberty," we esteem worthy of presentation in these columns.

"No movement inaugurated during recent years is probably of greater significance than the Inter-Church Federation movement. It is one which cannot fail to be attended with tremendous consequences, and, if followed to its logical outcome, will terminate in results which ought to cause every thoughtful person to shudder in advance.

"The outcome of this federation movement has been plainly outlined in the 'sure word of prophecy.' History also illustrates, by similar movements, its meaning.

"Concerning its importance, the chairman of the Inter-Church Federation Conference, recently held in New York City, said: 'This is one of the most notable assemblies of believers in Jesus Christ that has ever been seen. John Calvin wrote to Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, and declared he would cross any sea to make such a union effective. The dream of the great reformer and the great archbishop has met with realization in these latter days.'

A BIBLE PROHIBITION OF CONFEDERACY

"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.) It is evident, from the context of this passage, that God's professed, people inaugurated this federation movement against which he warned them, because they had departed from

him, and 'refused the waters of Shiloh that go softly,' and 'vexed his holy Spirit.'

"The rejection of the holy Spirit lies at the foundation of every Church federation which has blighted the prosperity of the Church during her history. The only union the true Church has ever sought is a union with Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church; and when such a union has been maintained, mighty power has attended it. As evidence of this, one has but to revert to apostolic times, when the Church went forth 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.'

"Years ago much power attended revival efforts, conducted by such men as Professor Finney, President of Oberlin College, and later, by Mr. Moody and others. These old-time revivals were attended with a harvest of souls; but they are largely now things of the past. Many ministers deplore the absence of spiritual power which prevails to such an alarming extent at the present time. Realizing keenly the weakness and lack of spiritual life which characterized the once Spirit-filled Church with a power which brought conviction to sin-sick souls, churchmen are seeking for some remedy by which the Church may regain her former power.

"The means by which this restoration of former power is sought is a gigantic Church federation movement, through which the Church may secure the power of the State to institute moral reforms and enforce her decrees. To many, at first thought, this may seem an innocent, harmless, and desirable thing. For this reason we desire to submit a few of the inevitable practical results of such a union.

"One of the results of this movement was outlined by a prominent delegate at the conference, as follows:

"I trust that one of the practical results of this conference will be the organization of a force that lawbreakers, and

lawmakers will respect and heed when great questions of morals are involved. Our gospel is the fulfilment of the law. It is our province, in the name of our Supreme King, and seeking the good of mankind, to ask rulers to respect the code of our kingdom. Rulers may ignore sects, but they will respect the Church. This federation will compel an audience, and it will speak with power if it will put aside its differences and make its agreement its argument.'

"When the end has been attained for which they have been seeking, we will have a parallel to that which existed in the fourth century, when the bishops of Rome were united in compelling the Emperor Constantine and others to yield to their demands concerning the settlement of 'grave moral questions,' among which [R3864 : page 308] was chiefly the enforcement of Sunday observance by law.

A CHURCH TRUST

"Another result of the evil principles underlying this proposed Federation will be a veritable Church union, or trust; and the same tactics will doubtless be employed by it as are common to other unions. Freedom to preach the gospel will be denied. Any denomination not conforming to the creed, rules, and regulations of this religious trust, will be regarded as an unlawful rival. This was indicated by one speaker at the recent conference, who said:

"No community in which any denomination has any legitimate claim, should be entered by any other denomination through its official agencies without conference with the denomination or denominations having said claims. A feeble Church should be revived, if possible, rather than a new one established to become its rival.'

"This is an age of unions and confederacies. Every department of the commercial world is being bound together. The power which is being wielded by these unions in securing their desired ends has exerted an influence which the Church, in its worldly condition, has been unable to resist. On this point a prominent speaker at the recent Inter-Church Federation Conference said: 'The two words which express the principle that rule to-day in the business world are co-operation and economy. Apply these two thoughts to the work of the Church. Our sects and denominations have often been sources of rivalry and competition, and they have left the Church as a whole weakened and shorn of its power. We have not presented a united front against a common enemy, but have too often fired into one another's camps.....Co-operation through a closer federation is the need of the hour.'

"It will readily be seen from this proposal that any denomination which does not belong to the union, would at once be considered a 'rival,' or, in a more characteristic term familiar to all unions, a 'scab.' This would at once arouse endless animosities and controversies between the union and the sects which are not connected with the federation, or union. Such a course would result only in the federated churches bringing pressure to bear upon those who refuse to yield to their demands, which would be nothing short of religious persecution. Again it will be seen that the only safe union for the Church, the only true union, is a union with Christ."
