

shall tremble, a day when the sun and the moon shall be dark and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Or take Peter's description of it: "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be destroyed." 1 Thess. iv. 13-18, does not set the day of judgment before us, and the Post-millennial theory has no place for that glad part of the word. The coming there spoken of is a quiet one, preceding the judgment of the wicked by centuries. That coming precedes the millennium.

Let us go into a building that a farmer has for housing his implements—suppose the implements in pieces. We have never seen these implements in use. We look around and see wheels, bands, bolts, screws, knives and many other things. We say these are all related the one to the other. We commence to put the various parts together. We are surprised at our success. The bolts fit the holes, and are the right length. The cogs fit the wheels. In a little we get a machine built up, and commence to use it in mowing down the grass. But we have not brought into use all the pieces of machinery that are there. The pieces that are still unused are of the same colour and make as the others. It is clear that we have not got the full idea yet. If the maker of this machinery were here he could find a place for every one of these pieces. He could set up a reaper or self-binder. We cannot do it. We have not got the idea of the maker of all these. There lies the trouble with this modern Post-millennial theory. It has no place for many parts of the word. A sad thing is that it does not use that truth as the apostles did. In days gone by that truth was an engine of tremendous power. In these days it has been shunted off and run under the shed and left there.

X. Y. Z.

A SAN FRANCISCO LETTER.

MR. EDITOR,—In my last letter were given some slight shadows of the darker side of this city viewed, so to speak, in its secular aspect, business and social life, touching crime, intemperance, divorce, etc. Now a glance will be taken at the so-called religious life, work and methods in their salient points. At the outset one feels the utter impossibility of giving any correct or adequate conception of it to those not having visited this city. The task reminds one of the Centennial Exhibition. No matter how much had been read about it or heard from others, no shadow of a right idea of it was gained until visited, and then only after days of careful and toilsome inspection. In the first place nothing can be wider apart than Toronto and San Francisco in the make-up of their people, customs, etc., unless it be the daily life of the average Canadian there and citizen or native here. How can any notion be transmitted even of the situation of this metropolis of the Pacific? Located at the Golden Gate, not on seven hills, but on scores of sand dunes, with its mammoth hotels and rickety rookeries, its palatial mansions on Nob Hill, while at the foot close by is Chinatown with its 75,000 Mongols, herding together like wild beasts in underground dens or cellars, often in several tiers, without any light or ventilation except from the door opening from the labyrinthine passages, like those in a mine, only more narrow, crooked and filthy.

The catacombs of Rome are, in comparison, cheerful, healthy and airy places. Hard by in their million-dollar residences on the hill-side, the railway magnates puff the finest brands of cigars, gormandize on the richest viands and booze in all night carousals over the choicest native and foreign liquors, while a little lower down the same hill skirting it as a fringe or back-ground, the heathen Chinese gulps rice with his chop-sticks. (At a New Year or other festival he may indulge in the rare luxury of dog, hog or rat flesh.) In the "joints," as the opium dens are called, he spends his nights sucking opium vapour through a yard-long cane pipe. These "joints" are underground, with cots or shelves in tiers around the walls, on which the "opium fiend" reclines while smoking or is stretched out afterwards while comatose.

The opium in gum or semi-liquid state is sold, being very expensive, owing to the high duty—in draughts from 5 cents upwards. When used the opium is lighted by holding a bit of it on a long needle or blade in the blaze of a small spirit lamp kept burning beside each smoker. The cots or shelves are not isolated, differing from the urn shelves in the catacombs. The smokers stretch themselves in rows like rolls of goods on the shelves in a shop. All classes of Mongols indulge in the drug as all grades of Caucasians do in the weed; from the serf-coolie to the mandarin and millionaire. But of course not in the same style of caboose.

It would extend this digression too far to describe a tony Chinese resort, or one of the extravagantly garnished liquor saloons for the "melican man" in this city of prodigies.

When the realm of religion is reached then a marked difference is visible between Chinese and American. The former, though he be the lowest menial or in the vilest business—dive or brothel—always keeps up his Joss tithes and vows—while the latter, chiefly the upper ten thousand of money, have long ago dispensed with religion—no use for it. They have advanced in liberality and enlightenment too far to be so bigoted and narrow as to believe the old creeds or theology. In the leading churches, so called orthodox, the Bible, theology and creeds are moulded like wax to suit the advance of the times. Original sin or total depravity, the atonement, as well as the old idea of hell, are explained away in the elastic creeds in vogue. The leading "evangelical"

preacher of Oakland, on his arrival some years since, announced that he was not going to scare the people with hell. A leading one in this city formulated a new creed to suit the people and times. An old fogey among the officers, as a bar to the leveling of old doctrines, proposed, ironically, an additional article, to the effect that heaven should be abolished also as the new creed had obliterated hell. But he was hooted down by pastor and fellow-officers.

In the Presbytery here the vote on Revision of the Confession of Faith was almost a tie, all the leading pastors voting for it, excepting Dr. McKenzie, a Scotchman, and the most able and popular evangelical preacher on the coast. Those who voted against Revision were ministers in the Theological Seminary or without charge, with few exceptions. Those against Revision would not be tolerated in the leading pulpits. It may be necessary to remark right here that the cry for Revision is not raised because of minor or verbal objections in some articles of the Confession (which all admit exist), but because of hatred to Calvinism and kindred doctrines of grace, so objectionable to unconverted or nominal Christians. And worse than all, it is started by the craven spirit in the pulpit which truckles and panders to the outside clamour in the daily press and other organs of Satan against, ostensibly, creeds and dogmas, but in reality against the Gospel, so humbling to human pride, knowledge and culture, and theories, substitutes for real religion everywhere.

Whether we are in the "last times" or not, we are certainly in one of the last places here for real spiritual, scriptural teaching and life. Not only are all nationalities here, but all religions and schisms and heresies. Nay, more, there are some "isms" indigenous or native to this soil. Here the devil seems to have done his best or worst in all old and in some new lines of work. Not only in outside evil, crime, fraud in business, politics and social life, but in the arena of religion his masterpieces are seen on all sides. This city and Oakland contend for the palm as the metropolis of pious cranks. It is claimed that the chief crank lives here. To say nothing of over 160 kinds of secret societies and orders semi-religious, and a conglomeration of pagan mummeries, there are wild crazes and phases of religious fanaticism, marvellous if not unique. Time would fail to notice even the classes or species of wholly sanctified humbugs, consecrated cranks, higher life frauds, sanctimonious blatherskites and pretenders to divine healing, and living by faith in God while sponging on credulous sisters or brethren in their dotage, hence gullible by these tramp saints. These are the froth or scum of the bogus religions, the *debris*, or floating elements attracted by every new craze that may turn up.

One is reminded of Sam Jones' saying, "Of all humbugs, a religious humbug is the humbuggest." That was a general remark—a few of his touches on this city and Sacramento are drastic surely, but true. He said when he struck St. Louis he was near hell, but "if hell is due west of St. Louis, then San Francisco is 2,500 miles nearer hell than St. Louis." "If the devil was to assume the direct personal control of this city, he would not change one official, for all suit him exactly, or open another saloon. It has all it can stand." He said of Sacramento that if the devil was to open a branch of hell there, plenty of the officials would be eligible to be appointed as head devil!

But the biggest sensation of this age and coast is what the daily papers designate "The Trance Evangelist," a Mrs. Woodworth, who came from Iowa in November to Oakland with a large tent, and for some months held "Gospel and divine healing" meetings. The tent, it is said, held 8,000 people, yet crowds went away unable to enter. Each afternoon and night from six to twenty persons were prostrated by the "power," as she called it—meaning thereby the Spirit of God coming on these persons. Some lay rigid for hours, while others swung their arms, jumped, walked, sung, etc. They all saw visions of heaven—hell as well—got messages regarding the present and future. It was a daily or nightly sensation for months. Feeling ran high both ways, *pro* and *con*. People actually and fistically fought both ways, for and against. Hoodlums mobbed the tent and broke up the meetings, the general *melee* or free fight being quelled by the police. Both "saints" and sinners were laid out by the power. Some in judgment, others in conviction, so Mrs. Woodworth claimed. She also asserted that the devil was showing his hand or hoof, too, in counterfeiting the "power" by operating, however, only on sinners as his subjects, also in healing people in imitation of the so-called genuine cures of all sorts of maladies of persons attending her meetings. The clergy denounced the whole thing as a fraud. Various theories are advanced to account for the strange phenomena, some assigning Satanic agency, mesmerism or hypnotism, spiritualism, hysteria, lunacy, excitement, etc. Hypnotism seems the most likely solution. Great numbers of conversions of sinners and of the perfect sanctification of Christians were claimed.

The law was called in to rescue some of those taken with the power, in cases of minors or young children. Some adults of both sexes have been sent to the lunatic asylum. Many others are half-crazed and debilitated possibly for life. The end of all is not yet visible. The craze seemed to reach the climax when one of the woman's dupes, a Norwegian, had a vision foretelling the destruction of San Francisco, Oakland, Chicago and other wicked cities. Toronto has not been named. So none of your readers need tremble in their shoes yet. This is to be accomplished by earthquake and flood on April 14 next, according to the "prophecy."

This may seem an overdrawn picture. Not so. People are troubled about it. A prophet on a bicycle has been speeding along the streets warning people to flee to the mountains to escape the coming doom. Strangest of all, many otherwise sensible and religious people, evangelists and other leaders, believe the revelations, and are preparing to get out by the 7th of April, and are selling their property. Among these are persons of culture, a physician of some note, several somewhat prominent evangelists and workers too. Even business has been depressed by it. Not a few worldly people are uneasy and some unready professors of religion, who are whistling to keep up their courage. The mass of the outsiders is too fast asleep in the arms of the wicked one to be aroused. The mass of professors of religion are, like Jonah, asleep, for the same reason he was so drowsy.

But deeper, more widespread and far-reaching are all sorts of more specious, plausible and delusive errors, heresies, "isms," beyond description. Christian science, mind-cure, Theosophy, etc., with their hosts of dupes or devotees. These embrace church members, men and women—the latter chiefly. It would seem that the bottomless pit had been uncapped and the weird spawn of the infernal regions had come forth like the frogs of Egypt, crawling into every house and chamber. Reading the Epistles to Thessalonians and Timothy one sees a portrait of actual life here, true to the very letter. 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11; 1 Timothy iv. 1, 2; 2 Timothy iii. 1-6.

A more dismal sign of the times is too obvious to be blinked, however much one might wish to ignore it, viz., the absence or mixture of the Gospel in the leading pulpits of all denominations, as gathered from the notices in the Sunday morning papers of the pulpit themes for the day. Take a specimen at random. A leading Congregationalist had for his subject, "Hoodlums." Another, a Presbyterian, "Do infants grow in heaven?" and "Did Christ die for other worlds?" The leading Methodist took the "Devil" by the horns, or as a butt for caricature of the orthodox view of him. Robert Elsmere, Henry George, single tax furnished tid-bit themes for some time for all pulpits, with scarcely an exception.

This city has been recently greatly agitated by two seemingly incompatible things. Those unable to find work have been meeting daily in the afternoons on a plaza in front of the city hall, to agitate for work from the municipality. Orators of the sand-lot order harangued the crowd. Some women added their fiery appeals to the masculine thunder. They claimed that 25,000 persons, including from 2,000 to 7,000 women, were idle and next to starving. A committee of the unemployed waited on the city authorities. After a hollow pretence of effort to assist, nothing came of it. The clergy were appealed to next. A dozen responded. The Roman Catholic Archbishop sent Father Montgomery with a proposal to raise \$100,000, to be expended on the park and his check for \$1,000. The clergy induced the Mayor to call a public meeting, which appointed a committee to raise money. Enough has been secured to employ 1,800 men for a short time. As in London Cardinal Manning won the palm as the champion and friend of the working man, so here the Archbishop rightly gets the credit of making this movement go. The other trouble is a widespread strike of iron moulders, in fact all the leading works are idle. Men are being imported from the east, but are induced not to work by the local unions. The strike is running the fourth week now. It is expected to run for months or to July—till one or other party is crushed. Violence is hourly feared. The foundries and shops are blockaded and fortified by special constables and non-striking men. A bread riot was imminent before work was found. While dull times continue and this temporary work is done, trouble will begin again. There are 10,000 of the idle, thieving, gambling, anarchist class here always, who are ready as now to fan any popular flame to precipitate an outbreak of arson or plunder. It must come sooner or later. As the minister who spoke last Sunday on "Hoodlums" said, "How" is the only question, i.e., what will be the match to start it?

San Francisco, March 28, 1890.

EXCUSES.

No wiser remark was ever made by Dr. Benjamin Franklin than a severe sentence which he once uttered to a young man who had an appointment with him and missed it. Next day the young man came and began to make a very fluent excuse to the doctor for his absence the day before.

"Stop!" said Franklin. "You have said too much already, my good boy, for the man who is good at making an excuse is seldom good at anything else."

An easy excuse made by a delinquent for a flat error or failure to do a duty seldom, indeed, softens the heart of an employer or superior. Of course an account of the reasons for a failure should be given when a demand for them is made, but they should be given simply and briefly, and without any attempt to make the case appear any better than the plainest statement of the facts make it.

A youth who is beginning a round of duties in any place which has any responsibilities may as well make up his mind that his employer will look with some disfavour, if not with suspicion, upon his explanation of failures.

He must be perfectly honest about them, and never slow to admit his mistakes. And there are few employers who are not willing to allow a beginner a liberal number of blunders and failures as a part of his education.