

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

We have called attention at various times recently to the changed attitude of Protestantism toward Roman Catholicism, noting the fact that not only have the echoes of protest died away in the distance, but that the very grounds of protest are fast disappearing, and that, not because of any change in the principles of the Church of Rome, but of so-called Protestantism. And so changed is its attitude toward Rome that from various Protestant pulpits, and presses, and prominent leaders, we now quite commonly hear expressions which sound strangely out of harmony with the name Protestant. The deadly wound given to the Papacy at the Reformation, is fast being healed (Rev. 17:5) and "mother" and "daughters" are coming to realize more and more their mutual relations.

This changed attitude of the daughters is quite marked, and Catholicism is noting the trend and taking advantage of it, although Protestantism is scarcely aware of the long backward slips she is making. She is too drowsy to realize the situation. While noting these facts the following, clipped from "*The Catholic*" of Pittsburgh will be of special interest. It says: —

"For centuries Protestant writers in every land drew up the most terrifying pictures of Catholicity. The adoption of downright infidelity was preferable according to Protestantism, to affiliation with Catholicity. In European countries wherever Protestantism grasped the secular power, persecution and exile became the lot of Catholics. The change of religion in England was effected by the Mormon wife slayer Henry VIII. and bloody Queen Bess, by the confiscation of all Church property, and dire persecution and expulsion of Catholics. Churches were destroyed, or perverted to the use of the established pet, which, by the way, the English people are now tired of maintaining, as was made evident in the late elections.

"All this is now changed, and the "horrors of Rome," is no longer a "taking" subject to dwell upon, except by some ignoramus, who confines his abilities to the backwoods. Henry Ward Beecher advises one of his flock who approached him for information to go and become a Catholic, and she would be safe in doing so. Sam Jones calls long and loud for heavenly benedictions upon the work of the Catholic Church, and many other distinguished divines pay the Church [R854 : page 1] marked respect, though following different doctrines.

"As an evidence of the change of Protestant opinion in this matter, witness the fact that lately occurred in a Presbyterian church when they sang the "Ave Maria," and when the attention of the *Presbyterian Observer* was drawn to it, that paper said it was all right. This, like the elections in England, as Gladstone said, 'is wonderful;' Presbyterians honoring the Blessed Virgin by singing this most Catholic hymn, 'Ave Maria,' is a 'wonderful change.' Soon we will have them calling out with Catholics, 'O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary, pray for us, oh Holy Mother of God.'

"All these are good omens of the progress of our holy religion, while if we look across the garden wall of Catholicity, and view the turmoil in which the rest of Christianity is engaged, having abandoned all dogmatic religion, and 'carried about by every wind and doctrine,' 'reading Scripture to their own destruction;' their churches falling into decay, or sold for other purposes; their congregations failing to worship, or bear the expenses, their press calling upon the people to pay the preachers, otherwise they will not be able to meet the expenses of their families. All these omens are sad in the extreme, and portend speedy dissolution at the hands of infidelity, which is fast filling up its ranks from the disorganized condition of our Protestant citizens. We do not rejoice because of this exhibition of failing religion on the part of our separated fellow-citizens, but we would invite them to study the claims of Catholicity."

Very nice, kind, conciliatory things are now being said by each party about the other, and each wants to smooth over the old difficulties and be friends again. The main points of difference and grounds of protest of the Reformation, against the Church of Rome were two. First, that while the Church of Rome gives to tradition the same force as to the Scriptures, Protestantism recognized in tradition only the fallible judgment of men, and declared the individual right to interpret the Scriptures each for himself. Second, that *justification* (acquittal) from original sin is secured not by *works* (of morality or of penance) but by *faith* in the finished sacrifice of Jesus our Lord. But both of these points of original protest, are now fast being ignored by Protestants. The death of Jesus as man's ransom is being ignored and faith in that as the ground of acceptance with God is little preached and little realized by the "popular preachers" and the rising generation of so-called Protestants; and instead sectarian zeal with morality and benevolence – good works – are the implied ground of acceptance with God and atonement for original sin – where such a thing as original guilt is acknowledged at all. And, too, individual right of Bible interpretation is fast being ignored by Protestants, though not generally denied; and in their anxiety for union at any cost, all denominations of Protestantism are abandoning Scripture doctrines and ignoring differences. And to swell their number, they are counting in Roman Catholics as well.

In this peculiar day the claims of the Protestant Church to be the power which is to accomplish the world's conversion are being severely and questioningly pressed upon her, and in order to maintain her old position she finds it incumbent upon her to count up and display her numbers as evidence of her power, and of the future possibilities to be expected from it. Hence her eagerness to count in as many as possible to show her numerical strength. But alas! for her moral and spiritual strength; for when she gathers her vast numbers and we view the whole from this standpoint, there is not the shadow of a chance of the world's conversion to God by that means.

Hopeless indeed must be the outlook to thoughtful Christians who are not yet enlightened from God's Word concerning his glorious and all-sufficient plan for the world's conversion – a plan which does not ignore a single member of our dead and dying race, nor yet save one in any other than one appointed way – through repentance and faith in the redemption freely provided for all.

While the Church of Rome kindly invites thinking Protestants to re-examine her claims and compare them with Protestantism and see how much stronger they are, we would suggest to such that before they do so, they would do well to turn to the Bible itself, and they will find that though Protestantism has ceased to enter its protest against her false methods and doctrines, the Bible protests against her in no uncertain language; and they will find too that Protestantism comes in for her share of its denunciations, and that the course and end of both are clearly shown: that Great Babylon – Papal mother and Protestant daughters are to fall, and as a great millstone are to be cast into the sea, never again to rise, while the plan of God, as presented in the Scriptures, will move grandly forward to the full accomplishment of his purpose of restoring the redeemed world to its original perfection as represented in Adam, and to the blessings prefigured in his Eden home.

