

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

### **RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF THE WAR.**

THE SUCCESS of Japan bids fair to make of her a "*Christian Nation*" – for are not the successful fighting nations Christian nations? And are not the unsuccessful fighters the barbarians? As a matter of fact the heathen masses of the Japanese are tractable and obedient to their rulers, economical and industrious and very poor. The leaders of that nation have adopted the civilization of Europe and America, but very little Christianity, except as it appeals to them as indispensable to foreign relations and the advancement of their own nation's interests. So far as we can ascertain, the majority of those rated as Christians are no more worthy the name than are the Evolutionists and Higher Critics of Europe and America, – they are Agnostics. The name Christian is a respectable one now-a-days, and many good fighters and brilliant thinkers prefer and adopt it as in contrast with Heathen.

We even hear that the "Anglo-Israelites" have about concluded that the Japanese must be part of what they are pleased to term the "ten lost tribes." Why? We presume because they are successful fighters! Alas, that the professed disciples of the Prince of Peace should measure the affairs of earth by such carnal rules!

The New York *Independent* contrasts the paganism of Japan and the Christianity of Russia thus: –

"Russia claims to be fighting the battle of Christendom against a pagan nation. It is not so easy to say which is the Christian nation. Japan allows liberty of conscience. There are members of Christian churches who command her battleships, who sit in her cabinet, who preside over her parliament. There is the full civilization that has grown out of Christianity: public schools, the best education, the

institutions of business and benevolence which are the product of Christianity. This has been given to Japan under the tutelage of Christian nations, frankly adopted from this and other countries. There is a constitutional government, elected rulers, courts and freedom.

"But what do we see in Russia? An absolutely autocratic government, with no local self-government, no congress, no constitution, no public-school system, no religious liberty, the Dukhobortsi, the Jews and the Lutheran Finns equally forced into exile, and the Armenians in the Caucasus driven to frenzy by the robbery of their churches and schools. Which is the Christian country?"

### **RUSSIA'S INTERNAL TROUBLES.**

Geneva, Switzerland, March 13. – Japan is not all that is worrying the Russian government at present. As a matter of fact, the opinion prevails in revolutionary circles here (and this is headquarters for the whole revolutionary movement in Europe) that St. Petersburg is in far greater dread of the work of the revolutionary party at home than of the legions and warships of the Mikado in the far east.

Geneva swarms with Russian spies, and the movements of known Nihilist leaders are watched as closely as possible; but despite all the efforts of the Czar's police, the presses are busily turning out revolutionary literature and most of it finds its way across the frontier and is distributed throughout Russia.

There is no doubt that plans are being made for a series of demonstrations against the government at the first favorable opportunity. A decisive defeat of the Russians in Manchuria would unquestionably be regarded as the opportunity.

One of the leaders of the Russian revolutionists here said recently:

"We don't propose now to make war on the Czar. Our efforts will be directed against the creatures who use him as a cloak for their reactionary designs. I believe that if the Czar were freed from the influence of such men as Pobiedonostzeff, Plehwe and those they represent, the nobles who think more of their privileges than of the good of the country, that his majesty would ultimately be willing to go as far in the direction of liberalizing Russia as is desirable at this time. We realize that there is a vast population in Russia, the [R3342 : page 100] descendants of former serfs, who are not ready for a full measure of self-government, but we believe the day for the autocratic government of Russia in the name of the Czar by an oligarchy of noble grafters is nearly passed.

"Russia's defeat by Japan would be the very best thing which could happen to the fatherland, and the revolutionary party will spare no means to encompass it. This is not a war for Russia. It is a war for the nobility, and the defeat of the nobility means that the people will come to their own. That there will be 'removals' of high officials when the time comes is altogether probable.

"All reforms in a country like Russia must be accomplished by agitation, and the dagger and bomb properly applied are potent agitators. Even the most radical revolutionary, however, will not move against the Czar. His danger lies not with the Nihilists, but with the oligarchs whose power is threatened. His liberal ideas and predilection for peace may cost him his life, but if he is slain it will be by the men who have dragged Russia into this predicament.

"That the Nihilists will be blamed in case the Czar is assassinated is altogether probable, but you may say that those who wish to see Russia enter a new era of greatness under a constitutional government look upon the present Czar as more likely to bring this

about than any man living, and would regard his death as a national calamity."

\*

\*

\*

It is well for those who are followers of him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life to avoid extreme views and positive assertions respecting the Russo-Japanese war. The new King, Immanuel, has taken the helm of earth's affairs – Michael has assumed command (Dan. 12:1) and matters will no longer be allowed to "drift." The outcome will be favorable to the preparation for and the establishment of the Kingdom of the Lord under the whole heavens, however disappointing the intermediate steps may be to those with whom "the secret of the Lord" is not. Let us not forget that the Lord is preparing for "his act, his strange act," utterly incomprehensible to those not acquainted with his "secret," revealed through his Word only to his "little flock":

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

**page 100**

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan his work in vain;  
God is his own interpreter,  
His Word will yet be plain.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds men so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
With blessings for the 'dead'."

## **CRIME THREATENS NATIONAL LIFE.**

In an address on "Suggestion and Crime," delivered before the members of the Patria Club last evening, President Henry Hopkins of Williams College declared that the prevalence of crime in this country was greater at the present time than ever before, and that the very foundations of the national life are seriously threatened. He said: –

"The heart of the American people is sound and its head is level. Our business interests still rest upon a basis of honesty and honor. The sacredness and integrity of the family as the foundation of domestic, social and civil institutions are still our cherished faith. Reverence for law and a willingness to make any sacrifice to maintain the law continue to be national characteristics.

"Nevertheless the foundations of personal character and our national life are threatened. There are some very ugly features in the present situation. There is abounding evidence of an alarming increase in crime, of crime of every sort, but especially of the kind that undermines honesty, chastity and respect for law. Statistics of crime are for several reasons unreliable. Prof. Commons, ten years ago, said that crime would indicate degeneracy and danger of collapse. The blood of the body politic may become vitiated and the whole tone of public health lowered.

"We have been discussing and revising penal codes, improving our houses of correction, and correcting our prison discipline, and in the meantime crime has been multiplying. In philanthropic work we have been seeking to rescue the fallen rather than to prevent a man from falling. It is a thousand times better to stand in the way of his fall and ten thousand times more hopeful than to raise him broken, bruised and defiled after he is down.

"This is an era of scientific philanthropy, and under this head no more important work has been done than in the department of penology. Indeed the hopeful sign of our time is the number of trained minds which are carefully investigating our social problems. It is at last almost true that the watchword of modern reform is prevention, and it is beginning to be recognized that its true method is displacement versus repression.

"The causes of crime have only begun to be scientifically studied. These causes are of course complex and diverse – density of population, economic conditions, family circumstances, the character of the Police Department. For forty years crime has increased five times as fast as population. Whatever value we may place upon this estimate, the facts for the last ten years have been worse.

"Leaving out of consideration the ghastly growth in the number of murders and suicides, we are compelled to admit that there is a growing infidelity to financial trust in the business world, so that there is a visible loss of confidence of man in his fellow man. Defalcations continue and multiply in disheartening succession. The proportion of divorces to marriages is astonishing and sickening, not only in the newest States, but in the oldest Commonwealths. Disintegration, decadence, and often destruction of the family and lowering of the ideal of the home goes on unceasingly; and back of it all is a vast and swelling volume of dishonesty, unchastity and crime.

"But most startling and disheartening of all is the progress of the spirit of lawlessness in our towns and cities, where there have grown up crowds of idle hoodlums, where there is an increasing population who **[R3343 : page 101]** break out into reckless violence at times of strikes and lockouts...

"Lynch law as we have lately seen it is a defiance of all moral order, a denial of free civil government, a crime against the life of

the State itself. Considering society as an organism, the extensive prevalence of the luxury, artificiality and materialism of our life, the get-rich-quick craze, alcoholism, the drug habit, cigarette slavery, the social vice, and disease, all tending to weaken the brain tissue, to destroy moral fibre and to bring on not only neurosis, but insane or semi-insane neurosis."

– *New York Times*.

\*

\*

\*

We prefer now and again to quote expressions like the foregoing from men of national repute rather than make the same statements ourself. Were it our statement many would claim that we were pessimistic, – that we saw the world through spectacles colored by our understanding of the teachings of the Scriptures. But how well the facts do correspond to the predictions of the Bible respecting the characteristics of nominal Christendom of our day! The fulfilment is marked – remarkable:

"Men shall be lovers of their own selves, money-lovers, boasters, proud, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, trucebreakers, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." – 2 Tim. 3:2-5.

### **THE GOLD IN THE VATICAN.**

The gold contained in the medals, vessels, chains and other objects preserved in the Vatican would make more gold money than the whole of the present European circulation.

– *Pittsburg Dispatch*.

\*

\*

\*

If true, is not the Vatican, as well as the demonetizing of silver, responsible for much of the financial stringency? And may not this have an important bearing on the fate in store for Papacy? – Rev. 18:21.

### **FOR ORGANIC CHURCH UNION.**

Should the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists of Canada unite to form one Church? That was the subject of an informal conference of representative ministers and laymen of those churches held in this city (Toronto, Canada) yesterday. The answer to the question, according to the sentiment and resolution of the conference, was affirmative, and the question of organic union of these three denominations will in consequence be raised in a more formal way and with practical ends in view.

Dr. Carman explained that this conference was both informal and unofficial. He reviewed the history of the present movement, touching upon the efforts in the direction of union previously made, the action of the last General Conference of the Methodist Church at Winnipeg in approving with confidence and hope of an effort looking to the cooperation and organic union of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, and the action of both Presbyterians and Congregationalists along the same lines. Committees had been appointed to correspond and confer on the question of such union and to report to their respective Church courts. Yesterday's informal conference was merely introductory to the formal meeting of those denominational committees.

Dr. Carman further expressed his own personal sympathy with the movement and his confident belief that such a union is not only possible but necessary, if the pressing religious needs of Canada are to be met. He presented the attitude of the Methodist Church, and, despite the difficulties, urged wise, progressive, confident action.

Dr. Warden, convener of the Presbyterian Home Mission Committee, was even more hopeful of organic union than was Dr. Carman, and instanced the experiences of the union of the various branches of Presbyterianism and of Methodism in Canada in support of it.

Dr. Sutherland, Missionary Secretary of the Methodist Church, corroborated Dr. Warden's testimony as to the good effects of the action taken last year looking to cooperation in Western Canada, and indicated the necessity for union and marked the increasing conditions favorable to it.

Mr. O'Hara, President of the Congregational Union, was heart and soul in favor of such a union as would conserve the best in doctrine, polity and life in the three denominations, secure reasonable liberty for individual peculiarities and preferences, and guard against the waste of overlapping and competition.

Rev. J. W. Pedley saw in the movements of recent years the way being prepared for the larger Church unions. Theological controversies are of the past.

Said Chancellor Burwash: "It would be the fulfilment of my life-dream, the answer to my life-prayer, to see these three Churches one in organization as well as in spirit. And the barriers are breaking down. There is no insurmountable obstacle either in the theology or in the organization of the denominations.

Dr. Cleaver read a letter from Rev. Dr. Rose of Hamilton, in which he confessed himself to be an out and out unionist, and declared that the continued separate and competing existence of the three Churches named had ceased to be regrettable, and had become criminal. Dr. Cleaver expressed sympathy with those sentiments and urged action. He believed the people would become enthusiastic if the ministers were in earnest and would lead the way.

The conference passed a resolution favorable to the calling of the several denominational committees by their respective conveners, after which a joint meeting for the more formal discussion of the questions involved will probably be held and such steps be taken as further conference may warrant. Dr. Carman, Dr. Warden and Mr. O'Hara were appointed a committee to arrange for any further conference meetings.

– *Toronto Globe.*

### **PRESBYTERIANS PROPOSE UNION.**

St. Louis, Feb. 19. – After three days' conferences the Committee on Church Cooperation and Union of the Presbyterian churches of the United States and the Committee on Fraternity and Union of the Cumberland [R3344 : page 102] Presbyterian Church unanimously adopted an agreement as a basis of the union of the two churches. It is in the shape of a report to the general assemblies, and will have to be ratified by both before it becomes operative. Both general assemblies meet May 19, the Presbyterian branch at Buffalo, and the Cumberland branch at Dallas, Tex.

This action of these committees will make the Presbyterian church national in character with a membership of 1,250,000.

=====