

have done heretofore, viz. : admit ministers and churches according to their own judgment, in each case. It must be remembered, that the National Council has no authority over State organizations or individual churches. This, by the way, was one strong argument against their making any doctrinal declaration. The question will have to be settled in each church, and group of churches. After all, are not these the best tribunals? the most Congregational, the most Scriptural?

"WHAT IS TRUTH?"

BY REV. W. H. ALLWORTH, PARIS, ONT.

Much of what our Fathers believed to be true, cannot be accepted when subjected to the light of the nineteenth century.

All truth is what it was. The things that are true in science now, were true centuries ago. The facts in Geology, Chemistry, Mechanism, and Agriculture, and in other departments of knowledge, together with the laws and principles by which they are governed, are just what they have previously been. The laws of gravitation were as true before they were discovered by Newton, as afterward.

But mankind have not always *believed* the same. There has been a steady search after truth, and a gradual progress in knowledge. Old theories have been sifted, and have step by step yielded to newly-discovered facts.

It is only in the province of theology that men have conceived their ancestors to have discovered *all* the truth. Men who are progressive in all other things, are conservative in religion. With those who question freely all the forms of belief in science, as held by their ancestors, a tame acquiescence in their religious beliefs is accounted a virtue, and honest inquiry is arrogance. "In religion, change is heresy, and improvement sin." Why? Simply because we have got it into our heads that our ancestors, who failed to understand some of the commonest facts in nature and science, who failed to read the handwriting inscribed by God on the rocks, and other natural things, understood the whole of God's will in His inspired word.

Now it is certain, that the Bible was, to a great extent, a sealed book through many generations, long after it was written. Long centuries before the Reformation, there were few who could read, and very few who possessed a copy of the Scriptures. Those who had access to the Scriptures, and could read them, interpreted them according to the light they had; formed their ideas of divine truth by what they saw and understood of things about them. The customs, manners, idioms, &c., of those who lived when and where the Scriptures were written, were far less understood than now.

Doctrinal truth was, for many years, defined by deep mystic philosophy, and metaphysics of a seemingly learned character. The reasoning of the men of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries exhibited more of the traces of the Aristotelian dialectics than of simple Bible research. Their speculations were the results of the