

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

"THIS ONE THING I DO"

THE *Methodist Review* gives a report of a sermon by Rev. C. E. Jefferson as follows:

"No other man can wander so easily from his province as the preacher. The fences are low, and if he steps over them no one but God will speak to him about his indiscretion. Every man in the community except the preacher is bound with hoops of steel to the task which heaven has assigned him. The physician must practice medicine and keep close to his patients, the lawyer must practice law and keep close to his clients, the editor must gather news and keep close to his subscribers, the teacher must teach and keep close to his pupils, the banker must keep close to his money, the business man must be loyal to his business; but the preacher can leave his work and flit like a bee from field to field, gathering nectar from a thousand flowers, and he himself may think he is making honey when in fact he is only buzzing."

The "buzzing" preachers who are moved to treat all manner of "magazine" subjects because of the prevalent conviction that the preacher should be "a social agitator, a political reformer, a man who stands before the community as the sworn antagonist of every form of social wrong," are reminded that their day furnishes a social environment different only in matter, and not in manner, from the day of Christ's preaching. "The people of his day wanted him to do everything," says Dr. Jefferson. "That was their conception of the Messiah." Further:

"The air was filled with questions, political, social, economic, ecclesiastical, but he refused to touch them, so eager was he to say just one more word about God. Evils lifted their

hoary heads on every side – slavery, Roman tyranny, the social evil, false customs, economic tragedies – but he never lifted a hand to strike them. So narrow was he, so blind was he! Men were hot in their discussion of problems. No age ever had more problems than his. But to him there was only one fundamental problem, and that was the problem of sin, and he had time for the discussion of none other. The estrangement of the heart from God – that to him was the root of all tragedies. A will fixed in rebellion against the good Father – that was the fountain of all the world's woes. All problems of all kinds got their complications from the estranged heart, and all tragedies got their blackness from the mind that had become darkened by going away from God, and he had nothing to say about secondary problems and subordinate evils because his eyes were fixed on the one plague-spot of humanity – a will disobedient to the good God. Such a line of action on his part was of course disappointing. It was even exasperating. The intellectual people of his day had no use for him. Men of acumen and large mental grasp smiled at the poor peasant telling people little stories about God. Men of patriotic fervor, alive to the needs of the day, sneered at him because he did not fall in with their plans and adopt their panaceas. To all practical men who believed in grappling with problems and suggesting solutions he was a visionary, a fool. It did seem visionary, so much talking about God.

"The German Strauss is offended because Jesus allows the life of the family to fall into the background, is neutral toward the State, rejects property, and passes all the esthetic intents of the world unnoticed. John Stuart Mill declares his Gospel is not sufficient as a rule of action, and must be supplemented by instructions drawn from non-Christian sources. The Italian Mazzini thinks his heart was all right, but his intellect deficient because he took no interest in the great ideals of political liberty and national progress which made the nineteenth century glorious."

Christ consciously and steadfastly limited the field of his activity, says Dr. Jefferson, and so was able to say at last, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." If he carved out his work with such clean-cut edges, the writer remarks, it may be that his example was designed "to save us from the tragedy of attempting things to which we have not been called." We read:

"Do you not think that the name of God would be more glorious in the hearts of men today, and the [R4025 : page 212] Kingdom of heaven would have wider limits on the earth, if all who have been ordained to preach the Gospel had only been willing to confine themselves to the one task assigned them? I like to think that a preacher should talk differently from any other man in the community; that a sermon should be unlike any other discourse known among men. I like to think that a Christian Church should be different in atmosphere from any other building built by man. Public worship, so I think, ought to have a different tone from the tone of society or the street. On going into the house of God one should know at once that it is not a lecture-hall, a reform-club meeting-place, a professor's classroom, a newspaper office, the rendezvous of a literary or musical society. There ought to be in the air a mystical something which awes the heart and impels it to look upward. There ought to be something there which makes one feel like saying, 'This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.' And it is the preacher who must be foremost in creating this atmosphere."

The Monitor (Rom. Cath., Newark, N.J.), in commenting on the lament constantly appearing in Protestant journals over the dearth in Church attendance, observes somewhat similarly:

"Perhaps the spiritual leaders of our separated brethren make a mistake in striving too much after novelty. Perhaps the people, especially the men part, may prefer the teachings drawn from the everlasting and inexhaustible Gospel of Christ; the daily papers

can supply all necessary comment and criticism on passing events. Sincerity is a much better heart-mover than sensationalism, and the true preacher will impart to his hearers the thoughts and ideals and resolves that move himself. 'If you wish me to weep, you yourself must shed tears.'

"Two generations ago one of the most peaceful and Christian parishes in Ireland, and that is saying a good deal, was a village near Mitchellstown, County Cork. The aged pastor had been in charge for over half a century, and he was never known to preach but the same sermon in all that time. Every Sunday, after the Gospel, he turned to his people and said solemnly to them, in the old Gaelic, 'Brethren, avoid the evil and do the good.' This fact is historical, and it is also historical that this parish was called the parish of saints, where a lawyer would starve, a judge throw up his position in sheer disgust, and a jail collapse through dry rot."

SEEKING COVER OF THE MOUNTAINS

We have called attention to the statement of Scripture that in the day of the Lord the rich and great and mighty will foresee the impending trouble and seek protection from the stronger institutions. A poor translation says that they will call on the rocks and mountains to *fall on them to hide them*, whereas the thought is that they will request of these symbolic rocks, etc., hiding, covering, protection from the storm of trouble brewing.

We have already noted that Croker, Astor, Carnegie and other wealthy men sought the security of Great Britain as greater than that of the United States, and removed their residences thither. We now note a different move by the millionaire J. Pierrepont Morgan. He is far-sighted and seeks a different rock or mountain to cover him. For a long time a Protestant he recently joined the Roman Catholic Church in a manner so public as to advertise him a Catholic all the world over. Newspaper reports say that he presented about one million dollars to the Catholic

Church and then received the Pope's public blessing and an amulet which the pontiff took from his own neck and fastened about the neck of Mr. Morgan.

In the case of so astute a financier as he, the public is justified in supposing that he must have associated financial matters with the religious. It is not, therefore, far-fetched to suppose that the gentleman sees the trouble coming, and concludes that his vast interests will be safest if allied with the largest religious system of Christendom, and the one whose millions most thoroughly obey the voice of their leaders. Nor will it surprise us if other wealthy men see the situation in the same light, and flee to the same mountain.

SURPASSING SKILL OF THE ANCIENTS

"We are losing all our secrets in this shabby age," an architect said. "If we keep on the time will come when we'll be able to do nothing well.

"Take, for instance, steel. We claim to make good steel, yet the blades the Saracens turned out hundreds of years ago would cut one of our own blades in two like butter.

"Take ink. Our modern ink fades in five or ten years to rust color, yet the ink of mediaeval manuscripts is as black and bright today as it was 700 years ago.

"Take dyes. The beautiful blues and reds and greens of antique oriental rugs have all been lost, while in Egyptian tombs we find fabrics dyed thousands of years ago that remain today brighter and purer in hue than any of our modern fabrics.

"Take my specialty, buildings. We can't build as the ancients did. The secret of their mortar and cement is lost to us. Their mortar and cement were **[R4026 : page 212]** actually harder and

more durable than the stones they bound together, whereas ours – horrors!"

– *New York Press*.

CHURCH EVOLUTION

Northern Baptists are to be less local and more national in point of view, less independent and more cooperative in their methods of government and denominational activity. After a stirring debate the large gathering of representatives of the churches, sitting at the national capital, finally voted "that in view of the growth of our country and our denomination there is need of a general body that shall serve the common interests of our entire brotherhood." Supplementing this steps have been taken to perfect the organization of a national council, which shall be to northern Baptists what the general convention of southern Baptists has been for some time and what the national council of the Congregationalists has been for a generation. The [R4026 : page 213] first president of the new body is to be Governor Hughes of New York State, of whom the Baptists naturally are proud. His election also is a fine tribute to the Baptist emphasis on laymen's rights in the Church.

This movement had its origin in Chicago and Boston, and has been backed by some of the ablest and most forceful men of the denomination.

– *Boston Herald*.

METHODIST PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD

The editor of *The Western Christian Advocate*, having recently advocated that Methodists hereafter pray publicly for the dead, has aroused his brother editor of *The Central Christian Advocate* to a discussion of the subject. He notes that not even Romanists pray for those in hell, but only for those in purgatory,

for whom there is a hope of escape. He asks, "Would we [Methodists] adopt the word Purgatory?" He proceeds to show that John Wesley, when charged with praying for the dead, did not deny it, but admitted it – denying that prayers for the dead were "popery." He concludes: –

"We do not think that it is strange that Methodism has not produced a literature on this thing of prayers for the dead. Methodism is practical. The land immediately beyond the grave is shrouded in loving mystery; there is scant revelation. Therefore Methodism is silent."

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So, then, Methodism from Wesley down to the present finds nothing to say against *future probation*; but has some considerable leaning toward it. Only uninformed Methodists, therefore, have anything to say against the main argument presented and proven in MILLENNIAL DAWN.

THEATER ANNEX FOR CHURCH

Roof garden vaudeville will probably be introduced in Philadelphia by and at a church, the Fairhill Baptist congregation, Lehigh avenue and Fifth street, whose members this morning enthusiastically discussed a startling scheme of their pastor, the Rev. Dr. Charles B. McClellan.

Last night at the celebration of the tenth anniversary of his pastorate, Dr. McClellan proposed "high-class vaudeville" as a feature of his Church's work, and asked for \$10,000 to complete the auditorium for winter and provide a roof garden for summer, where every Saturday night a moral "variety performance" could be given, with moving pictures and ending with a Gospel service. Several thousand dollars were subscribed and other contributions were made later.

– *Philadelphia Bulletin.*

HOME RELIGION

Home religion is as important as personal religion, and is essential to it. The relationship between parents and children grows pure and dear when they all kneel together and ask the peace of God to rest on their home. Many of us remember the dear old days when at the family altar morning and evening prayers were offered together, and the Sunday evening hour, when we sang hymns, each choosing his favorite.

Through the whole community the influence of a Christian home spreads. The town seems purer, the birds sing more sweetly, the flowers bloom more radiantly. Joy sings its anthems in such a home as it sings in no other place. And if this blessedness is to continue, we must shut out all unkindness, bitterness and injustice.

– *Floyd W. Tompkins, D.D.*

THE VULGATE TO BE REVISED

In a dispatch from Rome the correspondent of the *London Times* says he learns the Pope has issued a decree entrusting the entire revision of the Vulgate to the Benedictine Order. This is the most important decision yet announced as an outcome of the Biblical commission appointed toward the end of the pontificate of Leo XIII., the correspondent says.
