

## VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.

### JAPAN A CHRISTIAN NATION.

THE Japanese are such valiant fighters on sea and land that few any longer doubt that they must be "Christians" (?). They are very desirous of ranking with Europeans and Americans, and feel that to the prowess they have shown in war they now merely need to avow themselves a "Christian nation" in order to be all that any "Christian nation" could be expected to be.

The Japs are a very practical people in this as in other respects. They are quite right; they are a "Christian nation" as truly as is any other nation, for there are no "Christian nations" in the proper use of that term. The "holy nation" is only in embryo, only being formed, and will not assume its power and place as God's Kingdom under the whole heavens until the number of the "very elect" is completed and glorified. The best of earthly kingdoms are only "kingdoms of this world," as the Scriptures designate them.

The Emperor of Japan is expected to make his nation Christian by proclamation, and as a preparation to this end public meetings have been held in Japan to arouse public sentiment on the subject, and in these great enthusiasm was developed. We must not sneer at the Japanese misconception of the subject: rather we must remember that some very prominent people in these United States have for years been petitioning Congress that the constitution be changed so as to have in it somehow *the name of God*, and thus to imply at least that this is a "Christian nation." The whole matter shows how gross is the blindness prevalent even among the civilized.

Let no one get the idea that the Japanese are converted to Christ: they are merely bent on getting a good name among the nations; for patriotism is the chief "religion" of the Japs. Various religious

journals are commenting on the situation. The Methodist Protestant Conference received a report on the subject from its Board of Foreign Missions, which said: "The opinion held by some that Japan has become a Christian nation is far from correct. Idolatry, superstition and atheism largely prevail. The great mass of the population has not become impressed with Christian teaching."

*The Globe*, New York, says: –

"Travelers, listing the peculiarities of the Sunrise Kingdom, have often noted that the Japanese were not so much irreligious as non-religious. The habit of personal devotion, as we understand that state, seems almost altogether absent. The Shintoism and Buddhism which exist are secular rather than sacred. Hence it is that the Christian missionaries, although the Government and the people are tolerant, have made little progress, the number of converts being pitifully small. Hence it also is (religion being deemed a public rather than a private thing and one form being thought about as good as another) that the majority of the population would probably loyally obey the edict if the Emperor, for secular or other reasons, should proclaim Christianity as the state religion. The clew to the Japanese character is patriotism. To the demands, or supposed demands, of this everything else is subordinate."

The Boston *Watchman* (Baptist) says editorially:

"Of course, there is no spiritual element in this movement. It does not indicate an adoption of the Christian life, or even an intellectual acceptance of the truths of Christianity. What is proposed is merely a formal adoption of the Christian name, so that Japan may be called a Christian nation and rank with England, Germany and the United States. The Japanese hate the name pagan; they have now no national religion, and there would be nothing strange in their adopting the name Christian; but how much it would really advance the interests of pure and personal faith in Christ is doubtful."

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## TOWARD CHURCH UNITY.

"With the Methodist Protestant church conference enthusiastic for union with the United Brethren and Congregationalist denominations and gravely considering amalgamation with the Methodist Episcopal; with the Methodist Episcopal, south, discussing consolidation with the same denomination, north; with the Presbyterian assembly considering absorption of the United and Cumberland Presbyterians, and with a movement toward the adoption of rituals, one may well believe the churches have caught the spirit of combination so marked in the industrial world. It is no less true of the churches than of the commercial corporations that in union there is strength and in combination there is economy of operation....

"Universal church union has been broached by bold theologians. The time is not ripe for that. It may never come. But the tendency is yearly toward greater tolerance and closer fraternal relations. The time is favorable for wiping out minor distinctions and organizing upon broader lines. The signs are altogether favorable for larger conceptions of religious duty and for more concentrated effort in spreading the gospel. The war of the creeds is a [R3396 : page 212] waste of energy that might better be devoted to the conversion of the heathen at home and abroad."

– *Pittsburg Gazette.*

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The above editorial fairly represents the usual worldlywise view of this question – the view entertained by the majority of church members. All are dissatisfied with their creeds, made in or shortly after the "dark ages." All, or nearly all, regard their creeds as fair expositions of the Bible's teachings – and in thus dropping these creeds as no longer serviceable in this twentieth century they are also practically discarding the Bible. The Lord, foretelling their present

discomfiture and disgust with what were once their spiritual delicacies, says, "All their tables are full of vomit" – full of matters and doctrines they have rejected. – Isa. 28:8.

How different is the condition of those whom the Lord is now specially feeding with "meat in due season," "things new and old." Of this our table it is written, "My table thou hast furnished [supplied] in the presence [sight] of mine enemies." They see our bounties and feel jealous, but refuse to accept the good things we would so freely share with them. – Psalm 23.

Well, soon we will have their "union" or "Confederacy" (Isa. 8:12), and the bitter fruits of Union in error will speedily manifest themselves in tyranny, as during the "dark ages," – though perhaps affairs will never grow quite so black as then.

### **FRANCE AND GERMANY IN OPPOSITE COURSES.**

It seems peculiar that France and Germany are doing opposite things for the same reason. In France the government realizes that the Roman Catholic religious orders (Jesuits and others) are the active agents of the monarchists, who seek the overthrow of the French Republic and the restoration of the Empire. For this reason – to secure the stability of the Republic – the religious orders are forbidden longer to teach in French schools, and, cut off from this revenue, many of the monks and nuns are expected to seek other homes. The strain between the Government and the Papacy is seriously increased, and the threat is made that about the beginning of next year the Government will cease to be Roman Catholic – will cease to pay salaries to Romish priests and leave to the people the support or non-support of their clerical advisers, as is the uniform custom in these United States.

Germany, on the other hand, for similar reasons banished the Jesuits and other orders in A.D., 1872; in 1894 some orders were

permitted to return, but not the Jesuits. This action was forced upon the German government in its endeavor to secure votes for naval extensions – the price of the Catholic party's vote.

Now the Emperor makes the final concession – permitting the return of the Jesuits – in the following terms: –

"We, William, by the grace of God, Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia, order in the name of the Empire and in accordance with the decision of the Bundesrath and of the Reichstag, as follows: 'Paragraph 2 of the law of the 4th of July, 1872, concerning the order of the Society of Jesus, is abolished.' Given at the Palace of Berlin the 8th of March, 1904."

Why this concession, do we ask? It is wrung from the Protestant government of Germany as the price of the aid of the Catholic party in legislation. Furthermore, the Jesuits will be expected to work secretly against the Socialists and in favor of the Emperor. The Socialist gains in late years have been enormous, and their ultimate control of the German Parliament is feared.

### **EFFECTS OF PRESENT WAR FAR REACHING.**

"A dispatch from India a few days ago said that the people of India are taking a keen interest in the Russo-Japanese war and that the victories of the Japanese are hailed with delight simply because they are Asiatics and the Russians are Europeans. This suggests the possibility that the day may come when the people of India will try to throw off the British yoke. In this connection it is interesting to learn that for eight years past, the Hindus have taken great interest in the development of Japan. Since the wonderful victory of the Japanese over the Chinese in 1894, some of the Hindu papers have maintained correspondents in Japan.

"The London correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, St. Petersburg, says that the people of India were **[R3396 : page**

**213]** further interested in the Japanese by the hundred-tongued rumor that in the operations against the Boxers the Japanese army proved superior in courage and in humane treatment of the conquered to all the European armies. 'From this time on,' says the correspondent, 'the whole Hindu mass began to be fascinated by Japan and to place upon her hopes of deliverance. Hindus began to travel in Japan, to reside in Japan and to study in her schools. At present the fashion among well-to-do Hindus is to send their boys to Japan, where they formerly sent them to England. On the other hand the Japanese began to travel through India and to stay months and even years in its cities. The English observed and rejoiced at the sympathy of the Hindus for the opponents of her rival in Asia. The Japs they thought would serve them in good capacity for the estrangement of the people of India from sympathizing with Russia. But recently the English were thunderstruck by some sufficiently eloquent facts. An article on Japan, written by an Englishman returning from travels there, evoked a whole mailbag of letters to him from editors of other gazettes, nabobs, rajahs, etc. They had taken him for a Japanese and expressed their delight that at least one of the future liberators of their country had arrived. Some even sent presents, and offered subscriptions for the prosecution of the secret propaganda. The whole correspondence fell into the hands of the Anglo-Indian government, which could not contain itself in its astonishment. Lord Curzon viewed the affair seriously, but smothered it in order to prevent its dissemination. But there is a plan afoot to prohibit Hindus from attending Japanese schools, and principally the University of Tokyo.'

– *Exchange.*

## **THE GERMAN WAR IN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.**

Germany has on hand a small war with some of her dependent and subject peoples in South-West Africa, in a territory twice the size of her home country in Europe. She already has soldiers on the spot who are unable to hold their own, and they are to be reinforced by

2000 soldiers and 2400 horses, which are expected to arrive at the scene of action about the middle of July.

A visitor from another planet might suppose the white race most noble, most generous, to impose upon itself "the white man's burden" of ruling the darker races. Doubtless the results will bring valuable lessons to all concerned, and prepare the way for Messiah's Kingdom, which will bless the world with an unselfish reign of righteousness, which shall "bless all the families of the earth." "The desire of all nations shall come."

## **ORIENTAL VIEWS OF MODERN CHURCHIANITY.**

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### **WEALTHY JAPANESE ON A TOUR OF INSPECTION.**

Associated Press dispatch. – "A party of wealthy Japanese have arrived to visit the principal centers of the United States, inspect rolling mills and factories of all kinds, look into the condition of the poor, examine the practical working of the laws, and ascertain, if possible, whether religion enters to any appreciable extent into the actual daily life of the people.

"One of the party, a graduate of Tokyo University, said that after most careful examination, absolutely unprejudiced and free of preconception, the Japanese had unanimously and unhesitatingly rejected the religion of the Europeans as something they did not want and did not need."

### **AUSTRIA-HUNGARY PREPARES FOR WAR.**

Without claiming to anticipate any war near at hand, but evidently determined to be better prepared for war should it come than was Russia, Austria has decided that she should devote \$75,000,000 (seventy-five million dollars) to war preparations – chiefly for naval reinforcement. As the Scriptures say, "Let all the men of war draw

near. Wake up the mighty men." (Joel 3:9.) Anyway, it will increase the demand for labor – skilled and unskilled.

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