

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

NATURALLY enough at the opening of a new century thinking men inquire each other's views respecting the outlook. Naturally enough, too, hopes and fears chase each other through these imaginings, according to the temperaments of the thinkers and their experiences and their light.

The child of God, with his Father's Word of revelation in his hand, surely has much advantage every way over others as he seeks to scan the horizon of the twentieth century. But alas! how few among the millions of Christendom are in this position scanning the future through the glass of divine revelation. The masses nominally assent to the wisdom of such a course, yet will not follow it, confessing themselves "babes" as respects the Bible, – "unskilful in the word of righteousness." (Heb. 5:11-14.) Such "babes," realizing their own inabilities, look to their teachers as to nurses, care-takers; and the latter, sad to relate, are fulfilling prophecy in turning away their ears from the truth unto fables, – evolution theories and higher criticism unbelief. – 2 Tim. 4:3,4.

But the few, the very few, the Lord's "little flock," those who do trust the Lord and search his Word – the very class to whom our Lord declares, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom" – the very class specified by the Apostle as "taught of God" and guided by his holy spirit to an understanding of his Word – these certainly have much advantage every way; notably as respects the Kingdom, but also in respect to the affairs of the present evil world. – 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Matt. 13:11.

As this class faces toward the sunrise to note the world's prospects for the twentieth century, what a sun-burst meets their eye of faith peering with the aid of the divine glass – God's Word

– through the clouds and mists! They see, just beyond the veil, the Lord of Glory ready to take possession of earth's empire, just as soon as the allotted "Times of the Gentiles" shall have run out! They see, with the same eye of faith, the Lord's jewels, his bride, his joint-heir in the Kingdom, mostly with him and waiting now while the remainder of the 144,000 finish their course and make their calling and election sure – passing one by one beyond the veil – changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to the glorious perfection of the First Resurrection, with its glory, honor and immortality, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, but which, as the Apostle declares, God hath revealed unto us by his spirit.

Then looking for the world's portion through the same inspired glass and with the same eye of faith they see still other wonders and glories. They see God's (spiritual) Kingdom about to be established in the earth: they see its wonderful provisions of heavenly love, – for justice, equity, righteousness and the resultant blessings of peace on earth, good-will toward men: they see the binding of Satan and every evil principle and thing: they see the release of earth's dead and dying millions from the curse to an opportunity then to be theirs to return to full heart-harmony with the Creator through their Redeemer: they see the channel of this favor to be Christ and that the knowledge of this grace of God is yet to fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep.

Seeing these things their hearts rejoice and their faces are glad; – truly the holy anointing oil, the holy spirit and the blessed enlightenment which it brings them, is the oil of joy which replaces the spirit of heaviness. True, they see also the intervening trials of faith to themselves, and the sharp experiences which lie before them in the narrow way ere the goal is **[R2767 : page 68]** reached, and they see with even clearer distinctness than do the worldly-wise the great time of trouble coming upon nominal Christendom; but realizing all these things

to be but incidentals preparing the way for the great blessing so soon to follow, they can and do lift up their heads and rejoice in the God of our salvation, saying – "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

"What if the clouds do for a moment
Hide the blue sky where morn appears?
Soon the glad sun of promise given
Rises to shine a thousand years!"

But now let us contrast with the above bright prospect the fears and doubts which trouble the wisest of the "children of this world," because they see only with their own mental eyes and lack the hearing enlightenment of the Bible spy-glass. These views have been collated by the *New York World*, which sent out some time since to prominent people a query respecting their view of the greatest menace to twentieth century progress. Some of the replies are summarized as follows: –

"I believe that ere the twentieth century closes, the earth will be purged of its foulest shame, the killing of men by men in battle under the name of war," says Andrew Carnegie.

W. T. Stead declares that the chief menace to man's progress is "war, which threatens Christendom as the result of ignoring Christian principles in its dealings with one-fourth of the human race which is born inside a yellow skin." Sir Walter Besant fears **[R2768 : page 68]** especially the increasing naval armaments, designed "apparently for self-protection," but in reality for aggression; while Lord Charles Beresford regards "the Chinese question" with most apprehension.

In many quarters the greatest menace is believed to be of a social rather than international nature. The Earl of Wemyss states it as his opinion that Socialism is blocking the march of human

progress, and Arthur W. Pinero, the dramatist, attacks trades-unionism. Joseph Arch, the English labor leader, retaliates by declaring that "a large accumulation of wealth on the one hand, and a large increase of pauperism on the other" is the growing evil in society; and Samuel Gompers expresses fears for the lowering of the American standard of living, by Oriental competition.

"The greatest political danger of the twentieth century is that the increasing influence of wealth will lead to increasing disregard of the inalienable rights of man," says William Jennings Bryan. President Schurman, of Cornell University, fears most the "exaltation, worship, and pursuit of money as the foremost good of life. The salt that may save us from this blight," he adds, "is to be found in our schools and churches; in every union for a righteous cause; and most of all, in the ideals and aspirations of the noble souls who will not suffer human society to degenerate into a mere brutish struggle for life and the survival of the fittest." President Hadley, of Yale University, finds the threat to the public welfare in "legislation based on the self-interest of individuals, or classes, instead of on public sentiment and public spirit."

Among the ecclesiastics, emphasis is laid on the moral virtues. When questioned regarding coming dangers, the Bishop of Hereford replied, in the words of Col. 3:5: "Evil desires and covetousness." The Bishop of Llandaff answered: "Infidelity, anarchy." Cardinal Gibbons says that "the greatest dangers that now seem to confront us are political corruption and lust for gain and the unholy purposes to which it is perverted."

"MEN'S HEARTS FAILING THEM FOR FEAR."

"The view ten years ago showed a placid, smiling river; now we see the boiling rapids of a torrent plunging toward what abyss

no one knows. War has followed war with swift succession....What the next stroke will be, who can say?"

– *Springfield Republican*.

Lord Salisbury said of threatened wars: –

"These wars come upon us absolutely unannounced and with terrible rapidity. The war cloud rises in the horizon with a rapidity that obviates all calculation, and, it may be, a month or two months after the first warning you receive, you find you are engaged in, or in prospect of a war on which your very existence is staked."

Gen. N. A. Miles, after his European tour said: –

"I have seen all the great armies of Europe except the Spanish army. What I have seen does not indicate that the millennium is at hand, when swords shall be beaten into plowshares."

The late Bishop Newman gave his view thus: –

"This is the most unsettled condition of the world since the crucifixion of Christ. The stability of government is no longer a fact. Change is in the atmosphere. It is just as true now as a thousand years ago, 'Thou knowest not what a day will bring forth.'... Statesmen are at their wits' end. Philosophers speculate in vain."

Archbishop Ireland, Roman Catholic, declares: –

"The bonds of society are relaxed; traditional principles are losing their sacredness, and perils hitherto unknown are menacing the life of the social organism."

Prof. Andrews, ex-president of Brown University, says: –

"No well-informed person in Europe seems to believe that peace is destined to endure there very long. On all hands people are preparing for war. Armies and navies are strengthened; fortifications multiplied; immense war treasures of gold piled up; all possible hypothetical plans of campaign, offensive and defensive, [R2768 : page 69] studied and discussed; firearms, great and small, ceaselessly experimented upon and improved; civil measures subordinate to military, and statesmen to great army men and navy men."

Signor Crispi, ex-prime minister of Italy, says: –

"Europe resembles Spain from a certain point of view. *Anarchy is dominant everywhere*. To speak frankly, there is no Europe. The European concert is only a sinister joke. Nothing can be expected from the concert of the powers. We are marching toward the unknown. Who knows what tomorrow has in store for us?"

All of these are right to some extent, for indeed and in truth the new King, Immanuel, will bring in an everlasting peace, but his reign will be ushered in by the political and social and ecclesiastical troubles, which Bishop Heresford properly ascribes to "evil desires and covetousness" – otherwise selfishness, which, as Bishop Llandaff declares, lead to anarchy.

RELIGIOUS FEDERATION IN UNBELIEF AND WORKS.

In Great Britain and in various quarters in the United States religious federation is making progress. These unions are for greater and more effective *works* of righteousness according to their own statements, and religious conviction, faith, is generally lost sight of – denominations of opposite faiths seeking rapprochement, – in growing unbelief as respects Bible doctrines. Note the following public affirmation of unbelief in the reliability

of the Scriptures by Rev. Rainsford, D.D., of New York City, reported in the *New York Journal*.

"In his sermon at St. George's Protestant Episcopal Church, Rev. Dr. W. S. Rainsford said that the teachings of Jesus Christ in regard to his second coming had been grossly misunderstood by the Apostles; that they had incorporated their mistakes into the New Testament; that the Church had been grossly misled; and that the Prayer Book's teachings had been largely influenced by a handling of the Bible which did not discriminate between the spiritual teachings of Jesus and the concepts of men.

"The preacher's thesis was that the Kingdom of God was not a world power at all, but a spiritual kingdom in all men's hearts, which could never be established by force, but could be wrought only by the persuasion of truth. Dr. Rainsford said that the prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem, in the Gospel of St. Mark, had been understood to include the promise that the Lord would come again within the generation of the Apostles. When he did not come, St. Jude attempted to explain the apparent failure of the prophecy by saying that one day was with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

"'A delightful theological subterfuge,' remarked the preacher; 'a complete twisting of the meaning of Jesus. There is no terrible judgment ahead, no physically burning hell. Judgment is a process here and now; salvation is a process here and now. There is no standing before an awful throne and the separation of impossible sheep and goats; but the separation is here and now, as men go on up or slip down into the bog and mire.'"

Here we have one of the nominal church's great men, one of its "princes," doing his best to undermine the faith of the people who pay him a princely salary to help them to see and follow the Lord's paths. Nor must we condemn the man as a hypocrite, for doubtless it is but another case of the blind leading the blind into

the ditch. This learned man has possibly not yet learned that it was not Jude who wrote the words to which he objects, but Peter. (2 Peter 3:8.) He perhaps has not noted, either, that the same holy spirit indited the same lesson through the Prophet David centuries before Peter's day, saying, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday." (Psa. 90:4.) The expression was so used by the Lord himself also. – Gen. 2:17.

However, Dr. Rainsford is only following the logical course of all "higher critics," who, starting out with too much egotism, find fault not only with all of the Old Testament but also with the New – confounding both prophets and apostles by their superior wisdom, and classing our Lord with these because he quoted those very prophecies which the superior wisdom of the higher critics show to be spurious, while our Lord, lacking their wisdom, thought these to be genuine prophecies and quoted them as such. Truly, as the Prophet Isaiah foretold, the wisdom of their wise men is perished. – Isa. 29:13,14,9-12.

A PLAIN STATEMENT OF THE CASE.

The Rev. M. O. Simons, a Cleveland minister, is reported by the *Plain Dealer* to have summed up present conditions in Christendom as follows: –

"Rev. Simons referred to some of the old battle fields in this warfare of ideas, and indicated how recent have been the great changes in religious thinking, by referring to the fact that only in 1876 Dr. Minot J. Savage preached a series of sermons on "The Religion of Evolution." So far as known, he was the first minister in Europe and America in the regular course of pulpit work to frankly accept evolution and to frankly attempt a reconstruction of religious thinking. 'And it is hard for us to realize now,' said Mr. Simons, 'the hue and cry that was raised over these sermons. Where are we now in this conflict between the old and the new? I believe we are on the verge of a frank confession that there must

be a complete religious reconstruction. The old system of Christian doctrine rested upon the fall of man as a foundation. But now modern thought has utterly discredited this story of the fall and the subsequent depravity of all human nature. What then becomes of the system that is built upon it?

"Mr. Simons then referred briefly to some of the [R2769 : page 70] great Christian bodies to show how *every one of them is yielding to the broader and more liberal interpretation of Christian doctrine*. He said: 'Officially, the Catholic Church stands squarely opposed to all modern tendencies, and yet its people cannot be prevented from thinking. We find much unrest among Catholic leaders, much suspicion in European Catholicism of American Catholicism. The Catholic Church has its radical wing as truly as any Christian denomination. In the Church of England we find reactionary tendencies, but these simply indicate that the conservative element has turned to the only things left to it, the traditional value of church machinery and apostolic succession. That reaction does not represent the whole church. Some of the most enlightened scholars in the world are in that church; the great liberal interpretation of all doctrinal points is winning its way and the future of the English church is in the hands of those who are rebuilding their religious thought on new foundations.'

"I may say much the same of the Episcopal Church in America. It has its conservative reactions, but the growing sentiment in the church is broad and liberal. I have friends in its ministry who are as liberal as I am. In the Congregational Church there is going on a rapid reconstruction of religious thought. A book like Dr. Gordon's 'The Christ of Today' is proof of this, not only because of its ideas, but because it did not convulse the whole Congregational body as it once would have done.

"In the great Presbyterian Church there is a great rising tide of liberal thinking. The movement for revision of the Westminster Confession, or for some relief from the outgrown ideas of that document, is plain evidence.

"In all the great Christian denominations the conservatives who would keep fighting the church upon its old foundations, are fighting a losing battle. The advance of liberal thought is irresistible."

We quote the above to prove the reverse of what the speaker intended – to prove the great falling away from the truth to vanity and fables and from vital godliness to moralizing infidelity. However, the wider the chasm grows between the "wheat" and the "tares," between the children of light and the children of darkness, the easier it will be for each to know his place, and by taking it he will make the division the more quick and complete. Who is on the Lord's side? Who? – Speak and live accordingly!
