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VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.
THE OFFICIAL PRAYER OF RUSSIA FOR DIVINE AID
AGAINST JAPAN.

THE *Official Messenger* of St. Petersburg, Russia, published the following prayer appointed by the Holy Synod.

"By virtue of an imperial ukase to the effect that during the present trials of our dear country more ardent prayers should be offered for the victory of the Russian troops, who are worshipers of Christ, over a cruel enemy, full of guile, the Holy Synod pronounces the time ripe for special prayers to be offered in all of the churches in the empire on Sundays and holydays, after mass, beseeching that heavenly aid should be sent to the Russian army, which is sacrificing its life for its faith, its emperor and its country, for long life for the victorious troops and for the repose of the souls of the warriors who fall."

The following prayer has been specially ordained:

"Although unworthy, we implore thee who art strong in battle for aid, and humbly beseech thee to [R3442 : page 307] accept our weapons in thy cause, to give thy Christ-loving army victory, and to permit it to subdue the enemy.

"Send from on high thy hand and touch the hearts of the enemy so that they shall make supplication to thee, the God of peace, who loves his creatures.

"Strengthen us with thy might, defender of the orthodox faith, send thy arrows to confound the enemy.

"Strike them as with lightning and give them into the hands of thy faithful troops.

"Thou who hearkened to Moses, bless the emperor's doings, multiply his glory and confirm his empire. By thy almighty hand preserve his army. Send thy angel to fortify his troops and give them salvation.

"Send peace upon us. May thy invisible finger defend thy servants, show them the right path, forgive them their sins, and bestow upon them the crown of glory.

"Grant the emperor peaceful life and well-being, the fulfilment of his desires and a conquest of his enemies."

The prayer also appeals to the virgin, and concludes by beseeching eternal rest for the dead and for all those who have laid down their lives for their faith and their country.

A secular journal editorially comments on the prayer thus:

"Those who remember the horrid barbarities of the Russian troops on the way to Peking will shudder at the blasphemous bigotry and assurance which calls the Russian army Christ-loving. If they were Christ's they would do his works. Moreover, instead of a prayer for divine guidance, these mistaken ones call on God for reinforcements. They do not ask him to guide the Czar aright, but merely to endorse his policies. There is one tiny clause, evidently an afterthought, which asks that the Russians may be shown the right path, but its position, following as it does an appeal to the Deity to smite the enemy and to deliver them into the hands of the suppliants, shows they don't want this asked-for guidance until they have settled with the Japanese. They seem to forget that the same God made both the Japanese and the Russian."

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Poor, blind priests and people! although nominally "Christians" how sadly they need the true eyesalve! How glad we are for them

and for the whole world that God's promise is soon to be fulfilled: "All the blind eyes shall be opened" – "the blind shall see out of obscurity."

The Apostle says that "the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." We see this illustrated in the present instance. False doctrine is blinding the Russians just as it does other nominal "Christian nations."

That false doctrine had its start in the third century, when faith in the coming Kingdom of Christ began to fade; – when the Millennial Kingdom promises **[R3442 : page 308]** began to be interpreted as signifying the Church's control of world power. Under this error the Papal hierarchy rose into power until it controlled practically every nation in Europe. These nations have since broken away from her, except Austria-Hungary, but the Popes still claim temporal power, assert that they represent Christ and that his Millennial reign has been in process of fulfilment in Papacy.

Russia coalesced with the Greek Catholic Church which, through the Holy Synod, recognizes the Czar as the head of the one and only true Church of Christ. From the Russian standpoint, therefore, the success of Russia in conquering China and Japan means the prosperity and spread of Christ's Kingdom, which ultimately, all-conquering, shall fill the whole earth.

The same error poisons all the remainder of Christendom; for although the casting off of the Papal yoke seemed to mean the overthrow of this error amongst the masses of Europe it really meant nothing of the kind: the error merely took another form. At first each sect of Protestants proposed that it was the Kingdom of Christ and must prevail and conquer the world. But as splits and factions increased the number of these spiritual kingdoms of Christ, and demonstrated that none of them could conquer the world single-handed, a truce was called in 1843, when the Evangelical Alliance was formed. Since then the theory is that "all the sects as well as their

Papal mother" constitute the Kingdom of Christ which must conquer the world.

This thought still dominates, and under it every civilized government which favors the Church styles itself a kingdom of God. The union spirit grows, and soon, according to the Scriptures, will bring to Protestantism and Catholicism, cooperating, the old-time power over secular affairs formerly exercised by Papacy during "the dark ages."

It is time for all of God's true people to discern this error, which in various ways has misled, is misleading and will yet further mislead all those blinded by the Adversary on this subject.

What is the antidote for this poisonous blinding error, do you ask? We reply that the remedy is a return to the primitive faith of the Church; namely, a recognition that all these man-made institutions are pseudo kingdoms – false, deceptive misrepresentations of Christ's Kingdom; that Christ himself will be the great King in that Millennial Kingdom, and that his true saints of the entire Gospel age, after sharing in the First Resurrection, will constitute the Holy Synod or Royal Priesthood promised. How this truth frees us from the blindness which once afflicted us even as it still afflicts others! and how it inspires us with true ideals and the best and most powerful aspirations! The faithful all down these eighteen centuries have waited for God's Son from heaven and for his Kingdom, for which we still pray: "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth even as it is done in heaven."

TOLSTOI'S SERMON ON THE WAR.

"All over Russia, from the palace to the remotest village, the pastors of churches, calling themselves Christians, appeal to that God who has enjoined love to one's enemies – to the God of Love himself – to help the work of the devil to further the slaughter of men.... Christian pastors continue to invite men to the greatest of crimes,

continue to commit sacrilege, praying God to help the work of war, and, instead of condemning, they justify and praise that pastor who, with the cross in his hands on the very scene of murder, encouraged men to the crime. The same thing is going on in Japan.... Japanese theologians and religious teachers no less than the military in the techniques of religious deceit and sacrilege, but distort the great Buddhistic teaching by not only permitting but justifying that murder which Buddha forbade. The Buddhistic scientist Soyen-Shaku, ruling over eight hundred monasteries, explains that, although Buddha forbade manslaughter, he also said he could never be at peace until all beings are united in the infinitely loving heart of all things, and that, therefore, in order to bring into harmony that which is discordant it is necessary to fight and to kill men.

"It is as if there never had existed the Christian and Buddhistic teaching about the unity of the human spirit, the brotherhood of men, love, compassion, the sacredness of human life.

"Stupefied by prayers, sermons, exhortations, by processions, pictures and newspapers, the cannon's flash, hundreds of thousands of men, uniformly dressed, carrying divers deadly weapons, leaving their parents, wives, children, with hearts of agony, but with artificial sprightliness, go where they, risking their own lives, will commit the most dreadful act of killing men whom they do not know and who have done them no harm. And they are followed by doctors and nurses, who somehow imagine that at home they cannot serve simple, peaceful, suffering people, but can only serve those who are engaged in slaughtering each other. Those who remain at home are gladdened by news of the murder of men, and when they learn that many Japanese have been killed they thank some one whom they call God....

"The frightful work commenced is continued. Loot, violence, murder, hypocrisy, theft and, above all, the most frightful fraud – the

distortion of religious teachings, both Christian and Buddhist – continue....

"This evil which is leading men to inevitable destruction has manifested itself with special power in our time, because, having lost all rational guidance in life, and having directed all efforts to discoveries and improvements, principally in the sphere of technical knowledge, men of our time have developed in themselves enormous power over the forces of nature; but, not having any guidance for the rational adaptation of this power, they naturally have used it for the satisfaction of their lowest and most animal propensities.

"Bereft of religion, men possessing enormous power over the forces of nature, are like children to whom powder or explosive gas has been given as a plaything. **[R3442 : page 309]** Considering this power which men of our time possess, and the way they use it, one feels that, considering the degree of their moral development, men have no right, not only to the use of railways, steam, electricity, telephones, photography, wireless telegraphs, but even to the simple art of manufacturing iron and steel, as all these improvements and arts they use only for the satisfaction of their lusts, for amusement, dissipation and the destruction of each other....

"Man has no choice; he must be the slave of the most unscrupulous and insolent among slaves, or else the servant of God, because for man there is only one way of being free – by uniting his will with the will of God. People bereft of religion, some repudiating religion itself, others recognizing as religion those external, monstrous forms which have superseded it, and guided only **[R3443 : page 309]** by their personal lusts, fear, human laws and, above all, by mutual hypnotism, cannot cease to be animals or slaves, and no external efforts can extricate them from this state, for only religion makes a man free. And most of the people of our time are deprived of it."

Again he says: "Christian nations are all in one and the same condition of having rejected religion; and therefore, notwithstanding dissensions among themselves, they are all united and form one confederate band of robbers, among whom theft, plunder, depravity and murder, individually or collectively, go on without causing the least compunction of conscience, and even with the greatest self-complacency, as occurred the other day in China. Some believe in nothing, and are proud of it; others pretend to believe in what they for their own advantage hypnotize the common folk into accepting as a faith; while others, again – the great majority, the common people, as a whole – accept as a faith the hypnotic suggestions to which they are subjected, and slavishly submit to all that is demanded of them by the dominant and unbelieving hypnotizers."

THE NEW PROTESTANTISM.

From the following it is apparent that the cleavage or split which we have predicted is already under way in Germany. Infidelity, masquerading under the name of Higher Criticism, has for a time deceived many and will continue to appeal to all the "tares" and to confuse some of the "wheat"; but the time is at hand when the latter must recognize the deception and not be bound with the tares in their "bundles" or organizations. Alas that the wheatfield is so overgrown with "tares" that the "wheat" is but a small minority. We quote from the *Christian Intelligencer* (N.Y.) as follows: –

"That there is a reaction from the rationalistic and critical character of the Protestant Church in Germany is apparent, not only from the attitude of some of the leaders of thought in the empire, but from the rapid increase and growing influence of an organization known as 'Association Agitation.' Pastor Zeller of Stuttgart describes it as to all intents and purposes a pietistic agitation, and directed against the type of theology that prevails in the universities and in the pulpits. It is a protest of the heart against the head, and is accordingly one of the ever-recurring reactions that put in their

appearance in the ups and downs of the Church history. It is not positively new, but its earliest beginnings date to the days of Professor Christlieb of Bonn, and it has largely been influenced by the ideals of the practical Christianity of England and America, especially of the latter. It is largely a movement of the laity, who find that the pastors, with their intellectual university training and their views, do not reflect the piety and the positive Christian convictions that the 'associations' consider as belonging to the essentials of Christianity. The prejudice against the Church and its pastors has extended so far that in some circles pastors are prohibited from membership or participation in the meetings of the association. The associations are largely controlled by a remarkable religious enthusiasm. The agitation is undoubtedly healthful, and betokens the vital hold the Bible as an inspired authority has upon the common people in the land of Luther. The evil and danger of the movement is in the disposition apparent in some quarters to cut loose from the Church and regard all theological studies as useless, if not harmful."

ST. PAUL MINISTERS DISCUSS PRAYER.

"I don't want to make a sensational statement, but I will say, and I won't qualify it, that in your congregations not more than half the people believe in prayer."

"Rev. John Copeland, pastor of the East Presbyterian Church, was not contradicted when he declared this opinion yesterday afternoon at the rooms of the Bethel association before two dozen members of the St. Paul Ministers' association. Mr. Copeland said he knew that people didn't believe in prayer when they assumed irreverent attitudes during invocations. Only last Sunday he had been obliged to announce that no child would be allowed thereafter in a Sunday school class unless he would bow his head during prayers.

"Mr. Copeland was commenting upon a paper entitled 'The Problem of Prayer.' Rev. R. M. West, of the First Baptist Church, who read the paper, thought that people that didn't believe in prayer

didn't have the proper conception of prayer. 'Prayer,' he said, 'is not a mere petition, a mere asking for something, but it is the spiritual communication between man and God. Yet many persons are so sure that God's will and that Christ's name is a blanket privilege covering everything those people happen to want, that they seem to regard God as an unthinking being whose chief happiness is to do what they'd like to have done. Other persons pray with a view to assisting God in the government of the universe. That's a bigger burden, I fear, than the average supplicant can carry. Sensible Christians will remember always the limitations of prayer as fixed by the divine order, by the sovereignty of God, and by his fatherhood; they will never fail to add, "Thy will be done."'"

"Rev. David Morgan, of the Bethel, agreed that laymen, even ministers, are losing some of their faith in prayer. 'It's a fact,' said he, 'that ministers in [R3443 : page 310] this city have said they didn't want any more revivals, which were only attended by hired girls and by people that didn't pay anything.' Mr. Morgan himself remembered the time when he felt himself hanging over hell-fire by a hair – 'a hair ready to break any instant,' was the way he expressed it. His thought used to keep him awake nights, 'but it doesn't disturb my rest now,' he said."

– *St. Paul Globe.*

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