

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

THIS WONDERFUL PERIOD

THERE never was such a wonderful period! We never before knew so much or could do so much. We never experienced an age of equal comfort. No part of yesterday was as glorious as this hour.

The hundred years behind us are jammed and crammed with achievements that out-balance the sum total of progress since the signing of the Magna Charta.

The average mechanic enjoys luxuries that Midas, with all his wealth, could not command. The college freshman has more real information in his little finger than the erudition of the foremost scholar of the Renaissance. We have done more to put existence on a sane, logical and definite basis than the sum total of our ancestors.

A mere hundred years ago even the scientist thought that the atmosphere was simply space – that gas was only a smell.

The first microbe hadn't disclosed his identity.

Metchnikoff's announcement of battling hosts in every drop of human blood would have earned him a padded cell.

The best illumination George Washington could secure came from tallow dips, lighted by striking a spark from flint and steel.

Every piece of fabric was woven by hand.

The only horse-power was four-legged and wore a tail.

The steamboat was still building on the ways of Fulton's brain, and the wheels of the steam engine had only moved in Stephenson's head.

It took Benjamin Franklin two weeks to send a letter from Boston and get a reply from Baltimore.

Abraham Lincoln's angular frame never reposed in a Pullman berth.

Garfield called a 20-day "liner" an "ocean greyhound."

It is hardly a year since the father of antiseptic surgery was gathered to his fathers.

Electric light, trolley cars, bicycles, automobiles, department stores, skyscrapers, 10-cent collars, tinned salmon, airships, penny newspapers, appendicitis and power cranes are infant ideas still toddling in their diapers.

Thirty years ago electricity had never been hitched to a wheel; gunpowder was the most powerful explosive; subways weren't considered within range of possibility.

"Impossibility" is now an old-fashioned word with a definition, but not a meaning. Almost every dream of the past is a reality today.

The magic cities and the fairy kingdoms of your grandmother aren't half so wonderful as the world in which you live.

– *The Cincinnati Post*.

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PRESENT DAY INVENTIONS FOREGLEAMS OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

The above surely is not exaggeration! What thanks should be rising from all our hearts to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift! How energetic we all should be to rightly use present blessings and opportunities for our own good, for the good of our families and neighbors – all men!

Thinking people cannot help wondering why so many blessings have been crowded into our day. There is but one answer, and remarkably few seem to realize it. Some are disposed to say that all of these blessings come as a result of another onward step of evolution! Is this reasonable? Do we see signs of excessive wisdom in ourselves or others? How many people do any of us know personally who have ever invented any great, wonderful or useful article of the many which go to make up our wonderful day?

Examining carefully the personality and history of individuals through whom present day blessings come, we may well be astonished. We find that very few of them have been men of great education, and many of them are by no means great men in any sense of the word, except in the one particular of their invention. It is by no means sure that the prodigies of today are any more numerous than those of previous periods, but our facilities for *knowing about them* have increased a thousand-fold.

Through the printed page the knowledge of an invention, carried before the civilized world, becomes a stimulant to others, furnishing, perhaps a connecting link for another invention. Many of our great inventors tell us that they merely stumbled on their invention. Our successful air-brake patent, for instance, is merely the development of the cruder thought that water, hydraulic power, could be used to operate brakes. A still brighter mind caught the thought, and realized that air would serve the purpose better.

As an illustration of the fact that mental illumination may be along some one particular line, we remind our readers of "Blind Tom." He was noted for his wonderful skill in playing any tune that he might hear. He had no education; in fact, he was almost idiotic, incapable of receiving an education. But he had an ear for music [R5153 : page 4] which made him famous. Can we claim that we or others of our day stand so high intellectually as to be able to look down upon some of the bright minds of the past? Have we

many Shakespeares, many Byrons, many St. Pauls, many Ciceros? Have we many Solomons? or are there many who could compare with Moses?

THE MILLENNIUM HAS COME!

We must look in another direction, if we would rightly understand and properly appreciate the meaning of the wonderful inventions of our day. They are coming to us because we are living in the dawning of a New Dispensation! They are the foregleams of an Epoch so wonderful as to be beyond our most vivid imagination. Evidently God has been gradually lifting the veil of ignorance from the eyes of human understanding. Gradually He has allowed us to see the power of steam – gradually to learn how to apply it. Later He lifted the veil in respect to electricity. Now its marvels are enlightening the world.

Shortly chemistry will be accomplishing wonders for us – no doubt making unnecessary the mining of coal. From the air that we breathe and the water that we drink we shall doubtless shortly know how to separate the elements necessary to furnish us the light and the heat indispensable to the world's progress. Everything is getting ready for the Millennium! Not only is it *coming*, but *it is here!* We are not, indeed, enjoying its full blessings yet; but what we are enjoying is a foretaste of them.

All of our hearts should be attracted more and more to the Lord in thankfulness for His wonderful mercies. More and more we should be studying His Divine Word, the Bible. From it we should be coming daily to a clearer understanding of the Divine Character and Plan. This alone will chase away our ignorance and superstition, and bring us love, joy, and peace.

The blessings of God now coming to the world will center in Christ's sacrifice at Calvary. During the past eighteen centuries, His redemptive work has been the gathering of the Church, and now it

is to mean the blessing [R5154 : page 4] of all the families of the earth, as the Scriptures have promised. Yea, the Scriptures clearly show that these blessings are intended for those who are *in their graves*, as well as for the living.

IS THERE A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE MINISTRY?

Rev. Chas. E. Newlin addressed the regular monthly meeting of Methodist preachers in Atlanta some days ago, and in the course of his address Mr. Newlin used the words: "I can prove by 99 per cent. of the business men of Atlanta that they lack confidence in the real, true manhood of the preachers of the city."

The Rev. B. Frank White, in leaving the pastorate of the First Presbyterian church, of Connellsville, Pa., is quoted as saying: "A man can't be honest in the ministry and hold his job." As Mr. White expects to remain in the ministry, although seeking another field, the inference is that he prefers a station where he can preach the word in a style more in keeping with his conscientious scruples.

The writer is inclined to believe that both of the assertions above quoted are rather broad, if not more or less exaggerated. We believe that the great majority of ministers are honest and are doing all in their power to advance the cause of religion here on earth; we also believe that there are some in the pulpit who have no right to be there. The vision they saw in the clouds, "G. P. C.," meant not to "Go Preach Christ," as they imagined, but to "Go Pick Cotton."

– *South Georgia Progress.*

WHY MINISTERS DESERVE SYMPATHY

Christian ministers deserve considerable sympathy. They are at the present time in a very trying position. It is the conscientious ones who are in trouble. Behind them are the creeds and theories of the Dark Ages, to which they are chained:

(1) By the vows which they took at their ordination.

(2) By the honor of their position in the sight of their friends and neighbors.

(3) By their financial necessities and those of their families.

Ministers possessed of an education know not only that the creeds of the past are in conflict with each other and with reason, but also that those creeds are in conflict with the Bible. Better translations and older MSS. have shown us the fallacy of deductions made by our forefathers. Every educated minister now knows that the Hebrew word translated "hell" in the Old Testament Scriptures, means the tomb – the state of death – the only hell that was known for four thousand years. They know that in our Common Version of the Bible this word Sheol is translated *grave* and *pit* more times than it is translated *hell*. They know that it never means and never did mean, anywhere, a place of fire and torture.

Baptist ministers have gotten out a new Bible, in which they go to the trouble of translating this word Sheol by three English words, "the under-world." This hides the truth from the average mind about as much as the mistranslation *hell* does. But it helps our Baptist friends a little in dealing with Sheol, for of course, in *the grave*, in *the tomb*, is in "the under-world." Of course nobody thinks there is another world of living people in the center of the earth. It is only the dead that are in the under-world – in the tomb.

All educated ministers know further that the word Hades, in the New Testament translated *hell*, is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Sheol, and likewise means the under-world, the tomb, the state of death or condition of death. The trouble with these ministers is that they know that their congregations are not generally aware of the truth on the subject, and they fear to tell those truths lest they should be accused of having practiced deception in the past, when as a matter of fact they had simply taken from theologians of the Dark Ages what they in turn gave to the people, without examining the Scripture proof.

HONESTY TO GOD AND RELIGION MOST COMMENDABLE

Another difficulty confronting these ministers is this: For the past twenty years the colleges of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, etc., have been teaching the Evolution Theory – that man was *not* created in God's image, that he was *not* in God's sight "very good," and that he did *not* fall *down* from Divine favor. It teaches, on the contrary, that he was an evolution from the ape, and instead of *falling* has been *rising* in the scale of intelligence and getting nearer to God's image every year, all the time.

Following the Evolutionists came the Higher Critics, declaring that the Bible is really old wives' fables and not at all inspired. Nearly all graduates of colleges and seminaries for the past twenty years have gone into pulpits, consecrated to the preaching of God's Truth from the Bible standpoint, in violation of whatever conscience they have.

These generally are the great and popular preachers of all denominations. They consider not the vows of their ordination, but practically say, "We do not hide our unbelief to any great extent. We answer questions **[R5154 : page 5]** of the people with a measure of candor, dodging occasionally; and if they know anything about the Bible themselves, they know that we do not believe in its inspiration.

If they wish to continue us as their preachers and to honor us and to pay our salaries, we will continue to serve them. By and by we will get their faith in the Bible thoroughly undermined; and then we will come out into the open. Then we will tell them that we falsified a little for their good, as a mother would tell her babe some fairy story for its entertainment."

The preachers who are in trouble are the conscientious ones who believe the Bible to be true and who have not yet gotten their bearings. They cannot long believe in an eternity of torture, yet are afraid to follow the course of the International Bible Students Association in a thorough Bible Study which ignores the creeds. These poor men know not what to believe, and are in great trepidation when a question is asked them by the people who pay them for religious advice. They cannot dig. To beg they are ashamed. And to tell the whole truth about what they know and what they do not know respecting the Bible they are afraid. They have our sympathy.

Our advice to all such is, "Tell the truth and shame the Devil!" Take your stand for what truth you see, and seek for more light upon God's Word in this glorious dawning of the New Era, in which God declares that He is pleased to give an increase of light on things Divine. "The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked [or hypocrites] shall understand." – Daniel 12:10.

It would appear as if we are living in the time of special testing so clearly foretold by the Lord. Everything hidden would be uncovered, He said. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness. (I Cor. 4:5.) If we would not be put to shame before Him, we must be honest. Who can doubt that honesty, especially in respect to God and religion, is most estimable from the Divine standpoint? None of us have anything whereof to boast. But if we are honest with our God, we can look up to Him, by faith realizing that we are acceptable through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE REMEDY FOR INEQUALITY OF CONDITIONS

"The struggle under the competitive system is not worth the effort," wrote the publisher at Girard, Kan., of a widely circulated Socialistic newspaper, just before he committed suicide. Could there be a more mistaken reason for a Socialist's self-destruction?

This man's peculiar creed had been accepted within a few days of his death *by a million of his countrymen*. A new political party that subscribed to many of his beliefs *had polled* 4,000,000 *votes*. If Socialism is a true remedy for political and industrial ills, *those who preach it should be filled with confidence and hope*.

It is to be feared that it is *not a true remedy*. Human nature is competitive. No matter how it may be governed, it will not be radically changed.

– *N.Y. World*.

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We agree with the Editor of the *World*, that four millions of American voters and as many millions abroad are Socialists from the conviction that Socialism is the proper remedy for the world's difficulties. We agree with the Editor of the *World*, also, that these well-meaning men are deceiving themselves. The only remedy for the inequality of human conditions is the one which God has declared He will provide. Selfishness is so ingrained in humanity that apparently none can be absolutely just when self-interest is in the opposite balance.

God purposes to settle the whole matter for rich and poor in His own way – and His way must be the best way. He purposes to change the hearts of men. In the Bible He tells us that He will take away the

stony heart and give a heart of flesh. (Ezek. 36:26.) This signifies that He will make mankind more tender-hearted, more sympathetic. He will restore that condition of things which existed at the beginning, when Father Adam and Mother Eve were created in the Divine likeness, and declared to be very good and acceptable in God's sight. – Genesis 1:26,31.

The fall drove our first parents from Eden and necessitated the battle for daily bread, against thorns and thistles, etc. Under this influence selfishness has developed and now, after six thousand years, is deep-seated. What a blessing it will mean for God to take away this stony heart and to give the heart of flesh! When that time shall come and that change shall have been effected, Socialism will be a success and surely will prevail throughout the whole earth.

But, you ask, by what mighty miracle can this change of heart be accomplished? How can the whole world be thus converted? The Bible answers that it will be done, not by sudden conversion, but by a gradual one, which will **[R5155 : page 5]** require nearly a thousand years for its accomplishment.

Are we asked, What power could intervene and force this change of heart upon humanity? The Bible answers that it will be Divine Power represented in Messiah's glorious Kingdom. The Second Coming of Christ, once supposed to mean the destruction of the world, Bible students now see to mean the very reverse – the blessing of earth, the taking away of the curse, the lifting of the fallen race to all that was lost in Eden, and the destruction of the finally impenitent.

FOREGLEAMS OF MESSIAH'S KINGDOM

We are not to look into the sky to see Messiah come, but rather to remember that His resurrection exalted Him to the glory which He had with the Father before He became a man. He will at that time indeed empower earthly representatives, to whom the world will

look for guidance and instruction; but Messiah and His glorified Church, His Bride, will be invisible to men – on the spirit plane.

Many of our readers will be surprised to know that the glorious blessings of Messiah's Kingdom will steal over the world gradually, coming through *human channels* – entirely unaware of being used of the Lord. Bible students are so interpreting the wonderful things of our day. They are foregleams or early dawning of Messiah's Thousand-Year-Day, during which He will roll away the curse and shed forth Divine blessings. Whoever can see the matter from this standpoint must be deeply interested in every fresh advance of invention. In another column we refer to some of these present-day wonders which have come in during the last century.

If it be true, as we hold, that these blessings are the foregleams of Divine favor through Messiah's Kingdom, with what patience should all exercise themselves to wait upon the Lord, and not to seek to disturb too radically any present condition which is at all bearable! Who will dispute that everybody today is much better off than his grandparents were – even fifty years ago? St. Paul by inspiration declares that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." We commend this thought to Socialists and every one else.

We do not claim that even-handed justice prevails, nor do we admit that it would be possible under present conditions. People of superior brain power will not use that power for the public good solely. All still have a **[R5155 : page 6]** sufficiency of selfishness to claim that their superior qualities justly entitle them to superior conditions. Why may we not concede this point, rejoice in the blessings we have, be thankful to God for them, and wait patiently for His Kingdom?

Under present (selfish) conditions each workman demands wages according to his skill. Why quarrel with the wealthy, learned, more capables on that score? What great advantages have come to the world thus! Why stop it before God's providence brings us a

better rule – the Golden Rule. "Have patience, brethren," and be ye peacemakers not strife-breeders.

