

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

FROM the standpoint of the Truth and its prosperity – its victory over error – no year in the past, in our experience, has ever offered so grand a prospect. During the past year the Lord has done great things for his people, whereof we are glad. Viewed from some standpoints it is difficult to imagine that the coming year could equal the past one, much less excell it. However, as we are learning more of the Lord's ways we are coming to have greater confidence in his almighty power, which is able to make all things work out his glorious plans as the due time of each item arrives.

But our hopes have circumstantial foundations supporting our faith. We will mention some of these, that we may hope and rejoice together. (1) The number of the interested is greater than ever before; – the WATCH TOWER list is nearly twenty thousand, which represents about 40,000 readers and colaborers. (2) The consecration of all seems to be deepening. (3) These furnish nearly one thousand "Volunteers," and guarantee a circulation of at least three millions of tracts which we may hope will find and enlist other earnest, consecrated heads, hearts and hands. (4) The Colporteur brigade is now nearly 150 strong, and many of them well tried and experienced soldiers of the cross, whose zeal increases as they realize that "now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed." (Rom. 13:11.) These will surely put into the hands of the Christian people many thousands of volumes of *Millennial Dawn* – which, in turn, should assist much in breaking down prejudice and superstition in thousands and in bringing hundreds into fellowship with the Truth. (5) The Pilgrim service will, we trust, be blest of the Lord to those already fully committed. (6) The *Pittsburgh Gazette* each week publishes the editor's sermon to from 70,000 to 85,000 readers far and near. This should prove a help to some. Many will read in a secular journal what they would refuse to notice elsewhere. (7) The "Good Hopes"

prospects are favorable so far, and encourage us to lay our plans broad and deep for the year beginning.

The above prospects relate to the "*machinery*" which the Lord seems to have provided and blessed in connection with the "harvest" work. Now let us look to the conditions in the world outside our influence. We find that an increasingly large number of pious, Christian people are losing their prejudice and getting their eyes opened, little by little, to the beauties of the Divine Plan of the Ages. It may be that the millions of tracts and hundreds of thousands of DAWNS which we have unitedly circulated, and the other efforts put forth to proclaim the truth, have been used of the Lord to break down the prejudice and to anoint the dim eyes. We are glad to hope so: we would feel discouraged indeed with any other view.

However, we are inclined to think that the results are largely the operation of forces at work in an opposite direction. While we are busy heralding the Truth and endeavoring to show the real meaning of God's Word and its sureness of fulfillment, Satan is no less busy and has powerful influences at work. For the past twenty years he has been carefully sowing and watering the seeds of unbelief – "Evolution" and "Higher Criticism" – in all the colleges and theological seminaries of Christendom. As a result the "leaven" – the corruption of faith – abounds in every direction. To such an extent is this true, that the term "orthodoxy" practically stands for this modern form of "rationalism" or unbelief.

The effect of this growing skepticism, or "falling away" from the faith, is two-fold. To a large class it is infectious: never well established or convinced of **[R3295 : page 4]** the truth of God's revelation, they needed only the word of some one "highly esteemed among men" (Luke 16:15), D.D., to turn them away from the truth to fables. Soon they plume themselves upon their "advanced views," and learn to look down upon those who hold fast to the precious Word

(Titus 1:9), and to think of them and speak of them as "credulous" and "old fogy."

These "snares of the Adversary" will, we doubt not, entangle the great mass of professing Churchianity. They shall indeed be snared and taken. A thousand will fall to one who will stand. (Isa. 28:13; Psa. 91:7.) But the Lord's truly consecrated people will be kept by the power of God through *faith*. At first they are sure to be *bewildered* as they hear their trusted under-shepherds advance the very arguments once set forth by Ingersoll, Paine and other opponents of the Word. They wonder whether or not they heard correctly, and finally they wonder if they have been too slow and stupid and too credulous.

Alas! many of these dear sheep have relied too much on the creeds and traditions of men, and have not sufficiently "proved all things" before acceptance, with the standard of God's Word. And so their faith may be sadly shaken and their peace and joy in the Lord destroyed. But as surely as they are the Lord's sheep he will not abandon them, but if they cry unto him he will deliver them from the Evil One.

Deliverance will come to them just in time; – just when they have learned to deplore their loss of faith and its connection with the joys of the Lord. We are rapidly approaching a time of famine for the hearing of the Word of the Lord. Those who have always fed on the husks of human theory and tradition will not be aware of this famine; but those who do know the Lord will begin to feel the pangs of hunger. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The Lord will hear their cry for the bread of Present Truth and will send it to them by the hand of some of his willing servants. Verily *they* shall be fed and led into green pastures; because they are true sheep and under the care of the true Shepherd. – Psalm 23.

It is, therefore, in the interest of the Lord's true sheep that the Evolutionists and Higher Critics should become more and more bold

and aggressive soon. So much the sooner will the Lord's true followers discern that Babylon has been rejected – that instead of the name meaning longer the Gate of God, it now stands for Confusion. When once they get their eyes open on this subject they will listen more carefully than ever for the true Shepherd's voice, and seek for the flock he is feeding, that they also may feed in pastures green and be refreshed by the still, deep waters of Present Truth.

Our view in this direction is most encouraging. The leaders of Babylon are nearly all Evolutionists and Higher Critics, and their numbers and influence are making them more and more bold and outspoken. We welcome this progress of error in this class, realizing that it is the Lord's way of letting error and all [R3296 : page 4] things work out good to those who really *love* him; – the called ones according to his purpose. Thus God will cause the pride and worldly wisdom and wrath and boastfulness of Satan and his deluded ones to praise him, to serve his cause, to deliver his true sheep from the bondage of Churchianity. Let us be vigilant to use every opportunity to serve these and to do good unto all as we have opportunity; but let us not forget that the "strong delusions" the Adversary is now permitted to bring upon Christendom will not be permitted by the Lord to deceive "the very elect." – Mark 13:22.

PRAY FOR THE REAPERS IN THE HARVEST.

– MATT. 9:28 –

Seeing that the fields of Christendom are thus white for harvesting, that everything is ripe for the gathering of the "wheat" class, what should be our attitude toward the Lord's work? The Lord arranges matters so as to place opportunities for his service within our reach – such opportunities for printing and circulating the Truth as never before fell to the lot of the Lord's people. Are we doing all that we can for the Lord's honor, and for the assistance of brethren both in and out of Babylon? Some are doing heroic service and are being blest. It is our duty to stimulate all as best we can to seize and use the

opportunities as they are daily passing us. If we fail so to do some in the future might reproach us with not having done all we could to bring them into the place of greatest blessing and security; for it is the zealous that are least likely to be ensnared by the Adversary – if their zeal be born of love.

This time of great opportunity for the Lord's service is likewise a time of great opportunity for self-service – for "money-making," etc. It is a time of general activity, and the question is – In what direction shall our energies be expended? Whom will we serve? The Lord, his Truth and his brethren? Or self, or the world, or the flesh, or the devil?

This is the hour of trial for the consecrated. We have solemnly told the Lord that we love him more than we love houses or lands, or father, or mother, or self, or any other creature, and now he is putting our professions to the test. The measure of our sacrifice of earthly privileges for spiritual ones will mark the degree of our love, our devotion, to the Lord; and **[R3296 : page 5]** our favor with the Lord, our growth in him, in his character-likeness, will be proportionate.

We all see the issue squarely. Let us each resolve that by the Lord's grace we will yet hear his voice declare of us, as members of his Bride, – "She hath done what she could." This will mean more energetic and more persistent service. It will mean more "Volunteers," and a still greater area of the wheat-field attended to. It will mean more WATCH TOWER subscriptions (free or paid – for you know that the interested poor are as carefully served and as much esteemed as those who can and do pay). It will mean daily watching and praying, that neither fear of man, nor pride, nor sloth, nor any form of selfishness, shall hinder us from attesting to the Lord our love and loyalty, nor deprive us of the present and future joys and rewards of his service.

We have specified labor in the circulation of our Society's publications, because we know of no others giving the "harvest" message – no others which the Lord is using so specially and peculiarly; and because we address those who we believe view the

matter in the same light. We urge your cooperation, not only for the good that may thus be done to others, but also for the spiritual profit sure to come to your own souls. The work as we view it is one – the Lord's, and hence yours and ours, in proportion as we are the Lord's and are collaborating with him. TOWER subscribers now number 19,000; let us see what, under the Lord's blessing, we can make it by this time next year. In our last issue you saw the circulation of tracts and DAWNS for the past year; let us see what we each can do to increase those large figures for the year now commencing. The way to accomplish large results is not to hope that some one else may do and bear and get a blessing in this service; but for each to resolve to do what he can. Ask yourself, – What more can *I* do to increase the circulation of the WATCH TOWER and the DAWNS? How many more DAWNS can *I* put into circulation than I did last year? How many more WATCH TOWER subscriptions can *I* influence than last year? Remember, however, that our desire for the list is that it shall represent *the interested*, whether free or paid subscriptions; – especially are we desirous of having the Lord's saints on this list.

Pray for reapers! And ask the Lord to help you more and more as one of them, to gather much fruit. But in all this labor for others let us not forget that our first duty is the cultivation of the graces of the Spirit in our own hearts. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life."

THE FINANCIAL STORM.

Whether the financial storm is over, or only begun, no man knows; but appearances seem to indicate a clearing financial outlook for 1904. In any event, care and conservatism, "moderation," is the proper course for the Lord's people to pursue. Seek first (i.e., chiefly) the Kingdom of God (to be joint heirs in it with our Lord), and seek its righteousness, – the righteousness it will uphold; and so far as possible get out of debt and keep out of it.

We still think, as a year ago, that the next few years will be very favorable ones for the propagation of the Truth. This may be by the continuation of "good times," permitting the purchase of DAWNS by all classes: or it may be by a curtailment of prosperity which may give some the time for thought and study as well as the inclination now lacking.

THE WORLD'S OUTLOOK.

There are strong indications of war between Russia and Japan, and there would be no knowing where the matter would end if once begun. Alliances might involve other nations. We look for a great war in which the whole civilized world will be involved (Joel 3:10), but know not if the time for it is very near. Our confidence is that the Lord is at the helm of national affairs in a special sense now, and that all things permitted will work favorably to the establishment of the Kingdom for which we long and pray.

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