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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN RUSSIA.

THE CZAR has commemorated Easter by an edict granting religious freedom to all the religions of his empire except the Jewish. The principal newspapers of the world seem to consider this one of the most momentous events in Russia's history. It is presumed to be granted with a view to the conciliation of the various classes affected.

The Greek Catholic Church is still the "orthodox," the State Church however, with advantages every way over all competitors. For some time all religions have been tolerated in Russia, but hampered by various disabilities, and none were permitted to either publicly or privately proselyte. A man born a Mohammedan, for instance, might continue thus to worship, but if he ever became a Greek Catholic it would go hard with any who [R3566 : page 163] would convert him back to Mohammedanism or anything else, and in leaving the Greek Church he would forfeit all his civil rights. Indeed only the Greek Catholics had any civil rights. Others could not hold property, were debarred from certain schools, and although compelled to do military service they could not rank higher than privates. They were not permitted to erect church or school buildings nor to circulate controversial literature. Their marriages were "illegal," unless performed by a Greek Catholic priest, etc. It is estimated that about one-third of the Czar's subjects are benefitted by this "ukase" or order. The chief party of dissenters in Russia are styled "Old Believers." These, though but slightly different from the Greek Catholics in forms, have been persecuted for nearly two hundred and fifty years. After referring to these "Old Believers," *The Herald* says:

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"The humbler dissenters have had a much harder time, being hunted down until secretly they gave rise to a breed of sects. One

preached redemption by suicide and a fiery or a bloody baptism; others worshiped images of Napoleon as the Messiah, believing that he escaped to Siberia and would return some day and establish a reign of justice and peace, and still others indulged in most licentious rites. Of these dissenters there are about 12,000,000.

"The Emperor's act will affect about forty millions belonging to alien faiths, such as the Catholics, and Lutherans of Poland and the Baltic Provinces, the Protestants of Finland and the followers of Islam and Buddha in the Urals, the Crimea, the Caucasus, Turkestan and Central Asia."

The Chicago *Record-Herald* says: –

"The Easter decree seems to put an end to all religious persecution. Secession from the State Church is not to be punished as a crime and is not to involve any loss or forfeiture of rights. Dissenters are to be permitted to establish monasteries and schools, print and circulate religious works and maintain missions. It is stated that the decree also affects the millions belonging to alien faiths.

"Those who know the influence of the orthodox church of Russia will regard this decree as more revolutionary even than that of March. The right – indeed the duty – of enforcing conformity and preventing heresy, within the church has been aggressively asserted by the exponents of the old policy, and even the priests, who a few weeks ago published a bold appeal for the separation of the church from the bureaucratic organization and the restoration of the independence it enjoyed prior to the abolition of the patriarchate by Peter the Great did not go so far as to include a demand for real religious freedom. As the liberals pointed out, the priests wanted more power and dignity for the church, but not more liberty for the individual subject. The Czar has declared the movement for church independence inopportune, but in conferring religious freedom on the empire he has done more than that movement contemplated. And religious liberty spells other liberty. It is an earnest as well as an achievement."

The New York *Tribune* remarks on the exception of the Jews: –

"The Jews, five million strong, are still outlawed, That may be because the Jewish religion is esteemed in Russia less highly than the Mohammedan. It may be because the Jews are a nation without a country, and no foreign government is inclined to champion their cause, and therefore no political end is to be served by emancipating them. Whatever the reason, this omission must be deplored as gravely marring what would [R3566 : page 164] otherwise be one of the most splendid acts in the history of Russian government."

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Apparently conciliatory measures will avert any immediate collapse of the Russian government; but many of her sons are incessantly planning a complete revolution. It will doubtless come in due course within the next ten years, as a part of the great world-trouble predicted at the consummation of this age.

THE OPEN SHOP AND SOCIALISM.

A builder of large experience, a WATCH TOWER reader, sends us a clipping from *The Builder*, with the remark, – "This will cause a rapid growth in Socialism." We agree that it will have this effect, and that Socialism means ultimately the Bible-predicted anarchy, though we are equally sure that many of the best and noblest Socialists are totally blind to this result. We quote the article entire: –

EIDLITZ ON ARBITRATION

"At a dinner given by the Contractors' Protective Association in New York recently Charles L. Eidlitz, president of the Building Trades Employers' Association, declared, in responding to the toast, 'Arbitration,' that the next fight with the building trades unions in that city will be for 'the open shop.'

"Continuing, Mr. Eidlitz said: 'We will have peace for a year, possibly for a year and a half, and then, I am confident, trouble will break out again. But our fight then will not be along the line of union principles. It will be for the open shop – the non-union shop.

"Arbitration reminds me of the practice of taking candy with medicine in order to make the dose more pleasant. So it is with arbitration according to the theory of union workmen. They seek arbitration as candy in order to administer to us a dose which at all times is severe. The labor unions of to-day believe there is only one way to settle a labor trouble, and that way is their way.

"Greater labor troubles within a year and a half in the building trades than we have ever had, with an "open shop" for us all at the end of the struggle, is my prediction.

"It has been said that the only good Indian is a dead Indian. I would change that so as to say that the sentiment of the men who would erect buildings here, if they only had half a chance, is that the only good union, so far as our business is concerned, is a dead one. Arbitration has proven a failure and our only hope lies in the "open shop". That is sure to come in the building trades within a year and a half at the most."

– *The Builder.*

THE DUTY OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

The Pittsburg Christian Advocate publishes a query from a Methodist minister as follows: –

"Within the limits of my pastoral charge are a number of professedly Christian people who do not seem to realize it to be their duty to become members of any Church. Otherwise they give evidence of sincerity in their profession. What scriptural arguments

may be brought to bear in order to convince them of their duty to the visible Church?"

The Advocate's editor proceeds to prove that every true Christian should belong to some one of the numerous man-made sects; – should get behind some one of the numerous man-made creed-fences; – should declare I am of Wesley, or Calvin, or Luther or some man; – should thus separate himself from other fellow-members of the same body of Christ; – should *belong* to men and not merely to Christ, as the Scriptures direct.

Of course *The Advocate* did not put the matter in this its true form, but, following the general delusion, argues that whoever is not a member of a sect is not a member of the Church of Christ.

As the question evidently refers to WATCH TOWER readers who stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free and avoid all sectarian yokes of bondage, we give our answer to the question very briefly, thus: –

Every true Christian, that is every believer in the atonement, secured by the precious blood, who has consecrated his all to his Savior and is striving daily even though stumblingly to walk in his steps, has a duty toward the visible Church – toward the fellow-members of the Church of Christ.

(1) He should recognize *all* such and that without partiality, loving and striving to serve them as "brethren" in deed and in doctrine.

(2) Should he find these "brethren" bound in sectarian "bundles" (Matt. 13:30) he should not join a "bundle" to please them and encourage them in their error; but standing fast in his liberty in Christ he should seek the deliverance of the "brethren." His duty is to lift up the standard and get the true wheat out of all the tare-bundles into the same liberty, in union with Christ, the only Head.

(3) If he cannot have full fellowship at first, he will be all the more in the position the Savior himself occupied before he got a faithful few delivered from Jewish bondage and error. He should be just as kind and helpful to opposing brethren as their wrong ideas and position will permit; and he should foster fellowship specially with those who more and more hear the voice of the Shepherd and come out of Babylon.

(4) The great mistake seems to be in what is called a Church. As bricks and beams and stones do not make a church, neither is every assemblage of well-dressed people a Church. Christ's Church is composed only of those *united to him* in faith and obedience, and these will know and fellowship each other always, and need not names, badges, grips and passwords.

SCHOLARLY INFIDELITY CLAIMED.

"An educated man who would to-day quote the Bible as an authority on any physical subject would be an object of ridicule in the eyes of all educated hearers. Our Bible is but the mould of two thousand years ago into which was poured the fundamental principles of religion. Its facts are not history as they have been considered for the past nineteen centuries. Indeed, there is no history in the Bible."

These were the words of President J. Gould Schurman of Cornell University yesterday when he addressed [R3567 : page 165] 1,200 students from the pulpit of Sage chapel, the occasion being the first Sunday of the second semester of the university year.

His subject was "The Christianity of To-day."

President Schurman said that the Christ of the twentieth century must be admitted to be different from the Christ of the preceding nineteen centuries. The Bible, he said, can no longer be considered a textbook of science. It seems strange to us that men should ever have considered it as such.

Explaining the miracles which the Bible attributes to Jesus Christ, President Schurman said:

"We have to-day our Christian Science and our faith cure, by means of which we see one man exerting great powers over both the minds and bodies of another. Who can say what great influence Jesus Christ might have had in conformity even with the laws of nature over the minds and bodies of men.

"Altho we have broken away from the garb in which the teachings of Christ were first clothed, the principles he taught are still needed to save our race from despair, materialism and scepticism, and our young men from low standards. I know from experience that *most of you who come to the university from homes where you have been taught to believe in the Bible begin to doubt its teachings when you begin to learn from science that what it states as historical facts cannot be true*. I wish to help you in this stage and show you that behind the statements in the Bible, which we must cast aside, are principles of religion which we must follow to-day."

– *N.Y. Sun*.

INFIDELITY SIMILARLY TAUGHT ABROAD.

Considerable comment and discussion has followed an address delivered by the Dean of Westminster to Sunday-school teachers. The dean declared that "our whole conception of the inspiration of the Bible has been altered." In support of this theory he referred to the first two chapters of Genesis as portions of the Bible which must be taken as parables and allegories. He went on to say that these and many other stories, such as that of the talking serpent and the talking ass, are not now regarded as literal statements of historical facts, but as imagery, clothing certain spiritual lessons. In short, the dean advanced as his view of the Bible the one that is too well known to need further description than is indicated in the above passage. It is

his position in the Church that has given rise to public discussion. Many clergymen have expressed surprise, and Canon McCormick protests that this sort of thing upsets the whole foundation of belief, because it attacks the question of inspiration. He says: "We cannot believe one part of the Bible is inspired and another is not, because we believe that the compilers were inspired".

– *Cablegram to Globe-Democrat.*

"ALMA MATER" WILL SUCCEED DOXOLOGY

The "Doxology" has been discarded at the University of Chicago. The faculty has agreed with students that college songs do more to breed a true religious and college spirit than the chanting of the tenets of Christian belief, and to-day at all chapel services in the junior college the college song "Alma Mater" was substituted for the doxology. The gist of the recommendation of the students to the professors was that a college spirit was the aim of the morning chapel service.

– *Toledo Times.*

These items tell the tale of the rapid departure of faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. But still worse is the fact that even the public-school text-books are being remodeled, so as to affect the child-mind at its earliest and most impressive stage of development. What must be the great loss and far-reaching blight that will result? True, much that has been taught as truth is rankly unscriptural and unreasonable; but with all that, there was still an element of truth in every creed, on which some hope and reverence hung ever so tentatively.

We see in this war of Scholastic Infidelity a preparation for the great anarchistic trouble with which the Scriptures predict this age

will end in a baptism of fire and blood. Thank God for its assurances of the Golden age to follow speedily.

SPIRITUALISTIC MANIFESTATIONS INCREASING.

Be not deceived said our Master. So far as we are able, we desire that all TOWER readers may be proof against the deceptions of the fallen angels, who, personating the dead, are rapidly deluding the world as they are granted more power in this "evil day," as predicted. It is remarkable that as Higher Criticism's denial of divine inspiration of the Bible finds its advocates in the Christian ministry, so Spiritism is choosing the same channel, so far as it is able, to deceive the whole world.

While the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* tells of a "spirit photograph" of General Lee, taken without intention when a group was photographed on a veranda – above their heads – word comes from Chicago of a spirit-painted portrait produced in daylight in the presence of the widely known Rev. Isaac Funk, D.D., and for him; and another paper publishes a bishop's declaration of his faith in such manifestations as from the dead.

Can we not see that the influence of the demons is growing, and does not this betoken a great night of darkness so far as the light of the Bible is concerned? Yes, the forces of evil are being let loose to tempt them that, professing Christ, have received not the Truth in the love of it. – 2 Thes. 2:10.

We quote below the newspaper reports referred to:

**TIME COMING WHEN COMMUNICATION WITH THE
OTHER WORLD WILL BE EASY, DECLARES BISHOP
FALLOWS.**

Chicago, Ill. – "As a Christian and a believer in the Bible, I must believe in communication between the two worlds – that in which we live and that to which our friends have gone."

Bishop Samuel Fallows of the Reformed Episcopal Diocese of Chicago, made this statement to-day.

"But," he went on, "I have a profound distrust of the mediums who are pretending to be able to call up spirits at will."

"I believe in apparitions, however, and think it possible that there are persons possessed of a certain mysterious psychic power which enables them to make [R3567 : page 166] of their spirits a channel, as it were, through which the earth-bound spirit can communicate with the friend from the other side.

"We are still in a state of groping. I believe the time will come, with the further development of those psychic powers of which we are just beginning to get an inkling, when communication with the other world will be very easy."

– *Inquirer.*

REV. I. K. FUNK, D.D.'S EXPERIENCES.

AMAZING STORIES OF PICTURES GROWING ON CANVAS
BEFORE THE EYES OF WITNESSES REVEALED IN
CONNECTION WITH BANGS SISTERS

Chicago, Ill. – Details of a seance at which a \$1500 picture was painted by dead masters wielding the brush in the mysterious world of spirits under the mediumship of the Bangs sisters, 654 West Adams street, have come to light.

The amazing story is given on the authority of a spiritualist, who had it first hand from Dr. Isaac Funk of New York, who paid \$1500 for the "spirit painting."

Dr. Funk is one of the proprietors of Funk & Wagnalls, one of the largest publishing firms of the United States. He formerly was a Methodist minister. He is editor of the Standard dictionary.

"Funk, when in Chicago last September, visited the Bangs sisters," said this informant. "He has long been interested in spirit phenomena. But only recently he had taken up the investigation of spirit painting. This is a rare manifestation of spirit power. The Bangs sisters are among a very few mediums through whom dead artists paint."

Dr. Funk was ushered into a south room on the second floor at the end of the hall. It was barren of everything save a table and a few chairs. Light was admitted through one window. No one except the two sisters, Dr. Funk and a friend were in the room.

The sisters showed them several white canvases both on stretchers and off and asked Dr. Funk to select any one he desired. He picked out one about 20 x 24, which was already on a stretcher.

Nobody spoke or moved. In about three minutes a cloud seemed to pass over the canvas, leaving a pearl-gray effect for a background.

A few minutes more and a dull outline of a portrait appeared. Every few minutes it grew more distinct. Then followed the various colors, and in 45 minutes the picture, a perfect likeness, was completed.

AT M. E. BIBLE CONFERENCE – LOS ANGELES.

Dr. Biederwolf is reported to have answered the question, "What is the Evangelical Church?" as follows, – very truthfully:

"I don't know what your idea is, but mine is something like the following:

"The Evangelical Church must be pure in doctrine. I mean true to the evangelical creed. The revival of the next fifty years must be a revival of doctrine. The preacher must first take his stand on the inspiration of this Book, and be steadfast, immovable, abounding in the Word of the Lord. Once give yourself up to the unsubstantial supposition that like all other good books it has its errors as well as its truth, its only superiority being that it has a little more of the latter, and you will either wreck your faith on the barren reefs of a shallow liberalism or, like a coward, will use the pulpit of the Lord Christ to minister to your pride and purse. If this book is the Word of God the only important thing for **[R3568 : page 166]** this world to know is, what it says, and the only call you or I ever had from God is to make clear and emphatic to the world the message it contains. Blessed Book!

"And now for the message. The evangelistic Church must above all be evangelical in its preaching. I wonder if we haven't been placing too little emphasis on the trenchant doctrines of the world in our concern for practical righteousness; science has put such a beautiful dress on man's wickedness that we have almost forgotten there is such a thing as sin.

"Never as to-day has the world been so disposed to doubt and deny the real meaning of the cross. And this finds encouragement in a two-fold tendency of the ministry, the one seeking to please the world with some weak and dilettante palliation, the other ignoring the cross well nigh altogether. Of the first class none are, I presume, here to-day; they are not usually found in such places; but, brethren, what about the other class? We hear about the wide range of the pulpit, but that is not true – its range is very limited indeed – but this is true in a sense only – it should be determined to know nothing save Jesus

Christ and him crucified, and when anything crowded in means the cross crowded out both are out of their place and the preacher, too."

