

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER

IT WOULD appear that our nation is entering the danger zone as respects the great war-conflagration of Europe. The war fever seems to spread. Our President, who has been so staunch a friend of peace, is manifestly being influenced by the prevalent spirit of pride and the demand that American rights shall brook no interference. Our President's peace policy has been changed to a preparedness policy. And what could preparedness mean except that, if we had the largest navy, the Government sooner or later would become more proud and arrogant and wish to dictate conditions to other nations, and thus plunge us into war?

From our viewpoint, the United States has a very respectable navy, abundantly sufficient for its own home defenses – especially when supplemented with the laying of ocean mines and with port fortifications, if any of the latter be lacking. What has America to fear? Do Great Britain and Germany, France, or all of them together, wish to destroy their best customer, from whose trade they make their largest profits? Nonsense! All the great countries of Europe are anxious for our friendship, and all of them should have it, with our influence exerted in the interests of their peace and welfare. Imagine an army of a million men crossing the Atlantic ocean! Imagine the number of ships required! Remember that the largest vessels can barely carry coal enough to bring them properly across the ocean without replenishment. Who can imagine the inability of the United States to meet any invading army, if we had no navy at all?

We are not disputing that it would be a policy of reasonable worldly wisdom to be prepared for any reasonable liability of invasion. We are not disputing that it might be, in some respects, a wise policy to enroll the youth of the land and to require all to spend two weeks every summer in camp life. This would be both a

recreation and an education, and with the inculcation of the thought that they are a peace army, and not an army of aggression, the influence might be favorable.

VIEWS OF BIBLE STUDENTS

The foregoing is what we might call a worldly view of the situation. Bible Students, looking from the standpoint of the Word of God, see clearly that the present great war in Europe will, according to prophecy, so utterly wreck all the participating nations that they will have no strength for further combat, no gold reserves, called war-chests, for military purposes.

War-smitten, bankrupted, discouraged, the nations will be many years in repairing the terrible losses they are now inflicting upon each other. Moreover, the Bible assures us that with the crisis of their trouble, coming through revolution and anarchy, the world will be saved from its own madness by the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom. "He shall make war to cease unto the ends of the earth." (Psalm 46:9.) The war-mad nations will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks...and learn war no more." – Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3.

But of course we cannot expect others than Bible Students to see matters from this viewpoint. They must wait for the actual experiences which we foresee through the telescope of God's Word.

Failing to see from the Bible standpoint, yet wishing to carry forward his policy, which so far has been so very successful, our worthy President now seems in great danger of being misled by his past successes in the field of diplomacy. He is greatly endangering, not only the peace of our own land, but the breaking of all restraints of war throughout the world by insisting that Germany shall declare that she transgressed the laws of warfare in destroying the Lusitania. Germany's plea is that the submarines, recognized and used by all nations, bring in a new question as respects international law in

dealing with life. To maintain the respect and good will of the United States, Germany has offered to pay for the lives of American citizens lost on the Lusitania and has given assurances of her intention to hereafter abstain from sinking passenger vessels, even though they carry munitions of war; unless the passengers all be given first a full, fair chance of safely leaving the captured vessel. The attainment of such a concession is a great honor to President Wilson's diplomacy. We greatly fear that he is about to wreck the entire matter by insisting that the German Empire shall say, "We confess that we were naughty."

Our President threatens that if Germany does not acknowledge that she did wrong, he will undertake to punish her by breaking off friendly relations between the two governments, etc. We see nothing to be gained by his course, but much to be endangered. Germany's friendship and willingness to concede to our wishes may be brought to the snapping-point. Their friendly relationships sundered, what would there be to restrain the Germans from going any length they might please in what they recognize as a war for their very existence as a nation? The result might be to give every submarine commander liberty to sink any and every thing bearing the flag of Germany's enemies. Moreover, the animosity undoubtedly would extend to the American flag. Furthermore, if not resented, it would be considered as more or less of an injustice, on the part of many Americans whose sympathies must naturally **[R5852 : page 52]** go, to some extent, with their blood toward their kinsmen across the water, waging battle for existence against a combined world in arms.

To Bible Students we merely suggest that, if the worst should happen, we should remember that God is at the helm, and that thus He will allow human pride and wrath to further work out the great troubles incident to the "Battle of Armageddon" and the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom. Let us remember Jesus' words, applicable to the present time, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look

up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." – Luke 21:28.

BITTERNESS AND PASSION INCREASE

In STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. IV., we have clearly pointed out the things now transpiring, and the worse conditions yet to come. We have said in so many words that this great Time of Trouble will manifest fully that the civilization of our day, of which we have so greatly boasted, is merely skin deep – merely a veneer. Already we have seen manifestations of this in various quarters, and our understanding of the Bible teaching is that these matters, so deplorable, will grow from bad to worse. National animosities will become personal animosities until, as the Bible foretold, there will be no peace to him that goes out, nor to him that comes in, because "every man's hand will be against his neighbor." (Ezekiel 38:21.) Our Savior, in describing these matters, prophetically declares, "Unless those days should be cut short, no flesh would survive." (Matthew 24:22.) But we are glad that He also gives us the assurance that because of the Elect (Himself and His Church in Kingdom power and glory) those days will be cut short – Messiah's Kingdom will be set up.

But we are not to expect the interposition of the Lord's power to stop the great Time of Trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, until mankind shall have been greatly humbled to the dust and shall call upon the Lord in great trepidation. We are far from that condition of things now. Now the Germans pray to God that He will destroy England. And British prayers go up for the victory of their armies and the downfall of their foes. And so with the other nations participating in the war; each praying against its foes; each expecting God's favor and blessing. Will it not be a very different story and will not very different prayers ascend when all nations shall realize their undoing and that the only succor they can hope for from any quarter, will be through the interposition of Divine power to stay the anarchy

of that awful time which the Bible symbolically calls a devouring fire, and which our creeds have all mistaken to be literal fire?

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PREACHERS

The following extracts from the *Methodist Times* purport to be faithful translations of some German sermons recently preached. These sermons remind us of the infatuation unto persecution which once was general between the various sects. We had hoped that all such bitterness and acrimony were things of the past, yet here they are in all their evil malignity. Rev. William Burgess, the Methodist representative at Rome, furnishes the quotations referred to as follows:

"NO COMPROMISE WITH HELL

"Pastor Zoebel, speaking in the great Lutheran church in Leipsic, said: 'It is this deep consciousness of our mission that permits us to congratulate ourselves, and rest content with a heart full of gratitude, when our guns beat down the children of Satan, and when our marvelous submarines – instruments to execute the Divine vengeance – send to the bottom of the sea thousands of the non-elect. We must fight the wicked with every means in our power; their sufferings should give us pleasure; their cries of despair should not move German hearts. There ought to be no compromise with hell, no mercy for the servants of Satan – in other words, no pity for the English, French, and Russians, nor indeed for any nation that has sold itself to the Devil. They have all been condemned to death by a Divine decree.'"

"A WORK OF CHARITY

"Professor Rheinold Seeby, who teaches theology in the Berlin University, preaching in the cathedral of the city, [R5853 : page 52] said: 'We do not hate our enemies. We obey the command of God, who tells us to love them. But we believe that in killing them,

in putting them to suffering, in burning their houses, in invading their territories, we simply perform a work of charity. Divine love is seen everywhere in the world, but men have to suffer for their salvation. Human parents love their children, yet they chastise them. Germany loves other nations, and when she punishes them it is for their good."

"THE DIVINE MISSION OF GERMANY

"Pastor Fritz Philippi, of Berlin, from his Protestant pulpit, among other things, said: 'As the Almighty allowed His Son to be crucified, that the scheme of redemption might be accomplished, so Germany is destined to crucify humanity, in order that its salvation may be secured. The human race can be saved only by blood, by fire and sword. German warriors do not shed blood with a light heart. They look upon it as a sacred duty imposed on them, a duty they cannot neglect without committing sin. Our beloved Emperor hates the horrors of war. Through long years he labored to maintain the peace of the world. Germany has never employed force to menace the independence of any nation. It is really because we are pure that we have been chosen by the Almighty as His instruments to punish the envious, to chastise the wicked, and to slay with the sword sinful nations. The Divine mission of Germany, oh brethren! is to crucify humanity; the duty of German soldiers, therefore is to strike, without mercy. They must kill, burn, and destroy; any half measures would be wicked. Let it then be a war without pity. The immoral and the friends and allies of Satan must be destroyed, as an evil plant is uprooted. Satan himself, who has come into the world in the form of a great Power (England), must be crushed. On Germany is laid the Divine command to bring about the destruction of those who are the personification of evil. When this work is finished, fire and sword will not have been used in vain. The redemption of humanity will be achieved. The kingdom of righteousness will be established on the earth; and the German Empire, which will have created it, will remain its protector.'"

CHRIST'S KINGDOMS AT WAR?

What a pity that the name of Christ should in any sense of the word be associated with such a horrible war, the basis of which is commercialism! What a shame to see nations immorally balancing the lives of millions with the hopes of commercial gain, or territorial gain! Note how Italy balanced the question for three months whether she would join the Teutons or the Allies, finally deciding that the latter offered her greater hopes of an enlarged dominion. She was ready to slay and to be slain, and ready to embargo with debt coming generations, if only she might have more territory. If this same principle were applied to individual affairs, it would mean a willingness to kill our neighbors in order to enlarge our own **[R5853 : page 53]** properties, just as King Ahab of old slew Naboth in order that he might have the vineyard which he coveted.

Similarly vicious is the attitude of Japan. The dispatches told us how she refused for a long time to send any soldiers to Europe; and how then she proposed that she would send 500,000 soldiers to kill and be killed if, as her reward, the French would turn over to her the control of Kozan, China – French China – a portion of Chinese territory which the French stole years ago as a part of their commercial warfare. France is not yet ready to give up her Chinese dependency; and Japan is still waiting for the blood-money before she enters upon her side of the killing program.

But how came we to think of the kingdoms of Europe as Christendom – Christ's Kingdom? How came the various great nations of Europe to put upon their coins the declaration that their kings reign by the grace of God? Many perhaps have forgotten where the matter started. Let us remind our readers:

These kingdoms of God had their start A.D. 800, and are therefore eleven hundred years old. The beginning was with Papacy, which perceived its own great power over the peoples of Europe, all

of whom at that time ignorantly and blindly acknowledged the Roman Catholic faith. While the kings of Europe were comparatively weak, the suggestion came, "Now it must be God's time for setting up the Messianic Kingdom, because now we have the power." The answer of others was, "Not so. The Bible teaches that Jesus will set up His own Kingdom at His Second Advent in power and great glory, and that the Church will become His Bride and Joint-heir by the power of the First Resurrection." The answer to this was, "So once we thought. But we have waited for the coming of Messiah for over 800 years; and now we have the new thought that He probably wishes us to set up His Kingdom for Him, and in His name to reign over the kings of the earth and to convert the world."

They acted upon this suggestion. The Church, that is, the hierarchy, was set up in dignity and power and claimed authority. The rulers of the nations were informed that their continuance in power depended upon their obedience to Papacy – that it was Christ's spiritual Kingdom, and had all power to crown and uncrown kings, and to rule the world with a rod of iron. It was publicly claimed that the Popes in succession were Christ's vicegerent, which signifies that they reigned instead of Him upon His Throne. Our Catholic friends still claim this, denying not one jot of it. They hold that all the kingdoms of the world should bow to the Pope's authority as supreme – as God's authority, Christ's authority.

It was at that time that the kings of Europe were told that, through accepting their honors and dignities as rulers from the Papacy, their kingdoms were kingdoms of God, and that all of these together were Christendom – Christ's Kingdom, under Christ's vicegerent – representative.

Of course we dispute the whole matter. We deny that anybody has ever had the right to set up Christ's Kingdom; and that we still properly pray the Master's prayer, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, even as in Heaven." We are not charging our Catholic

friends with fraud, but believe that they were deceived, as St. Paul prophesied. (1 Timothy 4:1,2.) Surely the things which the Bible foretold respecting Messiah's Kingdom have not come to pass during the eleven centuries of the Papal vicegerency. We read, "Of the increase of His Government and peace there shall be no end." (Isaiah 9:7.) This has not been fulfilled. We read, "He shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth." (Psalms 72:8.) This has not been fulfilled. We read, "In His day the righteous shall flourish," and "evil doers shall be cut off." (Psalms 72:7; 37:9.) This has not been fulfilled. The wicked have flourished instead of being cut off; and it is the righteous that have had the narrow way from Jesus' day until now – a way of self-sacrifice, and not a path of glory.

PROTESTANT KINGDOMS OF GOD

Germany and Great Britain are Protestant kingdoms of God, while Austro-Hungary is the only one engaged in this great war which holds its commission and approval entirely from the Papacy. How is this?

We answer that these kingdoms, once recognized by Papacy, broke away – protested. Great Britain withdrew from Papal control in the days of King Henry VIII., who renounced allegiance to Papacy, but accepted the Catholic Bishops of Great Britain, made them members of the House of Lords – Lord Bishops – and appointed himself to be the head of the Church of England, as the Pope was the head of the Church of Rome. Thus he attempted to set up a new kingdom of Christ, making himself Christ's vicegerent. All succeeding kings of England hold title to being the head of Christ's spiritual Kingdom, the Church of England, and the head of His earthly kingdom, the British Empire. This is the title of King George V. now reigning.

In Germany it is a little different. German princes and kings fostered Luther until his teachings had made a deep impression upon

the most educated Germans at that time. Then they exalted the Church of Luther to be the State Church, and the Lutheran Church recognized the rule of the kings of Germany as kingdoms of God.

Surely we need not dispute with any one the error of these claims. This accounts for the false position in which all the kingdoms of Europe stand today, claiming to be kingdoms of God, while really they are kingdoms of men – earthly kingdoms – Gentile kingdoms. Jesus declares that Satan is the Prince of this world, and that all these are kingdoms of this world – therefore under Satan's princeship. (John 14:30; Revelation 11:15.) Not that they realize this, but rather, as the Apostle explains, they are deceived. (2 Corinthians 4:4.) Not that God gave Satan any authority to rule these kingdoms, but that he is ruling through human weakness; as the Apostle says, Satan "worketh in the children of disobedience" as God works in the hearts of His children of obedience. (Ephesians 2:2.) The latter are the Little Flock to whom the Father will give the Kingdom in due time. The children of disobedience are, in the great majority, absolutely ignorant of the fact that they serve Satan. Nevertheless, "His servants ye are to whom ye render service."

TRUTHS UNTAUGHT – ERROR ENTRENCHED

With the coming of clearer light, did the ministers of Germany and Great Britain, Austro-Hungary and the other countries tell the people the truth about the Kingdom of God and about what mistakes have been made? Nay, verily! They allowed the question to go by default. Hence, today the people of these various countries are impressed still with the thoughts of the Dark Ages respecting a Divine appointment of their churches and their governments, and are not therefore looking to the Kingdom of God's dear Son to bring its proper blessing. Hence prayers are going up from each side of these professed kingdoms of God – sophistries upon the Truth.

How we long for the time when the true knowledge of God shall fill the earth; when the Kingdom of Messiah will have really come,

and the Church of Christ will be with Him as His Bride and Joint-heir; when the Reign [R5854 : page 54] of Righteousness will fill the earth with blessings, physical, mental, moral, uplifting, resurrecting! The world cannot understand these things yet, but will learn them soon. We who have the knowledge of God's Word should lose no opportunity for showing forth the praises of our God and for explaining His great Divine Plan of the Ages for the "blessing of all the families of the earth." Let us be of good courage. Let us be sympathetic with the whole world on all sides of these troublesome questions, realizing that very few have eyes to see, and hearts to appreciate the true condition of things; and glad that ere long the glorious Kingdom of Messiah will bring light, knowledge and blessing to every creature.

OUR FAIR LAND.

Daniel's Image of Gentile governments (Daniel 2:31), pictures Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Grecia, Rome – the ten toes being represented in the present divisions of the Roman Empire in Europe. It is upon the feet of this Image that the Armageddon crash of God's Kingdom is pictured as falling – grinding the entire image to powder. America is apparently not included in this picture directly, but of course is represented indirectly, because our population is from all the countries represented in the Image. The winds of strife are not needed here to weaken the kingdoms, preparatory to their fall, for we have no kingdoms.

However, we cannot suppose that America is more ready for the great Kingdom of Messiah than the remainder of the world. Americans have much of the same spirit as Europeans – the Spirit of the Lord in His saints, the spirit of the world in the others. Here, too, the children of disobedience are so much more numerous than the children of obedience that Satan and not Christ is the Prince. – Ephesians 2:2.

America's first share of the trouble may be in its secondary stage, i.e., revolution; or in its third stage, anarchy. Notwithstanding our blessings and great prosperity in many ways, there is a spirit of discontent – a selfish grasping for future blessings and an impatience at their delay. This is far from the Spirit of the Lord – the spirit of meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, faith, hope and love.

Who can tell that revolution or anarchy may not come just as soon in America as in Europe; as we write, there are rumblings of discontent heard from two quarters; the coal miners are threatening a strike which might quickly disarrange the entire social structure. The railroad employees have formed a union of their various departments – engineers, firemen, conductors, trainmen and switchmen, such as they have never before had. We learn that they are determined to have a strike unless their latest requirements are met by the railroads. And they admit that the railroads are not likely to meet their requirements without a strike. They declare themselves financially prepared for the strike, and that it will take place in the spring – March 1st, say some, others say later. In any event, God's people are to remember the words of the Savior, especially applicable now, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28.) The course of the Lord's people and their counsel to others should always be along the lines of peace and righteousness, justice and love – even though we know that these are not now to prevail. But oh! what comfort and serenity of soul it gives to have the knowledge which the Bible affords in respect to the present times and the grand outcome of the trouble – Messiah's Kingdom.

We remind our readers of the suggestion previously made in these columns, i.e., that they keep a good stock of coal on hand always, and a little reserve of something like beans, wheat, corn, or other staples of food. "The wise man foreseeth the trouble and protecteth himself." – Proverbs 22:3.

