

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

BISHOP POTTER AND THE SALOON.

BISHOP POTTER, of the Episcopal Diocese of New York, has created quite a commotion in all circles by giving his sanction to a newly-opened "tavern" in New York City. The saloon and cafe are described as having fine appointments: in one end is a soda fountain at which beer is sold for the accommodation especially of ladies, who are not admitted to the saloon proper, at the bar of which liquors of all kinds are dispensed with free lunch at noon. Of the enterprise, the *New York Sun*, after recounting Bishop Potter's address and his leading in the singing of the doxology to the tune of "Old Hundred," says: "The idea of the tavern originated in the mind of Joseph Johnson, Jr., the Great Oak of the Order of Acorns. Mr. Johnson has always believed that rum is a curse, but he holds that the evils of intemperance must be combated by practical men and not theorists. If there must be saloons he wants them to be as ethical as possible. So he organized the Subway Tavern Company with a capital of \$10,000 – subscribed by prominent men whose names are given. The managers of the company have decided that not more than five per cent. shall be paid as dividends on the stock, whatever the profits may be; the surplus is to be used in starting other similar taverns."

We have no doubt that the gentlemen connected with this innovation have benevolent intentions: Their thought evidently is to fight fire with fire; to fight the doggerel saloon with a better one, to furnish purer liquors and better surroundings. We believe that they are making a great mistake. Nevertheless, the affair shows the extremity to which well-intentioned people are driven by present conditions, that the Apostle calls "the present distress." How evident to the instructed Christian that the one thing needful is the establishment of the Kingdom of God, for which we pray, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

Nothing short of this heavenly power can cope with the present downward tendencies that afflict the whole human family, the "groaning creation."

These gentlemen in New York City are copying a plan adopted a few years ago in Great Britain by some of the Episcopal clergy there. These established taverns where liquors of all kinds were obtainable, as well as "soft drinks," the latter being given the preference in that the bartender is paid a commission on the soft drinks, making nothing on the intoxicating liquors. The effect has been good in Great Britain, it is claimed. Nevertheless we have no such expectations in respect to the introduction of this system into this country. Conditions here are totally different. Here the majority are opposed to liquor drinking, and the business and all things associated with it are more or less tabooed, and thus many are protected from the degrading influences. We fear that the tendency will be to break down this barrier and to make drinking more general and more fashionable, and thus to increase the evil effects of this most terribly degrading practice.

Bishop Potter's course has brought upon him very severe criticism from many quarters: yet it will make him popular with a certain very respectable class. The chief difficulty seems to lie in the fact that the *true* Church is not understood and its rules do not fit when applied to the world and its wisdom. Recognizing *the Church* as the "little flock" of "saints" fully consecrated to the Lord, we do not suppose for one moment that Bishop Potter would claim to be a member of it nor to be bound by its precepts and ideals. But many others, who take the same unsanctified stand, and who patronize saloons of the [R3418 : page 260] worst class, are chiding the Bishop, rebuking him, because they think of him as one of the "saints," and perceive that his course is not up to the ideals of the New Testament for such.

The sooner the world realizes the truth on this subject the better it will be for all concerned: that fully ninety-nine per cent. of the nominal Church (preachers included) are merely well-intentioned worldlings, who have never consecrated their wills, never been begotten of the Spirit and have not, therefore, "the mind [Spirit] of Christ."

DANGER FROM "HIGHER CRITICISM."

Dr. David J. Burrell, pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church, Fifth avenue, New York, says: –

"It is indeed true that there is sore danger from this critical movement, but it is not the Bible that stands so much in danger – it can take care of itself – as it is the dictionary that is assailed.

"Words that have a specific and clear meaning to us, used by the exponents of the critical propaganda, have a different meaning entirely. It is one of the calamitous consequences of this criticism. It means a complete overturning of definitions as we understand them. And to coin a spurious word is worse than to issue a spurious coin.

"Men preach from the pulpit and talk with you and me about the inspiration. Their terms to them have not the dictionary definition which they know you put on them. I won't mince words, for I know friends of mine who do this. It's not honest. We are fighting for Webster's and Worcester's dictionaries, just as we are fighting for God Almighty in this contest.

"There are men preaching the gospel of Christ who do not know what the little word "is" means, using it instead in the most *outré* and outlandish way. I know a man who will say 'The Bible is the Word of God,' yet he doesn't mean what people think him to mean. 'Is' to him means 'is not.'

"In days of old, when the gods of the Pantheon had lost their powers, the priests laughed to themselves before the altar as they went through the ceremonies. That is an effect, too, on the Christian ministry of the higher criticism.

"I make no charge against any man, and I say it with a deal of charity and lamentation, but some men in some pulpits are smiling at the words they have to preach.

"I walked with a man from a church one day – he being a friend of mine, though he is one of the critical ones – at the close of a sermon he had preached on the incarnation. He had hardly gone a hundred steps from his pulpit when he turned to me and said [R3419 : page 260] with a smile: "It isn't of any great difference to me whether Christ was the son of Joseph or was conceived by the holy Spirit.' The fine edge of honesty was worn off there, as it is elsewhere. But the mass of people in the pews, notwithstanding the teachings they hear, are honest to the Word of God.

"People won't go to church to hear hypotheses. There is more good in a Sunday newspaper than there is in a man who preaches the vagaries of the 'higher criticism from the pulpit.'"

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True, but not strongly enough stated. The harm done by the "higher critics" exceeds all other sources of harm, including infidel publications and dime novels, because it breaks down all true faith and confidence toward God and sets at nought "the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved." It makes the "blood of the covenant a common thing." – Heb. 10:29.

LEAGUING AGAINST "HIGHER CRITICISM."

"The American Bible League" held its first convention lately in New York City. It has our best wishes, but we fear it will find far less

sympathy and support amongst ministers and laymen than it should naturally expect. The fact is that the entire body of Christendom has been thoroughly inoculated with this poisonous infidelity of the refined Sadduceeic sort. For years the colleges have been turning the stream at its head waters. Today the studies and school-literature of the public high schools are completely under this same influence. We have no thought, therefore, that the American Bible League will meet with any degree of success. We do, however, hope that its course may have the effect of arousing some true believers and separating them from nominalism and thus preparing them to search for and to find "the old paths" – the old theology – "the faith once delivered to the saints."

Unless we greatly err the "League" will find even among its own members some who are half poisoned on this subject by evolutionary ideas. We quote extracts from several of the speakers and from commentaries on the first session. Mr. William Phillips Hall, the president of the "League," said: –

"That the Bible is now being subjected to a scholastic assault of unparalleled danger; that the practical consequences of this assault are in evidence in the demoralization of conduct and education, and in evil influences on the ministry and missions; that the assault is based upon groundless claims of a false scholarship, and that the methods proposed by the league will fully meet the imperative needs of the situation and lead to a recovery of faith in the Bible as the Word of God and to the enthronement of our Lord Jesus Christ in the hearts of men.

"Fascinated by a strange scholarship, multitudes among the leaders in the Christian ministry and educational work have turned aside in large part from the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints, to worship at the shrine of a destructive criticism that destroys individual faith in the divine origin, integrity, inspiration and authority of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and that

sooner or later, logically, and inevitably, leads to the denial of [R3419 : page 261] the incarnation, omniscience, atonement and supreme authority of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Dr. Francis L. Patton, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, said, respecting the views of "higher critics:" –

"To them there was no primeval innocence, no fall, no redemption, no incarnation. They hold these things not to be doctrines, but pretty teachings, making up what is really nothing more than a metaphysic philosophy. Ask them straightforward questions and they begin to dodge the issue. Ask them, 'Did Jesus Christ have a preexistence? Did he rise from the dead? Was he ever really dead? Was he God of very God?' They begin to shift. They begin right away to talk sentimentalism and say, 'We want the moralities.'

"'All right, we'll talk morals;' but they don't. They dodge them, too.

"It all comes around to the question of judgment of fact and value. If you can discard the former and retain the latter, what is the good of Christianity? You can then preach just as good a sermon from Aesop's fables as from Holy Scripture."

Dr. Daniel Gregory, General Secretary of the League, is reported to have said: –

"The league believes this to be one of the most serious crises in the history of Christian faith, and has taken up its task with a twofold object: it takes its stand for the Bible and the old view, and yet with open vision for any new light, and it challenges these claims of radical criticism, the baselessness of which it purposes to show. We have no fault to find with real criticism. We do not challenge the new views because they are scientific, but because they are unscientific.

"The second object of this league is to help the people to see the Bible as it is and to find out what is in it."

The New York *Sun* editorially notes that the League describes the present as a "*crisis*" in the history of Christianity. The *Sun* agrees that the term "*crisis*" is none too strong and adds: –

"If this subversive and destructive criticism was confined to avowed opponents of religion and the Church, as it was formerly, it might not be an enemy dangerous enough to require the formation of a Christian league against it; but now it has affected profoundly the thought and radically changed the view of a large part of Christendom itself. It has entered into theological seminaries to a very great extent, and is influencing the sentiment and modifying the points of view in many pulpits of even the most nominally orthodox churches."

Most of the prominent journals that comment at all treat the League respectfully, but clearly imply their "higher critic" predilections, and imply that the most the League will do will be to sow discord and rancor and controversy. Thus the "wise" always deprecate any battle with Satan.

POLITICS IN RELIGION.

"People with old-fashioned ideas concerning the relations between the churches and the Deity, whose cause they are presumed to set forth here on earth, are often somewhat dismayed at the very practical way in which the machinery of the churches work. The present quadrennial conference of the Methodist Church at Los Angeles has been styled by some members of the faith the biggest political event of the year of presidential nominations.

"Questions of creed, of the form of Church government and the selection of Church officials are settled in all Church assemblages in a highly practical and thoroughly human manner. Church politics differs from the ordinary kind most in subject matter.

"The methods are the same, very largely because in not a few instances they are employed by the same kind of men, but most of all doubtless because they represent the working out of divine purpose in other fields. In the Presbyterian and Episcopalian and other general religious gatherings, the men whose influence counts for most are not infrequently those who stand high in political and business circles.

"It shocks people who believe that the churches are exclusively divinely guided to see so little difference in ecclesiastical strategy from those which prevail in more worldly gatherings. Yet there should be no dismay or surprise even. For while we all know that the churches are under divine guidance we are wholly wrong in supposing that other of the vast concerns of men are not equally under the same influence and direction.

"Creeds and churches are all man-made out of material furnished him by his Maker, but expressions of man's recognition of his obligations and opportunities lies in the spiritual plane. Though inspired by the Creator since they are not universal, they are all manifestly imperfect, and so doubtless because transmitted through erring man. Creed and Church discipline and law have no more foundation of authority or guarantee of stability than do political platform declarations. They are all always subject to revision as men progress in religious understanding and to meet new contingencies of moral perversion as they arise.

– *Toledo Sunday Times-Bee.*

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This editor sees only a part of what he points out. God has given his Church explicit directions, but the plans, schemes and traditions of men ignore the Word, the counsel of God, and hence the similarity of political manipulations.

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