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World War I

The Watchtower Reprints, April 1, 1915, p. 5659

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The Watchtower Reprints, September 1, 1916, p. 5951

“In the meantime, our eyes of understanding should discern clearly the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty now in progress.”

Pastor Russell’s Sermons, 1917 ed., p.676

“The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures. (Rev. 16:16-20.)”

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larger annual sums than ever before in interest. In case of failure the State will have to pass into the hands of the receiver, and in its ruin great commercial and financial houses will be involved. We are all slaughtering one another's customers, and every week of international warfare spreads destruction among the fortunes of individuals. There is even a sense in which one may say the greater the success the greater the embarrassment. The debt of the German Empire, like the German Empire itself, is a new creation. The State debts of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, etc., are, separate and together, much larger. Austria-Hungary, again, is not a unity like France. Suppose either Germany or Austria become dismembered by external force, or exploded by revolution, what becomes of their national or Imperial debts, or of the indemnities which the Allies might hope to exact? The more one looks into the financial and political future of Europe after the war the darker and more obscure do its problems appear. But that is all the more reason why independent men with knowledge and penetration and foresight should exercise their minds upon the political economy of this war. Never has there been such a collision of forces, never so much destruction in so short a time. Never has it been so difficult or so necessary to measure the calamity, to count the costs, to foresee and provide against the consequences to human society. Philanthropists profess to hope that the peace settlement will bring with it a great international reduction of armies and armaments, which will enable the nations to support their new war debt, and so to avoid the bankruptcy court. No doubt the fear of bankruptcy will count for something; otherwise the peace settlement might be expected to breed another series of preparations for another series of wars. But those who know the forces which really control the diplomacy of Europe see no Utopias. The outlook is for bloody revolutions and fierce wars between labor and capital, or between the masses and the governing classes of Continental Europe."

BIBLE STUDENTS AND THE FUTURE

In all the Continental armies our brethren, known as Bible Students, are to be found—not willingly, but by conscription. However opposed to the taking of life, they are subject to the powers that be in everything that does not conflict with conscience. Before the war we recommended to the brethren that in the event of hostilities they should, so far as possible, if drafted, request positions in the hospital service or in the supplies department, where they could serve the Government efficiently; whereas, if they were ordered to the firing line, they would not be obliged to shoot to kill. We have reasons for believing that these suggestions are being followed and that meantime the brethren are using the opportunities for proclaiming to their companions in military service the blessed message of the soon-to-be-established kingdom of Christ, for the blessing of all the families of the earth.

We have exhorted the brethren to strict neutrality so far as the combatants are concerned, whatever might be their natural inclination through accident of birth or association. To Bible Students none of the belligerent nations are wholly in the right, and none of them entirely to blame. Let us more and more seek to take the Bible view of the great Armageddon, of which we are now having the prelude. It is the outgrowth of our civilization, developing in the soil of selfishness. We are seeing fruits which have been ripening for forty years.

We are never for a moment to forget that if the nations were Christian nations, as some of us once supposed, they would be bearing the fruits of the Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, love. How great the mistake! Christendom—Christ's kingdom—has not yet been established. It awaits the Lord's time and the manifestation of his power and great glory in its establishment. These are kingdoms of this world, actuated by the principles of selfishness and deceived by Satan, "the god of this world."

The Battle of Armageddon, to which this war is leading, will be a great contest between right and wrong, and will signify the complete and everlasting overthrow of the wrong, and the permanent establishment of Messiah's righteous kingdom for the blessing of the world. All these things are probably easier to be seen from this side of the ocean than by the dear friends who are nearer to, and more directly influenced by, the war and their national, personal interests. Nevertheless, it is important that we all keep clearly before our minds that this is not the war of the church, but the war of the world with carnal weapons; and that our sympathies are broad enough to cover all engaged in the dreadful strife, as our hope is broad enough and deep enough to include all in the great blessings which our Master and his Millennial kingdom are about to bring to the world.

Meantime, another danger to the Lord's consecrated people lies along the lines of worldly-mindedness—neglecting the things of the kingdom in favor of the things of this present life. Our adversary is still alert. We, also, must be alert as children of the light, children of the day, soldiers of the cross. There never was a better opportunity than now for lifting high the royal banner of our Redeemer. More people have ears to hear and sharper ears to hear than ever before. Thousands are anxious for the message which we have to give them and which they do not find elsewhere—the message of hope, the message which explains that the present reign of evil, and the past six thousand years of the reign of sin and death, have reached their culmination, and how and why they are about to be brought to an end by the great Redeemer, in fulfilment of our Heavenly Father's glorious plans which he purposed in himself from before the foundation of the world.

SELL THE PHILIPPINES TO JAPAN

Two years ago, on our return from the Orient, we sent the below letter of suggestion to the Government with copies of it to the newspapers, some of which published the letter, which read as follows:—

Brooklyn, May 26, 1913.

Honorable Wm. J. Bryan,
Secretary of State, U. S. A.

Dear Sir:—I am addressing you, and through you the Honorable President of this Nation, and the Honorable Members of its Congress, upon a subject which I believe to be of prime importance to our Nation and to the world. I would have preferred to make this communication a private one, but believe that its object will be much better served if it be known at home and abroad that the suggestion comes from a native citizen, a minister and ambassador of Christ, rather than if the same suggestion were to emanate from some Official of our Government or from a politician.

THE WORLD'S PEACE ENDANGERED

A year ago I visited Japan and observed the congested conditions there prevailing, and learned that her population is increasing very rapidly, while every foot of arable land is under "intense" cultivation. Japan's need for room for her overflow population has already led her to grasp Korea, and it is no secret that she longs for possession of the Philippine Islands, and would be glad of a reasonable pretext for taking possession of them. Many broad-minded Americans have suggested that the United States has no desire to acquire colonies in an imperial sense, and that, therefore, the Philippine Islands should be surrendered to the Filipinos. The only objection urged against this move is that the Filipinos are not as yet sufficiently advanced in civilization to properly govern themselves. And those most intimate with the situation have not the slightest doubt that if the United States withdrew from the Philippines, the Japanese Government would immediately take control, and shortly the Philippine Islands would be inundated with Japanese—undoubtedly much to their benefit, as the latter people are more thrifty and prudent and energetic than the Filipinos.

SOME RADICAL SUGGESTIONS

I suggest that the United States Government select from amongst the Philippine Islands one island suitable as a naval base, and tender to Japan the opportunity to take over the Philippine Islands at precisely the same they have cost the United States. This would give our neighbors of the Far East exactly what they want, at no price at all compared with the cost of war. Additionally, it would make them our friends, and surely all Americans desire a world-wide friendship with all nations. I advise that this step be taken speedily, because there is a "jingo" party in Japan bent upon the acquirement of the Philippines, which party will always be ready to take advantage of such trifles as the California Alien Law to incite hatred against the United States and to force their Government, against its judgment, to seize the Philippines.

It is human nature for the Japanese to want those Islands—to feel that they need them. It is practical common sense to say that they can take them whenever they are ready. The United States could not retake the Philippines except at the expense of many lives and thousands of millions of dollars—if at all.

Our Japanese neighbors, flushed with their victory over the Russian Navy, and courageous and proud-spirited, anyway, realize fully their ability to capture the Philippines and probably to hold them; but they do not realize that a war with America would be a very different one from that with Russia—that American pride and valor would spend thou-

net close with A. D. 70, but progressed in various parts of the world thereafter. Quite a good many Jews, doubtless, profiting by their terrible experience, were all the better prepared to be gathered into the Gospel Garner after the destruction of their national polity. Similarly, we may expect that quite a good many will yet be gathered to the heavenly Garner, and we know of no time-limit here.

Incidentally we remark that some historians put the end of the Jewish Time of Trouble as April A. D. 73, which would correspond to April 1918.

Are we regretful that the harvest work continues? Nay, verily; we rejoice and have the pleasure each day of showing forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his most marvelous light; and we delight in seeing how others are being benefited and made to rejoice. Are we regretful of the experiences we have had in coming to this present point? Do we feel like repining that the Lord did not force upon us more careful attention to the parallelism? Nay, verily; the Lord's leadings have been good. Perhaps, indeed, we got benefit from the thought that the harvest work would soon be ended. Perhaps it led us to deeper consecration and greater activity in the service of the Lord, in ourselves and for others. We therefore have nothing to regret.

"Who led us first, will lead us still,
Calmly we sink into His will."

THE BURNING OF THE TARES

In the parable of "the Wheat and the Tares," the Master puts very prominently the gathering of the tares and the binding of them in bundles for burning. We assumed that this burning would not take place until all the wheat had been gathered into the heavenly Garner; but apparently this was

an incorrect thought. The garnering of the wheat continues; but apparently the consuming of the tares will correspond very closely with the division of Jordan. The tares are a class of (often) noble people who have risen up out of the world infused with hopes and aims of a benevolent character, but misled into thinking that they are the church. From the tare viewpoint, the wheat are an abnormal growth, a peculiar people, few in number, and not held in high esteem. The smiting of the waters will reveal the truth in respect to what is the real church of Christ, and what are imitations; and the honest-minded tare class will be undecieved, and cease to longer pretend that they are the church of Christ—thus they will be burned or cease to be as tares, continuing however as noble-minded worldly people and will have a share in the general blessings of the "sweet by and by" under the kingdom, for which we still pray.

Our present attitude, dear brethren, should be one of great gratitude toward God, increasing appreciation of the beautiful truth which he has granted us the privilege of seeing and being identified with, and increasing zeal in helping to bring that truth to the knowledge of others. In the meantime, our eyes of understanding should discern clearly the Battle of the Great Day of God Almighty now in progress, and our faith, guiding our eyes of understanding through the Word, should enable us to see the glorious outcome—Messiah's kingdom. Furthermore, we can be fully content not to know how long the harvest work will last—content that the great Captain, who by divine appointment has the entire matter in charge, is too wise to err, and has promised us that all of our experiences shall work together for our good if we love him and are of "the called ones according to his purpose," seeking to make our calling and election sure.

GREATER SUFFERINGS—GREATER REWARD

SEPTEMBER 24.—2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-18.

FAINT NOT IN TRIBULATION—THE NATURAL MAN PERISHES—THE NEW CREATURE GROWS—WHAT ARE LIGHT AFFLICTIONS?—WHAT IS THEIR DURATION?—WHAT IS THEIR OBJECT?—HOW SHALL WE ATTAIN THIS OBJECT?
"The things which are not seen are eternal."—Verse 18.

What great Christian courage St. Paul's words and deeds manifest! He that endured so many hardships, a veritable thrashing-machine experience, nevertheless writes: "We faint not; for though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Ah, that was the secret of the matter—the renewing of the inward man, the new creature! The tribulations of the outward man would have been terrible experiences indeed had there been no inward man to take a different view of matters and to learn valuable lessons and experiences from the outward man's tribulations. The inward man had God's assurance that if God were for him the opposition of all others would be as nothing. He had the assurance that God would overrule all of his experiences for his highest welfare. He had the assurance of the Lord, too, that the glories of the future would be proportionate to the trials faithfully endured.

FELLOWSHIP IN CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS

Ah, here we have the secret of the Apostle's great zeal for God, for the church, for the truth. He endured as seeing him who is invisible to natural eyes. (Hebrews 11:27) St. Paul lived a double life, in the sense that to man he was Saul of Tarsus, but in reality he was Paul, the servant of God, the new creature in Christ Jesus. The world knew him not; but he knew himself, knew his God; and he was energized by the power divine and by the message of God's Word, which spoke to him peace and relationship to God through Christ, and also informed him of the glory, honor and immortality awaiting all the faithful ones at the end of the way.

And this secret of the Apostle's own experience is an open one to all of God's family of spirit-begotten children who faithfully are continuing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus and to be taught of him through the Word. We do not have so large a manifestation of divine favor as had Jesus, the Head of the church, and the apostles, the foremost members of the church; but still we have in a general way the same favors of God, the same promises of God, the same inspiring hopes which they had. Let us not forget the Apostle's endurance when we read his words: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Corinthians 4:17.

The Apostle gives the same thought when, writing about the resurrection, he declares how it will be with the church in the resurrection. All the faithful will be glorified, honored, blessed, perfected—not blessed in the same degree, however; but, "As star differeth from star in glory, so also it will be in the resurrection of the dead." (1 Corinthians 15:41, 42)

The same lesson is given us in Daniel's prophecy, where the resurrection is referred to and the resurrected ones are illustrated by the stars, whose beauty and brilliancy vary.—Daniel 12:1-3.

The Apostle's argument was that if the sufferings of Christ, in the divine arrangement, are to measure the coming glories of Christ, then he desired to be a participator with the Lord in the present sufferings in order that he might also be a participator with him in the coming glories. Instead, therefore, of saying to himself or to others: "I am doing more than my share of the Gospel work; and some others of you should come and help me, and give me a rest," St. Paul took the other view. He declared himself willing and anxious to fill up as much as possible that which was behind of the afflictions of Christ. (Colossians 1:24) He counted it all joy to have tribulation, knowing that tribulation would work out the fruits of the holy Spirit in his character, and thus prepare him for the kingdom. (Romans 5:3-5) Incidentally, we remember the assurance of the Bible—that only if we suffer with Christ shall we reign with him, and that only those who become dead with him shall live with him.

THE SECRET OF HIS FAITHFULNESS

Many find it easy to make a start in the Christian way when everything is favorable. Some run briskly for a while, and then grow weary in well-doing. But the Apostle seemed never to weary. He was always on the alert, in season and out of season, so far as his own convenience was concerned. He was ready to preach the Gospel anywhere, everywhere, to all who had the hearing ear. The secret of his perseverance is given us in Verse 18, in the words: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

What do these words mean? They mean that St. Paul had spiritual eyesight. He indeed saw earthly attractions, but they lost their drawing power upon him because of his spiritual sight—his perception of the things unseen. With the eye of faith he saw the heavenly Father, the glorified Lord Jesus, the heavenly hosts, the coming kingdom of glory, honor and immortality. By faith he saw the great Millennial kingdom spreading out before him, and heard the divine invitation to become an heir in that kingdom, to be joined in heirship with the Master and Redeemer. He had accepted his invitation. He had enlisted under the banner of the Master; and he realized that everything else in the world was of practically no value in comparison with these eternal things which God had promised. His confidence was in the Word of God.

are bound, not for Purgatory, but for eternal torment. So a devout Catholic has great fears of being a heretic. Thus we find but comparatively few Catholics even today who dare to read the Bible.

How much trouble all this nonsense has caused! The Bible foretold it all. The Apostle Paul declared that "many would depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils." (1 Tim. 4:1-3; Acts 20:29, 30.) It is upon these seducing spirits that we lay the blame—Satan and his fallen angels. We are not claiming that our Catholic and Episcopalian friends have intended to perpetrate a fraud, nor any of the others. But with the Apostle Paul we claim that they were deceived by the great Adversary. We are beginning to see that a God of Love would never have such a Plan for His creatures as is taught by the creeds. We are living in a day when more light than ever before is due upon God's Word. We are living at the dawning of the glorious New Dispensation. We are nearing the time when, according to the Bible, "all the blind eyes shall be opened and the deaf ears unstopped." Thank God!

ARMAGEDDON NEAR—GOD'S KINGDOM TO FOLLOW

The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures. (Rev. 16:16-20.) It will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all the systems of error which have so long oppressed the people of God and deluded the world. All iniquity of every kind will go down. The glorious Kingdom of Messiah is about to be set up in the earth, for the deliverance of the world and the establishment of permanent righteousness. We believe the present war cannot last much longer until revolution shall break out. The nations are rapidly impoverishing themselves.

Great Britain has already expended thirteen billions of dollars in the war, and her minister of finance says that another year of war will require nine billions more. That will make twenty-two billions. At five per cent interest