

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

POSSIBILITIES OF A EUROPEAN WAR.

NEWSPAPERS and magazines are discussing the possibility of the Russo-Japan war eventuating in a world-wide war. It is generally conceded that it would be the part of wisdom for Russia to back down and sue for peace proposals, but equally certain that the pride of that great nation will hinder such a course. If, therefore, the land fighting should go against Russia it is surmised by many that her diplomacy would manage to bring on a general war, in which her own defeat by little Japan would be measurably lost sight of in the glare of still more momentous conflicts. Matters have this appearance, though they may not reach such a culmination very soon.

Meantime the great nations are preparing for emergencies – especially Great Britain, France and Germany. Naval warfare is steadily undergoing a radical change: the prospect is that the great battleships will soon be of little value under the new conditions. The new models of fighting craft are the auto-boats and the submergible-boats. The latter can be sunk completely under water – 100 feet if desired – in six seconds, and can thus travel toward their opponents unobserved, and can discharge torpedoes at close range and be gone. England has about twenty of these boats nearly completed and a large number ordered. France has more, and by the close of this year she will have at least thirty. These boats carry gasoline for fuel – enough for a 400-mile journey, and require but small crews. They would, of course, operate near a harbor or in conjunction with larger vessels. The auto-boat can be operated by one intrepid man, can travel 20 miles an hour and in the dark could creep close to a great ship and attack her with a torpedo. A large, swift ocean liner could carry twenty or thirty of these little auto-boats and make great havoc – in the night or in a fog.

Experts are speculating on the possibilities of these two new craft and conclude that no port would be secure against them – that four million dollar battle ships with hundreds of men aboard could be sunk almost instantly and without a sight of their enemy. Others still believe that air-motors will soon come into prominence and be used in dropping explosives upon ships and cities and armies.

We are to expect great things – shortly. The passions as well as the ingenuity of men will ere long wreck present civilization according to the Scriptures. We recall our Lord's prophecy of the days now near at hand, "Except those days were shortened there should no flesh be saved." But, for the elect's sake, they shall be shortened; – the "elect," Head and body, will assume the Kingdom control at the right time to stay the awful anarchy which will follow the great war.

The prospects for the immediate future are conceded on all sides to be more favorable for peace, because of the recent amicable settlement by Great Britain and France of differences between them which have long been a source of friction. The large navies of these two nations far outweigh all the combined navy power of the world.

THE ESSENTIAL UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS.

Rev. R. Heber Newton, D.D., of New York City (Episcopalian), in a recent article in *The North American Review*, proves to his own satisfaction, and doubtless to the satisfaction of many of his readers, that all the religions of the world are really one; – that they differ merely in proportion to their degrees of *evolution*. This is the view of "higher critics" and [R3365 : page 148] Evolutionists the world over. It ignores and laughs to scorn the Bible teaching of Adam, Eve and the fall (Rom. 5:12 and 1:21-28). It has no place for Jesus except as a great teacher like unto Confucius, Moses, Darwin, Spencer, and others. His work as *Redeemer* – as the sacrifice for man's sins, by which alone reconciliation to God was possible – it entirely discredits, but ignores because *a few* "good people" still so believe.

Doctor Newton likens the religion of the world to a great tree with many branches and sub-branches. Buddhism is a branch, Brahminism is another, Confucianism is another, Mohammedanism is another, Christianity is another – its various shoots and smaller branches representing the various sects and denominations of Catholicism and Protestantism.

As usual, the wisdom of this world misses the mark it thinks it hits. It is Devildom that the Doctor sees as a tree with these many branches. In every branch it has a "form of godliness" to deceive men – to satisfy the craving originally a part of man's nature when he was in the image of God – a craving which since persists notwithstanding the fall, though now through the blinding influences of Satan deteriorated into superstition and formality. Let us ask the Apostle Paul's inspired judgment on the subject. He tells us respecting these heathen worshipers that they worship devils and not God. See his testimony in I Cor. 10:20,21; I Tim. 4:1.

When the Apostle would use a tree to illustrate the Church, he pictured a very different tree and very different branches. This inspired account is found in Rom. 11. There his olive-tree represents not all nations, but the one nation of Israel, each Jew a branch, drawing strength and vitality from the *root*, namely the oath-bound covenant made with Abraham and his seed. The Apostle shows plainly that no other tree is recognized in the divine plan, and tells us that when the Jews rejected Jesus all the rejectors were broken off from the relationship the tree represented, and that only believers in Jesus were privileged to be engrafted to take the places of the broken-off branches, as members of the spiritual seed of Abraham. – Gal. 3:29.

Our position as Gentiles he distinctly pictures as "children of wrath even as others" – strangers and aliens and foreigners – without God and having no hope in the world. (Eph. 2:3,19,12.) How different the view of this modern Divinity Doctor from that of the great Apostle

to the Gentiles! Mark the agreement of the Apostle John's testimony. He says of the Christian believers and all the world outside, – "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Wicked One." (I John 5:19.) This reminds us of our Lord's words to some of the nominal Israelites: "Ye are of your Father the devil." (John 8:44.) Doctor Newton says: –

"Religion develops the same great *institutions* in different lands and ages which the varying religions of man vary indefinitely.

"The Church, spelled with a capital C, was an institution of Chaldea, India and Egypt, millenniums ago, as it is of Italy and England and America today. The Buddhist felt toward his 'order' much as the Romanist feels toward his church. A sacred ministry, a class of men set apart for the divine offices of religion, would have been found of old in Babylon and Thebes, as it is found now in Rome and London. The pagan temple was the Christian basilica and cathedral, baptized with another name. The altar [R3366 : page 148] stood in the sacred spot of the heathen temple, as it stands in the holy place of the Christian minister. Monasticism developed in the East long before it arose in the West. Monks and nuns and hermits would have been found along the Nile valley ages before Christendom poured its host of sad souled ascetics up the sacred river, peopling the hills for thousands of miles. Good Father Huc was utterly astonished to find in the Far East tonsured priests bowing before splendid altars, while acolytes swung the fragrant censers by their side. His *naif* explanation was, that the devil had counterfeited in advance the mysteries of true religion, in order that the elect might be deceived into perdition. A less heroic solution of the problem finds in these resemblances hints of the oneness of religion, generating the same sacred institutions among different religions."

"Good Father Huc," in recognizing the similarity between the Catholic and the heathen ceremonies, was not astray in attributing the heathen ceremonies to Satan's instigation. He should have gone

farther and have realized that he and his associates had likewise fallen into the "snares" and "wiles" of the adversary.

Doctor Newton proceeds to prove that all religions are shown to be from one source because related *in worship*. We agree that all world-religions are of one spirit – the spirit of "the prince of this world." But the true Church, "whose names are written in heaven," is in all but a "little flock," – not of the world, but separate from it. "I have chosen you out of the world." Of the world's worships the Doctor says:

"The sacred symbolisms through which art ministers to worship meet us in the temples of paganism as in the churches of Christendom. The circle, the triangle, and the trefoil were graven by pagan chisels on the walls of the sacred buildings reared by religions which thought of themselves only as aliens and foes one to the other, for the unity of God, signed by the circle, and the triunity, the oneness in variety, of God, signed by the triangle and the trefoil, were truths known to no one religion alone, shared by all great religions in the same stage of evolution."

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The *beliefs* of men, though seemingly wide apart, Dr. Newton finds to be substantially one:

"All great religions pass through one general course of evolution. In the same stages of development, all alike will bring forth, as the same institutions and worships, so also the same beliefs. Arrange these different religions synchronously, in respect to their evolution, and the same ideas will be found in all, more or less modified. As they grow, they grow together; over all differences of environment and heredity, the forces of the common life of man asserting the oneness which exists under black skins and yellow, red skins and white. In their higher reaches they strain toward each other. The flowering of all beliefs is in one faith – all religions seeding down one religion. So,

beneath the variant and discordant beliefs of the present the germs of the future *universal religion* can even now be traced.

Coming to the contrast of the Christian's life with the life of the heathen, Doctor Newton says:

"Goodness knows no native soil. Virtue is at home in every land. The Ten Commandments form the law of Egypt and of Persia as of Christendom. The Golden Rule proves the rule of Hindu and Chinaman, as the Christian. It waited not for Jesus to reveal it. The spirit of the Christ had already revealed it through Jewish Hillel and Chinese Confucius, and great spirits of well nigh every land. The Beatitudes exigently call upon the Buddhist as upon the Christian, '*Sursum corda.*' Saints are of blood kin the world over. There is nothing alien to the truly devout Christian in the devoutness of the Hindu Guru, or of the yellow-robed saint of Japan or of the mystic worshiper among the Iranian Mountains. When the soul of man fronts the infinite and eternal Spirit, beneath the bo-tree of India or amid the rugged fastnesses of Tibet or in the cloisters of the Christian abbey, it is one and the same God who is seen. Wherever we overhear the communings of a soul with God, we hear in our own tongue. In the presence of the man of the spirit, be his name what it may, we know that he is of our family and household of God."

Could evidence be more clear than the foregoing to prove that the Doctor does not know what constitutes a Christian – that he does not know that, according to Christianity as taught in the Bible, acceptance of God rests not upon perfection of life, for "there is none righteous, no not one"? (Rom. 3:10.) Its teaching is not, either, that none are justified by *doing the best they can*, but that none are justified except by faith in the Son of God – "faith in his blood" – our ransom-sacrifice. If these, *justified by their faith*, do the best they can, such obediences and efforts are acceptable to God *as though* they were *perfect*. – Phil. 3:9; Rom. 4:7,8; 8:4.

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