

**VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.  
ARGUMENTS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.**

RECENTLY at a Protestant Ministers' Meeting in the Y.M.C.A. building, St. Louis, Mo., the following argument was presented by Rev. Gilbert Dobbs, of the Coliseum Place Baptist Church: –

"The churches of Jesus Christ are confronted by a gigantic problem. Nineteen centuries have passed since our Lord came in the flesh, and taught and wrought and died; nineteen centuries since he arose from the dead and said, 'Go, disciple all nations,' and yet the nations are still stumbling on the dark mountains. Only the apex of the great pyramid of humanity has thus far been brightened and transformed by the Gospel light, a diamond point flashing in the sun. But what about the great pyramidal base, the black carbon of ignorance and superstition and sin and all the marks of a lost and benighted race?

"Nineteen centuries, and only 390,000,000 nominal Christians in all the world, and only 116,000,000 of these belonging to all Protestant denominations. That leaves more than one billion souls absolutely destitute of the bread of life. What a sad commentary on the sloth and strife of Christendom! This is the problem: How shall the great black pyramid be transformed by light? What concentrated energy and fervency must be displayed before the black can be burned out, and the huge mass become, as it were, a colossal kohinoor of divine splendor and glory?

"You remember the part of that remarkable prayer of Jesus recorded by the Evangelist John, where he prays: 'That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me,' and again he repeats it, 'that the world may believe that thou hast sent me and

hast loved them as thou hast loved me.' The great utilitarian purpose of Christian unity is, therefore, that the world may believe....

"We must get closer together. We must cease looking at our denominational difficulties through the magnifying microscope of bigotry and prejudice, and at our essential agreement through the inverted telescope of indifference and selfishness. Of course Christian unity does not mean uniformity. The latter is perhaps not desirable; and at present it is certainly not feasible. It is not one form that we need, but one spirit, a spirit of brotherly kindness and a broad Christian charity. All arbitrary and coercive methods of attaining uniform religious observances are anti-Christian. God's children are freemen, and their service must be rational and voluntary. There is nothing more uniform than penitentiary life. The same shaven face, the same cropped pates, the same stripes, the same dull, slavish tasks. It is not the unity of the prison that we covet, but the unity of the family, where each preserves his individuality, and yet where all dwell together in love, sharing a common life and hope and purpose.

"And just as there cannot be any uniform ritual, so there cannot reasonably be any uniform creed. Of course, we all admit that God's Word is our all-sufficient guide in matters of faith and practice, an infallible and inerrant standard by which we must be led; but as each man must interpret that Word as his mind and conscience shall direct, we cannot expect that all will see alike. The domain of God's truth is so wide, and the various paths of interpretation are so numerous and intricate, and the human understanding is such a complex matter, that all of us may not be expected to traverse the same paths. Perhaps God has so ordained it that every part of his divine truth shall have due emphasis by raising up different schools of interpreters.

"You know the parable of the blind men and the elephant. In describing the elephant one felt his leg and said, 'He is like a tree.' Another felt his trunk and said: 'He is like a huge snake.' Another his ear: 'He is like a blanket.' And still another said: 'He is like a rope,' as

he felt his tail. They were all right and all wrong. The part is never equal to the whole. Let us not suppose that our distinctive views are of more importance than the sum total of accumulated knowledge which the whole body of Christian theology sets forth. I think, however, that an occasional ecumenical council for the purpose of discussing in a brotherly manner our doctrinal differences with a view of arriving at a clearer conception of the truth, and the bringing of the various [R3388 : page 196] denominations into a closer sympathy and affiliation, would have an admirable effect....

"The most inspiring utterance on the subject of Christian unity, aside from the beautiful prayer of our Savior, to which we have made reference, is from Paul. Writing to the saints at Ephesus, he says: 'I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'

"The argument is this: As the body of Christ is one, and all of God's people are members of that body, made members by the divine Spirit, whose sovereign call they have heard and obeyed; as they all have the selfsame hope of eternal life and the glad expectation of entering into the joys of their Lord, whom they love and serve in common; as they acknowledge but one Lord and master, Jesus Christ, and have exercised the same saving faith in him, and have been brought into his Church through baptism, the one symbol of their renewed nature; as there is but one God who rules over all, everywhere guiding and directing his people by his loving providence, and who has made his habitation in every renewed heart; then ought not all his people endeavor to recognize and preserve this spiritual unity, and live and labor together in peace?

"The Indians speak of friendship as a golden chain. So may all God's people be linked together in the closest ties of fraternal love, and by keeping the golden chain forever bright, we will the best be able to bring a captive world in loving servitude to the feet of our God and Savior."

– *Times-Democrat.*

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The above shows how easy it is to have "a form of godliness and deny the power thereof;" how easy it is to have a form of sound doctrine, but to misapply it!

Neither our Lord nor the Apostle Paul referred to a union of denominations. They preached an individual union with Christ, and a consequent relationship of all justified and consecrated believers to each other in the one Lord, one faith and one baptism.

This union already exists, except to the extent that denominational creed-fences and social usages separate the Lord's sheep. Wherever and whenever the Lord's sheep meet they may and do quickly identify themselves to each other, and the heart union and fellowship and joy in the Lord they experience cannot even be imitated by creedal bonds.

The union of the Church to which our Lord referred in his prayer, "That they all may be one," was this union of heart already and always experienced by the true members of the "one body," – and additionally he referred to the actual union of all such with himself by the resurrection "change" from flesh and blood to spirit being – to be with him and like him and to share his glory and power and great work for the world, which he mentions just following, viz.: "that the world [during the Millennium] may believe."

## THE JUDGMENTS OF THE LORD.

The Scriptures declare that "when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9), and the coming Millennial age is pointed out to us as the world's Judgment Day; and our Lord tells us that the dead world will be awakened from the death-sleep – "come forth" unto a resurrection [*anastasis*, an uplifting out of sin and death] by judgments. – John 5:28,29.

Now we have an illustration well authenticated by the Chicago journals, showing one kind of judgments which will prevail during the world's Judgment Day, as follows: –

Julian Renfro, 21 years old, while engaged with three chums at a game of cards, declared his unbelief in a God. He was a "higher critic" of the Ingersoll school and said: "Fellows, if God would demonstrate himself to me in some way – for instance, if he would strike me deaf and dumb, or blind – I might admit his existence." One of the young men was about to reply to the argument when he noticed Renfro turn pale. The next moment the skeptic threw his arms out before him as if warding off a blow, then he convulsively placed his hands before his face. An instant later he fell forward off his chair, and on to the floor. Since that time he has been unable to speak or hear. In writing he afterward expressed faith in the Lord and declares his intention to study the Scriptures, and if the Lord should grant a recovery he hopes yet to preach Christ.

When the time shall come that the Lord's *judgments* of rewards and punishments will be promptly meted out, and in no uncertain manner, the whole world will be speedily converted and, like this young man, be glad to preach the One once blasphemed. But we must wait for this to become general until the Kingdom class shall be completed and the general "Judgment day" or age fully inaugurated.

## THE EFFECT OF THE EASTERN WAR.

The London *Spectator*, commenting on the recent successes of Japan, in the battle on the Yalu river, says: –

"It is the moral effect upon the world at large which is, and will be, so tremendous as to modify, possibly for all time, the relation of Europe to Asia. Until that battle had been fought the white race, though deeply impressed with the capacity of the Japanese and the devoted courage of Japanese sailors, was still unconvinced that a Japanese army could rival or defeat a European force of anything like adequate dimensions. The pride of the white continent had for three centuries [R3389 : page 197] seemed to be justified by history, and it created, consciously or unconsciously, a mass of belief which was perhaps the cause of many of its victories, and certainly of much of its daring. The struggle on the Yalu provides precisely the concrete evidence needed to dissipate this confidence. A Japanese army has crossed a mighty river in the teeth of European defenders, and then has marched upon those Europeans entrenched in a splendid hilly position; has driven them out by the close fighting which we still call fighting with the bayonet; has overwhelmed the European fire by the superior weight of cannon and shells made in Japan itself; has captured whole batteries of European guns; has driven European artillerymen in what seems to have been headlong rout: and – most notable fact of all – has taken hundreds of European prisoners, who have surrendered, not by a capitulation, but while fighting on the field. In other words, an Asiatic Power has arisen which, besides defeating a European war-fleet, is proving itself able to use three great armies of invasion, each sixty thousand strong, with the careful provision, the strategic skill, and the clenching courage of armies directed by the great masters of European warfare."

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