

## **VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER**

### **REV. DR. GORDON'S WAR VIEWS**

THE *Toronto Globe* publishes the following stirring article from the pen of Rev. Charles W. Gordon, D.D., widely known under the pen-name of Ralph Connor. Rev. Gordon, as Chaplain of the Forty-third Battalion Cameron Highlanders, has returned to Canada, bringing back his wounded brother, Lieutenant A. R. Gordon. His article in the *Globe* follows:

#### **BRITAIN SEES SPECTRE OF DEFEAT**

"Every one has been dutifully saying that this war is a serious business, but no man living, not even Kitchener himself, knew till three months ago just how serious it was. Kitchener knows now. Asquith knows. Lloyd-George knows. Bonar Law knows. The labor leaders of Britain and the labor unions know just how serious, how deadly serious, this war is. And on London streets and in London offices, in the drawing-rooms and at "week-ends," men are asking each other in whispers, questions they would not dare to ask aloud, and are getting answers that sometimes give a queer feeling at their British hearts.

"A serious business indeed is this war. The issue of it the cheerful and irresponsible Optimist, with his eye on the past, when wars were waged by men and not by machines, and when valor, not explosives, won fights, declares to be assured – only one issue is possible – victory to our arms. A pleasant man this Cheerful Optimist, till you notice that his eye is upon the back trail or in the clouds. When you know him, you damn him for being a misleading fool. Every man in the Empire that ought to be listened to sees no hope of victory, absolutely none, and little hope of a drawn battle,

unless conditions be changed, so as to be utterly different from those under which the war has been hitherto waged.

"The first impression one got on reaching London, about two months ago, was that the traditional British cocksureness had been shattered and had been replaced by a paralyzing sense of uncertainty. You caught it everywhere; on the streets, in the hotels, at dinners, in the House of Commons and in the press – even in the press! It was not so much what people said, but what they refused to say. It was the determined and obvious effort to be cheerful that depressed and disturbed one. Everybody was saying to his neighbor, 'Cheer up, things will improve.'

### **"BLAMES WAR OFFICE FOR STATE OF THINGS**

"But everybody, when by himself, refused to cheer up. He was mostly engaged during those lonely moments in blaming in his own particular way, something or somebody, and not the Germans either, but very largely those in the War Office.

"What was wrong? The fact was simply this: That the British people were standing and looking with newly-opened eyes at the spectre of Defeat looming up through the channel mists; a spectre unlike the traditions of our dreams, sleeping or waking, in that it refused to disappear, and wore a shiny helmet. That spectre, unless conditions were changed, could not be laid, but would take on a reality of hideousness and permanency for their children to contemplate for successive generations. There are people doubtless reading this line who pause to say 'Rot.' But the British people are not saying 'Rot' any more, and did not say 'Rot' when their eyes were opened some two months and a half ago. Then the British people sat up broad awake, and with that superb cool courage that faces men up to unpleasant and terrible facts, looked the situation in the eye and began forthwith to change things.

## **"ASQUITH MET THINGS IN CHARACTERISTIC WAY**

"The Government showed the way. With that fine power of sacrifice which is the characteristic of the British statesman Asquith met the crisis, for crisis it was. It was a bitter, hard day for the Premier, the bitterest and hardest day of his whole career, but he was equal to the demand made upon his patriotism. A coalition government was formed. Then the housecleaning began. Among other things the War Office was reorganized. A new department was created with Lloyd-George, that wonderful, great, little man at its head. Up to this time the call had been for men, men, and more men. Now to the nation's ears came a new cry: 'Munitions, munitions and more munitions.' That 'wonder-working little Welshman' was onto his job.

"One question still remains to be answered: 'What is to be the issue of this serious war?' The answer is plain, so plain that even the erstwhile Cheerful Optimist can see it. And the answer is this: If the change in conditions so splendidly initiated be not continued, and with ever-increasing acceleration, the issue is, DEFEAT.

## **"APPEAL FOR MUNITIONS**

"What then is the immediate duty of Canadians? To raise large sums of money? Not so much. Old John [R5765 : page 276] Bull may be safely trusted to look after the financing of this war. But for Canada two things lie in her hand. Listen to the insistent iteration of Lloyd-George: 'Munitions and machine guns, munitions and machine guns!' Let every Canadian wheel that can turn on a shell be set a-going. Let every Canadian workman and workwoman that can get to a munition factory or gun factory get there and with all speed. Shells and more shells! Machine guns and more machine guns!

"Where British soldiers have two machine guns Germans have forty. Shells spent with prodigality – even wasted – mean battalions

saved. We have tried fighting machine guns with men, and have learned our bitter lesson. Canadian shells and Canadian machine guns mean the saving of Canadian men. Seriously, soberly, solemnly let it be said, that unless the Empire can furnish in overwhelming quantities munitions of war, and in overwhelming numbers men of war, the bitterness and humiliation of defeat will be our portion, and the shame and slavery of an infamous and tyrannous militarism will be the portion of our children."

### **SORRY PLIGHT OF THE CLERGY**

Ministers of the nominal churches are finding themselves in a tight place. They are expected to be faithful to their country, right or wrong. They are expected to preach the War as the will of God and the going to war as a meritorious matter that will have Divine reward and blessing. They must encourage recruiting, in obedience to the commands of their earthly king, and in violation of the commands of the Heavenly King, who has directed them to be peacemakers, and to follow peace with all men and to do no murder, either under legal sanction or otherwise.

### **WHEN THE MISTAKE WAS MADE**

Long centuries ago a wrong step was taken by the bishops of the Church in claiming that they were Apostolic Bishops – with apostolic powers, the same as the original Twelve. Later these self-styled "Apostolic Bishops" (Revelation 2:2) concluded that the people need not have the Bible, and that they could simplify matters for the masses by giving them the creeds. They made their first creed in A.D. 325, and afterwards they continued to make "worse and more of it," until the Sixteenth Century. Meantime the Bible was tabooed. At one time it was almost a sure sign of heresy to be found reading the Bible; for this implied that the reader was not fully satisfied with the creeds which the "Apostolic Bishops" had made for the world. It was during this time that the horrible doctrines of the Dark Ages were introduced by our great Adversary.

Then came a change, when the people began to demand the Bible and to doubt the infallibility of the "Apostolic Bishops" and their creeds. Early editions of the Bible were burned publicly, by both Protestant bishops and Catholic bishops, until the Bible triumphed and became too thoroughly entrenched in the minds of the people for this. The period of darkness lasted over twelve hundred years, the Lamp of God's Word being absent. Then came various attempts at Bible Study, all more or less handicapped by the insistence of the bishops that the Bible must be interpreted by the creeds they had made. Nor are many out of the darkness yet. We all feel like saying, with Cardinal Newman:

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on;  
The night is dark and I am far from Home,  
Lead Thou me on!"

Only within the past forty years are Bible students really ignoring all creeds and going straight to the Bible itself for the light of Divine Truth; and correspondingly their blessing is increasing. The present great war, as everybody knows, has been held back for forty years. The Lord's object in holding it back in the past has been to favor Bible study. Thus we read: "I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth...and another angel... cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads." – Rev. 7:1-3.

It was during that long period of darkness, when the Lamp of Truth was hidden from the people, that the "Apostolic Bishops" exalted themselves and separated from the remainder of the Church – calling themselves the Church, the Hierarchy, the Clergy, and denominating the masses the Laity, contrary to the Master's words,

"All ye are brethren," and to St. Peter's words to the whole Church, "Ye are a Royal Priesthood."

The clergy, having exalted themselves, took another step, claiming power as well as authority. The claim went forth that the time had come for the Church to reign. Accordingly, a chief bishop was named Pontiff, or Pope, and he and all of his successors were decreed to be Christ's vicegerents – reigning over the kingdoms of the world as Christ's representatives. As such, they commissioned the various kings to rule their people in Christ's name, thus identifying the various governments of the world with the Church and making a combined reign, spiritual and temporal – two parts of God's Empire on earth, they claimed.

For centuries the Popes had such power that kings dared not dissent, but found it to their advantage to uphold the claim of Papacy, submitting everything to Papal direction. A king might not divorce a wife and marry another without a special dispensation from the Pope. The Pope did not respond quickly enough to the wishes of King Henry VIII. of England in respect to approval of his marriage to his second wife. Then the king broke off relations with the Papacy and started a church of his own – himself the head – authorizing and sanctioning his bishops, and giving them places in the House of Lords; they authorizing and sanctioning him, in return, as the head of the Church of England. Luther did a similar work for German kings and princes, for the Swedish, Danish, Finnish, etc. The Greek Catholics, also dissenting from the Papacy, sanctioned the Russian Government.

Thus we have the fact that present governments of Europe have been told by the religious systems that they are God's kingdoms – sanctioned by the Almighty through His earthly representatives – in some cases the Papacy; in some, Lutheranism; in some, the Church of England; in some, the Greek Church.

## WHAT A TERRIBLE MUDDLE!

"But," we are told, "that is ancient history. No educated people believe those things now!" We agree to this. We doubt if King George really thinks of himself as the head of Christ's Church on earth and the Divinely-appointed Defender of the Faith. We doubt if Kaiser Wilhelm seriously thinks that he is God's special representative to Lutherans. We doubt if the Czar takes seriously his claimed relationship to Messiah's Kingdom. We doubt if Francis Joseph of Hungary takes seriously the thought that he is the representative of Christ's Kingdom [R5765 : page 277] under Papal appointment. Nevertheless the theory is there. It is in the mind of the people.

The preachers of all denominations, in tacitly accepting these conditions and not reproving them and not denying them, have in fact approved them; and they have not told the people that a great mistake was made – that Christ's Kingdom has never been established in the earth, but that it is the next thing in order to be expected. Hence the people are in perplexity. German Christians are fighting as a part of Christ's Kingdom against Russian Christians as a part of Christ's Kingdom and against British Christians as a part of Christ's Kingdom. What a terrible muddle! And who is responsible, if the preachers are not, for such ignorance, blindness, superstition?

Meantime, God's Kingdom is coming, just as the Bible has foretold. The great Time of Trouble is about to inaugurate the new Reign – Messiah's Reign of Righteousness. But is not this latter coming as a thief and as a snare upon the whole world? Is it not true that as the Apostle foretold, only "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake you as a thief"?

Meantime also, are not the preachers of the world, Catholic and Protestant, in a terrible plight? Their forefathers told humanity that the present governments are Christ's Kingdoms. These learned

men, knowing well the fallacy of that teaching, have not corrected it. Now they are in the position of hypocrites. These earthly kingdoms call upon them to raise the money and the troops to defend what they have told the people is Christ's Kingdom. But the Word of God calls upon them to be peacemakers instead, and to so teach the people.

The people themselves are perplexed. But we may be sure that when they come to their senses – and they soon will, in the terrible trouble coming – they will not only feel incensed against the earthly princes who got them into the war, but they will doubtless also feel incensed against the spiritual princes who deceived them into thinking that they were fighting for Messiah's Kingdom – when in point of fact, they are opposing it.

The spirit of war and contention seems to be in the very air that we breathe. The attitude of all Christian people, and especially of all Bible students, should be that of peacemakers, in the home, in the shop, in the store. Let us keep our own heads cool, and thus be able to assist others to think and act coolly, calmly, in accord with the Lord's Word. Everything akin to wrath, anger, evil-speaking and bitterness should, as the Apostle [R5766 : page 277] says, be put far away from us who seek to be followers of the Lamb. These same principles apply in very marked degree to our relationship with brethren in the Church of Christ. With the brethren, especially, we should be very long-suffering and willing to surrender our preferences in the interests of peace, particularly where no vital principles are involved.

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## **RESULTS OF ONE YEAR OF WAR**

In the *New York American* (August 2nd) B. C. Forbes summarizes the effects of the present European War as follows:



"Look on these two pictures – what one year of war has done for Europe and what one year of peace has done for the United States:

"One year of war has cost Europe 2,600,000 of her best human stock, has maimed over 5,000,000 more and has entailed over 10,000,000 casualties among the men in the field – the 'casualties' among homes are beyond computation.

"One year of war has added \$18,900,000,000 to national debts, actually, though not admittedly, bankrupting every belligerent.

"One year of war has paralyzed Europe's trade and turned some twenty millions of productive workers into twenty millions of destructive workers, while the greater part of each warring population is engaged in catering directly or indirectly to the war gods – devils, rather.

### **"EUROPE PROSTRATED**

"One year of war has laid waste vast territories of Europe and ruined and rendered homeless perhaps fifty million human beings, to say nothing of the destruction of much of the world's most hallowed architecture.

"One year of war, in short, has prostrated and bankrupted Europe.

"One year of domestic peace amid the horrors of Europe's war has raised the United States to the forefront of the nations of the earth.

"One year of peace has won for us first place in moral influence.

"One year of peace has won for us first place in financial power.

"One year of peace has won for us first place among the industrial nations of the world.

"One year of peace has transformed us from a borrowing into a lending nation.

"One year of peace has sped us along the path toward becoming the financial centre of the world.

"One year of peace has enabled us to feed and succor millions and millions of innocent, helpless victims of the war – this last not the least notable of America's achievements during the blackest year the earth has ever known. One year of peace, in short, has brought the United States an infinity of blessings, just as one year of war has brought Europe an infinity of horrors and disasters."

### **WILL THE UNITED STATES BECOME INVOLVED?**

The article proceeds to query the future and the possibility of the United States becoming involved. How strange that such a possibility should be even considered, in the light of the fact that all of the nations now at war would be glad to get out of it honorably at almost any price! The danger is seen along the lines of international laws and the rights of neutrals. Armed air craft and submarines have brought new factors into this war not considered in the laying down of rules of warfare, not dealt with in the international laws. International law provides that neutral nations and their commerce shall not be disturbed, except in the case of blockaded ports. Any ship entering such a port may be examined. If owned by the enemy, the vessel and cargo are subject to confiscation. If owned by a neutral nation, they should be exempt as respects munitions of war.

Great Britain has violated the rights of the United States and other neutral nations in respect to these matters. She has not blockaded the ports actually, but has declared them blockaded and

has seized neutral vessels anywhere on the high seas and taken them into British ports, regardless of their cargo not being contraband of war. American shippers have complained greatly of detention and loss. They are sure, however, that ultimately they will get justice – probably when the war is ended.

Great Britain excuses these violations of international law and agreement by declaring that conditions have changed, and that it is to her interest to change her mode of operation. When in the arrangement of international law she agreed to the provision that food-stuffs would be free, she had in mind the fact that she needed to import food-stuffs herself. But later, perceiving that [R5766 : page 278] the Germans might be starved if free shipments were not permitted, she concluded that her warfare against the Germans might be more effective if food supplies were stopped and the Germans were partly starved.

In the international agreement, cotton is not included as war material and is not subject to seizure as such. Great Britain and Germany both agreed to this, because neither produces cotton. Both purchase it from America for manufacture of clothing, hosiery, etc. However, conditions have changed to such an extent that a large portion of the ammunition used in this war is made of cotton. Hence the British refuse to allow American shipments of cotton to go to Germany, either directly or through neutral countries, and have seized cargoes of it – contrary to international law, claiming the *right* to do this because she has the *might* – the most powerful navy – and because she considers it to be necessary to her speedier crushing of Germany.

The Germans also have violated international law, to which they agreed. They have announced a blockade of British ports without having their navy blockading these ports. This is called a "paper blockade," in the sense that it is merely announced in print, just as the British have announced the German blockade in print,

without having vessels actually blockading the German ports. Germany declares that new conditions (submarines and air-craft) justify her in violating the laws of nations and destroying vessels which her submarines cannot take as prizes into her ports. Her attention has been called to the fact that this jeopardizes the lives of non-combatants and neutrals and their proper pursuits. She has been asked by the United States Government to desist from this violation of law.

Germany declares that circumstances have altered cases; that it is necessary for her success and self-preservation that she shall establish a blockade against Great Britain as nearly parallel as possible to the one Great Britain has established against her; and that her only means of accomplishing this end is in the destruction of British vessels, which are carrying volunteers, arms and war munitions of various kinds to Great Britain, intended for the destruction of Germans and their homes. Germany regrets her inability, under the circumstances, to follow international law, to which she has agreed, and claims justification in the fact that the British have violated the same law. Germany has agreed, however, to respect the vessels of neutrals, if assured that they do not carry munitions of war. She calls attention to the fact that she notified vessels of neutrals (in her paper blockade) to keep out of the war zone; and says that if neutrals travel on ships of the Allies their lives and property must be at their own risk.

### **PROPER COURSE OF UNITED STATES**

Regardless of where our sympathies would naturally rest, either by our parentage or by association in life, all must admit that both parties in this great struggle are in dire straits, and therefore under great temptation to violate, as they have done, international law. But how should the United States meet the situation? Would it be the wise, the proper, thing to get into an altercation with any of

these nations because of their violation of the law? If not, how can we protest effectively?

We reply that a dignified and proper course would be to refuse to have any commercial dealings with the nations at war so long as they violate the international law to which they have agreed. We believe that this would bring both of the great powers to time and put a stop to the interference with neutrals and their affairs. Why should the portion of the world that is at peace be upset and inconvenienced by those at war? It would be permitted only because the nations at war are powerful. If the breaking off of commercial dealings with the entire war zone were accomplished, and Americans and their goods were kept outside those zones, trouble would be saved, even if the warring nations did not acquiesce and give guarantee of the observance of international laws.

Business interests cry out against such a dignified course, such a fair policy. They exclaim, "This would spoil the whole business!" We have orders for hundreds of millions of dollars worth of war materials at splendid prices, and we would lose all this. Therefore the suggested policy would never do."

We admit that according to international law the people of a neutral country may privately manufacture for warring nations. We admit that such trade is profitable. Nevertheless it is a *permission*, and not an *obligation*, that subjects of neutral nations may, according to international law, thus deal with belligerent nations. But that there is no compulsion in the matter is evident from the fact that our Government has already exercised its discretion in stopping the sale of war materials to [R5767 : page 278] Mexico, for instance. It has the same right, and without infringing neutrality, to stop the sale of war materials to every nation at war. Such a penalty upon the violation of international law would be, apparently, the only way of bringing belligerents to time.

Besides, our overtures to the warring nations and the prayers of many on their behalf and the sending of supplies, physicians, nurses, etc., to assist in caring for their wounded, all have the appearance of pitiable mockery in the light of the assistance we are rendering for the continuation of the war through permitting American manufacturers to sell war munitions to the warring nations, which are interfering with the rights of all neutrals and violating international law.

In any event, how foolish it would be that these United States should get into a controversy with any of the warring powers, when the whole world is witness to their folly and when they themselves are wishing most earnestly that they had kept out of the war.

We cannot appeal to our nation as a nation of Christians, along the lines of the commands of Jesus; but all consecrated children of God should remember that there are but two sides, two banners, two captains. Christians have enlisted under the banner of the Prince of Peace, who is opposing the Prince of Darkness, whose fall will be accomplished in the great time of revolution and anarchy which the Bible predicts will follow this war, and which, thank God! will be the doorway to the Millennial Kingdom and the great blessing which will then come to the world through it. "For the Elect's sake, those days [of strife and anarchy] shall be shortened" – interrupted (Matthew 24:22); for when men shall have learned the great lesson of what the outcome of selfishness would be without Divine interposition, God's Power through Messiah's Kingdom will promptly take control; and the blessing of the Lord will cause the winds of strife to cease, as did the Master's words on Galilee cause a great calm when the storm was at its height.

Meantime, regardless of the course of the world, it is the duty of the Lord's consecrated people to preserve unbiased, neutral minds – to look at matters from God's viewpoint, as far as possible – to sympathize with all and to join with none – to stand for peace

in action, in word, in thought. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

