

IEWS FROM THE TOWER.

WHILE the WATCH TOWER takes no part in politics in a partisan sense it must needs take note of all politics which have an important bearing on public welfare, and thus stand related to the fulfilments of the divine prophecies.

For the next four months the people of the United States will be in a fervor of excitement such as has not been known for more than thirty years. The "Gold and Silver question" will, we believe, prove to be almost as important a question as was the "Slavery question" in 1860: and the action in the United States will affect all the world. It may mean another "spasm" or "travail pang." But we still hold that God's saints are a separate and peculiar people, distinct from the world and its parties and factions; and accordingly urge all to increase their watchfulness, zeal and prayer for our Kingdom, which alone will meet the needs of the "groaning creation." Our Kingdom, for which we labor and wait and work, is the one for which also we pray, daily – "Thy Kingdom come – thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Since none of earth's kingdoms are *ours* we should be separate from all; – "Kept for the Master's use." Whoever enters politics will surely find that the time, influence and talent pledged to the Lord's service will be drawn into political channels. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." "Ye are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." "I have chosen you out of the world and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." These our Master's words, and his caution that we watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, and the assurance that we are now in a time of special testing, should put us on guard, so that the Apostle's words may be true of us; "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." – 1 John 5:18; Jas. 1:18.

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Under the caption "Religious Anarchy" the *Philadelphia Press* proceeds to advocate compulsory Christian Union. Its arguments illustrate the Apostle's statement that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." *Unconsecrated* believers (and hence natural men – not "new creatures") and unbelievers so largely preponderate both in pulpits and pews that the general sentiment will be more affected by the false than by the true view. To all except "the sanctified in Christ Jesus," "transformed by the renewing of their minds" and "taught of God" through his Word, truth is stranger than fiction. The *Press* says:

"A regulated liberty is just as necessary and as possible, and no more perilous in the Church than in the State. Individualism simply will not work. Of course, if religion be conceived of simply as a device to save each isolated soul from future damnation, then the question falls. In that case each must be as solitary as though no other had ever lived. He sins by himself, he dies by himself, he is saved or damned by himself, as the case may be. But that is not religion [R2004 : page 159] from the Christian point of view. Our idea of religion is that it is a joint enterprise for the moral uplift of humanity, and that each person concerned in it saves himself incidentally and without knowing it. But no cooperation is possible without some relinquishment of personal freedom of action. It is not in point here and now to say much about where we conceive the seat of authority to be, or through what organs it should act. It is enough to hold up to reprehension that selfish, [R2004 : page 160] impotent, mercenary conception of salvation which is so firmly lodged in the common thought. No man liveth to himself in any sphere of life. This is preeminently true in the sphere of religion, which is intended to be the social bond among men. The opprobrium of the present ecclesiastical situation is its apparent anarchy. Men will not submit to discipline, and they ought to submit. Do not misunderstand me. I have no hankering for either the Inquisition or the Geneva Council of Elders or the Court of Arches. But then, these are only ancient bogies to frighten children with. Our peril is all from

the opposite quarter. What the Church needs to day is not pious and independent people, but men who for Christ's sake and for humanity's sake are willing to cooperate with their fellow citizens in the household of faith. The creed of the Church may not be the form of expression which they would prefer; its discipline may be somewhat antique; its restraints may be somewhat irksome; but so long as it asks or prescribes nothing which is definitely contrary to right or truth it becomes the man who reveres God and who wishes well to men to forbear.

Here the evil results of false doctrine come to the surface. This writer (like a growingly large class in and out of the churches) has given up as antiquated the theory of mankind's fall by Adam's disobedience and the redemption of all by Christ in order that all may come to an individual knowledge and trial for eternal life under the terms of the New Covenant. His idea is the evolution idea of salvation (?), that our race developed gradually from microbes or protoplasm into monkeys, and from monkeys into men, and is saving itself as a race by cultivating and civilizing itself. Hence his statement above, "Our idea of religion is that it is a moral uplift of humanity, and that each person concerned in it saves himself incidentally and without knowing it." This is the logical conclusion of evolution, and it appeals of course to the "natural" heart.

If his premise as to the object and purpose of religion be accepted as correct, his conclusion that a union of Christians under some kind of a creed, "or any kind," so as to better accomplish this "moral uplift of humanity" would be logical.

But as his premise is false so is also his conclusion. He rejects the Scriptural testimony respecting the mission of the true Church, and hence his groping darkness and the darkness of the many on this important subject. As we have frequently proven in these columns, the Scriptures declare that the object of God during this Gospel age is not "the moral uplift of humanity" (except as it may *incidentally* be effected), but the selection, trial and perfecting of a special Church or

"royal priesthood" who, when all selected, shall be associated with their chief or High Priest (who *redeemed* them and the entire race) in the promised Kingdom of God.

For this Kingdom we wait, for it in God's providence is to accomplish "the moral uplift of humanity" during the Millennial age which will soon be ushered in. For it, as instructed, we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

However, faith in a ransom from an Adamic fall is fast fading from the minds of those who have never understood the subject and cared not enough to seek for the truth upon it; and thus "Christendom" is preparing for the union or "federation" which the Scriptures foreshow will be the final phase of "Christianity."

True Christians are recognized by God (1) as individuals; (2) as individuals who having severally submitted their wills completely to the will of God are each under the direction or *headship* of Christ, and related to each other in and through his spirit and Word, and not by either physical or mental creeds or other bonds. Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free indeed. Yet let us submit ourselves one to another and serve and love one another as members together of the Lord's body. Thus shall we realize the union and liberty combined; lost during the dark ages and not yet realized by any who are in sectarian bondage.

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A writer who sees matters more clearly writes as follows in *The Christian World*. –

"Christianity, as it came from Christ, concerned itself with spirit, motive, conduct. The disciple was he who 'heareth my words and doeth them;' whose life answered to the great appeal, 'if ye love me, keep my commandments.' The Christianity of theology, on the other hand, puts the emphasis on something entirely different. It constructs a system of

elaborate meta-physical propositions about the modes of the Divine existence and the relation to them of the Person of Christ, and then declares concerning them, 'this is the Catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved,' adding as a clincher 'which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.'

"The mind which can accept creeds has no necessary relation to the Christian mind at all. A Constantine could do that and be a murderer of his wife and his son. A Catherine de Medici, in the name of the Catholic Creed, could order a Bartholomew massacre. An Empress, Catherine of Russia, could uphold the orthodox confession and rival Messalina in her debaucheries.

"It is equally certain that the church confessions, powerless to produce the true Christian spirit and morality, are equally powerless to produce the true Christian conviction. When we are told we need to be convinced of Christ's right to command before we obey Him, we admit the plea. The true Protestant knows a better method. Hungry for the facts which bear upon his spiritual life, he will seek to give to each one of them its proper weight over his intellect and his heart. But the intellectual system which he builds out of them will ever be open to revision as new light comes. And the atrocity of using that provisional system as an instrument for persecuting his neighbor will be one of which he will never be found guilty."
