

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

CONCERNING FALLING STARS

OUR SOCIETY'S London representative writes as follows: –

London is getting a stir-up over "The New Theology," as it is called. A Rev. R. J. Campbell, who took Dr. Parker's place in London, thinks he has a mission. Ritual and Dogma are nothing to him, and he is laboring to break them to pieces. Man and God are indivisible; God is the sum-total of the consciousness of humanity – whatever that may be! Jesus was a man as other men, and was born in the same way: the difference in him being that he had more consciousness of himself and of things. There is no need for the terms Unitarian and Trinitarian, since man and God are one. The teaching that the blood of the man Jesus Christ, who was killed nearly 1900 years ago, could in any way avail to cover a man from guilt and that through faith in it a man can find acceptance with God is both lamentable and mischievous. These are some of the things being said. Other wild things are that a company of actors giving their services to interest some poor cripples were doing such work as Christ did on Calvary, and that the songs they sung, though not as fine words as the Psalms, were beyond them in actual effort. At any rate, this is to be seen – that the preacher in turning so sharply on the creeds will do something towards the disintegration of churchianity.

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The Rev. Campbell proclaims himself not merely a higher-critic infidel but an atheist as well; but he does this in refined terms so as not to alarm the flock he is misleading. To him God is either "*it*" or "*him*," with "*it*" first and the "*him*" merely added as a concession to the ignorance and superstition of his hearers

and readers. Then, to give his atheism milder form than some, he objects to calling the Creator merely "blind force," preferring rather the vague term "consciousness."

And what think you! This avowed infidel and atheist occupying the most prominent pulpit in Great Britain is about to instruct the preachers of Great Britain along these lines – "at their request." They are to assemble in various cities in conventions to hear this reverend D.D. prove to them the wisdom of David – "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." (Psa. 14:1.) What better evidence could we have that the harvest work is urgently needed? Do we not see that as between Infidelity and Atheism in the pulpits and Christian Science, Spiritism, fanaticism and demonism in the pews, only the "elect" can escape these "plagues," – and that the elect need the Helping Hands and Bible Keys speedily?

We are fortunate in being able to quote Rev. Campbell's own words in the following extract from the New Haven Union: –

VIEWS OF THE REV. CAMPBELL – SAYS SAVIOR WAS DIVINE AND THAT EVERYONE IS.

"The great modifications in religious belief which are taking place throughout the Christian world have recently been manifesting themselves with especial prominence in England. The leader in radical revision of faith is R. J. Campbell, pastor of the City Temple and the recognized head of the English Nonconformists. He is about to make a tour of the country, addressing gatherings of provincial pastors at their request upon the 'Restated Theology.' Inasmuch as Mr. Campbell rejects many of the chief dogmas of the Bible, such as the story of the fall of man, it will be seen how radically different from the old is the new theology, which is supplanting the religious beliefs of a generation ago in England.

"Mr. Campbell states his views with the utmost frankness in the London *Daily Mail*, and inasmuch as he is almost as well known in America as in his own country they will attract equal attention on this side of the Atlantic.

"'We object,' he says, 'to the formal statements of belief which have distinguished the theology of the past. We object to ecclesiastical labels. Everyone knows that for the last twenty years there has been considerable uneasiness in the churches, due largely to the development of scientific knowledge, the progress of archaeology and the study of comparative religion. This uneasiness has affected every Church, even [R3950 : page 68] Rome. From the side of science the new theology is typified in the work of men like Sir Oliver Lodge. The lines of divergence between the old and the new go down deep, and there is great cleavage.

GOD AND HUMANITY THE SAME

"'The new theology in common with the whole scientific world believes that the finite universe is one aspect or expression of that reality, but it thinks of *it* or *him* as *consciousness* rather than a *blind force*, thereby differing from some scientists. Believing this we believe that there is thus no real distinction between humanity and the Deity. Our being is the same as God's, although our consciousness of it is limited. We see the revelation of God in everything around us.

"'The new theology holds that human nature should be interpreted in terms of its own highest; therefore it reverences Jesus Christ. It looks upon Jesus as a perfect example of what humanity ought to be, the life which perfectly expresses God in our limited human experience. So far as we are able to see, the highest kind of life that can be lived is the life which is lived, in terms of the whole, as the life of Jesus. EVERY MAN IS A POTENTIAL CHRIST, or rather a manifestation of the eternal

Christ – that side of the nature of God from which all humanity has come forth. Humanity is fundamentally one; all true living in the effort to realize that oneness. This is the truth that underlies all noble efforts for the common good in the world today.

""The new theology watches with sympathy the development of modern science, for it believes itself to be in harmony therewith. It is the religious articulation of the scientific method. It therefore follows that it is in sympathy with scientific criticism of the important religious literature known as the Bible. While recognizing the value of the Bible as a unique record of religious experience, it handles it as freely and as critically as it would any other book. It believes that the seat of religious authority is within (not without) the human soul. Individual man is so constituted as to be able to recognize, ray by ray, the truth that helps him upward, no matter from what source it comes.

""The new theology, of course, believes in the immortality of the soul, but only on the ground that every individual consciousness is a ray of the universal consciousness and cannot be destroyed. It believes that there are many stages in the upward progress of the soul in the unseen world before it becomes fully and consciously one with its infinite source. We make our destiny in the next world by our behavior in this, and ultimately every soul will be perfected.

""The doctrine of sin which holds us to be blameworthy for deeds that we cannot help we believe to be a false view. Sin is simply selfishness. It is an offense against the God within, a violation of the law of love. We reject wholly the common interpretation of atonement, that another is beaten for our fault. We believe not in a final judgment, but in a judgment that is ever proceeding. Every sin involves suffering, suffering which cannot be remitted by any work of another. When a deed is done its consequences are eternal.

"We believe Jesus is and was divine, but so are we. His mission was to make us realize our divinity and our oneness with God, and we are called to live the life which he lived."

"THE NEW THEOLOGY"

Under this caption The Christian World (London) says: –

"It is an old saying that Englishmen have two interests, politics and theology. It would be more correct to make the duality a trinity, for if a census of tastes were taken it would probably show that sport is the largest preoccupation of our modern public. But that theology is in this country still a very live subject is sufficiently illustrated by the daily newspaper columns of the last few days. The latest press sensation is what is being everywhere called 'The New Theology.' Mr. Campbell, of the City Temple, its leading exponent, is the topic of the hour. His portrait is exhibited, columns are occupied with impressionist sketches of him, with interviews, with leading articles, and correspondence on his views. Presidents of colleges and well known preachers are being solicited for their opinions on the disputed points. There is the usual clash of diametrically opposite views which we have learned to look for as the Englishman's way of expressing himself on any subject of interest. The veterans shake their heads. Some declare that the new preaching is a denial of New Testament Christianity; others denounce the preacher as an ignoramus who has had no proper theological training. 'It is simple Unitarianism,' says one party. Another demands a resurrection of the City Temple trust deed and an arraignment of the preacher as violating its conditions. Meanwhile the crowd goes to hear Mr. Campbell, and both old and young, dissentients and disciples, agree that a crisis has arisen for the churches and pulpits of the land.

"Are we in for a new Reformation? Vinet, himself an evangelical theologian, said long ago that one was necessary and

inevitable, and there are features about the present upheaval which remind us curiously of that old one of nigh four centuries ago. It is difficult for an age to recognize the meaning of its own doings. To us Luther's movement comes as part of our orthodox creed. But we have only to go back to the literature of the time to see the enormous strain it put upon the faith of the world. The translation of the New Testament and its diffusion amongst the people, to us so essentially religious a work, was to orthodox Churchmen the most dangerous and subverting of acts.

"The time is one of sifting, when each man must examine his own foundations. Let him not lose his temper or his charity in the process. The day of the *odium theologicum* ought to be over. We may leave the topic with another word of Milton which could hardly be bettered as a present admonition: – 'A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity, might win all these diligences to join and unite into one general and brotherly search after truth.'"

LEAGUE OF "NEW" THEOLOGIANS

The Tribune, another English daily, under the above title, states that a meeting of ministers interested in the new theology was held at the City Temple, when the "New Theology League" came into definite existence. Its sub-title is as follows: –

"A society for the encouragement of progressive religious thought." The membership is to be confined [R3950 : page 69] to ministers and laymen in association with Congregational churches. The Rev. R. J. Campbell was elected president, and the Rev. T. Gilbert Sadler (Wimbledon) and the Rev. W. Evans Darby (of the Peace Society) secretaries. It is proposed to propagate the views of the League by means of pamphlets, but for the present at any rate no attempt will be made to formulate a creedal definition of belief. Those present considered it was wiser

to focus a common outlook and attitude rather than attempt creed-making.

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The Tribune publishes the names of sixteen ministers who have endorsed Rev. Campbell's position. Error grows much faster than does Truth. The people are more ready for it, and name and fame and salary are not thereby risked.

Meantime some one has created a sensation by the discovery that the trust deed to the London City Temple has a clause which restricts its use to ministers who teach as well as profess the Westminster Confession. Dr. Campbell and his followers are pained that they should thus be interfered with. They are willing to profess what they do not believe, but think the time ripe for telling the people of their unbelief.

The Express states that it is proposed to ask Parliament to pass a law voiding the restrictions of the trust deed. It says: –

"Mr. Campbell's 'New Theology,' as so far developed: –

- "1. Denies the 'fall of man.'
- "2. Rejects the Atonement.
- "3. Denies 'final judgment,' and says that judgment is always going on.
- "4. Denies the Virgin Birth of Christ.
- "5. Says that sin involves suffering which cannot be avoided.

"Mr. Campbell is not entitled to preach the 'New Theology' as pastor of the City Temple, nor is it legal for the trustees to allow him to do so, as they are equally bound by the deed, and have no power to alter it.

"The position is so acute that it has been proposed to apply for parliamentary power to vary the deeds, and at a recent meeting of the Free Church Council Mr. Reckitt, M.P., a leading supporter of Mr. Campbell's Church, said, 'We must act, because it is competent for any one to raise the whole question, and for ministers to be ejected from every chapel.'"

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RELIGION IN FRANCE

In the days of the Empire the French coins bore the usual legend, declaring that the Emperor reigned "*by the grace of God*" (*i.e.*, as authorized by the Papacy). When the Republic superseded the Empire the coins' inscription was changed and now reads: "*God protect France.*" The French Congress has recently directed that this be changed, and new coins will instead bear the words, "Liberty, Equality and Equity."

This is quite proper. The Government no longer recognizes the Papacy or its appointees, and gradually the French are realizing that their Government is no part of the Kingdom of God, and that special divine protection is not to be expected. When will other nations similarly awaken? They are all "kingdoms of this world," under "the prince of this world" – Satan. Only when he shall have been bound by the new King of glory will the French and others be prepared to become Kingdoms of God's dear Son.

The bishops' mansions, the seminaries, etc., vacated by their former occupants because of their unwillingness to obey French laws, are to be fitted up for and devoted to educational and museum purposes.

Some Catholics, in accord with the new French law, began the organization of a "Cultural Association," so as to have the use of the Church edifices; but the bishop of that diocese, Mgr.

Dizien, following instructions from the pope, ordered the withdrawal of their parish priest as a punishment – for this means to Catholics no one to forgive their sins, no one to help their dead out of purgatory, no one to baptize their infants or preserve those dying from an awful future.

Thus is the poor world staggering on out of the darkness toward the light, but still hopeless except as our Lord's prayer shall be fulfilled, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven."
