

## IEWS FROM THE TOWERS.

THE Pope's encyclical desiring union with Episcopalians and all Protestants has fallen rather flat. The sentiments of all except the "high-church party" are probably voiced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England and Metropolitan, who says: –

"I have no hesitancy in saying that, in my opinion, any corporate union with Rome, so long as she retains her distinctive and erroneous doctrines and advances her present unprimitive and unscriptural claims, is absolutely visionary and impossible."

The Scriptures indicate that there will be no general union with Papacy, but merely sympathy and cooperation: that the union or federation will be of Protestant sects, the Church of England joining with the others.

This sentiment for union of Protestants is expressed by the Archbishop in a recent "Pastoral" letter addressed to his arch-diocese, asking the members of the Church of England to offer prayers on Whitsunday for *Unity*. He says,

"When we consider the terrible separation of the past, when we now see so many communions, – Presbyterian, Non-Conformist and Roman Catholic, at home and abroad in America – we are moved to desire to seek Christian unity. Who can doubt that this change is of the Lord?"

We answer, that there is great reason to doubt its being an inspiration of the Lord. On the contrary, we believe that the union proposed would be of advantage to error and of disadvantage to the truth. Nor do we believe that it is inspired by right principles.

We will give our reasons for this position.

(1) The federation proposed is not a union or harmony of *faith* reached by growth in grace and knowledge, but a union in which vital faith in the teachings of our Lord and his apostles is to be ignored, because of a general growth of doctrinal ignorance and doctrinal unbelief, and a corresponding loss of grace which permits the skeptical to glory in their carelessness of divine instruction, as well as in their ignorance and unbelief.

(2) On the contrary, the union which the Scriptures inculcate is a union of faith and oneness of loving interest based upon *knowledge* – of God as our Father and Creator, of Christ as our Ransomer, and of each other as joint-heirs with Christ in the great work of blessing the world with a knowledge of God and his gracious will. It, however, has no physical union, no fences, no bonds of human dogma, form or custom. Each individual stands absolutely free in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, and is bound *only* by the love of Christ which *alone constrains* such as are free indeed. In this sense there is too little union amongst Christians in the various sects, though there is already too much in the sense of mechanical, sectarian bondage, not of hearts, but of profession; and the proposed greater confederation would only increase this physical bondage, and hence be even worse than the present for the personal liberty of those under it.

(3) The union proposed is largely a business move. There is a strong belief in the proverb, "In union there is *strength*," and strength is desired for various reasons: – (a) As strong denominations have an influence which smaller ones do not possess, so it is hoped that all denominations would be socially dignified by confederation. (b) Church people represent the wealth, culture and civilization of the world; and it is feared that the times are rapidly developing a revolution against the present social system and they feel the need of cooperation to preserve the present order, on which they perceive that their interests financial as well as social are dependent. (c) It has been their theory that they, by civilization, would convert the world and inaugurate the Millennium of peace and general

blessing (quite the contrary of the Bible's presentation [R1817 : page 128] of God's program); and now that it is evident that civilization is not synonymous with conversion, but that the nominally Christianized masses in civilized countries are more to be feared than many times their numbers of the unchristianized or uncivilized (for they improperly confound civilization with Christianization), they are anxious to consolidate and put on a good appearance in numbers as well as in financial and social strength. If carried out, as desired, the confederation would take the place once occupied by Papacy, when it ruled the world with a high and [R1818 : page 128] mighty hand as "God's Kingdom ruling on Earth." (d) A few others may have other motives, but the foregoing represent the general interest in Christian federation.

We submit that a union for such reasons is not authorized by the Scriptures: that the Scriptural union is one of *hearts*, produced not by such motives of selfish expediency, but by the sanctifying influence of a knowledge of the truth, producing love to the Head and to each member of the body – the only proper bond of Christian union. And we again point out that the result of the *mechanical* union to be accomplished very soon will be antagonistic to the Lord's plan – unfavorable to the development of the little flock of saints, as well as an obstacle to the introduction of Christ's Millennial Kingdom as he has foretold its establishment.

Nevertheless, the very unfavorableness of the arrangement will serve to prove and test and make ready the Lord's people. (Rev. 13:16,17; 20:4.) And as the last obstacle to the general blessing of the world, *united* Christendom (financial, social and religious) will be utterly wrecked and both the present heavens (ecclesiasticism) and the present earth (society) shall pass away with a great noise (confusion).

The true Christian Union is that in which each individual believer in the ransom for all is fully consecrated to the Lord; and all thus united

to the head and imbued by the truth with his spirit must be one – even as the Father and the Son are one. – John 17:21.

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The Socialists of Paris recently, on the anniversary of the Commune, at their *Maison du Peuple*, introduced a "Passion Play," representing the Savior's death at Calvary.

"In the dialogue the unrepentant thief reproaches Christ with the incompleteness of His mission, which, while inculcating goodness and almsgiving, did not boldly preach the right to live. The practice of that right had brought him to a more ignominious cross than that which would be a sign of glory unto all time. The pathetic reply of Christ is that He died as a malefactor for having tried to teach men to love one another. He wished for the happiness of all, but a deaf ear had been turned to His doctrine. From the Golgotha which they shared with Him the eternal light would come. The Redeemer then says to the thieves, "I bless you both." "And I forgive you," replies the bad thief.

The Socialists and all reformers feel that they have some share in Christ Jesus. This is because he is "the Savior of the world." So, too, among the Jews, "the common people heard him gladly," and probably more of them than of the aristocracy became his disciples. But not all of the common people, then or now, accepted him heartily. Now, as then, the interest of the poor, like the interest of the rich, is mostly a selfish interest. Few see the King in his beauty – the beauty of holiness. Few seek him as the bread of eternal life. Most seek the bread that perisheth. (John 6:26-37.) By and by all the blind eyes shall be opened, and all may at least taste of the heavenly bread.

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The dramatizing of Bible subjects is becoming quite general in Paris. Mrs. Booth, commanding the Salvation Army there, finding that the old methods of the Army no longer attract the multitude, has

introduced tableaux of Bible subjects, the first being "The Ten Virgins." The success was great; and now one of the leading theaters has tried the public taste with a play based on the narrative of John the Baptist, Herod, Herodias and Salome, of Matt. 14:3-10. The play was enthusiastically received, and will probably be followed by the dramatization of other Old and New Testament incidents.

From Paris the fad will doubtless spread to London, New York and elsewhere; and this reminds us that theatricals were early associated with religion. In Greece, according to the earliest records, it was in connection with religious festivals that dances and performances had their origin. And beginning about the fifth century and lasting down to the twelfth century the theatricals of Europe were almost, if not entirely, what were termed *Miracles* and *Moralities*, or simply "Miracle Plays," and were performed in the churches and occasionally on the streets or in convents.

At first the actors were priests; later on, monks, nuns, etc., joined. It was not until the eleventh century that the "laity" were associated. In these plays heaven and hell, angels and archangels and even Deity were represented; and although started with the desire to teach the world religious matters in an entertaining manner, the effect was bad, the influence degrading. And such will probably be the effect again. Indeed, God is at present selecting the "royal priesthood" only, and they are not such as need to be entertained and wheedled into the truth, but such as so hunger and thirst after righteousness that they will "*overcome*" otherwise unsurmountable difficulties in order to attain it and the divine favor. Hence God's plan is the preaching of faith in Christ crucified and obedience in walking the narrow way he trod, to glory and immortality. It is during this age, to many, *foolishness*; but to us who believe it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

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A new Roman Catholic Cathedral is to be built in London, capable of accommodating 10,000 people. The land is valued at \$1,300,000.

One contributor has donated \$100,000 toward the building fund. There seems to be plenty of money for the propagation of error; but amongst the saints there are not many great, or rich, or influential; God is choosing chiefly the poor of this [R1818 : page 129] world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom which he has prepared for those that love him supremely.

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In France a movement has been started to tax the revenues of Roman Catholic communities. As a result Catholics, especially ecclesiastics, are exasperated. Socialists are delighted, hoping for an insurrection which will give them a greater opportunity.

How evident it is that self-interest is, in the main, controlling all classes in France and elsewhere. As the trouble progresses this will become evident to all, and the masses will by and by look and long for rulers who will unselfishly and lovingly rule the world in righteousness. They will come to desire the very Kingdom which God has promised and which, unknown to the world, he has been preparing for more than eighteen centuries. Yes, "the *desire* of all nations shall come," – the Christ, head and body, glorified and in Kingdom power, – the Seed of Abraham in which all the families of the earth shall be blessed. – Gal. 3:16,29.

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Three candidates for the ministry, recently before the New York Presbytery, were asked their opinion of the fate, after death, of Socrates and Plato. One declared that they were eternally lost, another felt sure that they had another chance with clearer knowledge in the next world, while the third did not know if he had any opinion on the subject. The Presbytery decided that in each case the examination was satisfactory; – probably because, like the third candidate, they had no conviction on the subject.

But why do not thinking and educated men use their brains upon so important a subject, which has to do with billions of the dead and millions of the living? Above all, why do they publicly avow in their Confessions of Faith that which not more than one in three of them really believes? Why not be honest, conscientious, truthful? Why we cannot surmise, except it be as one minister hereabouts declared, their "bread is not buttered on that side." But we do know that the untruthful and dishonest are not likely to get the truth. We presume that the Lord's estimate, like ours, is that such as are dishonest in their confessions are not worthy of more truth. The Lord is seeking a peculiarly honest people for his bride. "He seeketh such to worship him" as worship him in spirit and in truth, and not for money or reputation or social station.

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In Cleveland the Y.M.C.A., Epworth League and Christian Endeavor Societies are combining their powers politically in what is known as "The Good Citizenship League." This may be considered a hint of what is to come. At first, no doubt, the energy spent will be well directed for purity and honesty in politics, and in that all honest people will rejoice. But within probably ten or twelve years, when religious federation shall have made itself felt in politics, both in Europe and America, and when, believing it to be the only safeguard against Anarchism and Infidelity, all who love *peace* shall ally themselves with the "religious party," then will come the danger. For, feeling their power, the tendency will be to use it arbitrarily and to trample upon the rights of others; and this, the Scriptures show, will be done, and will lead to the general collapse of the present social order.

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Henry Varley, the Evangelist, who has been laboring in Oakland, Cal., was invited by the Ministers of San Francisco to come next to help them. But, after preaching and holding Bible-readings on various other subjects for some time, Mr. Varley took up the subject of our Lord's second coming and spent several sessions in pointing out that it

is the center of the hope set before us in the Scriptures. This was too much for the San Francisco ministers, and they, at their regular Monday meeting, decided that if Mr. Varley wished to preach on Christ's second coming they would be obliged to cancel their arrangement [R1819 : page 129] to have him speak by turns in their churches, much as they would like to have him revive them and their flocks. They appointed three of their number a committee to visit and interview Mr. Varley, and to make known their terms. But, to his credit, Mr. Varley declined to leave out one of the chief features of the gospel and thus to prove himself ashamed of Christ and his Word, and went to Metropolitan Hall where he could preach the Word of God without restraint. God bless him! Yes, God always blesses those who are not ashamed of him and his Word.

But how strange that men who know anything about the Bible, who know that the Lord encouraged his Church with the assurance, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto myself;" and who know that the Apostles hoped, and exhorted the Church to hope, for "the grace that shall be brought unto you at the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and who, sometimes at least, pray after this manner, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as in heaven;" – how strange that they above all men should be so blinded, that they should hate the subject of his return, and despise those who trust therein while the promises of God are to those who love his appearing. As at the first advent, so now, the scribes and doctors of divinity are blindest of all, and cannot even discern the signs of the present times.

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Emperor William's Anti-Socialist Bill in the German Congress was defeated. It was intended to increase the Emperor's power, and practically would have treated as a criminal any one who would have questioned or criticized his person or governmental policy. The Roman Catholic party was relied on to assist in making the bill a law; but it amended certain portions to favor the Church of Rome, and merely put

it into a shape which pleased only themselves. No doubt they acted under instructions: Papacy wants to be paid by still greater concessions for assisting the Emperor to make his throne secure. We shall not be [R1819 : page 130] surprised if we find similar clerical parties in these United States within ten years.

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Germany was the first nation to enact compulsory life and accident insurance laws for all laborers, mechanics, etc. A certain portion of the premium, from one-fourth to three-fourths, according to the danger, is paid by the employer and the remainder by the employee. England and France are moving in the same direction.

France, by a recent enactment, places herself in the lead in the matter of granting pensions for aged work-people, who have for ten years subscribed to Benefit Societies. The Socialists wanted the measure to apply to *all*, irrespective of the "Friendly Societies," but accepted the present measure as a *recognition* of principles for which they have long contended. All of God's people may well rejoice in all such well-directed efforts to assist the less fortunate members of Adam's family. Let us all more and more cultivate such sympathy in the present time, even though our hope for the groaning creation lies beyond the great time of trouble by which Messiah's Kingdom is to be introduced.

### **JEWISH VIEW.**

"There are now 100,000 Jews in the Holy Land, one half of whom have arrived there in the past seven years."

"Jerusalem is advocated as the initial meridian instead of Greenwich by no less a renowned society than the Academy of Sciences at Bologna."

"Rabbi J. Leonard Levy lectured last Sunday morning before the Congregation Keneseth Israel upon "Jesus, the Light of Christendom." He said: – His moral doctrines are the purest. They are mainly from the Old Testament. His ethical precepts are the highest. They are for the most part from the oldest Jewish writings. He is a faithful copy of the lovable Hillel, that sweet, meek, gentle character. Our God is his God. Our people were his people; for our God is the Universal Father and our people the human family. I do not, cannot accept the dogma that was built around his name, yet I would be mentally blind if I withheld from him the highest tribute of admiration and respect.

"The greatest tribute that can be paid to him is to be worshiped by 350,000,000 of grateful people. What a wonderful influence he has had upon the world! To the tempted he has been a fortress; to the struggling, a support. Again and again he has told them, 'I, too, was tempted; I, too, suffered, but I bore my cross; go do ye likewise.'

"Where he is remembered in his spirit, men are nobler and women are purer. Where he has entered the human heart, charity abounds and hope is strong. Where he is imitated in his spirit, woman is revered and childhood is sacred, and there grows the sweetest flower that ever bloomed, the violet of meekness spreading its perfume in the human heart."

– *Jewish Exponent*.

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A young Israelite, a cultured man, thoroughly acquainted with the Jewish faith, became acquainted with several Christian families, and conceived the idea of writing a novel in which Jewish and Christian family life would be illustrated and contrasted. In order to more fully grasp the Christian idea he purchased and read a copy of the New Testament. His study convinced him that Jesus was indeed the Messiah looked for by his people.

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In Berlin, a Hebrew artist sought new subjects for pictures, and, searching for them, turned to the New Testament. As he read, the moral beauty of the Savior and the simple purity of his teachings deeply impressed his heart. The more he read, the more he became convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah.

Gradually, as the full number of the elect Gospel Church – "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" – is nearly completed, the "blindness" which for over eighteen centuries has rested upon "Israel after the flesh," according to divine prediction, begins to pass away in a manner that must be marvelous even to that people. – See Rom. 11:25-31.

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Considerable uneasiness is felt in Austria by the recent triumph at the elections of the Anti-Jewish Party, whose motto is "Hang or expel the Jews, and confiscate their property." This party has triumphed in Vienna and has charge of the city government, and it is feared will similarly triumph in the national Congress or Reichsrath.

As we have already pointed out, Jewish persecution in Austria must be expected; for large numbers of them reside there, and the Lord will no doubt use persecution to awaken them, and turn their hearts and minds toward him, that those who yet trust his promises may begin to think of him whom they have pierced and to return to the land of promise. – Jer. 32:37-40; 46:27,28; Rom. 11:25-31.

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