

[R1953 : page 63]

VIEWS FROM THE TOWER.

A FEVERISH ambition, pride and sensitiveness seems to be growing amongst nations as well as amongst individuals. Every one seems more than ever ready for a conflict on any and every pretext. During the short space of this year 1896, several immense wars have narrowly been averted, – between Russia and Japan, between Turkey and the combined powers of Europe, between Great Britain and the United States, between Great Britain and Germany and between the United States and Spain backed possibly by France; besides a number of smaller affairs. While pride and self-confidence have had to do with all these dangers of wars, fear of the terrible implements of modern warfare has doubtless had much to do with the avoidance of actual combat. But the pent up ambition and military feeling of Europe is finding a field for exercise in Africa, and British, Italian and French troops are finding plenty to do; while Spain has her hands overfull with Cuba; the Turks are conquering to death the Armenian Christians who refuse to become Mohammedans, and Russia is getting ready to seize Corea.

How unlike is all this to what might have been hoped for as the result of eighteen centuries of Christian instruction. Humanly speaking it seems as though we were getting farther and farther away from the promised era of "peace on earth, good will toward men." How strange their own attitudes must seem to so-called Christian kingdoms!

Thank God, our hopes of peace do not rest upon the expectation that the natural man, either individually or nationally, will grow just and merciful and loving and generous and peaceable. We find no ground for such hopes. On the contrary, it is still as true as eighteen centuries ago that the natural man appreciates not the things of the spirit of God, but is at enmity to them because they curb his desires and condemn his attitude and ambitions. It is still true that the carnal heart is boastful, proud, envious, vain-glorious, and that the carnally minded are despisers

of them that are good (meek, loving, peaceable, etc.), and full of hatred and strife.

No, thank God! our good hope of good things near at hand rests on a more reasonable basis – on the promised establishment of a strong, as well as a just and merciful, government – of God's Kingdom in the hands of the King of glory, – the Prince of the kings of the earth. To the rightly instructed these various signs, unfavorable to peace, are really harbingers of peace, since they corroborate the **[R1954 : page 63]** declarations of God's Word, that the reign of the Prince of Peace will be introduced by an unprecedented time of trouble and national and social disruption.

In view of the general prevalence of the proud, boastful, self seeking and combative spirit (2 Tim. 3:1-5), let us who are seeking to walk close to the Lord, remember and continually practise the Apostle's injunction, "So far as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."

* * *

As we read recently of the gathering of a rough element outside a Presbyterian church in Chicago, probably drawn by curiosity to witness the drill of the Boy's Brigade, how they misused the janitor who attempted to quiet and disperse them, and how then the boy-soldiers came out and with fixed bayonets charged upon and dispersed the crowd, sustaining some slight bruises from sticks and stones, we were reminded of our Lord's words, – "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." – Matt. 26:52.

Neither the boys nor their religious instructors probably foresee the results of their present course. The blending of carnal with spiritual warfare is impossible, and such a course is sure to cultivate, more and more, the carnal **[R1954 : page 64]** mind. In the troublous times coming, the poor as well as the vicious will be only too ready to conclude that religion and civil government are banded together for their oppression.

True Christians should keep themselves and their children free from all such evil entanglements.

The Governors of some of the States are requiring all companies of the Boy's Brigade to take the oath of allegiance to the state, the same as the Militia; because, according to law, others are not allowed to drill with firearms.

* * *

Mr. T. V. Powderly, formerly the chief executive of a powerful social order known as the Knights of Labor reports a tour among some churches thus:

At the Episcopalian church "the minister was a good speaker. He spoke of church repairs and parsonage repairs. He spoke 45 minutes and never spoke of Christ nor his work. In our cathedral [Powderly is a Roman Catholic] the priest told the people to be good, but nothing of Christ – not a word. I went to the Presbyterian church and to every church in the city – all the same story: all for man, not one word about God; not one word to help the poor man."

The need of to-day is the same as eighteen centuries ago. Our Master gave it as a sign of his Messiahship that "the poor have the *gospel* preached to them." We are told that "the common people heard him gladly." Now, as then, the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees have mistaught the poor, that after a life of trouble here ninety-nine of every hundred will find it worse hereafter, until the common people distrust and despise such bad tidings of great misery, falsely called gospel – good tidings.

We advise co-laborers to search for the Lord's jewels among the humble. Remember the Apostle's words: Ye know your calling, brethren, how that not many great or wise or rich are called, but [chiefly] the poor, rich in faith. – James 2:5; 1 Cor. 1:26-29.

*

*

*

The new X-ray is proving still more wonderful, in the new art of shadowgraph. Mr. Edison's latest announcement is that by placing a human being before a mineral coated screen he can pass the rays of light through the body so as to show the bones mirrored on the screen. By removing the subject further from the screen the bones become invisible, and the various organs are mirrored.

Truly, as our Master foretold, we seem to be approaching a time when "every secret thing shall be made manifest." (Mark. 4:22; Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:26; 1 Cor. 4:5.) As a railway passenger remarked, recently, "A man needs to be very good these days or his sin, however secret, will find him out and expose him."

Could we always remember that by powers yet more subtle than X-rays, —

"God our inmost thoughts doth read," it would help us all to walk carefully, so that the "words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts" might be acceptable to our Lord.

Quite probably the restored man of the Millennial period will have considerable of the power of mind reading, and intuitive discernment, over the imperfect; as our Lord could read the thoughts of the Pharisees. And quite probably this will occasion a portion at least of the "shame and lasting contempt" of the awakened wicked. (Dan. 12:2.) Their mean, grovelling dispositions, debased by selfish indulgences, will shame them in their progress back to manhood, while it will serve as a lesson to others not so degraded.

*

*

*

Mr. Rockefeller, one of the principal stockholders of the Standard Oil Company, recently received his quarterly dividend check for four million dollars.

What a responsibility, what a care, what a burden, what a stewardship, what an accounting to the Lord is implied in this wealth!

The Apostle says, "Charge them that are rich *among you* [they are not likely to be *of you*, for not many great or rich hath God called to joint-heirship with Christ], that they trust not in uncertain riches." Let us not be envious of those who have wealth, but sympathetic. The possession of wealth brings with it temptations to make it a *treasure*, a god. In many ways the position of the comparatively poor is far more favorable to grace. It is easier for them to cultivate meekness, patience, humility, brotherly kindness and all the graces of the spirit. Our Lord summed up the matter when he said, "How hardly [with what difficulty] shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" Yet there were none rich in that day in comparison with the very rich of to-day.

Our Lord's words are applicable to all in proportion as they have the "good things" of this world. Let each be faithful in his stewardship; for he that is unfaithful in a little charge would be unfaithful to a greater trust. The demand of the Law upon the Jew was – one tenth of all his increase. The test of discipleship to Christ is the consecration of all that we possess, principal and increase, money, influence, time and talent, to be used as his stewardship, –

"To be used in joyful service,
For the glory of our King."

In contrast with the wealth of some, note the fact that upon the lists of the WATCH TOWER are over three thousand too poor in this world's goods to pay for it, to whom it is provided out of the Tract Fund. Nevertheless, to some of these "poor" God has granted the "*riches* of his grace;" and has made them "rich in faith" and heirs of his coming Kingdom. To such of them as shall prove faithful to the end of their course he sends word through his Apostle, "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." Yes, thank God! many of these have received from the Lord a wealth of exceeding great and precious

promises, the understanding and appreciation of which are beyond all price. [R1954 : page 65]

Dismissing the question of whether or not a man can possess such enormous wealth honestly (for this dividend is only the *interest*, not the principal, and represents only one of Mr. Rockefeller's large investments) and supposing that every cent of it came justly: supposing also that Mr. R. is very charitable and generous, and uses his stewardship wisely, the question remains, Is there not something radically wrong with our present social and business laws and customs, when they leave it *possible* for one man to amass so great wealth while many find it impossible to earn a living?

True, the laws are alike for all, and in one sense all have the same chance; but all are not equally endowed with perceptive and reasoning powers and judgment and acquisitive propensities; hence "the strong [mentally, physically and spiritually] *ought* [as a matter of equity] to bear the infirmities of the weak." (Rom. 15:1.) And the laws should compensate, somewhat, for mental and physical inequalities of the race. But such laws will never be enacted. Why? Because the well-to-do are strong-minded, forceful men, and the same intellectual activity and power which enables them to acquire more than average proportions of this world's goods make them the natural leaders, lawmakers and rulers of the less forceful; and it would be like "making water run up hill" to reverse this natural condition.

But would not Love solve the problem? Yes; Love could solve the problem; but Love is not natural to the fallen race: Selfishness is the rule and law of life with all the fallen sons of Adam – except the few who have become new creatures in Christ, with whom Love is become the law of their hearts, and, so far as they are able, the controlling power in their mortal bodies also. (These, however, are a "little flock," and not a factor in the problem.) There is, therefore, no hope of a radical *reform* in this direction, unless we can convert the hearts of at least a majority of those who are able to profit by the present "free for all" race for wealth;

and the Scriptures assure us that they are the class most difficult to touch with the Truth and its spirit.

Is there then no hope? Yes, thank God! "Be patient brethren, the coming of the Lord [in the full glory of his Kingdom] draweth nigh." (Jas. 5:8.) He shall help the [R1955 : page 65] poor and the needy; and in his day equity and the righteous shall flourish. (Psa. 72:11-14.) He will exalt the humble and abase the proud, and cause the general levelling of society; and *all* the families of the earth shall be blest. The short, terrible struggle incident to the fall of the "powers that be" and the general spoliation of the present social structure (Mark 3:27) will be indeed a dark night, between now and the glorious Millennium of divine favor, in which the rich will "howl" for the loss of their treasures (Jas. 5:1); but doubtless many of them will then begin to search for the true riches, which moth and rust do not corrupt and which thieves cannot steal. Let us therefore have great sympathy for those who mistakenly are trusting in uncertain riches and are overlooking the riches of divine grace.
