

**VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.
BAPTISTS BOUND AS TRULY AS OTHERS.**

WE quote from the Texas *Baptist-Herald* as follows: –

"Prof. M'Glothlin of the Louisville Seminary, in an address at Savannah on 'Ecclesiasticism,' spoke these timely words:

"Ecclesiasticism tends constantly to increase the amount of machinery and centralize it in the hands of the clergy. Now the whole tendency of the times, among most other denominations as well as the Baptists, is to magnify the importance of the layman in the denominational life. We delight to make him moderator of our associations, our State conventions and even the Southern Baptist Convention. We are beginning to put him at the head of our denominational colleges, and the only reason he does not play even a larger part in our Church affairs is our inability to induce him to do so. There is no disposition among our preachers to usurp authority or even to retain what they have. They labor to bring forward the layman. No ecclesiasticism here.

"But what of the increase in machinery? Here we have a different tale to tell. *The early churches were the only Christian organizations so far as we know. They were wholly independent of each other*, having no connection except that which comes through unity in faith and practice. The same *was* true of the Baptist churches in America for nearly a century. The first Baptist Church in America was founded in 1639 and the first Association in 1707. The movement to organize the churches into associations met with determined opposition, but the work progressed, and by the beginning of the 19th century there were few churches which still stood outside the associations. The chief motives to these organizations had been the

desire to better resist the State churches, to secure doctrinal agreement and to prosecute local missionary work.

"With the 19th century came the great foreign mission movement and with it the need of larger organizations. In 1814 the first national organization, the present Missionary Union, was formed. Later two other national organizations, the Home Mission Society and the American Baptist Publication Society, were organized. As a result of this same movement, combined with the great educational movement, State organizations began to be formed about 1820. The present Baptist organization was completed by the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. ***All, or nearly all, these organizations met with the most determined opposition on the ground that they were not scriptural*** and endangered or destroyed the independence of the churches. It is not strange that there was fear. Never in the history of Christianity was there such rapid progress in organization as in the 138 years from 1707 to 1845. Baptists have existed in the United States for about 264 years, and it must be admitted that we have far more ecclesiastical machinery than the Christians had 264 years after the death of Christ. Out of the simple Baptist Church at Rome has grown the great Roman Catholic Church which encloses the world in its embrace! ***Are we on the same road? We have gone at a very rapid pace so far; will we stop, or will the organizations go on increasing?*** We have rapidly increased our organizations, but two things are to be observed which make the situation less serious than it at first appears. Before the year 294 A.D., infant baptism had been introduced and the churches had been greatly corrupted; and in the second place the local Church had lost its significance and independence. We Baptists, with all our increase of machinery, have stood true to the apostolic conception of an independent Church of regenerate people. The New Testament ideal is our ideal. And herein is our safety for the future."

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We cannot agree with the editor of the *Baptist-Herald* that these words are *timely*. They are quite behind time. Our dear Baptist friends have already lost their *liberty* in ecclesiasticism. For all practical purposes they are now bound as much as the people of other denominations, but they do not realize it and love their chains. Is it asked, How so? We reply that the bondage came through the error of ministerial [R3249 : page 372] ordination. Instead of recognizing, as we do, that "all ye are brethren," and that all anointed with the holy Spirit are anointed to preach, – each to the extent of his talents and opportunities, – Baptists recognized, as additionally necessary, a human ordination. The preachers took this into their own hands, implying that the Church was competent to express God's will in selecting its own pastor, but as "brethren" were so inferior that their commission or appointment or recognition of him would not do without a clerical sanction or ordination.

This *key* in the hands of Baptist ministers has made them the masters and lords of the Baptist Church, – much to its injury. Under their Ministerial associations numerous independent congregations, such as the apostles organized, have been welded into a denomination which these ministers control – creed and all. How so? Because any Church not a member of the Association would have no standing as a Baptist Church. And if a member of the Association, it can have no one for its minister unless the other ministers accept him. Hence, pastors must be chosen from the ministerial clique and must be acceptable personally and doctrinally to the other Baptist ministers.

The preachers, having all the vital power and authority, can, therefore, well afford to push forward their inferiors, the "*laymen*," to committees, chairmanships, etc. The preachers only reinforce their own power by securing the loyalty of the leading men of the denomination, financial and otherwise, at so cheap a price. Evidently the writer scents danger in the future, but just as evidently he rejoices in the Baptist bondage and hugs her chains as very precious. Baptist liberty is an empty boast – as meaningless and untrue as that other

claim, that the early Church sailed under the name Baptist. The Church founded by our Lord and the apostles took no sectarian name. Baptists, as well as others, need to heed the Master's final command of Revelation 18:4.

ZIONISTS IN PERPLEXITY.

At the last Congress of the Zionists the President of the Society submitted two important communications. One was from the British Government, proffering the Society land, etc., in East Africa under favorable conditions, similar to those enjoyed by Canada – the suzerainty of Great Britain being understood. The proposition was favorably considered by a majority of the Congress and a committee of nine was appointed to examine into the feasibility of accepting the proposition. However, a goodly and influential minority stoutly opposed even the consideration of the question, declared that the Society's funds were secured with the understanding that they were for reestablishing the Jews in Palestine and not elsewhere, and that they should object to the use of a single penny in other colonization schemes, no matter how roseate. They temporarily left the Convention as a mark of their strong sentiments on the subject.

The other important communication was from the Russian Government. It distinctly avowed sympathy with the Zionist movement as originally inaugurated, because it hoped that thus Russia might be relieved of its Jewish population and the troubles, disturbances, etc., connected therewith. It, however, as distinctly disavowed sympathy with the later development of Zionism into a national or political movement; because this had a disturbing effect on Jews living in Russia and tended to make them enemies of their home government and neighbors. The views of a Jewish writer and prominent Zionist are interesting, and follow: –

MR. ISRAEL ZANGWILL'S VIEWS.

"Viewed merely on its prosaic side, Zionism is by no means a visionary scheme. The aggregation of Jews in Palestine is only a matter of time – already they form a third of its population – and it is better that they should be aggregated there under their own laws and religion and the mild suzerainty of the Sultan than under the semi-barbarous restrictions of Russia or Roumania, and exposed to recurrent popular outbreaks. True, Palestine is a ruined country, and the Jews are a broken people. But neither is beyond recuperation. Palestine needs a people; Israel needs a country. If, in regenerating the Holy Land, Israel could regenerate itself, how could the world be other than the gainer? In the solution of the problem of Asia, which has succeeded the problem of Africa, Israel might play no insignificant part. Already the colony of Richon le Zion has obtained a gold medal for its wines from the Paris Exposition – which is not prejudiced in the Jew's favor. We may be sure the spiritual wine of Judea would again pour forth likewise – that precious vintage which the world has drunk for so many centuries. And, as the scientific activities of the colonization societies would have paved the way for the pastoral and commercial future of Israel in its own country, so would the rabbinical sing-song in musty rooms prove to have been but the unconscious preparation of the ages for the Jerusalem university.

"But Palestine belongs to the Sultan, and the Sultan refuses to grant the coveted Judean charter, even for dangled millions. Is not this fatal? No; it matters as little as that the Zionists could not pay the millions if suddenly called upon. They have collected not two and a half million dollars. But there are millionaires enough to come to the rescue once the charter was dangled before the Zionists. It is not likely that the Rothschilds would see themselves ousted from their familiar headship in authority and well-doing. Nor would the millions left by Baron Hirsch be altogether withheld. And the Sultan's present refusal is equally unimportant, because a national policy is **[R3249 : page**

373] independent of transient moods and transient rulers. The only aspect that really matters is whether Israel's face be or be not set steadily Zionward – for decades and even for centuries. Much less turns on the Sultan's mind than on Dr. Herzl's. Will he lose patience? For leaders like Dr. Herzl are not born in every century."

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It will be vain for Zionists to hope to establish an *independent* government in Palestine. None of the civilized nations would favor putting the Land of Promise wholly into their control; and if they did God would not favor it. Palestine will be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be filled full" – viz., October, 1914, A.D. By that time the heavenly Kingdom will be in power and the ancient worthies – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the holy prophets – will be resurrected and constitute the earthly representatives of the spiritual and invisible Kingdom of Christ and his Bride – the Gospel Church.

Then Israel will be saved from its blindness (Rom. 11:26,27); and God will "pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication" (Zech. 12:10); and this, their true conversion to the Lord and the Truth, will be the start of the world's conversion (Rom. 11:15), when "Many peoples shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths." – Micah 4:2.

UNEASINESS IN GERMANY.

The Kaiser has recently proposed an increase in the German army, already considered a heavy burden financially and otherwise. The press declare that there will be danger of a revolution if the matter be urged. German government bonds experienced a sharp decline immediately on the announcement.

The significance of this year's parliamentary elections in Germany cannot be fully appreciated without taking into consideration the fact that all men are not equal before the law in the Kaiser's Empire. Certain classes of voters have greater rights than others, and are permitted to cast two, three or more ballots, according to their rank or wealth. Needless to say, the privileged franchise holders are mostly adherents of the government and members of the conservative parties. The official returns showing that the Social Democrats polled 3,008,000 votes mean that they constitute more than one-half of the total number of electors in Germany, and that under a "one-man-one-vote" system they would sweep everything before them. They have gained 900,000 recruits since 1899, and their ultimate control of the Reichstag is a certainty. The Kaiser's enmity seems to help them. He will be forced to change his attitude or assume a dictatorship. He affects to treat the matter lightly, as one of chance, which may be reversed at the next election.

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