

[R5787 : page 317]

## NO NATIONAL PREJUDICES

MY DEAR PASTOR RUSSELL: –

It is after several months of considering and praying over the matter, that I have decided to write these lines: In advance I wish to say that I am writing as a Christian brother, and that there is no malice or ill-will in my action. I would surely not add to your burden. I am going to write of *what appears to me unfairness and injustice* in your articles in THE WATCH TOWER *about the war*. It is incomprehensible why I should find this in a man who is not merely a Christian, but, as I believe, that "faithful servant," of whom Christ spoke.

In many articles since the beginning of the war, now 14 months ago, you have referred to this event, which I consider not only proper, but necessary, as it again shows the accuracy of the Word of the Lord. You have shown that human civilization is a hollow boast. So it is. You have drawn attention to the horrible perversion of Bible texts. To all this a Christian can only most emphatically agree. You have adduced, in showing this, the offenses of Great Britain, the hypocrisy of British and Canadian ministers. This is right. I have read of other perversions by the Bishop of London and other chaplains at the front, which have made me sick to the heart. The more fearlessly you do this, the better.

But even before the war you were in the habit of citing British sins as illustrations of evil. The oppressing of Israel by the Philistines and other Gentile nations is constantly made clear by references to British rule in India, for instance. [R5788 : page 317] The Lord probably does not approve of that rule as it is carried out. Does He approve of American rule in the Philippines or in the Indian reservation in the States? And what about the oppression of the natives in German S. W. Africa and East Africa? The methods

in German S. W. Africa, which finally drove the Herreos into rebellion, were so atrocious, as was the war of extermination that followed, that even so patient a body of slaves as the German Reichstag could not swallow it. Were these matters not equally illustrated or were they perhaps too fiendish?

Although Count von Bulow has publicly declared that war is one of the fundamental principles of the scheme of God, it is not so according to the Bible. It is purely a human affair, and as such I would waste no time to discuss it. But it is not wrong to mention its various features, as you do, in connection with the Word of God. And here, month after month, you continue as before the war. Poor old England has to supply the proof; noble Germany is persistently not mentioned. Could you not possibly draw occasionally upon German crimes and German perversions of the Bible to illustrate points? Is there any doubt in your mind that Germany not only started this war, but even engineered it? Did she really create such a war machine and glorify war, merely for parades at Potsdam? You dwell on the "frightfulness and destructiveness" of this war; but you *never* mention the demon who started it. Why not? With love in Christ,

Your fellow servant,

W. M. HAHNNEMANN. – *Canada.*

### **REPLY OF EDITOR**

We appreciate the above letter, and promptly explain that any apparent unfairness was quite unintentional. We are far from thinking of Great Britain as the worst nation in the world. On the contrary, we esteem the British and the North American peoples at the head of the list for human progress and civilization. American by birth, British by ancestry, it is only natural that the Editor should appreciate highly the standards of his own race. But this does not,

and should not, blind him to injustice and perfidy. If he has sought more to correct these than the evils of other nations, it is because THE WATCH TOWER, published in the English, has less opportunity of reaching or of assisting people of other tongues.

It is far from our thought that the German Kaiser and the Russian Czar are the Lord's mouth-pieces and agents, and their warriors soldiers of Christ. We know that this is their claim. We have already pointed out the fallacy of such claims, and have shown that the delusion came from the Dark Ages. First the clergy separated themselves from the people, whom they styled laity. Having thus exalted themselves, they claimed that the Kingdom of God had been set up and that the Church was reigning. First through the Popes, and afterwards through the Protestant denominations, the kingdoms of earth were told that they were God's Kingdoms, whose duty it was to defend the Church and to oppose heresy. For centuries the domination of the Church has been growing less; but the kingdoms have maintained their power; and doubtless many of the rulers believe that they are God's appointees in His Kingdom.

Each nation in this war seems to believe itself God's favored people, whose ultimate mission is to rule the world. They are all in error. They are all on the verge of collapse. They are all to go down speedily, as soon as Messiah shall take to Himself His great power and begin His reign. As the Bible declares, they shall be broken into shivers as the potter's vessel, ground to powder, as pictured in Daniel's vision, and no place ever afterwards will be theirs; they shall be as though they had not been.

We are not without sympathy for all these peoples; for we perceive that they are all blinded by the Adversary, as are also their rulers. We have no sympathy with their atrocities, however; and we recognize war in general as devilish anywhere, everywhere, and as having a brutalizing effect upon all engaged in it.

We are glad that in this war personal atrocities (aside from the legalized atrocity of war) have not been proven against the British and the French, although substantiated against the Russians, who, besides devastating everything, deliberately shot non-combatants, gouged out the eyes of German soldiers, and put buttons into the sockets, etc., etc. Quite possibly those barbarous Russians were incensed by something that the Germans had done against them. For instance, it is well authenticated that the Germans decoyed a Russian army of thirty thousand into a swamp, from which they could not extricate themselves. The narrative declares that nearly three hundred of the German soldiers went insane that night from the hearing of the cries and curses of the poor Russians floundering and dying in that swamp.

We have no apology to make for the semi-barbarous Turks either, and think quite probable that atrocities reported against them are true. At the beginning of the war, the Germans were charged with atrocities in connection with the Belgians – with destroying an entire town and many of its non-combatant inhabitants. But the answer came, showing that there was a measure of excuse; that the people of that **[R5788 : page 318]** town had in the night in various ways sought to poison, to stab and to maim the Germans, who were in full possession. The Germans, in self-defense and by way of teaching a lesson, retaliated.

We sympathize, too, with the Belgians, for they realized that their little kingdom was suffering from an unlawful invasion on the part of a stronger neighbor. They did not understand the rules of war, and felt justified in doing anything for the protection of their national liberties. They were unwise in this, and suffered.

We do not defend Germany's invasion of Belgium. It was no more right than all the land-grabbing practised by other nations previously. What European nation has thoroughly clean hands in Africa, India, China? Each nation, in stealing the government and

the liberties of other peoples, has been violating the Golden Rule of Justice; but each has claimed that in so doing it not only advanced its own welfare, but really brought greater blessings to the conquered people. And we presume that Germany would make a similar claim. In reality, it is pride and selfishness which is behind all the land-grabbing of the great nations, and not a benevolent influence and a benevolent attempt to bless the families of the earth. It will be Messiah's Kingdom that will really bless all people unselfishly and for their highest welfare.

### **THE REAL CAUSE OF THE WAR**

The present war, as all well-informed people know, has been brewing for forty years. Ever since Germany defended herself successfully against the French and took two French Provinces as part of her indemnity, the French have been bent on reprisal – revenge. With but half the population of Germany a French army has been maintained for forty years on a war footing, sometimes in greater numbers than the German army, which also has been kept in a state of high military efficiency necessary to its defense. Meantime, Russia, as the friend of France, organized an immense army. Well-informed people have known for years that these two nations were intent upon crushing Germany at the first favorable opportunity.

The Germans felt that their very existence depended upon maintaining a strong military organization, capable of combating foes on both sides. Meantime economy, and efficiency and wisdom controlling wonderfully, has cemented the German people and made them a rich and powerful nation. The once rude, clumsy, stupid German youth not only served his term drilling as a soldier, but at the same time, got his schooling. This has lifted the German people out of the rut of centuries and made them one of the brightest peoples of the world. The eyes of the world are only opening to these things which the war is demonstrating.

Meantime, as German thrift and management brought prosperity, German commerce increased, German merchant vessels and steamship lines all over the world were practically the only rivals of the British, who, for centuries, have been masters of the sea. With a growing commerce, Germany not unnaturally craved a proportionate navy. Her ambition for commerce and for a navy have brought on this war. France and Russia feared to undertake a war, and have procrastinated for years. Great Britain feared to lose her proud place as mistress of the sea, and considered it necessary that Germany be not allowed to become a greater rival. British diplomacy encouraged Russia and France, and led them to believe that they would have British support in the war.

Germany recognized that the mobilization of the Russian army in defense of Serbia was the beginning of the national plot of forty years' standing for the destruction of Germany. She realized that if she waited until the French armies had mobilized on her western border, and the Russian army on her eastern border, she would be at a disadvantage. Her predetermined plan in self-defense was that she would smite one of her foes first and then the other. Her railways, etc., had all been arranged with this in view. She hoped in British assurances, yet, nevertheless, was fearful of what came – British declaration of war, ostensibly in defense of Belgium, but really in fear of Germany's growing greatness – in fear that Britain might some day lose her boasted rule of the seas.

While we deprecate the German method of submarine warfare and its exposure of neutrals and non-combatants, we should not forget that the Germans in turn are in desperate **[R5789 : page 318]** straits – surrounded by nations three times their size and these nations seeking, additionally, to cut off Germany's food supplies and thus to starve the German non-combatants. What is there commendable about war anyway, even if it could be staged as a prize-fight with the usual prize-ring rules and regulations!

## **SEEN FROM THE BIBLICAL STANDPOINT**

So, dear Brother, understand us as sympathizing with the purblind peoples engaged in this terrible war – each fearful, each jealous, each envious of the other, and none of them knowing, understanding, the Gospel of the Kingdom – of Messiah's Millennial Reign, now at the door. Understand us also to be fully out of sympathy with submarines, dreadnoughts, armored biplanes and Zeppelins, mines, rapid fire guns, great and small. It is time, however, that the whole world recognized that much of our boasted civilization is not Christianity, nor built upon the foundations of Christianity; and that, therefore, it is giving way to the better conditions of Messiah's Kingdom. Soon the resurrection "change" will perfect the elect Church of Christ, and qualify them as kings and priests and judges of the world. Soon Messiah's Empire will begin its sway. Soon all these Gentile kingdoms will pass away forever. And this is what we mean – the passing of earthly empires – when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come!"

There is nothing kind, loving or Godlike about war. It is fiendish, devilish. The men now at the front are being hardened, brutalized and prepared for the revolution and anarchy which the Bible points out will follow the war. Whoever thinks of war as a kid-glove affair, and expects great politeness from the belligerents, is unwise and will continually be disappointed. Moreover, it is to be remembered that all officers and great men will, publicly at least, throw their influence against all forms of barbarism; but in the rank and file of every army are to be found individuals who continually need watching, that they should not bring their comrades to disgrace. And even such discipline cannot always be enforced when men of the dare-devil kind are needed, and when entire regiments need to be plied with intoxicating liquors in order to make them sufficiently reckless to undertake a charge in the face of almost certain death.

=====