

**THE WORLD
MOVES: ALL
GOES WELL**

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The World Moves: All Goes Well by A. Layman

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BY
A LAYMAN.

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1890.

CHAPTER I.

FOR the past twenty years I have been brought into close relations with the leading spirits of various churches. During a large portion of this time I have communed with the Orthodox Church, where people of other persuasions congregated. Here I have met with the salt of the earth: Christians of large hope and unbounded faith, who take broad views of humanity, and worship with the devotion of those who put their trust in God.

As chairman of the parish committee, in arranging for the ordination of our new pastor; I had much to do with the Baptists and Methodists, besides the Orthodox brothers, who served on my committee, and I learned to respect them for their large and cheerful spirit, manifest in religious matters. I

have felt, too, the vital importance of the great movement in the Orthodox Church, which has awaked new life in the Christian world.

I have appreciated the position more fully on account of certain confessions made to me, or to some mutual friend, by the men who have bitterly opposed the advanced movement in the American Board of Missions,—men who had formerly made these confessions in response to statements and arguments which bore on the liberal and vital questions of the day. It is with this appreciation that I take up my pen to record certain of those conversations— together with thoughts suggested as I progress—in which arguments were advanced and responses given that may be termed confessions or concessions, as the nature of the answers appears to the reader. In one or two instances, as you will see, my talks were with prominent laymen who advanced their own arguments, and in others I conversed with laymen who presented the statements of leading theologians.

Some of the clergymen and laymen with whom I had conversations herein recorded have passed to a higher life, where they have a fuller knowledge of the God of the Bible and of history, and where that intuitive judgment which, in this life, was ever secretly contradicting the dogmas that they openly declared, asserts itself. Others are still living; and, though the most determined champions of the old school of Orthodoxy are among them, I, who know of their admissions and confessions, of which more anon, am fully aware that their positions are assumed from fealty to creed rather than to Christ. Stubborn before men, they are weak before God. Determined in their action, they are wavering in conviction. They are not bigots, but are led by bigotry. They are not hypocrites, but they wear the garb of hypocrisy. Champions of a lost cause, they must eventually surrender to the forces of a larger and a higher hope, and it were well if they could realize that they yield not to men but to God.

I shall mention no names in connection

with these interviews, as they were personal conversations, which, though not strictly confidential, were not of that nature which would warrant my pointing them out in a public manner.

A year or two ago I incidentally narrated to a friend one of the incidents I speak of to enforce my assertion that the old-school divine connected with it, who was charged with bigotry by an acquaintance, was really liberal at heart. I wished to defend him, as I would any friend, for such he was to me. This was reported in a secular paper, and the doctor in question was called on to verify or contradict the story. He promptly denied it. He never made such a confession (so he stated) to any one. I was called upon to charge home on the doctor, and remind him openly of the treachery of his memory, but I chose to leave the matter as it was, rather than push to the wall a man who had formerly done me a service. In these pages I shall record the interview in full. If the doctor reads and recognizes it, all well and good. If he does not recognize it, then his memory

is at fault, for mine is far from it. After long and careful consideration of my duty under the circumstances, I reluctantly give publicity to the incident, seeing no other course that I could consistently pursue.

Another leading champion of the old school committed himself to a theory which eclipses Second Probation. When I narrate the incident, the reader will discover in his conclusions, not a mere approach to Second Probation, but unqualified Universalism! The incident occurred many years ago, and so if the worthy doctor forgets it, I shall find excuse for him on the ground of mental absorption by his accepted creed. We must allow for the insuperable difficulties that these large-hearted but benightedly obstinate doctors labor under. Their *souls*, which are not committed before men, are ever recognizing God as he is; their *minds*, by which they openly commit themselves, present a stubborn front in defence of their peculiar dogmas. So the soul reveals the weakness of the intellect, leading the most learned into occasional committals to the

truth, from which, on the discovery of their inconsistency, they hastily withdraw. Heaven be praised that this inner conviction of the soul is a never-failing protection against insanity!

The full import of the various confessions and concessions in the following interviews will be apprehended when we consider that no one ever wavers whose convictions are grounded on a primary truth. The martyrs did not die from fear of hell, but from love of God and Christ. They did not chant praises at the stake in loyalty to dogmas, but, assured of the overruling providence of God, they joyously yielded their lives to his keeping. Martyrs, however, are not confined to the Christian fold. The Eastern peoples are so possessed by their religions that they too will die for them. We term them fanatics, — they are martyrs. One of the grandest pictures of the world's history is the universal sacrifice of man to his religious convictions. When one is possessed with the spirit of martyrdom, it means