

revision. That would be well, provided they did one other thing meanwhile, viz, declare themselves free from all human dogmas of the past. Dr. Paxton and others like him evidently feel themselves in a false position while the church holds over them a creed that they cannot preach. Brave and free men are not easily ruled by the dead hand of a past age. Our fathers might make jackets for themselves, but not for us. A progressive humanity will not be ruled entirely from the grave. The mistake that former generations made was in formulating their opinions, and handing them down to us as necessary legacies. It is to be presumed that we have the liberty of refusing an unwelcome inheritance. If any past system cramps any present age let it be revised out of existence.

What is the creed that does not need revising? Simple truth needs no revision. Divine truth is like the multiplication table; to revise it would spoil it. Human systems are always partial, unfinished, or wrongly finished, fragmentary or overdone; they need constant reshaping. That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of men, is a simple statement of fact; it is the expression of a divine truth; it is the creed of the apostles, and of all the early Christians; on that truth, as on a rock, Jesus founded His church; on that truth he promised that it should stand forever. That truth needs no revision. Peter said to Jesus, "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." That was the only article in the creed of the apostles. That was the true apostles' creed. One truth! One statement of the one truth! It is the simplest, soundest, sublimest creed ever presented to the human mind. Recently it was proposed from a popular pulpit a creed in three articles: 1st. God so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 2nd. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. 3rd. Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive blessing and riches and honor and glory and power, world without end, amen. Surely that is good, and we all agree to it, but it is only stating in other forms this, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that he is therefore the Saviour of men. It is Mr. Talmage who proposes the above creed in three articles, and I must quote to you a paragraph in this connection from one of his recent sermons. Since he preaches through the papers to so large a portion of the religious world such utterances can hardly fail of great influence. "You go to tinkering up your old creeds, and patching and splicing and interlining and annexing and subtracting and adding and explaining, and you will lose time and make yourself a target for earth and hell to shoot at. Let us have creeds not fashioned out of human ingenuities, but out of scriptural phraseology, and all the guns of bombardment, blazing from all the port-holes of infidelity and perdition, will not in a thousand years knock off from the church of God a splinter as big as a cambric needle."

It may be taken as a religious axiom, all Christians can unite in Christ. It is every day becoming clearer that they can unite no otherwise than in Christ. The sky is clearing; the sun begins to shine; we behold its light, and there are no stars. The creeds may do where Christ is not. They may even be like stars that guide the wise on their way to the Christ. But when He is found the wise will worship Him, whether in Bethlehem's manger, or on the cross, or in the resurrection, the wise will worship Him, no longer bowing at any other shrine.

The creed creating age has gone. The creed revising age is at hand. The physician is called, even when there is a sickness unto death. But no hand can stay the life that is doomed. The creed-

burying age will come—hastily, let us hope. Creeds are being revised because they are on hand, and are outworn, and their owners do not know exactly what to do with them. Christ on the other hand has risen from the dead, and He lives, the same yesterday, today, and forever. In him law is transformed into love; precept becomes example; canons take the form of character, and abstract decrees are exchanged for a personal guide and Saviour. He is the Word made flesh, and that marvelous metaphor of the Apostle John covers the whole ground. Tennyson felt the force of this when he said:

"And so the Word had breath, and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought,
Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
Or builds the house, or digs the grave."

We do well to apply the truth already revealed, especially since so many hundreds of years have been spent in showing that we cannot either safely or successfully go beyond what is revealed. To revise the creeds as proposed is practically to discard them as once formulated, and that is virtually to say that they might as well never have been. Meanwhile Christ endures, and those who work for Him do not labor in vain. The coming great men in the church are not the ones who can formulate dogmas, but those who can marshal the hosts of Christian men and women into great, well organized, working bodies. Bishop Vincent is widely honored because he had the tact to set some thousands of people all over the land to reading good books. Mr. Clark is widely known and loved because he suggested the plan for a great organized movement among young Christians. Josiah Strong has a harder task in organizing older Christians, who unlike the present-day boys and girls, were brought up in the schools of the creeds; if he succeeds he will deserve an immortality not second to that of Luther. We bless the man, and we think God blesses him too, whatever his theology may be, who like Dr. Guinness has sent seven hundred young men into pagan lands to preach Christ. Hard practical work for Christ is the best test of orthodox Christianity. "Come ye blessed of my Father, I was hungry and you gave me meat; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came unto me," that is Christ's test of the orthodox at the judgment throne, Loyalty to Christ, that is the Christian's creed; work for the world in Christ's name, that is the Christian's business; the man who thus labors in loyalty to Christ is orthodox enough to appear before the great white throne, and there is no need either in time or eternity for any higher degree of rectitude. On that day, we imagine, it will not be asked of any man whether he was a Sublapsarian, or a Supra-lapsarian; whether he was a Trinitarian, or a Pelagian, or a Semi-pelagian; whether he held by the Papal, or the Arminian anthropology; whether he adhered to the Soteriology of Anselm, or of Abelard, or of Bernard, or of Bonaventura, or of St. Thomas Aquinas, or of Duns Scotus; whether he was faithful to the Augsburg confession, or the Confessio Tetricopolitana, or the First Helvetic confession, or the Second Helvetic confession, or the Consensus Tigurinus, or the Consensus Genevensis, or the Heidelberg Catechism, or the Confessio Belgica, or the Confessio Gallicana, or the Confessio Scoticana, or the Canons of Dort, or the Westminster Confession, or the Savoy Confession, or the Cambridge Platform, or the Saybrook Platform, or any other platform, confession, or catechism. But before that throne it will be asked, O ye virgins, did your lamps burn clear through the night? Ye stewards of my talents, have you made the two into four, and the five into ten? O you of my earthly fold, did you visit the sick, and help the poor and needy? Ye vines and trees of my earthly garden, where is your fruit? Then will the faithful ones all join in saying "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb forever and ever, amen."

A PLEA FOR LIBERALITY.

By the foolishness of preaching God will save those who believe. Paul's charge to Timothy before God and the Lord Jesus was "Preach the Word." If the world is ever brought to Christ it will be because the Word has been preached. The necessary element of preaching is consecration, which gives eloquence to the tongue and success to labor. Consecration is to the preacher what the soul is to the body. Preaching requires whole-souled earnest effort, and is the sheaf before which all others bow. Devotion to the work of the gospel means divorce from the world, and an antagonism to all things earthly. All other things being equal, the true man cannot fail to ensure success. But, sad to say, all things are not equal. Many a noble soul is driven by the pressure of limited circumstances to divide his time between things secular and religious. This is sometimes absolutely necessary for the man; but what shall we say to those who are at ease in Zion? This is a case of "man's inhumanity to man." The Master's work dies while worldly things thrive on the offering of the Lord's people. Unfaithful stewards! Spiritual outlaws! Defaulters from the Bank of Heaven! The cry of the world is, "How many loaves have ye?" And in the battle for bread each strives to tell the other "I have more than ye all." In this struggle men think themselves liberal and the church rich if it get the crumbs. We give God the husks which we would not have, and expect such an investment to bring in return a golden crown. We give the preacher nothing to extravagance, and the prayer of many is, "Lord, keep our preacher humble and we will do our best to keep him poor." Of course the preacher must never say a word about money. If he ever gets bold enough, he is promptly told that that will never do, or that the world will think he is after the loaves and fishes. In this way many a godly man is chained between the skeletons—Ignorance and Want. But to show the fallacy of such proceedings we need but ask, "Is begging a virtue? Will poverty add to the happiness of one human soul? Will starvation be the watchword for admittance through the pearly gates? Does the law of Christian benevolence teach that because another seeks your happiness you are bound to destroy his manhood by making him an object of charity?" Does any converted man? does any Christian woman require any argument to prove that self-denial is a virtue? But remember that self-denial exercised to the neglect of every other virtue tortures the soul and makes tears instead of smiles, groans instead of songs. By the penuriousness of the many the few are driven to the woes of want. Why need it ever be said that because an able man could not live on unfulfilled promises he was forced from the church to the world, from the pulpit to the plough? There are times when the promises of men become curses to fill the life with sadness and gloom. This is one of the times—perpetual promises and a continual effort to avoid their fulfillment. A man that labors six days through the week and spends his strength for bread is not fully qualified to speak with power on the Lord's day. Vitality is exhausted, energy completely worn out. It is honorable to toil, but it is honorable to say of any church capable of supporting a preacher, that because of their lack of Christian liberality he was almost reduced to starvation—was forced as a last resort to abandon the pulpit for the world, and bring the odium of bankruptcy upon the church. To divide the time of the preacher between farming and preaching is to reduce power to weakness, and healthy effort to wasting disease. There is as much difference between the man of one aim and the man of many as there is between the wave that breaks in mid-ocean and the one that breaks with tremendous force upon the beach. It is the concentrated steady effort that tells. It is the irresist-