

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." – Matt. 24:14.

Notwithstanding the fact that sectarianism has blinded the hearts of the vast majority of those who own Christ's name, so that they cannot appreciate the real good tidings of the coming Kingdom of God and the blessed work it is to accomplish, yet God has so arranged that the gospel itself is being preached (declared), as a "*witness*," for use in the coming age; even though the traditions of men, which tend to make it void and meaningless, are permitted to accompany it. God's purposes will all be accomplished, even by some who forward them with their hands, while they oppose them with their lips. For instance, note the great work which has been and is being done by Bible Societies. They are incessantly spreading the "good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people," before all nations, and in all languages, even though as we know, very few of those engaged in the work see with any degree of clearness, either the harmony or the beauty of the plan of God for the establishment of his kingdom and the blessing of all people.

And this work continues notwithstanding the fact that so-called "rationalism," and Elsmere-ism, are convincing thousands that the Bible is, at best, but a conglomeration of well-meant, but utterly untrustworthy traditions, colored by oriental habit and language out of all resemblance to the real truths and facts. Still the work of publishing the Bible progresses, and even its opposers assist often in its spread. An instance of this sort was witnessed in this country a few years ago, when the Revised Version of the New Testament was first published. Unbelievers took hold of it, advertised it and circulated it by the million. To satisfy curiosity and make money, they published it in the daily papers, and even in Novelette form. Now – within the past [R1078 : page 1] month – the daily press makes mention of the fact that in Italy and in Spain, where Bible Societies have long been

trying to get a foothold and to introduce the Scriptures, with but slight success, because of the predominance of papal influence over the consciences of the people – even there the Scriptures are now being read by thousands. The item runs as follows: –

"A Milan (Italy) newspaper *Il. Secola*, is issuing in daily installments a new translation of the Bible. The enterprise is extraordinarily popular, and the circulation of the paper has reached 50,000. This success has provoked emulation, and a secular paper in Barcelona, Spain [where only recently Bibles were publicly burned], has arranged to publish a translation in Spanish. Both these undertakings are purely journalistic, and entirely unconnected with missionary societies."

Thus, despite every obstacle, both of friends and foes, the *gospel* is being preached *for a witness* to all nations.

Some good is being accomplished too, and some appreciation of God's character is reaching the heathen, notwithstanding the fact that those who carry the Bible, in great measure offset it with their traditions and make merchandise of the people through their creeds and sects. An illustration of this is furnished in the article subjoined, which we clip from an exchange. It is as follows: – **[R1078 : page 1]**

IN JESUS' NAME.

When the Japanese Empire was thrown open to American commerce, the American churches were zealous to proselyte that country to their several Confessions. The missionaries sent out found that their division would be an effectual barrier to success, and agreed to conceal their differences and work together for souls alone – simply presenting one God and Christ crucified for sinners, until they should obtain a foothold.

The dissimulation succeeded so well that in 1873 in respect to the clamor for sectarian harvests, on the part of home Boards it was agreed

that the converts were sufficiently numerous to warrant a division of the spoil.

But when the deceit was carefully exposed to the converts from heathenism an unexpected difficulty arose. These poor natives assembled and drew up a petition, setting forth the joy and peace and righteousness they had found in Christ Jesus, objecting to be divided contrary to the Word and the Spirit of God, and urging the missionaries, since they had confessed such a deplorable state of things in their own country, to return to America and leave the further evangelization of Japan to them.

Copies of this petition were forwarded to the various Boards by which the missionaries were supported and controlled, and agents were sent out to investigate and report.

One of these agents, whose letter was published in the *Independent*, says that to these minds, just brought from the darkness of heathenism, "the simple joys of salvation overshadow all other considerations," and "it will be many years before they can be indoctrinated into the nice distinctions which divide Christendom."

Nevertheless, these whose "other considerations" overshadowed the "joys of salvation" and shut out the love of God, persevered in their work of dividing.

The Spirit prompted these honest souls to meet in the name of Jesus only, as it always does. The most difficult thing in the work of the sectarian missionary is to "indoctrinate the convert into the nice distinctions which divide Christendom." Very few of the adherents of any sect in America are so indoctrinated. They are prejudiced and overcome by other considerations than real convictions. A very small per cent have anything like intelligent consciences about professions of faith and the distinction by which they are separated from other sects.

– *The Testimony.*

WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

Eighteen centuries of effort are in the past. What prospect is there that the claims of sectarianism will be fulfilled? What prospect is there of a Millennium of peace on earth being brought about by present missionary efforts? What are the evidences to support the claim that soon, or ever, the world shall willingly submit to the gospel, and voluntarily become God's Kingdom – in which his will shall be done as [perfectly as] in heaven?

This inquiry is now coming up from every direction. The nominal churches read it, and attempt to answer for themselves, to render up the best accounts they can in figures, while the world looking on draws its own conclusions. Why, we might inquire, is there so much reckoning, and figuring, and apologizing for meagre missionary results now? – a thing apparently not thought of in former times. We answer, it is because we are living in the "harvest," or reckoning time (Matt. 25:19; 7:20-23,26,27), and the Lord of the harvest, earth's new King, who is about to establish his kingdom in a totally different manner, permits those who have chosen a different plan from his, and who have boasted of what they could do by **[R1078 : page 2]** their own efforts in his absence, to see and to confess to each other and to the world their failures. All systems, both religious and political, claiming the name of Christ (Christendom) and to be engaged in his service, must give an account. All are on trial, and all are being proved incompetent – incapable of bringing about the desired and promised results – everlasting righteousness, God's will on earth as done in heaven. Each system must render up its own account, and some of these are now being heard by an astonished world.

Below we quote briefly from Canon Taylor, of the English Church, discussing the question: –

ARE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS A FAILURE?

A little more than a year ago Mr. Taylor read a telling paper before the English Church Congress, in which he took the ground that the Mohammedan religion is not only equal to Christianity in some respects, but is far better suited to the needs and capacities of many peoples in Asia and Africa. (In our issue of May '87 we quoted Canon Farrar and Mr. Thompson, the missionary, on this subject, under the caption "Christianizing the World." – Therein we showed the folly of comparing *nominal* Christianity with *genuine* Mohammedanism.) Mr. Taylor's article, entitled "The Great Missionary Failure," in *The Fortnightly Review*, is likely to attract even more attention than his paper of last year.

The most important point which he makes is, that at its present rate of progress, Christianity can never hope to overtake heathenism. Estimating the excess of births over deaths in Asia and Africa as 11,000,000 a year, and the annual increase of Christians as 60,000, it would take the missionary societies 183 years to overtake one year's increase in the heathen population. He says: –

"Dr. Bruce has complained that we do not succeed because the sums spent on missions are insufficient. It would rather seem that the floods of money which are poured out are the cause of much of the weakness of the missions. It is curious to note that the most costly missions are frequently the least successful....It is plain that the failure does not arise from a niggardly expenditure. But there can be no doubt that the vast sums of money, and the still more precious lives of hosts of devoted laborers, are thrown away in the prosecution of hopeless enterprises. In the missions to Egypt, Persia, Palestine, and Arabia, where there are no heathen,* the Church Missionary Society employs 119 agents, and has spent £23,545, 4s. 7d. in the last two years. The net results are *nil*.

"To extort from Sunday School children their hoarded pence, for the ostensible object of converting 'the poor heathen,' and to spend

nearly £12,000 a year in fruitless missions to lands where there are no heathen,* seems to me to be almost a crime; the crime of obtaining money under false pretenses."

*[The Canon's ideas of Christianity are, like those of most people now, that it is merely *morality*; and the Mohammedans being a temperate and moral people, he classes them not as heathens, but as good as Christians; hence this remark.]

According to official reports cited, the 424 agents of the Church Missionary Society in Ceylon spent a little more than \$55,000 last year in making 190 converts out of a population of nearly three millions. And as there were 330 relapses from Christianity the same year, this great expenditure counted for less than nothing. The same thing was true in a measure of China, Egypt, Arabia and Palestine. Moreover, the converts which are made in these countries at a cost of from \$300 to \$500 each, in many cases reflect no credit upon the religion whose claims they acknowledge. As an illustration of this he says: –

"Three years ago in a nominally Christian village [in Africa] a quarrel broke out, and not a few were killed. The victors cooked and ate the bodies of the slain. As a punishment the native pastor announced that they were suspended from Church privileges."

Of the native pastors engaged in the mission work, the Canon has evidently a poor opinion. He quotes Mr. Johnson as saying: –

"With a few very rare exceptions, those native African pastors, teachers, and catechists whom I have met, have been all, more or less, bad men. They attempted to veil an unbridled immorality with an unblushing hypocrisy, and a profane display of 'mouth' religion, which to an honest mind seemed even more disgusting than the immorality itself."

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Commenting still upon the general character of the few converts made, Mr. Taylor continues thus: –

"In Egypt, last year, there were two 'inquirers,' one a negro, and the other an Egyptian, but the inquiries did not lead to any further results. In Arabia a sick robber who was doctored by a missionary, promised to abstain from robbing for ten days. In Palestine, the one Moslem Convert of last year, a weakminded orphan girl, who required constant guidance, and for whom the prayers of all English Christians were evoked, has gone over to Rome, and is now in a nunnery. In Persia we are told that a 'great and wondrous door has been opened for the Gospel,' but no converts are mentioned, and the door seems to consist of a Persian who reads the Bible, which is one of his own sacred books. I have several correspondents among the Persian Moslems, and they constantly quote the Bible, with which they seem to be almost as familiar as with the Koran. It is plain that these futile missions should be given up. A few Eastern Christians may be perverted, but the missionaries make no way among the Mahommedans."

In giving his opinion of the cause of missionary failures: that it is Sectarianism, together with lack of full consecration on the part of the missionaries, who endeavor to live as princes surrounded by more than European luxuries, instead of consecrating time and all to the work of evangelization, Mr. Taylor refers to "Dr. Legge, a missionary of 34 years standing," saying: –

"He thinks that we shall fail to make converts so long as Christianity presents itself infected with the bitter internal animosities of Christian sects, and associated in the minds of the natives with the drunkenness, the profligacy, and the gigantic social evil conspicuous among Christian nations. Bishop Steere thought that the two greatest hindrances to success were the squabbles among the missionaries themselves, and the rivalry of the societies."

Thus the results of eighteen centuries look very meagre from the standpoint of nominal Christianity; and notes of their apologies and

perplexity are constantly appearing through the secular and religious press. They do not see, as we do, that the object of preaching the gospel in all the world now, is, to *witness* to the world, and to select a "little flock" of saints, to whom with Christ their Lord, it is the Father's good pleasure to give the Millennial Kingdom, – which shall bless the world, by both ruling and instructing it in righteousness. – Luke 12:32.

For some years the facts have been known to the officials, who, hoping for some miraculous change, have presented the brightest possible view of matters and urged larger and larger contributions. But finally, the facts are coming to the ear of the public, producing general consternation. It can no longer be boastfully and falsely claimed, that a few more millions and a few more years will see the world converted by present missionary arrangements. On the contrary, it must be admitted that according to statistics, at home as well as in foreign lands, Protestantism not only is not making headway at converting the world, but is actually going backward, not anything like keeping pace with the natural increase of population. Only this last month a general meeting of Protestants was held to account, if possible, for the great falling away in its influence and numbers in New York, the principle city of this land.

What a commentary upon the failure of *man's plans* are these reports and confessions! And when it is remembered that it was to carry out these plans, and *insure their success*, that 1500 years ago and since, the eternal torment doctrine and others, blasphemous and dishonoring to God, were invented, and all the creed- bondages of to-day manufactured, how great is the failure. How, with shame and confusion of face should Christian people acknowledge their failure, and their own utter inability to conquer evil, and look to God for help. In his plan, recorded in the Bible, they would find it speedily. But no, they are not ready for this yet; they must try their own way further.

What shall we do about it? they inquire one of another; and church Congresses meet in various parts, to help fix up an answer. Let us

ignore all differences in our various creeds, say many voices, and band ourselves together as one, for mutual assistance, and that will make a larger showing. Count in all the nominal as well as the real Christians, say another set. And count the baptized children too, say others. And count in all the big sects that can be induced to associate themselves. And don't forget "that great Christian Camp, the Holy Catholic Church of Rome!" calls out a Methodist bishop; and amen! amen! chime in his many retainers. And many in other sects re-echo the sentiment, saying, with a Presbyterian Minister of this city: We must not longer reject the "holy mother, from whom we received every doctrine that we hold dear."

But hold! says Mother Rome, I make no compromise! I am infallible! I will gladly receive you to my arms, but only on condition of submission to my authority. Here all pause and hold their breath in fear, as visions of her past authority and power flit before the mind. But what is to be done? they cry, hard pressed on every side. A Presbyterian minister replies, "We must make repeated advances until we gain her support."

Together they will attempt to show that all the civilization and progress of the world is due to sectarian efforts, and will entirely ignore the influence of the great truths of God's Word, which, notwithstanding misrepresentations both by friends and foes, has really been both the light and salt of the earth. Lowering the standard, and ignoring faith in the *doctrines* of Christ and the Apostles, morality and civilization will be the new standard or platform. It will be broad enough to include all grades of outwardly *moral* people – the various grades and shades of Protestants, including Unitarians, Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, Jews, Brahmins, and Mohammedans. Under this new standard the world will be re-examined and found almost converted – almost up to the standard. But, what a standard!

However, even this seeming successful *union* will be of short duration, for it is written: "Associate [unite] yourselves, O ye people

and ye shall be broken in pieces;...take counsel together and it shall come to naught." And again, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them [their futile schemes] in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure" – declaring, Nevertheless I have appointed to set my King upon Zion, my holy mount or kingdom. Isa. 8:9,10; Psa. 2:4-6; Prov. 1:24-33.

But the appointed work of the Gospel age, as shown in the Scriptures, has been going on and is almost accomplished, just as intended and foretold. The Word has gone forth as a *witness* to all nations; and the end, the "harvest" is here. As foretold, the Lord's word has not gone forth in vain; it has accomplished that which he pleased; it has prospered in the thing whereto he sent it (Isa. 55:11); the "little flock" is almost complete, and should now lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, and that their prayer – "***Thy Kingdom come***, thy will be done on earth as in heaven" – is about to be fully answered.

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