

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

SADLY CONFUSED TEACHING

THE *Christian Evangelist*, in a prominent article entitled, "What is the Soul?" says:

"To man is given the power to create an immortal soul, and father and mother walk hand in hand with God. It is fitting that the halo of love should shine around the mated pair, and that the new home should glow with light from the glory-world, for Eden's morn is dawning again to sweet new souls – souls that are born of man and also born of God."

When our friends of the Christian denomination get sufficiently awake to inquire for a Scripture authority for all religious teaching, the editor of the *Evangelist* and others will criticize what is published much more thoroughly than they do now; and a totally unscriptural article of the kind referred to will not appear in journals claiming "No creed but the Bible."

The idea that God would go into partnership with the majority of parents who know him not or who are his enemies through wicked works is absurd on the face of it, as well as unscriptural. Worse, it is blasphemy against God! The very idea! That God should be charged with the responsibility of the direct creation of the poor misshapen, diseased little babes, the one-half of which have not vitality enough to reach maturity, is surely the product of a deficient or sadly misdirected reason. Let God be true, though at the risk of making out that many men are liars or foolish. God's Word declares that infants are "born in sin, shapen in iniquity"; and the only exceptions to this rule are the comparatively few children of the sanctified. (I Cor. 7:14.) That the image of God has largely given place to the image of Satan is

manifest in the many who "go astray as soon as they are born" (Psa. 53:3), and respecting some of whom our Lord declared, "Ye are of your father the devil, for his works ye do." – John 8:44.

Alas that we must admit it, but who will deny that [R3774 : page 147] some dogs are far better born than are some of Adam's degenerate race? Aye, some of them with better dispositions, too – more of meekness, gentleness, patience and love; and less of anger, hatred and strife. If God has so arranged his laws of nature that each can bring forth after his own kind, why should not man, the highest of earthly creatures, have the same powers? Why should it be claimed that in man's case God interferes and helps produce the idiotic and mentally and physically unbalanced which constitute the majority of our race? Why should this be urged, not only without Scripture proof but contrary to the Bible's express teachings?

THERE IS ALWAYS A REASON

The reason is the desire to prove the immortality of the soul, which centuries of Platonic philosophy has foisted upon the world *as essential to any hope of a future life*. Plato's followers tell us that this wisdom of a heathen poet is implied in the Bible though never stated in it. We answer, to the contrary, that the Bible most explicitly limits immortality to the Father and the Son (I Tim. 6:16), and holds out to the saints the *hope* of "glory, honor and immortality" at the end of life's race. – Rom. 2:7.

The hope of eternal life, according to the Bible, is not a power in man to live forever, but a power in God to raise man from the dead and to perpetually supply the conditions essential to an everlasting existence. *Death* is the wage or penalty of God's law against sinners: the *death* of Jesus was the ransom for sinners; and the resurrection promised in the Millennial morning is the salvation provided – a salvation from *death*, a raising up from the fallen condition of sin and its penalty to the life and perfection

originally lost. "By man death, by man also the resurrection of the dead; for as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive." – I Cor. 15:21,22.

Note the inconsistencies involved. (1) For God to interfere with human pro-creation and insert a Platonic "spark of deity" into every idiotic or degenerate babe to make them death-proof would be in direct contradiction to his sentence against the race, "Dying thou shalt [R3774 : page 148] die." (2) It would make meaningless our Lord's words, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7), by implying that man's begetting and God's begetting are simultaneous. (3) If more than 100,000 infants are born each day, and myriads more are begotten that never reach birth, the *Christian Evangelist* must believe in a host of Gods kept busy day and night supervising and assisting in a very unholy and everyway quite unsatisfactory work. No wonder intelligent infidels despise such nonsense, and, thinking it is Bible teaching, repudiate the latter. (4) According to this false theory the whole matter of eternal torment is God's responsibility and fault; because if God would but exercise reasonable discretion in bestowing the gift of immortality and not cooperate in the birth of those unfit for everlasting bliss there would be none to torment.

What serious confusion comes from false reasoning, human guessing, contrary to God's Word. We devote some space to this matter, not from opposition to the no doubt well-meaning writer, but because the error is widespread. Yes, we are ashamed to say it, this is the maudlin view of Christendom as a whole. Let us whose eyes the Lord has opened to a clearer, saner, holier view of his divine plan be vigilant and wise and lovingly kind in helping to the light and food now provided all who give any evidence of hungering and thirsting after truth.

REFORMATION BY SURGERY

The newspapers recount a peculiar case which contains a lesson. A boy of 12 years, Harold Hurley, was about to be sent by his parents to a Reform School, because he was so incorrigible. An officer of the Toledo Juvenile Court noticed a scar on the boy's head, and inquiry developed the fact that it came from a fall when the boy was five years old, and that his incorrigibility dated from about that time. He was sent to a hospital where a surgical operation was performed, and the pressure of a broken bone was removed from the brain. Gradually the boy returned to his former condition of mind and became obedient. His mother is quoted as saying: –

"Dr. Donnelly states that the pressure of that piece of bone upon the brain had gradually dulled all the higher sensibilities, and if it had gone on Harold would, in time, have become an utter degenerate. No one knows how thankful we are today that our boy has been saved from Lancaster Reform School, where he would have been constantly punished for things for which we now know he would not have been responsible."

It is impossible for us to know what proportion of the morally weak and bad, the wicked, the merciless and the untruthful are to some extent what circumstances and conditions, mental, moral and physical, have helped to make them. Yet according to the general view the boy above described would have gone to eternal torment. That is to say, no one would claim that he was *fit for heaven*, and under the general assumption there would have been no other place to put him.

How grandly reasonable is the plan of God, which, while telling us that only a "little flock" of overcomers of the world, the flesh and the devil will go to heaven, tells us also that God has provided that "times of restitution" shall shortly begin, in which all the weak and depraved and ignorant, however unfit for heaven,

shall have one full chance of restitution to the full perfection of human nature in the Paradise of God restored under the whole heavens. All of this glorious provision, let us never forget, is in and through the *ransom* paid by our dear Redeemer, who "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." – I Tim. 2:6.

HELL CUT FROM CREED

From the Chicago Record-Herald

Valparaiso, Ind., April 12. – Hell fire and the brimstone griddle have no more terrors for the devout Presbyterians of northwestern Indiana. Simple and painless annihilation has been officially declared to be all that the souls of George Ade's sinful fellow-hoosiers need fear in the hereafter. The experts in salvation have discovered that for more than 1,000 years mankind has been laboring under a delusion about the fate of those who are turned away from the pearly gates by St. Peter.

At the meeting of the Logansport Presbytery, which has just adjourned its spring session in this city, it was decided that the words "eternal torment" and "everlasting punishment" should be stricken from the articles of the creed. "Destruction" was the substitute which the ministers and laymen, representing forty-three congregations in this section of the State, recommended. This action will be submitted for the approval of the general assembly of the denomination, to be held in Des Moines, Iowa, in May.

DOGMA NOT AUTHORIZED

Without a dissenting vote the members of the Presbytery expressed their conviction that the word "torment," as implying an unending series of diabolical tortures in flames, conducted under the personal supervision of Lucifer, was not authorized by the Bible. They expressed a conviction that such a dogma tended to retard the development of the Presbyterian faith. It was

admitted, however, that this view would be deemed revolutionary by many of the strict followers of John Calvin, and probably would cause much dissension. Many objections have already been made by the conservative elements in the congregations.

Rev. A. C. Beckes, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, said, in commenting upon the step: "Of course our action will have no effect unless the general assembly coincides. That body must approve before the words 'torment' and 'punishment' can be stricken out of the confession of faith. Our vote is simply the expression of forty-three ministers and forty-three laymen of the northwestern counties in Indiana."
