

## **VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER**

### **DISCOURAGED PREACHERS**

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MINISTERS are reported by one of their number to be in a permanent condition of "Blue Monday." The editor of The Standard (Baptist, Chicago) informs us that he was told by a friend not long ago that "nine-tenths of all the preachers in his circle of acquaintances are discouraged." This same Jeremiah "asserted that the great majority of pastors are practically hopeless of accomplishing anything worth while; that they are restless and discontented, and heartily wish that they had never entered the ministry." If he is right, the editor of The Standard observes, "we may add another to the tabulated reasons why young men do not enter the ministry." The editor thinks that the preacher, under stress of unusual discouragement himself, is mistaken, but the Rev. Dr. Aked, in a recent sermon on the alleged decay of Christianity in New York, practically asserted the same facts as falling under his observation when he first visited America. As quoted by The Examiner (New York), his words are:

"One of the things that impressed me most when I came here for a month in the autumn of 1906, was the depression of so many preachers and recognized leaders in the churches of this city. I met many representatives of the denominations, and their discouragement about Christian work in this city seemed very strange to me.

"It was unlike anything I had observed on previous visits, reaching back about fifteen years. It seemed to me, also, so unlike yourselves. The American people are not easily discouraged. There is in you a buoyancy of spirit, an irrepressible vitality, an

intellectual and emotional agility which smiles in the face of difficulty.

"We English people have shown through many centuries the grim determination we possess, and our Yorkshire saying, 'It's dogged as does it,' represents a national characteristic. With you it is different. It is not 'grimness' nor 'doggedness' that I find in you so much as a joyous and sunny disregard of difficulty, and the easy assurance of victory everywhere, which itself is more than half the battle, so that this attitude toward the problems of religious life struck me as significant.

"I have heard much of that kind of talk since I came here more than twelve months ago. First, one well-known preacher or worker and then another has shown that in his opinion Christianity is not holding its own in this city. And lately some remarkable utterances have reached the public ear."

The editor of *The Standard* attempts to furnish healing balm to the cases that may come under the preacher's classification. We read:

"To be sure, almost every man, in the ministry or out, has his hours of depression. The minister who goes home from the Sunday evening service after speaking to a handful of people, a majority of whom are not members of his church, somewhat worn by the work of the day, casting about in his mind for something upon which to preach on the following Sunday, carrying in his heart the news, just made known to him, that one of his best families will soon remove to a distant State, will doubtless feel cast down. But even so, his courage is not utterly destroyed. After a good night's rest and a talk with his Master, he goes about the tasks of the new week with a good measure of hope in his heart. The man who is permanently disheartened by one difficulty, or two or three or a dozen, ought not to be in the ministry. In fact, it is difficult to think of a place in this world where he ought to be, for there is not a

worthy activity of man that can be continuously prosecuted without meeting obstacles. The lawyer, the physician, the farmer, the merchant – each has his peculiar trials. If he amounts to anything among men he must do his work in spite of discouragements. The minister is no exception to the general rule."

– *Literary Digest.*

## **TOLSTOI AND THE PEASANT**

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Not long ago a small party called on Tolstoi, of whom Ivanhoff was one. One of the visitors first conversed with the Count about political and social matters. Then Ivanhoff's turn came. He was resolved to hear from Tolstoi's own lips his religious position. The following conversation ensued. "Who are you?" asked Count Tolstoi. "I am only a peasant," answered Ivanhoff. "What have you got to say to me?" was the next question. "I wish to know your opinion about Jesus Christ, and about the Holy Scriptures?" "With regard to Jesus Christ, there is nothing to be said," answered [R4230 : page 260] the Count. "His Personality is not necessary to us, only his teaching."

"That is very strange," said Ivanhoff; "if I found a letter in the street, the contents of which interested me, I would do all I could to find out who had written it. For me, at any rate, the writer is of more consequence than the letter. The writer can write one hundred other letters equally good, as this first letter. He himself, therefore, is of more interest to me than the letter. If I do not know him, I can only have this one letter; but if I am acquainted with him, I may be able to receive a hundred letters besides."

"As you really want to know what I think of Jesus, I will tell you," said Tolstoi. "For me, Jesus Christ is a good man, a man such as all men ought to be. You and I ought to be just as he was. But to call him God, that is blasphemy. As regards the Holy Scriptures,

take this Bible in your hand. The Old Testament, I don't read it; rather tear it out and throw it away. The Old Testament only causes, as the Dukhabors rightly say, a great deal of work and only leads to trouble. Then there remains the New Testament. Take the book of Acts and the Epistles, and then take Revelation; tear them out and throw them away. You have then only the four Gospels left. Take these Gospels, read them through and think over them. There are words there that Jesus said, and the Apostles have written down; there are also words that the Apostles have written of themselves. All that the Apostles have written, tear out and throw away. Now you retain only the words that Jesus himself spoke. Of these, there are two classes. Some of the words are dim and mysterious, and hard to understand. Lay them aside. It is best for you not to read them. Then you have left only the clear words, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Read it, for it is the teaching of Jesus. In this way, you will become a Christian."

"Leo Nikolajewitsch," answered Ivanhoff, "I have understood what you have said. But you have not given me any right to do that which you have said. In one of the books you left me to retain is a passage spoken by Jesus Christ, that says: 'O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.' (Luke 24:25.) You said to me, that I should throw away the Old Testament; but Christ himself – whom you call a good man – has commanded me to believe it all, therefore also the prophets. I hold that I have no right to throw away any book; yea, even more, that I have no right to throw away any one word that he has commanded me to believe."

Tolstoi was evidently very uncomfortable. He took the Bible from Ivanhoff's hand, threw it on the table, and began walking up and down the room in an annoyed mood. Suddenly he stopped in front of Ivanhoff, and looking him straight in the face said, "It would interest me to know what *you* think of *me*?"

Ivanhoff's friend wanted to come to his help, but he held him back saying: "If the Count had asked *you*, you could answer, but now he has asked *me*, and I want to answer him myself." He turned to Tolstoi saying: "I will tell you. In one of the books that you told me to take out and throw away, the Acts, is a story about a pious man, who gave many alms and always prayed to God. As you see, this man had the following virtues: He was God-fearing, merciful, did many good deeds, and he prayed – and yet, he was not a Christian. But an Angel appeared to him and commanded that he should send to Joppa and call Simon Peter, who would tell him what to do to be saved. And when Cornelius had fetched Peter and heard his words he became a Christian. Cornelius had, as you see, the following excellent qualities: He was pious, God-fearing, benevolent, and he prayed. In you, Leo Nikolajewitsch, there is not even all these, because you do not pray. And as you do not pray, I cannot call you a Christian."

Tolstoi again began to walk to and fro in the room. At last he said: "When a chicken has once come out of the shell, it cannot be put back." With this Russian proverb, the conversation ended.

"I have since told this little incident to several of Tolstoi's admirers," adds Ivanhoff. "They could hardly believe that I had dared to speak out so freely, because Tolstoi is to many thousands of the younger Russians almost an idol. It is said," remarked Ivanhoff at the close, "that Tolstoi has now begun to pray. If this man became a Christian, he would be Russia's Luther."

– *Quarterly Review.*

## **MRS. EDDY'S ABSURD IDEAS OF THE BIBLE**

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Mrs. Eddy's exegetical theories are dealt with in the final article on the history of Christian Science in the June *McClure's*.

The writer, Georgine Milmine, makes copious citations from Mrs. Eddy's famous book, [R4231 : page 260] "Science and Health," and connects these by comment of her own. "Mrs. Eddy says that her theory of the universe is founded not upon human wisdom, but upon the Bible," reports the writer, adding, "and so it is, but she uses both addition and subtraction very liberally to get her Biblical corroboration." The account given of Mrs. Eddy's point of view is:

"The Bible may be interpreted in two ways, Mrs. Eddy says, literally and spiritually, and what she sets out to do is to give us the spiritual interpretation. Her method is simple. She starts with the propositions that all is God and that there is no matter, and then reconstructs the Bible to accommodate these statements. Such portions of the Bible as can be made, by judicious treatment, to corroborate her theory, she takes and 'spiritually interprets'; that is, tells us once and for all what the passages really mean; and such portions as cannot possibly be converted into affirmative evidence she rejects as errors of the early copyists. Mrs. Eddy insists that the Bible is the record of truth, but a study of her exegesis shows that only such portions of it as meet with Mrs. Eddy's approval and lend themselves – under very rough handling – to the support of her theory are accepted as the record of truth; the rest is thrown out as a mass of erroneous transcription. Mrs. Eddy's keen eye at once detects those meaningless passages which have for so long beguiled the world, just as it readily sees in familiar texts an entirely new meaning. She explains the creation of the world from the account in the first chapter of Genesis, but the unknown author of this disputed book would never recognize his narrative when Mrs. Eddy gets through with it."

Beginning with the account of the creation, the writer takes her citations from the first edition of "Science and Health," which "remains practically the same in later editions under the chapter called 'Genesis.'" We read:

"To begin with, Mrs. Eddy says, there was God, 'All and in all, the eternal Principle.' This Principle [R4231 : page 261] is both masculine and feminine; 'Gender is embraced in Spirit, else God could never have shadowed forth, from out himself, the idea of male and female.' But, Mrs. Eddy adds, 'We have not as much authority for calling God masculine as feminine, the latter being the last, therefore highest idea given of him.'

"Mrs. Eddy next sets about the creation. The 'waters' out of which God brought the dry land, she says, were 'Love'; the dry land itself was 'the condensed idea of creation.' When God divided the light from the darkness, it means, says Mrs. Eddy, that 'Truth and error were distinct from the beginning, and never mingled.' But Mrs. Eddy has always insisted on the idea that 'error' is a delusion which arose first in the mind of mortal man; what is error doing away back here before man was created, and why was God himself compelled to take measures against it? Certainly the account of the Creation which came from Lynn is even more perplexing than that which is related in the Pentateuch.

"With regard to the creation of grass and herbs, Mrs. Eddy eagerly points out that 'God made every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew.' And that, she says, proves that 'creations of Wisdom are not dependent on laws of matter, but on Intelligence alone.'" She admits here that the Universe is the 'idea of Creative Wisdom,' which is getting dangerously near the very old idea that matter is but a manifestation of spirit. Call the universe 'matter,' and Mrs. Eddy flies into a rage; call it 'an idea of God,' and she is serenely complaisant. There was certainly never any one so put about and tricked by mere words; on the whole, it may be said that the English language has avenged itself on Mrs. Eddy.

"Arriving at the creation of the beasts of the field, Mrs. Eddy says that 'The beast and reptile made by Love and Wisdom were

neither carnivorous nor poisonous.' Ferocious tendencies in animals are entirely the product of man's imagination. Daniel understood this, we are told, and that is why the lions did not hurt him." The treatment of the story of Adam is thus examined:

"The history of Adam is allegorical throughout, a description of error and its results,' etc. Man was created in God's likeness, free from sin, sickness and death; but this Adam, who crept in (Mrs. Eddy does not explain how), was the origin of our belief that there is life in matter and was to obstruct our growth in spirituality. Mrs. Eddy says, 'Divide the name Adam into two syllables, and it reads, *a dam*, or obstruction.' This original method of word-analysis she seems to regard as final evidence concerning Adam. About the creation of Eve, Mrs. Eddy changes her mind. In the later editions of her book she says it is absurd to believe that God ever put Adam into a hypnotic sleep and performed a surgical operation upon him. In the first edition she says it is a mere chance that the human race is not still propagated by the removal of man's ribs. 'The belief regarding the origin of mortal man has changed since Adam produced Eve, and the only reason a rib is not the present mode of evolution is because of this change,' etc.

"Not to be warned by the footprints of time, Mrs. Eddy pauses in her revision of Genesis to wonder 'whence came the wife of Cain?' But on the whole she profits by the story of Cain, for here she finds one of those little etymological clues which never escape her penetration. The fact that Adam and all his race were but a dream of mortal mind is proved, she says, by the fact that Cain went 'to dwell *in the land of Nod, the land of dreams and illusions.*' Mrs. Eddy offers this seriously as 'scientific' exegesis.

"Mrs. Eddy's conclusion about the Creation seems to be that we are all in reality the offspring of the first creation recounted in Genesis, in which man is not named, but is simply said to be in the image of God; but we *think* we are the children of the creation

described in the second chapter; of the race that imagined sickness, sin, and death for itself. The tree of knowledge which caused Adam's fall, Mrs. Eddy says, was the belief of life in matter, and she suggests that the forbidden fruit which Eve gave to Adam may have been 'a medical work, perhaps.'"

Mrs. Eddy, continues this writer, "says that Christ did not come to save mankind from sin, but to show us that sin is a thing imagined by mortal mind that it is an illusion which can be overcome, like sickness and death. The Trinity, as commonly accepted, Mrs. Eddy denies, though she seems to admit a kind of triune nature in God by saying over and over again that he is 'Love, Truth and Life.' The holy Ghost she defines as Christian Science; 'The Comforter I understand to be Divine Science.'"

Mrs. Eddy is said to have revised the Lord's Prayer "a great many times." The form printed in the edition of 1902 is given and commented on thus:

"Our Father-Mother God, all-harmonious, adorable One. Thy kingdom is within us, Thou art ever-present. Enable us to know – as in heaven, so on earth – God is supreme. Give us grace for today; feed the famished affections. And infinite Love is reflected in love. And Love leadeth us not into temptation, but delivereth from sin, disease and death. For God is now and forever all Life, Truth, and Love.'

"In this interpretation the petitions have been converted into affirmations, and Mrs. Eddy's prayer seems a somewhat dry enumeration of the properties of the Deity rather than a supplication.

"This method of 'spiritual interpretation' has given Mrs. Eddy the habit of a highly empirical use of English. At the back of her book, 'Science and Health,' there is a glossary in which a long list of serviceable old English words are said to mean very especial

things. The word 'bridegroom' means 'spiritual understanding'; 'death' means 'an illusion'; 'evening' means 'mistiness of mortal thought'; 'mother' means God, etc. The seventh commandment, Mrs. Eddy insists, is an injunction against adulterating Christian Science, although she also admits the meaning ordinarily attached to it. In *The Journal* of November, 1889, there is a long discussion of the Ten Commandments by the editor, in which he takes up both personal chastity and the pure-food laws under the command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

– *Literary Digest*.

**AMERICA NEEDS PIETY MORE THAN VAST  
ENTERPRISES**

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**WILL BEAT TARIFF, RAILWAYS OR BUMPER WHEAT  
CROPS IN RESULTS**

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BROTHER RUSSELL: What think you of this for a characterization of present society and for a prophecy [R4231 : page 262] that seems certain of fulfillment, – and from a Wall Street Trade Journal at that? Very cordially yours,

JUNIUS M. MARTIN.

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"What America needs more than railway extension and Western irrigation and low tariff and a bigger wheat crop and a merchant marine and a new navy is a revival of piety, the kind mother and father used to have – piety that counted it good business to stop for daily family prayers before breakfast, right in the middle of harvest; that quit field work a half-hour Thursday night, so as to get the chores done and go to prayer-meeting; that

borrowed money to pay the preacher's salary, and prayed fervently in secret for the salvation of the rich man who looked with scorn on such unbusiness-like behavior. That's what we need now to clean this country of the filth of graft, and of greed, petty and big; or worship of fine houses and big lands and **[R4232 : page 262]** high office and grand social functions.

"What is this thing we are worshiping but a vain repetition of what decayed nations fell down and worshiped just before their light went out? Read the history of Rome in decay and you will find luxury there that could lay a big dollar over our little doughnut that looks so large to us. Great wealth never made a nation substantial or honorable. There is nothing on earth that looks good that is so dangerous for a man or nation to handle as quick, easy, big money. If you resist its deadly influence the chances are that it will get your son. It takes greater and finer heroism to dare to be poor in America than to capture a battery in Manchuria."

– *Wall Street Journal.*

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