

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

AS THOSE living at the close of the first century, on January 1, 101, looked back upon a full hundred years called the first century, and looked forward to a full hundred years called the second century, into which they had just entered, and which would continue until Dec. 31, A.D. 200, so we, on Jan. 1, 1901, look back upon nineteen completed centuries, and look forward into the twentieth, upon which we have just entered.

Few, if any, who read these words ever saw a new century born, and it occurs to us that as the Lord's people, daily and weekly and yearly, turn over new leaves of experience and repeatedly start afresh in their endeavors to copy the great character-pattern set before us by our heavenly Father in Jesus, so, too, we may specially profit by the thought that a new century has dawned, to encourage ourselves in fresh resolves to be and to do more than ever as would be pleasing and acceptable in the sight of our Lord. What more appropriate sentiments could we have than these! How could we hope better to please him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, him who has lifted our feet out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and set them upon the rock Christ Jesus, and established our goings, and shown unto us the path of life, and made us full of joy with the light of his countenance! The Lord's own expression on the subject is, "If ye love me keep my commandments;" and the Apostle, in the same strain, assures us that we are acceptable children of God if we do those things which please him, and do not find them grievous—if we do them gladly and of a willing heart—rejoicing both to know and to do the good pleasure of our God.

SALUTATIONS, GREETINGS AND GOOD WISHES.

We salute with Christian love and recognition all who trust in the precious blood of Jesus, justified by faith in his blood, and

reckoned as members of the household of faith the world over—known to us and unknown to us. And even beyond these, we salute with loving sympathy those who yet in darkness are feeling after God, if haply they might find him (Acts 17:27)—who are seeking peace and righteousness, the ways of the Lord. Our best wish for these is that they may find the Lord, and obtain through his grace the peace of God which passeth all understanding, to rule in their hearts and to shed abroad in them the light of the knowledge of his goodness as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord.—1 Cor. 4:4.

But specially we salute and greet the brethren in Christ, members of the Royal Priesthood, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ our Lord prospectively;—all those who, having believed in the Redeemer to the remission of their sins and their justification before God, have taken the next step of presenting their bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, and their reasonable service. We know and are in communication with a goodly number of these dear "brethren" (Heb. 2:11); yet we doubt not there are many others to whom we are as yet strangers; whom not having known we nevertheless love, knowing well that all who have this spirit of the Head of the Church must be indeed members of his Body, and therefore fellow-members with ourselves. We wish all such great blessing during the year beginning, and as it is now the harvest-time, in which the great Chief Reaper is gathering together into one barn of safety all the true wheat—as it is now the time when the messengers are gathering together the elect from the four quarters of the heavens (the nominal church) it is our hope that many of these dear brethren may be gathered during this year.—Matt. 24:31; 13:30.

Not gathered into another denomination, with [**R2751 : page 4**] merely a change of name or change of creed or change of form of worship, but gathered to Christ, into oneness with him, in fellowship of spirit through the knowledge of his Word. And we are to expect this gathering to progress more and more, because

two influences are at work, both calculated to effect the separation of these brethren from Babylon. (1) The increasing deflection of the nominal church people from the true standard of religion which God has provided, the Bible, into various subversive unbeliefs; *viz.*, into Higher Criticism infidelity, Evolution infidelity, Christian Science infidelity, etc., etc. The further and the more rapidly these leave the Word of God, the greater will be the influence upon the Israelites indeed, who are in heart-union with the Lord, and full of faith in his Word; for they will perceive more and more clearly what they have endeavored heretofore to ignore; *viz.*, that we are in the great day of trial of which the Apostle wrote: "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."—**1 Cor. 3:13**.

We are in this day of trial, have been in it for over twenty years, and each day brings us nearer to the culmination of testing, and tends to separate more and more widely between those who are really God's people begotten of the holy spirit, and those who are merely nominally and outwardly his, naming the name of Christ, and drawing nigh with their lips, but in heart are out of sympathy with him and his Word of righteousness.

(2) As this true class is being thus forced out of sympathy with Babylon and the masses of all denominations, they are hungering and thirsting after righteousness—desiring the spiritual food, which the Lord has been meantime preparing for them, and which now, by his grace, is indeed "meat in due season" to all who belong to the true household of faith. Such, having been considerably weaned from the spirit of Babylon, will frequently be found in just that attitude of heart and mind in which the truth will appeal to them quickly and thoroughly, and sometimes accomplish as much in one year as was accomplished with others at an earlier period in several years of study and development.

For these reasons we are expecting great things in the way of progress of the truth in the near future. We believe it the duty, as well as the pleasure, of all who have been enlightened of God through the harvest message, to spread the good tidings abroad,—to hand out to famishing brethren the meat in due season which has so strengthened our own hearts. And this seems to be more and more the spirit of the Lord's brethren, as they receive of the Lord's grace and truth and become more and more copies of God's dear Son, and have more and more of his spirit of willingness to serve the brethren, and, as the Apostle suggests, are willing to lay down their lives for the brethren (*1 John 3:16*)—not literally, but day by day and opportunity by opportunity—willing to sacrifice the comforts and advantages which, to the natural man, go to make up the sum of earthly life and happiness. They take pleasure in renouncing earthly privileges and luxuries, and even some of life's comforts, that they may spend the more of their substance and be the more [R2752 : page 4] spent themselves in doing good unto all men, especially to the household of faith, and especially in the higher spiritual good things which they have the inestimable privilege of dispensing as servants of our present Lord.—*Matt. 24:45*.

And since this commendable spirit seems to be growing amongst the dear friends of the truth, everywhere, we may reasonably expect that the coming year will be one of still greater activities and still greater successes in the dispensing of the truth and the bringing of brethren out of darkness into the marvelous light, now shining for all who are the Lord's people. Just how this will be accomplished we do not yet see clearly; but we are encouraged by fresh proposals for the Colporteur work and an increasing interest in the Volunteer work both at home and abroad. If all of the deeply interested will join us in praying the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the harvest

work, we may expect, as one result, that all who thus pray will themselves be granted fresh and larger opportunities for service.

As we consider it not to be the Lord's will that we should beg for money, but merely that we should use as wisely as possible whatever he shall supply, so we feel that it would not be the Lord's will that we should press or urge upon any the matter of service to his cause. We merely call attention to the opportunities for service and the privileges connected with these, and to the advantages and blessings which accrue to those who embrace them. We can, however, speak confidently of a fact that experience has demonstrated, and to which many of our readers could testify; *viz.*, that the Lord specially blesses those who, having received the light of truth, do not put it under a bushel, but let it shine, fearlessly and wisely, to all the household of faith. Many letters indicate that great blessing was received and spiritual progress made during the past year; and these came chiefly from those who have engaged in the Volunteer work—preaching the present truth Sunday after Sunday, to those professing to be children of God, by distributing to them literature as they returned home from their churches. So great has been the blessing upon **[R2752 : page 5]** many of these Volunteers that they have written to us urging that some kind of literature may be prepared so that they may engage in similar service during the year 1901. One dear sister, who was at first deterred by criticism (from one who should have helped instead of hindered her), declares that nothing she ever did in the Lord's service was so heavy a "cross" at first; but that having taken it up as a service to the Lord and his "brethren" she had received from it more blessing than from any other service ever performed. She and associates have thoroughly distributed the "Volunteer" TOWER to the Protestant church attendants of their city and even surrounding towns, and like true soldiers of the cross are waiting and calling for more of the love-and-truth ammunition which, under God's blessing, routing the powers of darkness, from some

hearts at least, will deliver "brethren" and bring them into the clear sunlight of grace and truth.

In compliance with these requests and suggestions, and with the belief that this is one of the best ways of reaching the *professed* "household of faith" with the meat in due season, we are preparing for another campaign in this holy war against the enslaving errors which hold so many of our dear brethren captive,—human traditions which both dishonor God and stultify those who in any degree give them allegiance.

We are not seeking to have any engage in this work who do not love the truth, and desire at heart to serve it; for we believe that such service would not be very acceptable to our Lord, the Chief Reaper. But we do seek to encourage all those who have a heart's desire to serve our King, and who know of no better way of engaging in his service, and who have thus far been deterred, and have missed the blessing which goes with it, through fear of man, which bringeth a snare—through shame for the cross and the true Gospel, which are not popular now. We want to assure such that this will be a part of their "overcoming" which will probably help them more than anything else they have ever done to become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might as overcomers of their own weaknesses. It will assist them in making their calling and their election sure, by assisting them in the development of the character of overcomers, to whom the Lord has promised the crown of glory and the heavenly blessings.—**Rev. 2:26-29.**

All who volunteer in this service during the coming year will be supplied with a booklet, entitled, "Food for Thinking Christians; Our Lord's Return, etc.," a neat, attractive little pamphlet, which, we trust, will feed many hungry brethren and sisters in Babylon, and thus give them strength to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. But whether we shall find many hungry ones, and learn of their refreshment with the truth or not, we are sure that those who dispense this food will have the

Master's blessing, and that they themselves will become strong by the exercise of their wills, and the bringing of their bodies into subjection in service and sacrifice to the Lord and his cause. And loving you all, and realizing that such a service will be the greatest blessing to you all, we are desirous for this reason alone that so many as wish this service may have the opportunity, and may be encouraged to engage in it; but we are confident that good will be accomplished also for some yet bound in Babylon;—that God will use this means for calling them out.—**Rev. 18:4.**

We are not urging this as instead of other means of work, as for instance, the Colporteur work, and the endeavor to interest friends through special tracts suited to their conditions, etc., etc. What we are suggesting is in addition to the other things. It is a method of preaching the Gospel—the true Gospel, of which no reasonable person need be ashamed. It appeals to all who know of no other way of preaching more likely to be effective in finding and assisting the brethren. While, therefore, we pray the Lord of the harvest for laborers in the vineyard in the Colporteur branch of the service, still, we remember that not all of the Royal Priesthood are so circumstanced in life as to be able to offer their sacrifices in this form. We thank the Lord, therefore, for the opportunity for their engagement in this preaching of the true Gospel through the printed page to church people; and we rejoice especially that in this service almost all of the Royal Priesthood can find opportunities for self-sacrifice, following closely in the footsteps of Jesus, and rejoicing proportionately as they follow; and proportionately growing stronger in the Lord and in the power of his might, and being made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."

Samples of the new literature mentioned will be sent to each one on our lists, as No. 52 of the OLD THEOLOGY series. We trust it will please you both in contents and in appearance; and we believe that it will be attractive to others who may through its perusal be led to "choose the better part," and to be taught of God,

and refreshed in heart by the glorious things he is now dispensing to his faithful. We offer the suggestion therefore, that in every little group of the Lord's people meeting for the study of his Word, this Volunteer service be taken up and discussed; and that those who have not yet entered the work shall seek to do so (that they may have a part of the blessing), "while it is called day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work." Appoint one of your number as the captain, and let him bring to his assistance as many lieutenants [R2752 : page 6] as he may please to counsel and assist in the division of the work, the appointment of distributors, etc., that the work may be done systematically and thoroughly.

Those who are without companionship and assistance in this work may engage in it, and we will be pleased to hear from them also; but let each little circle, so far as possible, act in harmony in the matter, not all attempting to be directors, but each willing to submit to the will of the majority and to act through whomsoever the majority may appoint the captain of the group. The responsibility falling upon one will be much more likely to be well discharged than if divided amongst many. Those who engaged in the work last year and the year before no doubt have memoranda which will be valuable to them in judging of the quantities of pamphlets needful for this work the coming year. We will be pleased to supply printed blanks useful in the guiding of the various distributors to the places of service to which their captains may appoint them week after week. We are pleased to hear from these captains at the close of each campaign, respecting the number of churches served, the average attendance, etc., and especially respecting any evidences of blessing, either amongst the distributors or on the part of those who receive the literature.

THE SPIRITUAL HEALTH OF THE LORD'S FLOCK.

Through our correspondence with the dear friends of the cause throughout the world we, so to speak, have our finger upon their

spiritual pulse, and we are glad to inform you all that the indications are that the spiritual condition is good—better than ever before. During the past few years we were impressed with the thought that some of the dear readers of this journal had received more knowledge than they were making use of in their daily lives—that some of them were more interested in the letter of the truth, in the knowledge of God's plan, than in conforming their lives to the spirit of the Truth. In harmony with this conviction we have sought, during the last three years especially, to draw attention to the necessity for receiving not the grace of God in vain, but on the contrary permitting the truth which we so dearly love to work in our hearts both to will right and, so far as possible, to do right—God's good pleasure respecting us.—*Phil. 2:13.*

Apparently the Lord has blessed these efforts, as no doubt he guided and led toward them. To him we gladly render the praise for the evidences we see through your correspondence that you are appreciating more and more not only the heavenly prize, but also the trials and difficulties which, under divine providence, are intended to develop our characters, and make us copies of our Lord, and thus to prepare us for the Kingdom and for the great privileges and work of blessing others through it. It is our desire, and we believe yours also, to still progress in this "narrow way" of self-sacrifice; to still recognize the Lord's hand in all of life's affairs toward "the called ones according to his purpose;" and the advantage of every trial and discipline rightly received; and to still be helpful to all who are in the way, assisting them to put on the armor of God, and to be clothed with all the graces of the spirit, and to be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, that they may tread faithfully this royal way opened up by our Redeemer, walking in his footsteps, until the heavenly Kingdom has been attained.

We do not mean to say that there are no drawbacks, no difficulties, no discouragements, in any part of the field. Quite to

the contrary, there are many such; but these also, interpreted in the light of the divine Word, are encouragements to us, since we know that they are needful. We realize that the Lord himself is pruning his "Vine," taking away the branches that will not bear fruit, and that unto perfection, fully ripe. When we say, therefore, that the outlook is encouraging, we mean the broad view of the harvest-field, rather than every little microscopic view of a particular point in it.

We have learned, too, that sometimes matters which seem to be dark clouds and troubles amongst the brethren are really, under divine providence, messengers of blessing, which, rightly received, do good in showing the brethren their own weaknesses and imperfections, and in leading them to seek more and more of the grace of God to overcome these, that they may be filled with all the fulness of God. It is along this line, then, that we congratulate you and bid you be of good courage and continue to press along the line toward the "mark" of perfect character—perfection in love: assured that if faithful we shall ultimately obtain blessings far beyond our present conceptions.
