

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

SINGULAR VIEWS OF THE DEATH OF POPE LEO XIII.

THE death of Leo XIII. at the age of ninety-three years is said to have created "a profound impression throughout Christendom." The President of the United States even felt it his duty to dictate a message to the Associated Press as the representative of seventy millions of people, more than one-seventh of whom were the pope's followers: –

"The president expressed his profound regret at the death of the venerable pontiff, whose long career, no less than his exalted character, has commanded the respect of all Christendom. The president said that in uttering these sentiments he was giving expression to the feelings of all the people in the United States, wholly without regard to their religious faiths."

We have no desire to say one word against any man, and surely have no grudge against this one of the more than fifty thousand millions of the dead; but we admire consistency, and fail to see how the deceased is worthy of all the adulation heaped upon him. We doubt not that he had an "exalted character," as the President intimates, but we have had no opportunity for judging of this, as we had not his personal acquaintance – as the President may possibly have had. We certainly should expect good morals and good character generally from one making the high claims that Leo XIII. made. We personally know some very humble people who have "exalted character," and therefore should not be surprised that a man *claiming* to be Christ's personal representative as King of the World should be given at least a decent reputation by his supporters, who claim that he was *infallible*. The fact that some of his predecessors on the papal throne were admittedly infamous, morally and otherwise, perhaps should, by contrast, lead all to proportionately greater respect for this man, whose gross immoralities, if he had any,

are unknown. Yes, we may well rejoice that the deceased was not so viciously disposed as some of his predecessors on the "throne of Christendom," who deluged the world with the blood of martyrs – in their endeavor to enforce the same false theories which this pope as tenaciously held but more covertly advocated.

But while thanking God that the fallen representative of the great Antichrist* was much less ferocious than many of his predecessors, let us allow also that all this change is not due to the man who died, but in great measure to the changed conditions – Papacy's loss of civil power, together with the greater enlightenment of the masses, incident to the new conditions which have prevailed since A.D. 1799. In this "time of the end," as foretold by the Prophet Daniel (Dan. 12:4), many are running to and fro, and coincident with this commingling of the people has gradually come the equally predicted dissemination of knowledge amongst the masses of so-called "Christendom" (Papacy's kingdom); and as a result the "bulls" and "thunders" of Antichrist *dare not* be of the same character as previously. Times have changed greatly since Papal bulls instructed the kings and princes of Europe that they must persecute heretics to the death through the Inquisition if they would maintain favor with the pope, who was proclaimed "A very God on earth." Otherwise their subjects would be released from obedience to them and enjoined to favor and fight for some "more worthy" "son of the Church." In view of these known and widely recognized facts, let us thank God rather than Leo XIII. for the beneficence of Antichrist during the last few pontificates.

[*See "Great Swelling Words," MILLENNIAL DAWN, Vol. II., page 304.](#)

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It is not necessary for us to suppose the pope to have been evil intentioned because he was for a time the head of the Antichrist system; rather we may well give him the benefit of any doubt on the

subject and suppose that he belonged to the vast throng of those mentioned by the Apostle as "deceiving and being deceived." Satan, himself, is the great Antichrist who, by his wiles and arts, has deceived almost the whole world into one form or another of misbelief and opposition to God and his great plan of the ages. Thanks be to God for the blessed hope of the Scriptures, that the true Messiah shall shortly take the throne of earth and subdue all things unto himself, bind Satan and illuminate the whole world. "This is the true light which lighteth [shall enlighten] *every man* that cometh into the world."

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Telegraphic reports told how before the pope's death he received at the hands of a fellow-mortal "*absolution*," freeing him from sin and its penalties, and how, when he did not die as expected that day, he asked for its repetition the next day, when he seemed to be sinking. Yet for all this, according to Roman Catholics, Leo XIII. went straight to purgatory. Evidently they doubt that his "exalted character" or his claimed high office as Christ's vice-gerent on earth, or his "absolution" – any of these or all of them – were acceptable to God, and so the poor old man, they think, went to "limbo" to expiate his sins. **[R3228 : page 324]**

How do we know this to be the Catholic view of the matter? Because, as usual everywhere throughout Papacy's kingdom, "pontifical requiem *masses* for the *repose* of his soul" are being performed – for the stilling of his soul's anguish in purgatory. Surely this would not be done for him if he were believed to be in heaven – in glory! Poor old man! Time after time, during his long career, he had fresh sacrifices of the mass said for his sins, and thus, theoretically, had thousands of years of purgatorial suffering remitted, and finally had all sin absolved, and yet to be obliged to go to purgatory to suffer and scorch – for how long no Catholic knows! He

and his followers surely have our sympathy in the calamity of so unsatisfactory a faith.

We inquired of a more than ordinarily intelligent Catholic how these seeming inconsistencies were harmonizable, and got the reply – "Well, you know, in matters of such importance we feel like using every precaution." Poor things! It is all a matter of doubt and uncertainty. Blind faith in the words of men (proclaimed infallible by men but not by God) can never give "strong consolation" nor "full assurance of faith." As the poor Romanist thinks of his pope ("a very God on earth") in purgatory, he shudders for his own fate and that of his friends. Nor are Protestants much better off. By rejecting the doctrine of purgatory and making the rewards of the present life to be heaven or hell – eternal bliss or eternal misery – they in some respects increase the difficulty. They must admit that only "*saints*" have the heavenly promises of the Scriptures, and few of them claim saintship. Besides, even the saintly must concede that but few of their neighbors and kin are *saints*. They are thus driven to doubt, or to the unreasonable hope that those who were unkind, dishonest, unneighborly, or brutal and bestial and savage are the kinds God is taking to heaven. In which case their reasonable hopes of heavenly bliss and harmony and joy would be rudely shaken.

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How refreshing to turn from all this unscriptural nonsense – from all this darkness of the dark ages – and to glance at the reasonable and plain teaching of the Bible on this subject of sin, its punishment, and the divinely provided salvation from these. Death, the penalty for sin, is comprehensible – reasonable, Scriptural. The resurrection hope, based upon the fact that "Christ *died for our sins*" (paid the penalty against us), is also reasonable. That God is now calling and electing a "little flock" of "saints" out of every nation, people and tongue to be associated with Christ in the Kingdom work of the Millennial age, is also reasonable. And that all others than the saints must wait for the

Kingdom of God (of which Papacy's kingdom was but a counterfeit) – wait in the tomb (where Pope Leo XIII. is now waiting), in which there is neither wisdom nor knowledge nor device, until the Kingdom time – is also reasonable.

It gives us pleasure to *know* on the strength of God's Word that Leo XIII., and all the millions of the dead Catholics and Protestants, are waiting in the great prison-house of death until, at the command of the Redeemer, "all that are in the graves shall come forth."

In due time Leo XIII., and all the other popes and peoples of the world, blinded by Satan, "the god of this world," will come forth to a purgatorial condition, but a very different one from that preached by Romanists. The Millennial Kingdom will be a purgatorial kingdom – established for the very purpose of blessing all the families of the earth by binding Satan and destroying his blinding influence, and by chastisements (administered in love) purging from all people (or from so many as will submit joyfully) all their sins and weaknesses and blemishes. This purgatorial kingdom will last only one thousand years and will accomplish its designed purpose (Isa. 55:11.) At its close all not in fullest heart-harmony with the Lord [**R3228 : page 325**] will be "destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23), and throughout the whole of the cleansed world praises shall ascend to God and to him who loved us and redeemed us with the one sacrifice of himself, which needed no addition of repeated *mass sacrifices*. And thereafter there shall be no more sorrow or dying or crying, because all the former things of sin and darkness and error shall have passed away. – Rev. 21:4; Isa. 35:10.

VIEWED FROM ANOTHER STANDPOINT.

Evidently others view the above matters quite differently, for, according to newspaper reports, prayers have been ascending to God all over the land, from Protestants as well as Catholics, that the aged pontiff might not die. Evidently many good people are of opinion that 93 years was too young for this man's death rate. They seemed to

consider their opinion on the matter worthy of divine consideration, but God was unmoved by their numbers and influence. Again the Apostle's words are verified: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."

However, one error always leads to another when the fault is with the heart, and hence, so far from realizing divine disapproval in the rejection of their prayers, we may expect that Protestants thus carried away with admiration for the head of Antichrist will be still further misled. Indeed the indications are that "mother" System (Rev. 17:5) and her daughters are surely coming into fuller harmony than has ever before existed between them. This will be recognized as in perfect accord with what we have already pointed out to be the teaching of Revelation, – that in the close of this "harvest" time Papacy and Protestantism will cooperate to arbitrarily coerce the people of Christendom and thereby lead to the great catastrophe of anarchy; – "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." – Dan. 12:1.

The following from the *Sun* (N.Y.) is to the point: –

"On Sunday prayers for the dying pope were offered up in several Protestant churches, of whose services we have particular reports and, probably, in many more as to which we have no such information.

"They were indicative of a change in the attitude of Protestantism toward the Roman Catholic church which is one of the most remarkable religious developments of recent years. Even not more than a quarter of a century ago that church, by far the greatest in Christendom, was usually excluded from consideration by Protestants when they were discussing the means and agencies for the propagation of Christianity. The article on the Pope in the Westminster Confession, in which he was described as 'that Antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition,' represented the prevailing Protestant belief.

"Twenty-five years before, this whole country had been stirred by a political agitation against the Roman Catholic church which seemed to some prophets ominous of a religious war. That church, then comparatively feeble, has now grown into the strongest in the Republic, yet, instead of the bitterness of hostility against it, proclaimed and predicted by the old Know-Nothingism, there have come harmony and respect. In Protestant churches prayers were offered up for the suffering and dying pope. The Roman pontiff has become a Christian brother, and Protestants join with Catholics in celebrating the spiritual exaltation of his character and the services he has rendered to Christianity. He was described by a Methodist preacher of New York on Sunday as 'a leader of the great army of the Lord's hosts,' a 'spiritual commander-in-chief,' a 'champion of the faith who has never wavered from the Catholic position and the theology of Thomas Aquinas,' 'who has done much for the progress of civilization,' who 'has restored the golden age of the Papacy in its best sense.' ...It cannot be denied, however, that frequently this new spirit of toleration is due to lessened partizanship because of lessened religious conviction."

THE CHARACTER OF NEXT TWO POPES PROPHESED.

Long ago, a Catholic whose name even is lost, affected to prophesy the characters of future popes. He did this by giving to each a "motto." And so accurate have some of his predictions been that Catholics respect them greatly. For instance, the Pope Leo XIII. motto was "*Lumen in caelo*" (Sunshine in heaven). His motto for the next pope is "*Ignis ardens*" (A burning fire), and that for his successor is "*Religio depopulata*" (Religion laid waste).

The reign of Leo XIII. certainly has been a very sunshiny one for papal interests, and it would be well in accord with our anticipations of the future should his successor have a brief and strenuous experience, to be followed by the general collapse of Daniel 12:2.

"OUT OF THINE OWN MOUTH."

A sister in Christ, once a Presbyterian, handed us a copy of the Central Presbyterian of February 18th, with several items marked, saying: If ZION'S WATCH TOWER contained such caustic criticisms of "Babylon" and her methods, they would be thought severe and uncharitable, even if admitted to be true. We present four extracts; the last going far toward sustaining the true gospel of "good tidings of great joy, which shall [yet] be to all people": –

"Dr. J. M. Buckley, the renowned editor of the New York *Christian Advocate*, at the meeting of Methodist ministers in that city, disputed the statement of Dr. Thompson of Chicago that a million and a half converts had been made by the Methodist Church in the last four years. He declared that statistics showed that Methodism was actually declining, at any rate in some of the Eastern conferences.

"Dr. Buckley added that many ministers will plainly state in public their frank doubt as to the truth of the Pentateuch. He continued: **[R3229 : page 326]**

"Some of our ministers even do not hesitate to state in their pulpits that in a few years Abraham will be generally regarded as a name, and not as a person.

"For twenty years I have not heard a real sermon on such a topic as the new birth. I do not say there have not been such sermons, but I have not heard them. I have heard but one sermon on sin properly presented. Now, I wish to say that if the gentlemen of the press report me as saying there is no such thing as a real revival and real converts, they will be wrong. But I do say that the predicting of a great revival tends to prevent its coming.'

"Again, we say to the Christian ministers of the South, 'Stand firm, brethren, declaring the whole counsel of God!' A touch of the

modern departures will make your sermons and all your ministry fruitless of anything but apples of Sodom!"

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"Certain so-called religious magazines and papers are *constantly* saying we need a higher state of morals in politics, in business, in social and civil life; saying, Preach moral duties, put high ideals before men; yet they fail to inculcate those very truths by which only *high* morals can be sustained – the regeneration of the soul by the Spirit of God, as the only reliable ground for good morals and upright living. They are trying to make men better by some other way than God's way. Dr. Chalmers tells us how, before his own regeneration, he preached all this sort of doctrine with God's power on the soul *left out*; but it was only when he became converted himself and fell back on the great truths of Scripture that his pulpit became a power. No preaching has ever really changed society deeply – made men *earnest* men, thoughtful men, holy, God-fearing – that has not dealt in the great primal truths of Revelation. The men whose preaching ignores God's grace, God's power in the soul, do not make Christians. That preaching which says develop your own natural virtues into piety, which does not proclaim the absolute necessity of being born again, is trying to warm up the frozen by painted fire, not by the real, burning flame. In much preaching in these United States God has as little part in what is preached as if we possessed no Bible. There is really no Savior in it at all. Men are not taught there is no salvation possible except through faith in Christ."

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IRREVERENT WORSHIP AND PREACHING.

"From a letter in the *Nashville Christian Advocate*:

"The editor of this paper well asks in a recent issue, 'When shall we have done with the abusive evangelist?' and he might easily have added a number of other adjectives similarly descriptive of that

brother's preaching. By permitting in our pulpits and worship any and every sort of spectacular displays we are only cultivating in our people a lack of reverence for things the most solemn and sacred. There ought to be in none of our churches any sort of sham or catchy shows. Deliver us from fads in religion, from slang and sensationalism in the pulpit, and from cant and claptrap in revival services!

"For one I wish to enter my most earnest protest against our preachers and people taking stock in these characters who advertise themselves as 'converted clowns,' 'cow-boy preachers,' 'boy preachers,' 'escaped nuns,' 'ex-priests,' and others of that ilk. Let us have holy living, plain, honest, quiet piety, faithful performance of duty, and fearless preaching of a pure gospel.

"In closing an announcement not long since regarding a sermon to men only, the significant statement was made: 'There's no filth in this sermon.' That is a sad commentary on the character and contents of many sermons to men only. If there ought to be no double standard in morals, there ought to be none in preaching. What a pure woman may not hear, no self-respecting man ought to hear, much less ought it to be spoken in the pulpit. Can we imagine Christ or Paul excluding women from their meetings because they are too refined and delicate to hear some things which it is deemed advisable to say only to men? May God speed the day when our ministry will cease entirely from pandering in any way to the morbid curiosity of people for the irregular, the grotesque, the tragical, the irreverent, and, too often, the disgusting in affairs pertaining to our religious life and work and worship.

"I heard one of the strongest thinkers of our church, and a man of deep and sincere piety, remark a few years ago: 'It disgusts me to hear some man say in simpering tones, "My Jesus keeps me sweetly."' To which remark my heart responded Amen. It is a weariness to hear

the easy and flippant phrases sometimes used in addresses to God or in statements about him.

"It is shocking and humiliating to those who love the church to see the advertisements and descriptions which frequently appear in the secular papers of all sorts of freaks and abnormalities in the way of church entertainments and services. 'A Talent Lunch,' 'Freezing a Mother-in-Law,' 'Lap Socials,' are some that have of late come under our observation as 'church entertainments,' while some of the subjects announced for sermons fall little short of blasphemy. Besides the sad feature of lack of reverence in these things, they contain another feature equally as hurtful, for in them is a tacit confession of our skepticism as to the power of the gospel to attract people, and also a confession of weakness on the part of church and ministry. We seem to have gotten hold of the false idea that we shall have more hold on the sinful world by conforming a little more to their ideals and standards. The world has never been made better by low ideals. It expects and has a right to demand of the church the very highest ideals in matters pertaining to things holy and religious. Let us have done with sensationalism in the pulpit, with sacrilege in our songs, with undue familiarity in our testimony and conversation, and with irregularities in our worship."

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GOD IS LOVE.

"We recognize electing love as the hope of man; but we see clearly that the love of compassion for all the perishing is coextensive with the earth. The commission of our Lord is an unmistakable declaration that 'his tender mercies are over all his works.' **[R3229 : page 327]** Every creature of our race is included in the provision. We do not remember any one of our leading theologians who has ever suggested a single exception. Our Savior never manifested, even to Judas, a particle of malice.

"The gospel is now, and ever has been, a proclamation of the Lord's love to sinners. It is a misrepresentation to say that this love is only for a secret number of sinners. Our Lord was not conscious on the cross of expiating the sins of the reprobate, but he was conscious of a mercy fully capable of that redeeming act. The heart of the glorious victim was capacious enough and unselfish enough to save any number of such worlds.

"Calvinism has suffered very much from its nominal friends, as well as its open enemies. The ardor of discussion has sometimes involved them in apparent views liable to misconception, but we cannot understand any of our representative men as imputing to God anything less than an infinite degree of benignity.

"God is love.' That is his nature. He takes no pleasure in retributive severity. *Endless torment is inflicted by his enemies upon themselves*. Irreconcilable antagonism to such a God clearly deserves the curse of its own perpetuation and appropriate misery. Fixed aversion to piety is the sin that destroys all who perish. They are incurable enemies of a God of love. That enmity toward such a Creator is the ground of perdition. It makes sin "exceeding sinful." It was honorable from the first that God was infinitely worthy of the love of man, and when the creature chose a bodily appetite in preference to him, the awful change occurred and the race of enemies began. But God did not become the enemy of man. He continued to be his best friend. 'He so loved the world' as to provide, by a divine sacrifice, for its salvation. The *heart* of the Creator was ready to forgive sin in Eden, and has been so ever since; and the olive branch of remission hangs high upon the cross wherever Christian missions have erected it in the view of men."

ANXIOUS TO CHECK THE GERMAN SOCIALISTS.

It will be remembered that the salient feature of the parliamentary elections which were held in Germany a few weeks ago was the enormous success of the Socialists. They polled 3,008,000

votes, as compared with 2,120,000 in 1898, and they increased their representation in the Reichstag from 58 to 81. Those figures indicate a gain which is most significant, and which is all the more remarkable because the Government had done everything it could to prevent it. It reveals the prevalence among the masses of the people of a feeling of profound dissatisfaction with existing conditions, and the growth of a determination to bring about a more or less radical and sweeping change in the circumstances of German life.

Naturally, the situation thus presented is regarded with alarm by those who, either through their ownership of property or their official position, make up the ruling classes, and there is much discussion as to what shall be done to stay the rising Socialistic flood.

"If the ruling classes have good sense, if they are acquainted with the teachings of history and are sufficiently intelligent to apply the experience of others to themselves, they will perceive the wisdom of meeting the Socialists at least half way and of placating them with some timely though moderate concessions." – *The North American*.

A SMALL CONCESSION TO ZIONISTS.

While refusing thus far the appeal of Zionists for some sort of autonomous government for Palestine, the ruler of Turkey has recently sold to them a tract of land said to be capable of supporting a colony of 70,000. Presumably this sale carries with it some right of residence not granted under present restrictions. Zionists rejoice in this crevice of an open door and hope for more. So do we hope for them – in accord with the divine Word. Official information is hoped for at the next Zionist Congress, Basle, Aug. 23-29.

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