

## **VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.**

### **DEATH OF CHRIST A PUZZLE TO DR. MORGAN.**

THE Rev. G. Campbell Morgan preached on the life of Christ to a large congregation at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church yesterday. "In the light of the revelation of the life of Christ, I come face to face with a great moral mystery," said Dr. Morgan. "There is some infinite meaning in the death of Jesus, and it is the stumbling block of my faith. At the cross of Christ I must be either an infidel or a believer. In the presence of the death of Christ I am compelled to deny the existence of a moral governor and admit his death a most terrible blunder or the presence of the most wonderful love that man has known. Notwithstanding the wonderful teachings of this man, God permitted him to die at the age of thirty-three. Humanly speaking, his work was undone – just commenced, as a matter of fact. Not a volume written, not a school founded, but just as he reached the commencement of his career he was foully murdered. I want an explanation of this. My mind demands it."

– *Exchange.*

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It is astounding that any man should consider himself competent to preach the Gospel who does not know why Christ died. It is still more astounding that a body of Christians should appoint, engage and salary, as their teacher, a man who gives us every reason for believing that he needs that some one teach him the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. We can only conclude that the people recognizing and employing such a teacher are similarly ignorant of Christian fundamentals.

To what advantage is it that thousands of church edifices are built every year, and that millions of money are spent on theological

seminaries, and on salaries for preachers, organists and choristers, if this is the net result; – ignorance of the fundamentals.

Are such people, who know not why Christ died, to be considered Christians? Certainly not. It is not good clothes, nor Sunday observance, nor even good morals that constitute men and women Christians, but *faith* – faith in the very thing that these people confess that they know nothing about. A Buddhist or Mohammedan or Confucian may have, and some of them do have, everything that a Christian has except this one all-important essential to Christianity – faith that Christ died as man's sin-offering, as his *ransom-price*, in order that God might be just and yet be the justifier of sinners who believe in this sacrifice and by faith accept forgiveness of sins and become on this basis followers of Christ.

How plain the whole matter from the standpoint of the *ransom*, its necessity and results. How clearly we can see that all the sermons and books imaginable would have been of no avail until first of all the New Covenant had been sealed with the precious blood. Harken to our Lord's words, "The Son of Man came ...to *give his life a ransom* for many." (Matt. 20:28.) He came not to preach and write books. Others under divine power and inspiration could do and have done those things, but he alone had an unforfeited *life* "to give for the *life* of the world." As he said again, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that is written in the prophets: ought not Christ to suffer and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25,26.) He did suffer death – "the just for the unjust" – and thus made atonement for our sins, paying the death penalty against us. He did enter into his glory and is fully prepared to give forth the vivifying blessing so much needed by the whole groaning creation.

Why then did he not at once – as soon as glorified – begin the Kingdom work of rescuing Adam and his children from the grasp of sin and its penalty, death? Because in the divine plan it was arranged that first a church-bride should be selected as his companions

in [R3234 : page 340] sufferings and future glories. Soon the testing of those called to this joint-heirship will be completed and then our prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," will be answered, and the blessing of the world at the hands of the Good Physician and his bride will begin. The great uplift of that blessed Millennial day will be not merely physical but mental and moral – not partial and temporal, but to those who *will* to obey it will be made complete and everlasting.

### **A NAVAL OFFICER ON PERSONAL RELIGION.**

Captain Mahan, of the U.S. Navy, evidently knows something else than naval warfare. He delivered an address worthy of being considered by a larger audience than heard it. He said: –

"In my judgment the Church of today, laity and clergy, have made the capital mistake in generalship of reversing the two great commandments of the Law; the two fundamental principles of her war, established by Christ himself. Practically, as I observe, the laity hold, and the clergy teach, that the first and great commandment is 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Incidentally thereto, it is admitted, 'Thou shouldst love the Lord thy God.' It is of course too egregious an absurdity to openly call that the second commandment. It is simply quietly relegated to a secondary place.

"You may perhaps dispute this deduction as a matter of fact or remind me of St. John's words, 'He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, can not love God whom he hath not seen.' It is evident, however, on reflection that St. John is in no sense inverting our Lord's order. He simply appeals to evidence. This man says he loves God. Very well, where is the proof of it? Does he love his brother? If not, he certainly does not love God, for the love of the brethren is the sure, inevitable fruit of loving God. In fact the whole missionary spirit, and much that is not narrowly missionary, involves love for brethren whom we have no more seen than we have seen God. The love of God is the one sure motive and source of the love for man."

Is it not true, Captain Mahan inquires, that within the last thirty years the Church has been teaching that "a man's personal piety is of small consequence alongside of his external benevolent activities"? Has not the Church come to stand for the idea that "external activities, outward benevolence, are not merely the fruit of Christian life, but the Christian life itself"? He continued:

"Is not the judgment of the world expressed, and is it not a true judgment, in the words of indifferent contempt for a man who is trying to save his own soul – his miserable soul, as I have sometimes read? And yet what is a man's soul? It is the one thing inexpressibly dear to God, for which, if there had been but one, he was content to give his Son, and this he has intrusted to man as his own particular charge. I do not say his only charge, but the one clearly and solely committed to him to make the most of. It is the talent which he is to multiply by diligent care; not that he may delight in it himself, but that he may present it to God through Jesus Christ....Because care of one's own soul, by internal effort and discipline, seemed selfish, men have rushed to the extreme of finding in external action, in organized benevolence, in philanthropic effort, in the love of the neighbor – and particularly of the neighbor's body, for the neighbor's soul was naturally of not more account than one's own – not merely the fruit of Christian life, but the Christian life itself. That the kingdom of God is within you, an individual matter primarily and in essence, and only in consequence, and incidentally external, as all activity is but a manifestation of life and not life itself – all this was forgotten. This I conceive to be the state of the Church now, I mean as an organization; for I doubt not the multitudes of earnest cultivators of their own souls for the glory of God – perfecting holiness, as St. Paul says, in the fear of the Lord."

There is but one remedy, declares the Captain, and that is the restoration of "personal religion" – "the direct relation of the individual soul to God – to that primary place in the Christian scheme which it has momentarily lost. In conclusion he said:

"Within this generation there has been given much vogue to a secular phrase, the prevalence of which seems so indicative of the temper of the day as to point just where the sagacious Christian warrior, crafty as St. Paul was to seize opportunity and capture men with guile for Jesus Christ, may lay hold upon men's hearts and minds. Self-culture – we have all heard much of it; sweetness and light, and all the rest of it. No new thing. The Stoics cultivated themselves, their personality, that they might reach self-sufficingness, which, being attained, could be presented to themselves in the form of self-contentment. Let this human conception receive consecration. What is self culture, but deliverance from evil unto good – salvation from sin? And who shall thus save his people? Who but Jesus Christ? And what is Personal Religion but the cooperation of man's will with the power of Jesus Christ, that man's soul, man's whole being, may be saved; not for his own profit chiefly, but that he may lay it, thus redeemed, thus exalted, at the feet of him who loved him and gave himself for him."

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The "salvation" of the philosopher is the growing one today, everywhere; because faith in the Bible is giving way to Higher Criticism and Evolutionism, which are mere human philosophies. A living faith must have a foundation in the divine revelation, the Bible. It alone shows what righteousness is and that "there is none righteous, no not one." It alone shows how sin came into the world (Rom. 5:12) and that personal *faith* in a personal Savior is the only ground for hope of a personal salvation.

"Truth people," as well as others, need to be on guard on this subject. Some of them seem to get the false impression that head-knowledge is the basis of brotherhood. While encouraging Bible study [**R3235 : page 341**] and growth in knowledge we must still recognize heart-salvation as the aim and object of all our proclamations of the Gospel. Knowledge is merely the lamp which

guides the way toward heart-salvation, – "sanctification of the spirit [mind] through the belief of the Truth."

With some, the thought that "our salvation is to be brought unto us at the revelation of our Lord and Savior" at his second advent seems to mean that it would be a mistake to speak *also* of a present heart-salvation translating us, even now, out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. We may be sure that none will attain the "great salvation" promised to the elect who does not in the present time experience heart-regeneration or salvation from the love of sin.

