

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

GETTING READY FOR FEDERATION

UNQUESTIONABLY the splitting of Christendom into numerous denominations since the Reformation has been productive of a spirit of moderation in sharp contrast with the period in which many were racked, maimed, burned at the stake, etc., as "heretics." When we have pointed out that the proposed *Federation of Religions* would again put great power into the hands of a united majority and possibly revive the persecutions of the past, we have been laughed at. We are told that the world has so changed that *persecution* for religious belief would be unthinkable.

Within a month we have heard of two professed "ministers of the Gospel" whose remarks imply that nothing is lacking but the favorable opportunity for them to light the fires of persecution. Besides the most refined modes of persecution, by slander and ostracism, there may yet be opportunities for as barbaric martyrdoms for the Truth's sake as were practised in our Lord's day.

REV. DR. PATTERSON'S CHRISTIAN LOVE

"There was an exciting episode at the Monday meeting of the Philadelphia ministers, and the Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson, pastor emeritus, was the centre of it. His assignment was a discourse on John Calvin. He gave the ministers a surprise by advocating capital punishment for other felonies than murder – and for flagrant heresy. According to one reporter, he said: 'Those who spread blasphemous and immoral doctrines should also be put to death.' According to another reporter, he added that burning at the stake was too good for them."

The editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, in answer to a query as to the very words of the reverend gentleman, replied (Oct. 18):

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"We are sorry that you should ask us to print the very words used by Rev. Dr. R. M. Patterson in his recent outburst. They were reported as follows: "If I had my way about it I would have an executioner called in to deal with all heretics and blasphemers. Burning at the stake would be too good for those who revile religion and take the Lord's name in vain. The growth of heresy is such today that nothing but measures such as this can stop it."

Not all Presbyterians, however, feel so bitterly toward the non-elect heretics; for we read further: —

"The Rev. Dr. Henry C. McCook, replied to the Rev. Dr. Patterson. 'My blood boils,' he said, 'at what I have just heard, and it astonishes me to think that a Presbyterian minister should utter such sentiments.'"

THE SPIRIT IS WILLING

Evidently, some of the "doctors of the law" in our day are as willing to do violence as were those who stoned Stephen. Their spirit is willing but their flesh is weak — because public sentiment would not stand for it. But we expect to see public sentiment grow in the same direction under the stimulus of the Federation of the Churches.

Recently the Editor preached at Morgantown, W.Va., to a large audience, which gave close attention for more than two hours. Shortly after a man who was present met one of the ministers of that city who asked him if he had heard the discourse. He replied, "Yes! and I enjoyed it very much. Did you attend?" "No," replied the minister, "I would sooner have joined in stoning him out of town!"

It is presumable that only lack of courage held back this Reverend Doctor of the Law of Love from enjoying himself at our expense. Poor blind leaders of the blind! We are so glad for them that God has a glorious plan in which they may yet share – when "all the blind eyes shall be opened and all the deaf ears shall be unstopped." Verily it is written, "They that hated you, that cast you out [rejected you] said, Let the Lord be glorified! [We do it for the good of Churchianity!] But he [Christ] shall appear to your joy and they shall be ashamed." – Isaiah 66:5. [R4095 : page 356]

METHODIST RE-UNION IN ENGLAND

By means of re-union a new church was created in Great Britain on September 17. This event, says Dr. Robertson Nicoll in *The British Weekly* (London), "was a historic day of the twentieth century and marked an epoch in the Christian Church." Three Methodist denominations, known as the Methodist New Connection, the Bible Christians, and the United Methodist Free Church, merged their separate life in one organism to be known as the United Methodist Church. From the beginning, the above writer also states, "this Church takes its place with the best equipped and most powerful denominations in the kingdom."

The historic uniting conference took place in John Wesley's chapel, City road, London, and was composed of seven hundred delegates. The controversies which from time to time caused the formation of these divisions have long passed into history, and the only differences that have marked them in recent years have been those of polity and not doctrine. Legal questions were, therefore, the main questions requiring settlement. Some account of these old denominations is given in *The Daily News* (London). We read:

"The Methodist New Connection is the eldest of the three contracting parties, and has been in existence for one hundred and

ten years. It represents the first division that took place in Methodism after the death of John Wesley. The question at issue, as in almost all the subsequent divisions of Methodism, was practically the right of the people to a place in the government of the Church. The leader of the agitation was Mr. Alexander Kilham, who contended for the right of the Methodist people to order their own form and fix their own time for religious worship, the right of Methodist preachers as apart from clergymen of the Established Church to administer the sacraments, and the right of the people to make and administer the laws of Methodism. The first two reforms were granted by the conference under what is known in Methodist history as 'The Plan of Pacification,' passed in 1795, but the third reform was refused, and for advocating this reform in a pamphlet Mr. Kilham was expelled from the conference in 1796, and in the following year, after a deputation to the conference had failed to obtain redress, the Methodist New Connection was formed.

"The second of the uniting churches is the Bible Christian denomination, which has behind it an unbroken and successful history of eighty-nine years of fervent evangelism. It originated through the remarkably successful lay ministry of Mr. William O'Bryan, who refused to confine his labors within the narrow bounds of a circuit. Though he was acting in the spirit of John Wesley, who said, 'The world is my parish,' and though he invariably chose as the sphere of his labors those parts of Devonshire and Cornwall where Methodism was unrepresented, he was deemed by the Wesleyan courts to be acting irregularly. Because he would not limit his labors to the circuit-preachers' plan, he was expelled in the chapel at Gunwen, in 1810, 'a chapel,' says the Rev. G. Eayrs, in his excellent little handbook, 'the erection of which he had superintended, of which he had given half the cost, and for which he had given the freehold, with more land for a burial ground.'

"The third Church, the United Methodist Free Church, is itself a union of denominations, each of which had unsuccessfully striven for certain reforms in the Wesleyan Church, and, in consequence of their failure, had formed themselves into separate denominations. The Protestant Methodists, formed in 1827, stood for simplicity of worship and impartial observance of Connectional regulations. The Wesleyan Association arose in 1835 out of controversies respecting ministerial education, and the claim of the local churches for self-government. The Wesleyan reform movement, in the controversy that ended so disastrously for the Wesleyan Church, and which cost that denomination 100,000 members, was a protest against the arbitrary rule of the conference and a demand for the cooperation of laymen with the ministers in legislation and administration in Wesleyan Methodism. The expulsion of Messrs. Everitt, Dunn and Griffiths, and the formation of the Reform Church, were the outcome of this controversy. Ultimately these three denominations united in 1857 under the name of the United Methodist Free Churches, and for fifty years this denomination has been regarded as the most democratic of the Methodist churches."

– *Literary Digest*.

THE TIME OF TROUBLE APPROACHING

The present financial flurry is doubtless another of the *spasms* of "travail" referred to in DAWN I., p. 334. The primary cause is a shortage of money, due to a demonetization of silver. Secondly, Italians, Poles, etc., to the number of 5,000,000, have come here lately, and, earning good wages, do not trust banks, but carry their money or bury it. At but \$200 each this would be an immense drain on our currency – \$1,000,000,000. Thirdly, the depreciation in stocks started many to hoarding money in safe deposit vaults. However, as the country is very prosperous it is to be expected that *confidence* will soon return.

It is seven years yet before the time for the great financial and social collapse which we find so clearly depicted in the prophecies. But meantime the spirit of unrest must be expected to prevail increasingly.

FRENCH PRIESTS AS TENT-MAKERS

The Hamburger Nachrichten in the following report does not intimate that these priests still serve the Lord and the people:

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"An unforeseen result of the separation of Church and State in France has been to make the Church of France more apostolic than it has ever been before. Peter was a fisherman; Paul a tentmaker. Thus a great number of the French priests are looking round for opportunities of earning their daily bread by the labor of their hands. Several of them are keeping bees and living on the sale of the honey. Others have large poultry-yards and live by selling eggs and fowls for the table. The breeding of blooded dogs, such as poodles, makes a profitable occupation for many of them. The cure of Labourgabe has a profitable trade in the fruits he preserves and has become quite famous for the geese he rears.

"Many of the clergy show a preference for handicraft. The cure of La Pannonie has set up a lathe and become a turner. Wheelmaking suits the priest of Averdon, who has accordingly become a wheelwright and carriage-builder, while as a side-issue he undertakes the repair of sewing-machines and bicycles. The [R4095 : page 357] cure of Maurages has turned locksmith. But the favorite trade of these spiritual men is that of watchmaking, in which seven noted cures are known to be engaged. Humbler vocations are also selected. The cure of La Tadiere has taken to tailoring, the ex-pastor of Negron weaves rugs, while about ten of his *confreres* do knitting, producing stockings and underwear. Among the most respected and honored of French village clergymen is the cure of Hericourt, who now

applies himself to the stationery business, the printing of visiting cards, etc. Others are bookbinders, photographers, artists, sculptors."

Such conditions in France should be very favorable to the Truth. We will be glad to further assist French brethren in making use of present opportunities for "harvest work" there.

TO REVIVE "PASTORAL OVERSIGHT"

When a pastor meets a member of his congregation, should he talk of politics and the weather, or bring the conversation to bear upon the member's spiritual condition? This spiritual pastoral oversight, which formed an important element in the vocation of a minister of a past generation, is practically laid aside by many clergymen nowadays without a substitute. The spiritual loss occasioned thereby is frequently lamented by religious journals; but the remedy is not easy to find, since, it is alleged, "the younger lay element in the Church" prefer the minister to "be a man among men," a "hail fellow, well met." "Real pastoral oversight," declares *The Lutheran* (Philadelphia), "is not desired as a rule, and, when offered, it seems almost like an intrusion, if not an impertinence." Whatever the cause, the fact remains, so *The Lutheran* asserts, that "in this age of ecclesiastical secularization, the pastoral office is not exercised as it should be." We read further: –

"That a similar state of affairs exists in communions where considerable emphasis of a certain kind is placed on conscious spiritual experience is made evident from an editorial on 'The Care of Souls' that appeared in a recent issue of *The Congregationalist* (Boston). It reports a business man as saying: 'I can't see that ministers as a class in private conversation with laymen discuss to any degree the subjects peculiar to their profession. When my pastor meets me, for example, it's "How are you?" and then some comment on the news of the neighborhood

or in the morning paper. He never ventures an inquiry or remark that has any bearing upon my personal religious condition."

The man in question is not regarded as a "complainer, or demonstrative in his emphasis of a peculiar kind of spirituality, but one who, immersed in business cares, probably feels the need of spiritual direction." *The Congregationalist* goes on:

"We wonder if this desire is not more widely spread on the part of the laity than many ministers realize! They have become of late years men among men. They play golf and mingle with their parishioners freely in clubs and social circles. That indefinable but real sense of separateness from common men which attached to the old-time ministry has gone. On the whole this is well, but the gains do not outweigh the loss if the average minister today is less eager and less competent to understand and satisfy the demands of the personal religious life. He is still or ought to be the spiritual specialist of the community. His supreme interest still is not in men in the mass, but in this and that and the other individual – how he or she can be brought under the compulsions of religion and then grow daily in grace and in knowledge."

The Lutheran recommends for its own communion a return to the practice of setting aside a day in the [R4096 : page 357] week when pastors would be free to confer with souls who feel the need of spiritual counsel. "What but this individual-contact method of dealing with souls have we to take the place of the Roman confessional?" it asks. It even conceives a way of adapting that confessional to Protestant uses, speaking in these words:

"We need not wonder that the Reformers were loath to part with this individual method of dealing with souls and that they purified it and retained it. The inquiry room or sick-bed visitation is a very poor substitute for the confessional in its purged

Protestant sense. What a new significance the celebration of the Lord's Supper would have could there be instituted in every congregation an individual preparatory service such as is in vogue here and there in Germany and Scandinavia! Besides, much of the reverence and respect once accorded by the laity to the clergy would be regained if the pastor might be known among them more preeminently than is the case at present as one who is in travail for their souls' sake. No ministry is likely to strike a powerful spiritual note until it has become intertwined with the deepest longings and spiritual needs of a congregation."

– *Literary Digest*.

THE MISSION FIELD

William T. Ellis has made a journey to Heathendom with a view to studying out a better mission policy. He has returned wiser as respects true conditions there and, while admitting that he was greatly disappointed at what he saw, because he had accepted too fully the mission reports, he nevertheless is hopeful that if new "business" methods were adopted much might soon be accomplished. Alas! thus others have hoped against hope, only to find that there are twice as many heathen today (1,200,000,000) as there were a century ago (600,000,000). He says: –

"Up to the present, foreign mission work has been a mere reconnaissance in force, and not a war. One of the hurtful delusions of the home churches concerning foreign missions (a delusion sometimes fostered by ill-balanced reports from the field) is that the whole heathen world is on the verge of conversion to Christianity. One of the commonest figures of missionary oratory represents the nations as crowding into the Church. Now, the unwelcome fact is that heathendom, as a whole, has scarcely been budged by missions. Great as have been the missionary triumphs in spots, the whole mass has hardly been

touched by the Christian teachings. Even enlightened Japan, which many persons believe to have become almost Christianized, is still rankly heathen, except for a small percentage of the population which only the mind of faith can invest [R4096 : page 358] with conquering power. The overwhelming and, at first sight, immovable and impregnable heathenism of mission lands is a challenge to the churches."

How much more reasonable the Bible hope: that when God's due time shall come, the glorified Christ (Head and Body) will inaugurate the Millennial Kingdom, under whose wise and loving and powerful rule Satan will be bound, sin estopped, ignorance and superstition banished, and the knowledge of the Lord be caused to fill the whole earth – causing every knee to bow and every tongue to confess.

Let all of our readers understand, therefore, that our present effort to send the true Gospel into Africa and Japan and China is not at all with a view to converting those peoples, but to do a harvest work among them – to seek for some of the Elect Church amongst them, – "not many."

PROHIBITION SENTIMENT GROWING

"The movement against the use and abuse of strong drink has grown and is still growing. It has already assumed the proportions of a veritable crusade. It is, too, a crusade of the strongest and most effective kind – a crusade of the people. The growth of this sentiment is found most vigorous in places where, but a short time ago, to have hinted of such a thing would have been considered absurd. Throughout almost the entire South, where the very term hospitality has so long been synonymous with strong drink that it was a fixed tradition that all southerners drank, and no southern man would think of welcoming another to his home without offering him the cup that cheers temporarily, this sentiment against general drinking has grown wonderfully,

and is gaining strength with every day that passes. Georgia has passed a strong prohibition law that becomes effective at the beginning of the coming year. Local option is coming to be the rule in another southern State, Kentucky, where tradition says every native is trained from his cradle up to 'turn his back when he passes the bottle,' that he may not be guilty of taking note of the size of the drink taken. In Tennessee saloons have been practically driven out of the State by the declaration of sentiment against them under the local option law. In Missouri fifty-three counties have already declared in favor of local option, putting the saloon under the ban, and the work appears to have only begun. These are only some of the more notable instances of the growth of this sentiment. Equally good work is being done in many other States.

– *National Daily*.
