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VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

PREPARING TO GIVE LIFE TO THE IMAGE.

"The heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll" is a symbolical prophecy now nearing fulfilment. As has already been shown, the "heavens" in the symbolism of the Bible represent ecclesiastical powers – the nominal church – and the rolling together of these represents the concentration, federation or union now being so prominently discussed.

"Rolled together as a scroll" is also a suggestive symbol. All who are familiar with a scroll of parchment, and its way of rolling together, know that it rolls from its two ends toward a common centre, yet that each side of the scroll has its own centre – two rolls, one scroll – a concentration to one centre but in two grand divisions.

The preparation for just this sort of a *union* and concentration of nominal "Christendom" is very apparent, and the evidences that it is imminent are everywhere and are multiplying. The Protestants are preparing to form one side or roll, and the Roman Catholics to constitute the other. The various denominations of Protestants, although uniting in the call for union, are doctrinally as radically opposed to each other as ever – Presbyterians holding that only the *elect* will be saved from eternal torment; Baptists claiming that only such as have been immersed are members of the true Church which alone will be saved; Episcopalians claiming that they only constitute the true Church; and other Protestant denominations making more or less similar claims.

The secular press abounds with intimations which clearly show the general drift in the direction named: Conferences and Councils endorse it; individuals talk it in and out of the pulpits; and the secular as well as the religious press commends it. Few

but ourselves see that what outwardly has an appearance of good will prove to be antagonistic to the truth – as a similar centralization of religious power proved to be injurious to the truth and its servants during "the dark ages" – and our judgment is what it is, not from greater human wisdom than others, but because of wisdom from above – through God's Word.

In MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. III., Chapter iv., we show that the beginning of Protestant centralization took shape in 1846, in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, a fact that is noted in the Book of Revelation as the making of an image of the (Papal) Beast. This Image is a partial federation of Protestants, but as yet it lacks all vitality; and the present agitation for *vital* union, when accomplished, will correspond to the vivifying or giving of life to the Image. (Rev. 13:15.) So soon as the vitalizing takes place, that Protestant system, a veritable likeness to the Papal, will similarly to it command the people in the name of God to obey its behests, and threaten them with both temporal and spiritual punishments for any resistance. An agreement between the original Papal Beast (system) and the Protestant Image (system) is clearly indicated by the statement that all must **[R1474 : page 356]** worship [reverence and obey] *either* the Beast or the Image. (Rev. 13:15-17.) This harmony and yet distinctness between the Beast and the Image is likewise indicated in the scroll with its two parts – yet joined and of one material.

The Protestant movement for union or rather *federation* has already received quite an impetus from the formation of the "Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor." This unites under one name young Protestants of every denomination; but so far from opposing or even ignoring sectarianism, it fosters it by obligating each Christian Endeavorer, to *belong* to some human institution, and exacting of him the promise to attend preaching at his *own* church every Sunday, so far as practicable, and to cooperate with *its* pastor and *its* rules.

The success of the young folks' movement has naturally led to the starting of similar union movements amongst senior Christians. One of these, recently started, and which thus far is making rapid progress, is styled the "Brotherhood of Christian Unity." As an evidence of this drift of public sentiment we note the fact that The Review of Reviews, in its issue of last February, published four distinct papers on this subject under the general head, "The Laymen's Movement." (1) "The Brotherhood of Christian Unity:" An explanation of the movement by its founder, T.F. Seward. (2) "Denominationalism on the Frontier:" An effort to show that denominationalism on the frontier is a serious drawback. (3) "Religious Co-operation in Maine:" An article by the President of Bowdoin College, to show that denominationalism is wholly unsuited to small towns and villages, and should be regarded as a city luxury. (4) "The Next Step Toward a Civic Church:" A report of an English movement and an address by W. T. Steed. The address urges the necessity of a Civil-Church organization to deal with all questions of morality. In it, under the caption "A Christianity that includes the Jews," we read: "I am glad to see on the platform the Rabbi of the Jews. I sincerely hope that he will not consider, when I use the word Christian, that I use it in such a sectarian sense as to exclude him [a Jew] from the field."

The same magazine in its issue for October has no less than eight articles on the same general line, headed, "Religious Co-operation – Local, National and International," as follows: (1) "Practical Co-operation in Church work:" A review of the good prospects of lay co-operation in Christian work. (2) "New Methods Wanted in Home Missions:" A plea for the abandonment of denominationalism in frontier mission work. (3) "A Christian Brotherhood Sunday:" A request that on October 30th Christian ministers, everywhere, would preach a discourse setting forth the advisability of a Christian Unity Brotherhood. (4) "The Municipal Idea of the Church:" Urging

Christian Unity. (5) "Progress of the Civic Centre Movement in England:" Showing that the movement begun in New Castle has spread to ten other cities and towns. (6) "The Reunion Conference at Gindelwald" (Switzerland). The report declares, "The whole tone of the discussions was most encouraging to those who hope that it may yet be possible for the Established [English] Church and the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists and Baptists to find a basis for fusion into a truly National Church." (7) "The Meaning of National Christianity:" In this paper the point is well made that none of the governments of the world are Christian governments. Then the question comes "How then does the State become Christian?" and the answer given is that it is by the passing and enforcing of Christian laws. (8) "The First Parliament of Religions:" An account of the Conference of all the religions of the world to be held at Chicago, in connection with the Columbian Exposition.

This general movement for union is an encouraging sign of progress to many – all glad to get away from the narrowness of their own creeds, without openly repudiating them. If it were a desire for union upon a Bible basis – an effort to lay aside prejudices and names and to seek the one interpretation with which every portion of Scripture would harmonize, we too would hail it as the peaceful ushering in of the Millennial Day. But, alas! it is the cry of Peace! peace! when there is no peace. It is the cry of Union! union! when the only true **[R1474 : page 357]** basis of Christian Union is omitted – *Jesus!*

But this is not the case, says one. This proposal is for a Brotherhood of *Christian* unity. Oh, yes! we know it is to be called Christian; but it is to include Antichrist's followers of every shade. As one writer cited above declares, such a use of the name Christian includes the Jews who crucified Christ as a blasphemer and impostor, and who still so regard him. It is to embrace Romanists whose false doctrines, yet unchanged, led their

progenitors to persecute and "wear out the saints of the Most High." Yes! it prostitutes a most sacred name to uses of human ambition for such a colossal union as God's Word never authorized – a union of the works of the devil under the name of him who was manifested that he might destroy the devil. Surely the proposed union – vitalizing the Protestant image and bringing it into accord with the Papal (beast) system – is a master-stroke of Satan and one of the "strong delusions" of this time foretold by the Apostle. – 2 Thes. 2:11.

But, as we said, all of these proposed unions ignore Christ's work as our Savior. Not one of them recognizes any need of a Savior. They are propositions of unions in disregard of the facts that all men are sinners and that the great sacrifice for sins was necessary. And the declaration of these facts is the gospel; and only such as accept of these declared facts by faith receive the forgiveness of sins or have a share in the benefits secured by the precious blood, or have a right to wear the holy name "Christian."

Let us see: here is the pledge of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity. It reads as follows, the italicizing being ours: –

"I hereby agree to accept the creed promulgated by the Founder of Christianity – love to God and love to man – as the rule of my life. I also agree to *recognize as fellow-Christians, and members* of the Brotherhood of Christian Unity, all who accept this creed and Jesus Christ as their *leader*. [R1475 : page 357]

"I join the Brotherhood with the hope that such a voluntary association and fellowship with Christians of *every* faith will deepen my spiritual life and bring me into more helpful relations with my fellow-men.

"Promising to accept Jesus Christ as my leader *means* that I intend to study his character with a desire to be imbued with his spirit, to imitate his example, and to be guided by his precepts."

Surely this pledge binds all who take it to ignore faith in the cross, the real Scriptural condition of union, when it binds them to recognize those who ignore the atonement. It is made thus broad purposely to take into *this* fellowship those who deny our Lord's pre-human life and glory and those who deny justification by his blood. It is a union which ignores the foundation of Christian faith – the ransom; that ignores the fact that Christ *died for our sins* according to the Scriptures.

The projected and now assured World's Congress of Religions at Chicago next year might also be regarded as a favorable sign for our times, but for the same reasons above mentioned. Its leading spirits are working up a union and fraternity at the expense of the keystone of God's plan of salvation, Christ the Redeemer. Among numerous quotations from ministers, college presidents and prominent people generally, we did not notice one reference to the *Savior* of sinners. On the contrary: – One thinks that the Congress will lead to a "mutually good understanding among those of every name who believe in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." [Nothing is said of those who are afar off from God, strangers and aliens through wicked works – nor of those to whom our Lord said, Ye are in no sense even Abraham's seed: "Ye are of your father the devil."] Another said: "Such a reunion would never have been possible until the present day; and it now marks a distinct epoch in *the evolution of the race.*" Of course; – when man's fall, and the redemption and restitution from it, are ignored or lost sight of, the other extreme is grasped; – man's ape origin is implied, and present progress is considered to be a *natural evolution.*

Another, commenting on the Congress, sums up the movement in words which confirm our criticisms above, saying:
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"A religion which can claim at once the faith of Christians, Jews, Mohammedans and Confucians – granting the existence of such a faith – should be considered as doing away with doctrines in virtue of which these various religious [R1475 : page 358] groups not only contradict each other, but too often outlaw one another. I will add that this common religion, the only universal religion, is, by this very reason of its universality, the most conformed to the exigencies of human brotherhood; and it would not be difficult to show that it is also the least opposed to the pretensions of science, which tends to assure it an immense advantage in our epoch and social environment."
