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Philosophy and the Cross.

The Cross of Jesus Christ stands for something peculiar and distinctive. It denotes a religion that is redemptive and practical. It produces an experience. It appeals to facts. It has done much for man. It can do much for him. It affects the conscience, the heart and the life. It introduces a Christ—a Messiah—an anointed One. It tells of a God-man. It brings forth the Son of the Highest for human benefit. He is a Prophet to instruct; a Priest to atone for, intercede and to bless; and a King to rule and to subdue. His life is a pattern; his blood is justifying; his grace is renewing and sanctifying. His Word is enlightening, comforting, directive and helpful. His Spirit is co-operative and all-adequate to the purposes for which he was given. Jesus offers his salvation to fallen, guilty man. He is a Saviour for all conditions and relations, for all classes, for all ages, for all climes, for time and for eternity.

Some persons look upon this as mere boastfulness—a sentimental appeal, and in contrast exalt the virtues of philosophy and demand for it a hearing. It is no new thing for wisdom and the Cross to come into conflict. Between them lies the wide domain of experiment. A fair test between them can be made. Their respective merits can be determined; each man for himself. The world has long been making proof of them as claimants for its attention. Philosophy was tried in Greece and Rome, and found wanting. It has been modified or enlarged since in scope and application, but still fails at many fundamental and essential points. It may suit the intellect and the reason, but not the conscience and the heart. It takes with certain types of men to a large degree, but does not measure up to the necessities of human nature in its varied activities, feelings and convictions. It meets many phases of life, but fails in affliction's hour and at death's door. Its voice is sweet and luring, but one wearies of it as a solver of the mysteries of life and eternity. It has a delicate touch, a subtle power and a discerning eye, but each and all are limited in range, penetration and application. On the other hand, the Cross has a voice richer, sweeter and more enticing; a touch more exquisitely tender, and a power deeper and more universal; a discernment far more piercing and reliable. The Gospel extends its intellectual, emotional, material, spiritual and eternal blessings to all zones, all nationalities, all characters and all lives. Philosophy may be in certain directions ethical; it may proclaim a fine morality; but Christianity offsets it with a purer and more comprehensive system of ethics. Plato, Socrates, Confucius and others have been outdone, in the lines where they stood pre-eminent as philosophers, by the humble Galilean Teacher. The decalogue and the Gospel create the purest and completest of lives, and make their demands upon all men in all relations and in all ages of the world.

Philosophy has a message for the man of leisure and of special aptitude, but it develops no universal experi-

ence. It lacks sympathy with suffering humanity. It is the spirit of the Crucified which causes a rejoicing with them that rejoice and a weeping with them that weep. Christians develop a fellow-feeling with human kind, a brotherly interest and helpfulness, a kinship, which link soul to soul and touch the innermost depths of man's need.

Philosophy in its various branches and studies covers a wide range of subjects and is fruitful in its panaceas for social ills. The press teems with the books, pamphlets, recipes and devices, but the supremacy of the Cross remains unbroken, and ever will. It, too, has its literature. First of all, it has its own inspired story. Then it has given birth to an endless variety of Christian experience, narrative, records, testimony and accomplishments, affecting the home, the State, society, the Church and the world. It has quickened the pen of Christendom, and has cast a flood of light upon every subject in which men are interested, touching beneficently every phase of life and of nationality.

Whatever may be the record of philosophy, the Cross far exceeds it in worth and results. It shows a philosophy far more profound and distinctive—a philosophy of redemption; the wisdom of God solving the problem, How can man be just with God; the philosophy of love, whereby God became incarnate and reconciled attributes that seemed to conflict, and effected the recovery of a lost world to God. It is no mere sentimentalism; it demands a life of righteousness. It calls for a spiritual regeneration. It requires a perfected nature. It does not ignore the place and power of intellectual speculation; it allows the widest scope to the philosophizing and formulative tendencies of the human mind; it recognizes the province of the reason; but it holds philosophy to its special domain, and claims for itself a sphere of operation unique and all-embracing, where its greatest triumphs are won. It deals, first and last, with sinful nature. It makes its main appeal to lost men. The world cannot redeem itself. The heart of fallen humanity must be renewed. Sin has wrought ruin. The Cross assures of grace, hope, purification, elevation and redemption. It cares little for brilliant speculation; it covets and works for the erring soul and its restoration to the divine image. Its aim is not high thinking, cultured thought, scientific formulations and human cults, but spiritual renovations, purified sensations, holy lives, triumphant deaths and heavenly exaltations.

It is along the line of the experimental and practical that it achieves its greatest triumphs and secures its most telling demonstrations. The more persons the Church brings under its transforming, ennobling and redeeming influence, the greater her incontestable witness-bearing power. She is to glory, not in her wealth, social status and material possessions, but in her soul-saving Cross, and in its conquests over sin, Satan and the world. She must rely upon it supremely for her aggressiveness and propagation. She must hold it up at all times and under

danger in constantly proclaiming that God is love and at the same time maintaining a sublime silence concerning the justice of God? Of course, the one who is constantly violating the laws of God does not relish the thought that God will call him into judgment for his wickedness. He would rather hear that God's love is so great that it will not permit the law-breaker to be banished from the gracious presence of God for ever; that some how or other love will defeat justice and the sinner will go unpunished. But to preach such a Gospel is to preach peace when there is no peace. Every preacher should be careful to impress upon the mind of every transgressor the truth that God's love comes to no man except through the channel of faith in the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ. The declaration of Jesus, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," should be given forth with no uncertain sound. God is love, but because he is love he is none the less just, and in the death of his well-beloved Son he has shown us how he is just, "and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus."

The Committee on Revision.

By Rev. Wallace Radcliffe, D.D.

The Assembly's Committee on Revision has done its work thus far promptly and well. The questions presented for Presbyterianial action are comprehensive and should bring a fair and decisive answer without distraction or heated controversy. It would have been well if the question concerning a brief creed (No. 3) had been presented a little more clearly. I could, and would like to answer affirmatively to both Nos. 1 and 3. I favor revision. But I am also in hearty sympathy with the large desire for a brief statement of the doctrines "most surely believed among us," for general circulation and pastoral use. Any pastor or active worker recognizes that the Church needs very much such brief authoritative statement in simple language. It would be a constant, valuable help and defense for the mass of our people who have not the inclination and need not take the time to read our more elaborate Confession. The wording of No. 3 conveys the right idea in its statement, "To supplement the present Doctrinal Standard;" but this does not meet a certain demand in the Church for a brief creed not to "supplement," but to supplant the present Standards. The Presbytery of Washington City, of which I am a member, joined with a number of other Presbyteries in overturing the last General Assembly for a brief creed, with this distinct and avowed construction. Moreover this report in its narration of the action of Assembly calls attention to the changes to be suggested as "revisional, supplemental or substitutional." (See Third.) Question 3 is the only one which could be construed as contemplating such substitution. Without a doubt many will answer it affirmatively, with the understanding of substitution, by reasons of their own past action, and the instruction of Assembly as quoted by this committee. It is possible that many others will answer affirmatively, in response to its surface suggestion and the common need. Let us have a distinct understanding. Will the chairman of the committee please clear away the fog? When we vote affirmatively for the brief creed of No.

3, do we vote to supplement or to supplant? And if it is only to supplement what becomes of the Presbyteries who wish, according to instructions of Assembly as quoted, to express their preference for "substitutionary" change?

A Proposed Overture to the General Assembly.

Whereas, There has been a remarkable development of intellectual vigor in recent years and a marked decrease in the enmity of the carnal mind against God:

Resolved, That the Presbytery of ———, respectfully overtures the General Assembly to suggest to the American Bible Society that in the future editions of the Bible, issued by them, it would be expedient and desirable to make such modifications as are demanded to meet the present advanced state of thought in the Church and the world, as e. g. in John 15:16, where Christ says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," a more correct statement be made, "Ye have chosen me, and I have not chosen you." And in Rom. 8:28, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," a change be made more suited to the facts of the case, "To them who by the spontaneous movement of their own will have chosen God, and are therefore entitled to have all things work together for their good," etc. And in Phillip. 2:12-13, "Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure," a more natural statement be made, "Work out your own salvation, for you are fully competent by the power of your own will to do all that is necessary for your own salvation." 2 Tim. 1:19, "Who hath called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," changed to "Hath called us, not according to his own purpose and grace, but according to our works which he foresaw would be most worthy of reward." By such changes as these, which might be made in many instances all through the Bible, the old effete doctrine of the sovereignty of God may be eliminated from the Bible, as obsolete, and so be removed from our Confession of Faith, which aims to be, and really is, nothing more than an echo of the Word of God. A Friend of Truth.

It is a grievous mistake to underrate the duty and the power of a public confession. Genuine conversion demands it; Christ enjoins it. With the heart man believeth unto justification, and "with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (or "in order that we may be saved"). This confession must be the open avowal of Christ before the world. The very idea of "letting your light shine before men," requires a public confession of your Saviour. When I visited a coal mine in Pennsylvania, and was looking through its dark chambers, I every now and then caught a glimpse of a moving lamp, and I could track it all through the mine. The reason was that the miner carried the lamp on his hat—it was a part of himself, and it shone wherever he went. I said to myself, would that in this dark world of sin, every miner of the Master carried so bright a lamp to show where he walks! No sceptic can deny the beauty of light, or refute the necessity of lamps.—Dr. Cuyler.