

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

THE day set apart for National Thanksgiving is past, but we trust that the spirit of thankfulness continues in many hearts; and no time is more appropriate for the review of our causes for thankfulness as children of the Heavenly King, than at Christmastide, on the threshold of a new year, while ruminating upon the things that were, the things that are and the things which we desire and hope shall be. Whether partial failure or moderate success has, during the year closing, marked our efforts along lines of moral, physical, financial or spiritual attainment, let thankfulness fill our hearts, as well as good resolves and holy ambitions for the coming year. Indeed, we esteem that thankfulness must be an abiding grace in all true Christians who have reached a reasonable degree of development in the higher life.

This highly favored land has much to be thankful for in the way of bountiful harvests; and although the farmer has not gotten high prices, this is a cause of thankfulness to other lands whose harvests are scant. As it is, wheat is nearly \$1.80 per bushel (silver) in India where the crop has been short for the past five harvests and gives little promise for the next, and where at present ninety millions are seriously affected and over one million on the verge of starvation, requiring military intervention repeatedly to quell bread-riots.

If the people of India cannot give thanks for rain and plenty, they can at least give thanks that the wholesale starvations of the past are now measurably prevented by the intervention of civilization and its accessories of wiser government and commerce. If the lot of any here seem hard, let him compare it with that of others; remembering that in India, in years of average bounty, millions of people never get a chance to eat three meals a day to satisfaction, even of the plainest food. Yes, the "curse," the penalty of sin, rests heavily upon the earth. The convict, man, is being made to feel its weight. Conditions are not what they would have been, had he remained obedient to his Creator in Eden.

But "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift," – his Son, our Lord; and for the "ransom for all;" and for the reconciliation by it made possible; and for the promise of his Kingdom soon to come; and for our call to a share in it with our Lord; and for the glorious prospect of coming "times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets." – Acts 3:19-21.

Thank God, this will mean the lifting of the "curse" from the ground, and from so many of the death-sentenced convict-race as will accept the grace of God in Christ. Ah! blessed thought; this will mean an end of famines, an end of pestilences, an end of storms and floods and droughts, and ultimately "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: because the former things [shall have] passed away." (Rev. 21:4.) Already a blessing has followed in the wake of the gospel of Christ – since the "Great Light" was "lifted up" on Calvary. Wherever any have been made free indeed by the Son, a light has shone out and has brought with it blessings; although, alas! this intelligence and its accompanying blessings have been sadly perverted by selfishness – especially in the large class of Christian counterfeits, called in the Scriptures "tares."

But if others have cause for thanksgiving, how much more cause have those into whose hearts the light of the knowledge of God, shining in the face of **[R2076 : page 300]** Jesus Christ our Lord, has shined. (2 Cor. 4:4.) Those thus favored can rejoice and give thanks under all circumstances and conditions; – in sickness, in death, in poverty's vale or in comfort and health. Surely, thankfulness is a necessary ingredient to Christian living. It must be mixed with our songs of praise, and with our prayers; it must fill our hearts to enable us to render faithful and efficient service to our Lord, in any direction. It was this gratitude, thankfulness, which enabled Brothers Paul and Silas to serve our Master so faithfully that they could sing praise and offer thanks for the privilege of suffering for Christ in the jail at Phillipi, while their backs were smarting from the cruel lashes received as the cost of their discipleship. – Acts 16:25,33.

Moreover, the thankfulness of the true Christian must continue – daily, hourly; its loss even for a moment should be deplored as an evidence of spiritual sickness, and the afflicted should go to the leaves of healing in the divine Word, that he may be refreshed in strength of love and zeal and realize afresh that "the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were *all* dead: and that he died for all that they which live [now reckoned alive in Christ] should not henceforth live unto themselves, but [in thankfulness] *unto him which died for them* and rose again." – 2 Cor. 5:14,15.

"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts,... and be ye thankful."
– Col. 3:15.

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The New York *Observer*, a high class "orthodox" religious journal has been studying the question of Israel's restoration to "the land of promise." After viewing the subject in various lights it gives its conclusions, as follows: –

"A 'restoration,' then, through the efforts of the Jews themselves, *must be the only hope*. And that it will be brought about by the voluntary efforts of others is exceedingly improbable. Under any notion of the fitness of things, Palestine ought, when the Turk is driven across the Euphrates and the Ottoman Empire is partitioned, to revert to the Jews. But all the plans which have thus far been suggested to restore it to Christian control have been negatived at the outset by the jealousy of the Russians for the safety of the Holy Places. It was that safety which formed the popular Russian pretext for the Crimean war. With passionate reverence for the Holy Places an unchanging tradition of the Russian peasantry, there is no reason to believe that the Czar will permit the transfer of Palestine to any save a great power, and that power Russia. Probably if before the Ottoman break-up the Jews desired to buy the Holy Land, and Europe consented, he might acquiesce on condition of a European guaranty. But there is little present reason to believe that he would consent to such a reversion as a part of the final

partition of Turkey. *It would seem, then, that the hoped-for 'restoration' may never come*, and that although Palestine will again become cultivated and prosperous, to the Jews it may always be a land of *promise.*"

The italics are ours and point out the hopelessness of Israel's cause from the human standpoint. We admit that the *Observer's* views and reasonings are clear and logical; but it has omitted the most important factor in question; namely the will and plan of God. That will and plan, as revealed in God's Word, teaches us to expect that within eighteen years the "times of the Gentiles" will expire, and that with their expiration Jerusalem will cease to be trodden down by the Gentile kingdoms; – that the set time to favor "Jacob" with Millennial blessings as the first-fruits of the nations will then have come, and that it will include their saving or recovery from the blindness which came upon them nationally, at their rejection of Messiah. Who can question this interpretation of the prophets in the light of the Apostle's testimony in Romans 11:25-33?

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Protestant federation has been little discussed of late, but is evidently progressing slowly as indicated by the following from the *Literary Digest*: –

"The committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada on Union with other churches reported to the recent Canadian General Assembly upon its proceedings with reference to the proposition of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada for the establishment of a federal court composed of representatives of the negotiating churches, whose function it should be to promote cooperation and economy in respect to mission work and 'dependent churches,' but which should not have power to deal with matters of creed or discipline, or with any question vitally affecting the independence of the negotiating churches. The proposition was generally accepted."

The expectancy of the Episcopal Church Rome-ward has doubtless hindered progress toward Protestant Federation or union; but this is now out of the way, as Rome has closed that door. The new policy of Romanism will surely revive Protestant desires for a consolidated and sizable Protestant system as an offset in influence with the governments and with the people. [R2078 : page 300]

"COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST."

God has his best things for the few
Whose love shall stand the test;
God has his second choice for those
Who do not crave his best.

It is not always open sin
That risks the promised rest;
A *good* more often is the foe
That keeps us from the best.

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There's scarcely one but vaguely wants
In some way to be blest;
'Tis not *a* blessing, Lord, I seek,
I want thy very best!

Yet others make the highest choice,
But when by trials pressed
They shrink, they yield, they shun the cross,
And so they lose the best.

I want in this short life of mine,
As much as can be pressed
Of service true for God and man;
God help me do my best!

I want to stand when Christ appears
In spotless raiment dressed;
Numbered among his chosen ones,

His holiest, his best.

I want among the victor throng
To have my name confessed;
And hear my Master say at last,
"Well done! You did your best."

Give me, O Lord, thy highest choice;
Let others choose the rest;
Their good things lose their charm for me,
Since I have found thy best.

– *Selected.*
