

THE HEAVENS ROLLING TOGETHER.

DURING the past twenty-five years we have several times called attention to the Scriptures which speak of the Day of the Lord and declare that in it the "heavens shall roll together like a scroll." ([Isa. 34:4](#).) We have pointed out that this means a coming together of the extremes of Christianity, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Other Scriptures show us that the consolidation, federation and unification of Protestants is now in order. This is already well under way and constitutes in the symbolic book of Revelation the "image of the beast"--the symbolic beast itself represented by Papacy. We might here remark that nothing in this word "beast" is specially derogatory or invidious--neither in our use of the word nor in the Scriptural use. Throughout the Scriptures, in the symbolisms of Daniel and the Apocalypse, beasts are freely used as symbols for nations, governments, earthly powers, though never used as representing the divine power--the true Church, the true Kingdom, which shall ultimately prevail.

We have already pointed out a general organization of "the image of the beast" effected in 1846, and are waiting for what in the symbol is referred to as the "giving of life to the image." This life, or vital energy, which the image is to receive shortly, comes from what is described as the two-horned beast, which in our understanding is the Church of England and Ireland. Our expectations, as heretofore set forth in these columns, are that after the federative influences already begun in Protestantism shall have knit the joints and members the more closely the one to the other, the entire federation of Protestants will receive some kind of Episcopal sanction, recognition, or ordination through the Episcopal system, and that thenceforth Protestantism the world over will assume a more active and dogmatic influence in the civil and political affairs of Christendom, cooperating with Roman Catholicism as a sister institution.

These are the two extremes of the heavens or ecclesiastical powers of the present time, and our Lord's declaration that they shall be rolled together as a scroll signifies, not that they will ever become one roll, but, remaining two rolls, will be drawn together by mutual interest and necessity for cooperation. These things must be expected before the outbreak of the great tribulation, which will eventuate in the symbolical burning or destruction not only of the present social structure represented as the earth, but the burning and consuming also of the symbolical heavens rolled together as a scroll. That dreadful anarchy, which will destroy everything of our present conditions and civilization, will in so doing prepare the way for the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom. In view of these things the Lord [R3532 : page 99] bids us, even with such terrible calamities before us, to lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing that our deliverance draweth nigh, and knowing too that our deliverance, our "change," signifies ultimately the deliverance of all the groaning creation from the curse of sin and death now resting upon the race.

"ROLLED TOGETHER AS A SCROLL."

For sometime we have been wondering how this rolling together of the heavens would come about. A few years ago we witnessed a great Romeward movement on the part of the High Church Episcopalians of Great Britain, and were somewhat surprised that Pope Leo XIII. refused to recognize the movement. However, we can see now that the repulsion of the High Church Episcopals has proved the better to keep the two parts of the scroll intact. As a result, the Episcopal Church is yearning for a closer alliance with all Protestants as well as with Romanists. Now we see in Germany what seems to be the start of this rolling together of the heavens, and it is to it that we now call special attention.

The relationship between Protestants and Catholics in Germany, as is well known, has been quite strained for years, but has been gradually easing up. It was Bismarck who, discerning that Catholic influence was inimical to the interests of Germany, secured the enactment of laws expelling the Jesuits and otherwise curbing the

influence of the Catholics in that empire. But with the restraint of Catholicism and with the increase of enlightenment in Germany came enormous gains to the ranks of Socialists. The representatives of the German nation, in their Reichstag or Congress, became divided along religious as well as political lines. The Roman Catholics, under the guidance of their religious teachers, formed a solid party by themselves, and used their power on every possible occasion to defeat the Emperor's [R3532 : page 100] plans, except as he would to some extent purchase their cooperation by granting, one after another, numerous concessions to Catholics--numerous releases from the restraining laws. The Socialists on nearly every question were opposed to the Emperor's policy, and as they have grown remarkably in numbers, the Emperor, in order to have measures passed by a proper majority in the Reichstag, has been obliged to conciliate the Catholic element of his empire more and more, until at the present time he can scarcely secure an appropriation of money for any of his favorite schemes without the aid of the Catholic party, called the Centrist party. It is indeed the pivotal party.

TRADES UNIONS AND RELIGIOUS DIVISIONS.

Another element is unexpectedly making itself felt in the direction of union between Catholic and Protestant in the German Empire, namely, trades unionism. The common interests of the working people led them about a year ago to a confederative cooperative association between the Catholic unions and the Protestant unions. The influence of the Roman ecclesiastics was not sufficient to hinder this cooperative movement among the working men for the protection of what they esteemed to be their vital interests. Altogether matters are so shaping themselves in Germany as to draw Catholic and Protestant more closely together.

Added to this is a recent expression by the new Pope which intimates a fellowship of feeling between himself and the German Emperor, and suggests a cooperation between them for the upholding of Christianity. Since the Emperor is a Protestant, and Germany is recognized as a Protestant country, this expression by the Pope seems to imply a willingness on his part to acknowledge Protestantism as a part of Christianity, and a general disposition on his part to favor cooperation between Catholics and Protestants along lines political, social and to a considerable degree religious. This is one of the most remarkable incidents of our time, and points in exactly the direction in which we have been looking. It points to a cooperation between Catholics and Protestants for the control of Christendom, and once the power has been tasted and the authority exercised we may be sure that it will increase, reaching out after more and more of the liberties of the people and bringing them under the combined control.

Doubtless, some of the first enactments will be against anarchy, social evils, immoralities, etc., and be very gratifying to all lovers of peace and order. Subsequently, however, we may be sure that this power will be exercised against Socialists, as being of a class calculated to disturb the public peace and to unsettle the present order of things. Still further along, all who are dissenters from the Church confederation will come under the ban and under the pressure, with a realization that liberty of thought on religious subjects has much to do with all liberty, and with the thought that the repression of liberty must mean the suppression of all religious teaching along independent lines, or, as we say, along Scriptural lines. When that hour shall come -- probably within eight years--it will surely mean the suppression of ZION'S WATCH TOWER and all propaganda of the Truth.

We may expect that by that time all of the "elect" will have been found, and we will incline to expect such a suppression as corresponding to the point marked by our Lord's parable when the "door was shut"--that no more might go in to the wedding. ([Matt. 25:10](#).) So far as we are concerned these restrictions and suppressions must not move us to an abandonment in any degree of the wisdom that cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, easy of entreatment and full of mercy and good fruits.

Instead of feeling even angry with those who would use restraint, we must be prepared to regard their course as our Lord regarded the course of those who suppressed him, and his answer to Pilate must satisfy us. His

words were, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above." ([John 19:11](#).) If the power for suppression is given by our Lord it will mean to us the good tidings that the Kingdom is very near at hand, and all the more we will lift up our heads and rejoice, knowing our deliverance is at hand, and that just a little further, after the great storm of anarchy, the Sun of Righteousness shall shine forth clearly and gloriously to the blessing of all the families of the earth, under the administration of the Kingdom of God's dear Son, of which, by the grace of God, we hope to be members.

THE POPE'S EXPRESSION ON THE SUBJECT.

While matters have been thus shaping themselves in Protestant Germany a very opposite condition of affairs has prevailed in Catholic France. The French, though still nominally a Catholic country, have lost considerable of their reverence for the Papacy, have expelled the clergy from being teachers in the public schools and will not even allow nuns any longer to teach in their religious garbs. Altogether, the relationship between France and the Pope is quite strained. Naturally enough, this alienation between the Church and the nation which so long has been known as the eldest son of the Church, has led the Pope and his counsellors to look for sympathy and assistance from other quarters, and no doubt this condition of things has had much to do with the greater sympathy prevailing between the Pope and the Emperor William, who is seeking more and more to conciliate the Catholic element of his empire.

Pastor Adolph Storcker, who some time ago was court preacher to Emperor William and the royal household, but who it was thought could exercise a wider influence in another sphere, resigned his pastorate, and was elected a member of the Reichstag, where he is recognized as being not only a champion of Protestantism but also of the Emperor. When recently in the Reichstag one of the members, Dr. Spahn, a leader in the Catholic party, made the demand that Catholics should have full and equal rights and liberties with Protestants throughout Germany and that this should include the Jesuits, once expelled, Dr. Storcker replied:

"Delegate Dr. Spahn has demanded full and equal rights for the adherents of both Churches [Protestant and Catholic]. To me this is not the question at issue, nevertheless I wish to answer his proposition. If this thought of his [of full equality of Catholic and Protestant in the empire] is to penetrate into and win the heart of the German people, then not only a civil but a religious toleration [of Protestants] must take place on the part of the Catholic Church. Recently some one showed me the letter of a gentleman who had interviewed the Pope in Rome. That letter said that the Pope had spoken to the writer of the decay of the Church in Catholic countries, for instance in France, and had used the words, 'I expect, in harmony and in cooperation with Emperor William, to lead the world back to Christ.' [R3532 : page 101] The words in French were, '*Restituer le monde dans le Christ.*'

"This is a grand thought; who would not wish that it might be realized! But to attain this mutual religious recognition it is wholly indispensable to make an end of strife. The Catholic Church must recognize Protestantism as an authorized element of Christendom, and the Protestant Church as an authorized feature of Christianity. Without this there need be no thought of peace. Only thus can we think of placing the world again upon a Christian foundation. I know full well how difficult this is, but since certain things cannot be developed except by transplanting them to a new soil, so must it also be in the religious domain. Otherwise the wild disputations which confuse and devastate our people will not cease."

Here we have not only the suggestion of the Pope that this shall be the mutual work of a Protestant Emperor and himself, but we have also laid before the German Congress the very correct thought that such a union, such a reestablishment of a community of fellowship and interest along religious lines, must mean some recognition of Protestants as the other end of the [R3533 : page 101] scroll, and a bringing together of the two general parts for mutual well being, for mutual defence against the increasing power of Socialism. And, by the way, the expectation of the Socialists is that at their next general election, less than two years hence, their power will be so great that they can practically control Germany's affairs. It is broadly hinted, too, that if

such be the case the Emperor will find some means of overthrowing popular government and holding lines of government on a more autocratic basis--as an emperor, autocrat, by divine authority. As a preparation for this emergency, we cannot wonder that he has strengthened his hands with the Catholic element of the empire and to a considerable degree will be guided by the Pope.

PASTOR STORCKER'S VIEWS ON THE SITUATION.

The above expression by Pastor Storcker in the Reichstag was some little time ago: recently he has made a much more elaborate statement of the same thought, which on December 20th, 1904, was laid before the public of Germany through the columns of *Das Volk*, a journal published under the Emperor's special sanction. By the way, the motto of this newspaper is "With God for the Kaiser and the Kingdom." We have secured a translation of this article, whose importance lies not merely in the phraseology but also in the fact that its writer is Pastor A. Storcker, honorable member of the Reichstag. The article, after referring to the Pope's language above quoted, proceeds to say, under the caption:

"KAISER AND POPE."

"This matter is well worthy of being made prominent for public discussion. For there can be nothing more fatal to our people than bitter strife between the two churches, and nothing more beneficial for a harmonious control of the Fatherland than through an understanding of the matter. That this desideratum is possible is proven by a coalition known as '*The Alliance of Christian National Trades-Unions*,' effected at Frankfort last year. To my knowledge not the least discord has yet come forward in the Alliance between the adherents of the two creeds. Rather the Catholic working men have held their position by an overwhelming vote against the efforts of the Bishops to hinder the harmonious interchanges between the labor organizations, and they have induced the Episcopate to assent to the understanding.

"It is praiseworthy for the working classes and instructive for the others that amid the raging of the poisoned strife a plane of peace has been created upon which Catholic and Protestant have joined in practical work for the combating and overthrow of all opposers of Christianity. Why should not this event be followed in other domains?

"The thought of the Pope, unless its point be lost, can surely mean nothing else than a more moderate Catholicism and Bible-believing Protestantism, which, when the possibility of joint action is found, can do much to deliver Christianity from the condition of unrest and excitement--from apostasy and immorality--from lack of authority and piety.

"The fact that the Pope, viewing the Catholic world, especially France, acknowledges the necessity for such action, is a proof of his perception as well as his energy. The Evangelical [Protestant] world suffers also, but at different points. From different causes, more particularly in the German world, she [Protestant religion] is sharply affected by Socialism and enmity to divine revelation, and similarly needs the restraining and reconciliation of the struggling elements. Of this there can be no doubt in the minds of the friends of the Fatherland, especially such as are disposed toward our social reforms [but not toward Socialism].

"That the Pope did express those very words is certain. The man to whom they were spoken is a prominent man, sufficiently bright to rightly perceive the significations of a remark of such wide bearing, and careful enough to repeat it verbatim. The interesting question is, How deep a meaning did the head of the Catholic Church attach to this extraordinary expression?

"Such a cooperation as the Pope's words imply can never rest upon present religious and ecclesiastical foundations. Catholicism and Protestantism are too much at variance in their principles as well as in their practices, in their doctrines as well as in their lives, to come to an understanding with one another. The

stimulation which the humanity of to-day needs does not lie in that which is common to both Churches, nor even perhaps in a still stronger avowing of matters pertaining to salvation as harmoniously asserted by Rome and Wittenburg in the Apostolic Creed. Our task rather is spiritual mediation respecting the divine revelation to mankind, torn by doubts and denials, confusion concerning Bible history by the laws of nature and casualty. Protestantism cannot alone undertake this mediation, much less could Catholics alone succeed with it [hence the necessity for united efforts].

"What the Pope meant can signify nothing less than a cooperation in the sphere of social and moral reawakening. And that in this some sort of partnership is possible is shown by the already existing equality of the two churches in the social and political economy of our Fatherland and in the cooperation for the suppression of alcohol, traffic in girls, immorality and bad literature. But these matters fail to reach a community of interest and action because the ecclesiastical chasm separating the two conditions prevents this, and the enmity breaking forth ever anew puts again in doubt every good result achieved. [R3533 : page 102]

"For the removal of this difficulty I have made the request that the Catholic Church should recognize the rights of Protestants. In our day, when numerous members of both Churches refuse in principle the doctrines of the apostles, it is senseless to ignore and deny as true Christians such [Romanists] as do hold to the Apostolic teachings. On the other hand, it is unhistorical to refuse to recognize as parts of the great Church system the evangelical Protestant churches, which for the last four centuries have done such great things in Christian development.

"It is self evident that the present strife must continue between the evangelical and ecclesiastical; that a different position than that of conflict is not conceivable between the two churches upon German soil; but the mutual misunderstanding of one another and disregard of one another should cease.

A CATHOLIC CRITIC'S VIEW.

"The *Saechsische Volkszeitung*, the organ of the Catholics in the kingdom of Saxony, considers my demand obscure and unnecessary. It considers, on the one hand, that a discussion of religious toleration does not belong to the Roman Catholic; one could just as well discuss Jews and atheists. On the other hand, the recognition of Protestants as Christians is being continually conceded even by Catholicism. However, the Catholic Church being convinced that she possesses the truth, must, therefore, consider every opposing doctrine false.

"To these replies I would only say that Delegate Dr. Spahn has demanded full, civil, equal rights for Catholics, including the Jesuits; and that, as a consequence, it is absolutely necessary to discuss that which hinders equal rights, namely, the religious intolerance of at least the majority of the German people. Secondly, the discussion is not about Jews and atheists, but about churches with a Christian creed. Thirdly, it matters not that Rome *calls* the Protestants Christians, but that she should recognize and esteem them as such. Fourthly, I hold that Rome should not only recognize the individual Evangelicals [Protestants] as Christians, but the Evangelical Churches as well, as recognized parts of Christendom.

"We Protestants, reared as Lutherans, hold the Lutheran doctrines of the Lord's Supper as the correct one, and that of Zwingli, therefore, as being wrong; but we do not draw from this the conclusion which Rome derives from the opinion that she possesses the truth. One can argue about differences and each hold his own opinion as to which is the right one, yet need not exert a decisive influence upon the judgment of the whole.

"In religious matters we have to deal with the material world and with revelation, both of which, according to their nature, are capable of various constructions on different points. Therefore, it would only be a reasonable expectation, a self-evident matter, if Rome were to withdraw from that harsh point of view [respecting

Protestants as being anti-Christian] with which Protestantism originally viewed Rome [as anti-Christian].

"At all events, the Pope's declaration shows that such a change in his point of view is not far off. Indeed, we have had times in which a mutual recognition of both stand points was evident. I remember that in my student years, the remark of the Catholic Professor Kuhn of Tubingen was repeatedly mentioned as illustrating a changed Catholic view. His words were, "Who of us Catholics could wish the Reformation had never taken place?" I fully understand his position. In Protestant countries [by reason of the divisions amongst Protestants] the Catholic Church stands out as by far the strongest, most favored and influential.

"But the considerations which cause me to urge my demands are not of a theoretical or historical kind, but that expression of the Pope which upon stern Catholic ground loses its significance. A further consideration is the expression of a still greater than the Pope--Christ-- who, in his High-Priestly prayer that all Christians might be one, laid the foundation for the faith of the world. That our Lord in that prayer thought only of the Roman Catholic Church united under the Pope no intelligent Catholic will assert; consequently he must have meant and deemed possible another unity which would cause the world more rapidly to believe in the sending of the Son. A further argument is found in the Epistle to the Galatians, namely, 'If you bite and devour one another, beware lest ye be consumed one of another!'" **[R3534 : page 102]**

The argument drawn from our Lord's prayer, "That they all might be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me," is an illustration of how the most precious truths may at times be so understood and wrested as to support fallacies and to hide their real meaning. Pastor Storcker considers that this Scripture favors the drawing together into a confederation the various Protestant denominations of Christendom in a sympathetic cooperation with the Church of Rome. He is blind to the facts of the case, both as respects the great anti-Christ and the image of the beast; and the great majority of Christendom are similarly blind on this subject. The Lord has indeed hidden his great divine plan from the wise and prudent and makes it known merely to the babes, the humble.

Can we think that it will be possible for Roman Catholics and Protestants ever to become one in the sense that our Lord prayed in this petition-- "that they might all be one even as thou, Father, and I are one"? Surely we can not think so for a moment. What communion hath light with darkness? What fellowship hath wheat with tares? The fulfilment of our Lord's prayer will be on a much grander scale, although all who are his and who will be one with him and the Father will be but a little flock, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom, in joint-heirship with the Messiah.

The Lord's real disciples have been one in heart, in purpose, with himself and with each other throughout this Gospel age, and they are one to-day. With fellowship of heart and with purpose true and real, they are all both justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus, who counts not in their number any of those who are tares, goats or wolves. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." Soon they shall be one in a larger and more complete and comprehensive sense, when they all shall be gathered to and united with the Lord their Head as his Bride and joint-heirs. Then they shall be one in the fullest sense, and then indeed the world shall believe, for the Millennial Sun of Glory shall then shine out, revealing fully the divine character and plan and filling the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of God.

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