

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

THE STORY OF ADAM AND EVE.

PROF. L. T. TOWNSEND of Boston University, discussing the credibility of the account of man's creation given in Genesis, says: –

"It is possible and perhaps probable that the world is to witness shortly among nominally Christian people one of the most resolutely contested intellectual conflicts between belief and unbelief that has been known since the dawn of the Christian era."

He expresses the conviction that a return to faith in the Bible's records will be advantageous to the world at large as well as to Christianity, and declares that scientists have been obliged to make so many changes of late that it should make them more modest. His words are: –

"The readjustments of astronomical and geological theories during the last quarter of a century, which in every instance have been making for, rather than against, the beliefs of the primitive Christian Church, and the remarkable discoveries in archaeology which are affording the strongest possible defense for the credibility of the Bible, together with the fact that many of the ablest scholars are taking issue with much that is called higher criticism, ought to suggest that modesty rather than egotism and dogmatism is peculiarly becoming in those who are posing as leaders of modern thought and reformers in the theological world.

"It can no longer be rationally questioned that the sciences of anatomy, of geology, of archaeology, of philology, of ethics and of theology unite in demolishing all theories of naturalism as to the character and condition of the earliest inhabitant of the earth of whom there is any record.

"And the evolutionary hypothesis that the human race began in a savage state and slowly worked up to its present condition, consuming in this development a hundred thousand years, more or fewer, is, in the presence of established facts, an assumption as groundless as anything one can imagine. On the other hand, a sudden emergence from the savage state to one represented by the ancient civilizations of Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and that of many other countries is not an emergence of which history shows any evidence. Hence the theory that the human family began high up in civilized and social life, but afterward suffered a decadence, has probabilities in its favor that amount well-nigh to an absolute certainty.

"What may be insisted upon, therefore, is this: There is no evidence of any kind that Adam, who throughout the Bible is spoken of as an authentic person, was not the first man. There is no evidence that he did not have a perfect body and fully endowed intellect; there is no evidence that he could not give appropriate names to the animals brought before him; there is no evidence that his son Cain did not build a city; there is no evidence that his grandson Jubal did not handle the harp and organ, and there is no evidence that Jubal's brother, Tubal-Cain, and grandson of Adam, was not a worker in brass and iron.

"But there is no need of stating these matters in negative terms, for all discoveries in the last twenty-five years or more are in harmony with the Bible record that the first beings on earth that wore the human form had a body just as perfect, and a brain or an intellect just as capable of working, and a language just as complete in expressing thought, as those of any man now living. These are not philosophical nor theological speculations, but conclusions based upon established facts and reached by approved scientific methods."

FORECASTING THE FINANCIAL FUTURE.

At the last session of the Pennsylvania Bankers' Association, one of their number addressing the body expressed himself as convinced that prosperity may be expected, and said in conclusion: –

"A friend of mine has it [the financial fluctuations] all figured out on the cycle plan – he starts with the panic of 1819. I will not burden you with it all, but merely state that, according to his figuring, we will have good times from now until 1908, when prices will have reached their height and start downward until 1911, when we will have the greatest panic in our history. I quote him as follows:

"In the past, stocks have gone up and down with regularity of the ebb flow of the tide. Some stocks, even with [R3506 : page 52] the tide going out, dart higher than others, and tend to confuse the would-be buyer as to the general tendency. So with the incoming tide, some stocks tend to keep back, though the general tendency is higher, always higher."

* * *

We have seen the financial cycles outlined, and consider it remarkable. We mention it as an outside corroboration of about what we are expecting inferentially from the prophetic testimony, viz., that October, 1914, will date the cataclysm of Anarchy in a world-wide sweep, which implies that a panic, the greatest ever known, would occur somewhere about 1911 and lead up to the "time of trouble, such as was not since there was a nation."

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF ROME'S TEACHINGS.

The latest statement we have seen of the teachings of Roman Catholicism respecting Purgatory, Indulgences, etc., is the following:

—

"A *plenary indulgence* is granted to the penitent sinner upon confession and going to holy communion. It is granted to lay Catholics who take part in the Congress, go to confession, receive communion, and on any day during the Congress visit a church, praying before the blessed sacrament for the intentions of the Pope.

"A *partial indulgence* of seven years and seven quarantines – that is, the reduction of seven years and seven times for sin committed here – is granted to those of the Church in the city and ecclesiastical province of New York who will unite themselves with the Congress in spirit and be interested in its proceedings, and visit a church on any day during the Congress, praying before the blessed sacrament according to the intentions mentioned above.

"A *partial indulgence* of 300 days' remission from punishment for sins in eternity is granted to those who assist at the Congress, as well as to all the faithful in the province who at least are contrite of heart and visit a church on any day of the Congress and pray. All these remissions of punishment for sin may be gained for the benefit of any friend or relative suffering punishment in purgatory. The duration of the suffering of the latter is thereby lessened and their advent into heaven expedited.

"None of these remissions from punishment in eternity can be obtained for unconfessed sin.

"The Church makes a distinction between the forgiveness of sin and its punishment.

"Confession and communion bring forgiveness, but sins must sometimes be atoned for in eternity, even after sacramental absolution, the remission of this punishment being valid in the court of conscience and before God, and being made by an application of the treasure of the Church on the part of a lawful superior."

ALL GO TO PURGATORY.

"Purgatory is a middle state between heaven and hell. Few, if any, are so perfect at death as to deserve immediate admission to a state of bliss in Heaven, and the Church has taught from the beginning that souls which are not pure enough for heaven nor evil enough for hell are made to suffer for a time in purgatory.

"The pains of purgatorial punishment may be as awful as those of hell, but with this difference, that the torments of the one are everlasting while the purgatorial sufferings endure only for a limited time.

"Now, as Christ in making St. Peter the head of his Church gave him the keys of heaven and of hell, the Popes, Peter's successors, have the power to absolve from sin, and consequently from much of the purgatorial punishment. And it is this that is meant by indulgences. But it does not, by any means, imply that the Pope has the power or authority to remit the punishments of hell."

* * *

Poor creatures! What a miserable prospect they look forward to when they think of death coming upon their friends or themselves. No wonder the majority of the laity have such unhappy faces. How relieved they will be when, in the resurrection morning, they awake and find that their fears were a nightmare of Satan's origination to keep them from knowing and loving the true God, whose name is Love, and whose merciful provision is that all redeemed by the precious blood of Christ shall yet come to a clear knowledge of his grace and to an opportunity for restitution to all that was lost – including lasting life in divine favor.

It may sound strange at first, but it is true, that Protestants have been blessed in some respects by adding to this error – by making the future yet more awful – by determining and teaching that there is no purgatory, no prospect of peace or joy, but only agony for all eternity, *for all not fit for heaven when they die*.

How is this more horrible doctrine less injurious, do you ask? Because it is so unreasonable that few believe it. Protestants well know that only saints are [R3507 : page 52] "fit for the Kingdom" (Luke 9:62) and it is to their credit as rational beings that they cannot imagine their unfit loved ones as having been consigned by a just God to everlasting tortures.

A STRANGE PREDICTION.

The following item is going the rounds of the secular press: –

"In 1849, according to the German newspapers, Frederick William, who was then King of Prussia, consulted a fortune teller, and here is the extraordinary prediction which she made to him: –

"'We are now in the year 1849,' she said, 'and if, beginning at the right, you place under each other in a vertical column the numerals which make up this number, 1849, under the number itself, you will find the year in which your kingdom will become a great empire. That year will be 1871. Now perform the same operation with 1871 and you will arrive at 1888, which is the date of the first Emperor's death. Finally treat 1888 in the same manner and you will obtain 1913, this being the year in which the empire will be overthrown and a republic proclaimed.'

"Here is the way in which she obtained the three notable years:

–

1849	1871	1888
1	1	1
8	8	8
4	7	8
9	1	8
----	----	----
1871	1888	1913

"Her predictions as regards two of the years have come true and superstitious persons are now wondering if 1913 will really prove quite as fatal a year for the German Empire as she has prophesied."

=====