

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

THE Christian Endeavor and other societies of "Young People" are keeping well to the front, influentially and otherwise, in religious matters. When we remember that these young people's societies represent about five millions of members, and that the majority of these are no longer very young, we can readily see that within ten years these people will include the most active representatives of normal Christendom. They are likely to have considerable influence in forming the coming Protestant Federation. In view of this, we have been on the lookout for reports of what was accomplished by the recent C.E. Convention at San Francisco, California.

We have seen the report of the President of the Society, congratulating it upon its growth and size, and giving a brief account of his recent trip around the world, in the interest of the Society. But we have as yet seen no report of any important action taken, or even proposed. Indeed, it seems to be an immense combination of well-intentioned young people, anxious to do something great – and good, rather than bad. But it scarcely knows what to adopt as its mission. Hitherto this subject has not been so important; for all energies were employed in growing. Now it has corporeal size, and weight of influence, and feels strong, and realizes that it must have a policy and a mission, or else it will look foolish; and it, no doubt, will decide this question shortly.

It is fearful to adopt any very spiritual work or mission; because doctrine is more or less necessary to every such movement, and doctrines must be sedulously avoided, lest they split the organization, and thus wreck all that has so far been attained – size and union. For instance: suppose it were resolved that the Society of Christian Endeavor shall hereafter devote its main energies to Foreign Mission work, among the barbarous and heathen. Questions would at once

arise, such as, Shall we determine and expect to convert the world? Shall we understand this to be God's purpose, and that he has raised us up to do it, and that [R2193 : page 223] he will give us success in its full accomplishment? And how quickly can we do this, if it has required eighteen centuries to reach the present degree of development? Or, shall we undertake it merely as a witnessing to all nations, to gather out an elect "little flock" – through whom, at the second advent of Christ God will "bless all the families of the earth"?

Here would be a split at once. Would the Y.P.S. of C.E., as a whole, declare its belief in a pre-millennial advent of Christ, or in a post-millennial advent? It would do neither; but would refuse to discuss the matter, lest it cause division; because some of its most earnest members are on each side of that question. But to avoid the question as to object of work, is to avoid those lines of work which necessitate decision as to object. And so it is with all spiritual questions and activities; they are inseparably connected with faith; and all faith is built upon doctrines – true or false, divine or human.

If, then, these societies are built upon wrong principles for spiritual work (in that they ignore doctrine, the basis of faith, as faith is the basis of spiritual activities), what will they do with their immense organizations, restless as they are for some great activity – some mission?

The next plane of labor, lower than spiritual work, is moral or social or political reform work. For activities in these directions, doctrines are unnecessary, [R2193 : page 224] or at least easily avoidable. The faith of a Buddhist, or a Brahmin, or a Christian, need not interfere if the holder thereof will sink every other ambition and work, and devote himself solely to the reform work. But which of these phases of reform work will it probably decide on – the moral, the social, or the political?

These three reforms, all good, are more or less near to religion and spiritual things. Moral reform probably comes nearest – lifting

up the depraved and fallen, is next, we may say, to preaching the gospel, because it helps often to prepare the way for the gospel. In fact, moral reformers often rank their work far above the commission given by our Lord – "Preach the gospel to the meek." But the Young People's Societies are not likely to take up that field as their mission; because it is already fairly well occupied. They will want a new work, which will show as distinctly theirs.

The second reform in nearness to religion would naturally be social reform. This is a large field, in which great good to a great number would be possible, if five million Christian men and women were to take hold of it. The world's social conditions sadly need an uplift – the poor need a protecting arm, to help ward off the pinch and grind coming as a result of invention, over-production and monopolies. But this field is apt to be left to Socialists, Populists and Anarchists; for the "Young People" generally feel that they and their benefactors belong to the other side of the question.

This still leaves the door of political reform open; and we incline to believe that these societies will decide that in that direction lies their mission. In some places they are already beginning this work; and of course there are politicians who will be glad of their co-operation, and who will teach them how to make this movement somewhat of a success. But where will this leave the more spiritual work and doctrine and faith within ten years? They will evidently be obsolete – abandoned. The reform movements will come gradually to be considered the real gospel to the world. And the world will, of course, approve the change; for it never has comprehended spiritual things; these and the cross of Christ have always been foolishness unto it. – 1 Cor. 2:12-14.

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Many of the C.E. Societies have adopted yells, similar to those used by college students, and these were freely poured forth as the

delegations gathered at their Convention and en route. A published report of the Convention, for instance, says:

"The Colorado delegation came in with a ringing yell:

"Pike's Peak, or Bust!
Pike's Peak, or Bust!
Colorado, Colorado!
Yell we must!"

The editor of one of the Pacific coast journals writes of the Convention delegates under the caption, "Christians Who Yell," as follows:

"There is no other body in the country like that of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor. It is strictly a religious organization, but it is the best exemplification of muscular Christianity that ever appealed to robust piety. There is nothing sanctimonious about its members or sniveling about its methods. It unites good fellowship with Christian brotherhood, with no affectation of manner, speech or action.

"There is no other religious fraternity which goes to a convention with a college yell and a whoop. The war cry of the Spokane Club: 'Who can? We can, Spokane, Wash., Wash., Wash.,' is not only funny, but it is vastly superior to the ordinary run of baseball club and college yells, which are, indeed, frequently idiotic. The Colorado delegation also has a yell which must be very effective when uttered by a large body.

"The Christian Endeavorers have done more than any other organization to bring into the ranks of a Christian society young men and young women, and especially young men, who are ordinarily disinclined to be regarded as 'good' in the sense of being pious. There are some things which no amount of argument will change, and one of them is the suspicion and even dislike which attaches to too many

young men who assume to be leaders in church work. Pastors know this, if they know anything in the world, and young men who are not professing Christians, although they may be good enough as the world goes, also know it. Although the Christian Endeavorers have been the most successful in the new departure, other organizations are awakening to the difficulty which they really have to overcome. The establishment of athletic clubs by the Y.M.C.A., for instance, has done much to impart a manlier tone to the members of that body.

"When, in order to be an acceptable member of a church organization, it is no longer necessary to wear a sanctimonious look and speak with a nasal twang, when a young man feels that he is no longer derided because he is an active church worker or a Sunday school teacher, it will be a great deal better for the churches, and we shall not hear that wail about the worldliness of the present generation. Men with fifty years of experience in English-speaking countries, at least, are aware that there has been a great improvement in the morals of the average young man. The number of those who are addicted to intoxicating drinks in an excessive degree is much smaller, and the experience of physicians is that there is much less unhealthiness due to preventable causes than there used to be, and the number of stalwart Christians who do not belong to churches is greater.

"The chief cause of this change is the realization by many pastors of the fact that all that is worldly is not vicious; there are songs which are harmless, although they are not hymns; amusements which are not sinful, although they are not strictly in the line of **[R2193 : page 225]** church work. Dancing is no longer condemned as it used to be, nor is whist regarded as an occupation invented by the devil. There never was a time when flirting could be entirely prevented, even by the most rigid disciplinarian and in the most Puritan communities, but it was regarded as a sin by the mistaken judgment of ministers."

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The writer of the foregoing likes the change which he notices, and as much as says that he himself never was one of the over-pious, and is glad to find those of his mind greatly on the increase in numbers and influence. But Christians who have learned the way to God and the "narrow way" of discipleship in following the footsteps of Christ, will take a wholly different view of the change.

If these were claiming to be merely moral or social clubs, there would be no grounds for objection. The objection is to the desecration of the name Christian, to the erroneous thought that every man and woman who does not steal, nor get drunk, nor use vile and profane language, and who is moral and honorable, is therefore a Christian.

Here the ignoring of doctrines has a bad effect. If the doctrines of Free Grace and Election must be avoided, and if it is right to avoid and ignore them, then may not the entire subject of grace be ignored? and may not all faith be ignored as a standard by those who bear the name of Christ? This certainly is the tendency, not only of the young people, but also amongst the older Christians of all denominations. But all who see the Scriptural definition of a Christian falling into disuse and contempt, should be the more careful to hold firmly to "the faith once delivered to the saints," viz., that the steps into "the body of Christ, which is the [true] Church" are **(1)** Faith in the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins; **(2)** acceptance thereof with repentance and reformation: and **(3)** an unreserved consecration of every talent to the Lord's service.

The reason for such a falling away from doctrine is not difficult to find. It is because the doctrines of God's Word were so terribly mixed with God-dishonoring human traditions. For instance, the doctrine that an eternity of torment awaits all who are not of the elect, has brought the Scriptural doctrines of "an election according to

favor" and the perseverance of the saints into disrepute. Intelligent people say to themselves, the saintly are few, the decent, moral and semi-moral are many. These are too decent and [R2194 : page 225] too good to be everlastingly tormented after death, and we must therefore suppose that they will go to heaven. And the next argument is, If they will go to heaven, can they go there without being Christians? The third step is to claim that they are Christians, and a letting down of all the terms and conditions of Christianity – on the score that if a moralist is a Christian, and will gain the reward of heaven, no one need be required to be more. Thus, the blasphemous doctrine of everlasting torment, foreign to God's Word, and invented during the dark ages, is rapidly destroying the Scriptural doctrine of the necessity of making our calling and election sure by faithfulness and holiness unto the Lord.

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The "Cincinnati Post" gives the figures of a statistician, who has estimated the cost of four conventions of Young People's Societies this year, as follows:

Christian Endeavor Convention, fares etc..	\$2,875,000
Baptist Young People's Convention, fares, etc.....	1,400,000
Epworth League Convention, fares, etc.....	1,700,000
Brotherhood of St. Andrew Convention, fares, etc.....	200,000

Total.....	\$6,175,000

The Post's article concludes by saying:

"The aggregate sum equals the contributions of all Protestant denominations for Foreign Missions."

The following statement by Mr. W. N. Coler, just returned from Japan, is significant, and fully in line with the foregoing – only "broader." He said:

"In Japan there is much talk of getting up a new religion. Japanese students and thinkers are studying religion as a practical problem, which they believe will throw much light on the question they are now asking, 'Why has the West gone so far ahead of the East in civilization?'

"They are reaching the conclusion that strict morality has much to do with it, and a large body of advanced thinkers are seriously considering the proposition of getting up a new religion.

"It is proposed to do this by dissecting the Christian and Buddhist religions and Confucianism and uniting the best doctrines and principles of each into the new system.

"In Tokyo and other Japanese cities all the religions are being liberally discussed. I think they are getting to the point of believing that the Christian religion is the most civil of them all, though believing in the principle of evolution and improvement."

Mr. Coler believes that the result of missionary work in India, China and Japan has been to detach many orientals among thinking classes from Buddhism, and has made them free thinkers, who will readily attach themselves to a new religion embracing the best points of the religions named.

MOHAMMEDANS INSOLENT AND BLOODTHIRSTY.

The success of Turkey in the recent war with Greece, has a tendency to encourage the followers of Mahomet to hope that they may yet conquer Christendom [R2194 : page 226] and the world, "for Allah and his prophet." We quote from a New York "World" a cablegram as follows:

"Sayid Rayhan Allah (the Mollah) has planned the extermination of all the Hebrews in Persia. He has summoned the chief rabbi, and informed him that the Hebrews must accept the Mahometan faith, or he will do all that he can to oppress and exterminate them.

"Sayid Rayhan has formulated the following restrictions:

"Every Hebrew must have all of his hair cut off, must never ride an animal throughout the city, must wear European dress, and must wear a mark to distinguish him from the Mahometan.

"Hebrew women must veil. They must not wear the chador, or chaghchoor, the outdoor dress which Persian etiquette expects of every woman.

"A Hebrew must not build a house higher than that of his Mahometan neighbor. The entrance to the house must be distinguished from the Moslem's. He is not to come out of his house on a rainy day, and is not to touch articles of food.

"When a Hebrew dies, any relative who is a convert to Mahometanism may possess all his property.

"A Hebrew who, having once accepted Islam, renounced it, will be put to death."

Poor Jews! Much of Jacob's trouble lies yet ahead, before the faithful are gathered back to Palestine, there to have the eyes of their understanding opened to recognize him whom they pierced, and to mourn for him and to be accepted.

The Zionist movement, noted in our last issue, although strong and very popular with some Jews, is opposed by others, as likely to bring greater persecution.

For fear of persecution, it has been decided that the convention will be held in Switzerland, instead of in Germany, as first proposed.

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THE PILGRIM.

Wild shrieks the wind, how rough's the way!
But, see, one star's alight!
Up! let us follow, where its ray
Strikes through the shuddering night
O'er yonder roof, serene and clear.
And hark! what music is't we hear?

My heart scarce beats, my steps are slow,
Almost I faint and die:
Sick, worn, benumbed amidst the snow,
Ah! what a pilgrim I!
Yet will I follow stagg'ring on,
Ere light and music both be gone.

For One waits there, the only one,
Who knows my heart and me;
All that I am, all I have done,
All I may chance to be:
Who will not spurn the piteous thing,
The sole, best offering I can bring:

Who will not chide me, poor and late,
Nor scorn my sorry wit;
Who will not fling me to my fate –
O God, the thought of it!
Once that I look in those dear eyes,
What virtues shall my soul surprise!

Then up, my heart, gather thy strength
A little longer! see,
Almost our journeying ends; at length

Almost at home are we:
Sheltered, my heart, from storm and night
In that Friend's house of sure delight!

– *Selwyn Image*.
