

WHY WE ARE AT WAR WITH GERMANY.

When the founders of the Republic wrote the preamble to its fundamental law; the phrase, "to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity" doubtless expressed the highest and purest purpose possible to their conception.

To secure those blessings they no doubt dreamed that nothing more would ever be needed than to repel invasion of our soil.

Separated as we were, by broad oceans, from the rest of the world; the conduct of other Nations seemed no concern of ours. But in a few brief years we were compelled to enlarge our ideas of self-preservation. The pirates of the Mediterranean in an effort to levy tribute on our commerce, all but swept our shipping from the seas; called forth that American ultimatum from which we have never withdrawn, "Millions for defence; not one cent for tribute"; and plunged us into war with Tripoli. And so for almost a century, the idea gradually grew that even to maintain our own freedom we must be concerned about the policies and practices of other nations beside our own. Gradually the cables that spanned the oceans and the steamships that plowed the main, made America next-door neighbor to all the world. We could no longer live or die to ourselves alone.

The first great National awakening came just twenty years ago. We had always emphasized "our" liberty, and "our" posterity. But after silently watching the terrific struggle and heartless oppression of the Pearl of the Antilles for half a century; our country finally arose to the broader patriotism, and declared that "The people of Cuba are and of right ought to be, free and independent".

#2.

Thus for the first time the innate antagonism between tyranny and freedom;--the inevitable conflict between autocracy and Democracy, became recognized,-- and the fact that "we and our posterity" could not remain free while those around us were slaves, became impressed on our consciousness.

Every Republic that has ever existed has been a menace to autocracy, and when this New Republic was formed, it was so recognized by every monarchy of the Old World.

The Great Lafayette caught some inkling of the truth that God made it his duty to leave a home of luxury and peace, and come to the wilds of America to fight for your liberty and mine; and Woodrow Wilson also, when paraphrasing Lincoln, he declared "The world cannot exist--half slave, and half free." Greater still was the grasp of the artist,--the concept of the sculptor; from whose brain sprang that figure of speech in steel and stone that stands at the entrance to our greatest harbor,--the statue of Liberty enlightening the world;--for the fires of freedom that blazed up on these shores have ^{spread} shined into the farthest corners of the darkest continents of Christendom-- fill the whole race has seen the light and is struggling toward the dawn. But a few months since, Russia was the worst of autocracies,--while she has not yet achieved law and order, she is today one of the most advanced democracies in the world.

This world-wide war is but the effort of the whole race to achieve its freedom from oppression.

In such a contest, that is to decide the destiny of all nations for no telling how many ages to come, America cannot be a disinterested witness. Her freedom and her

#3.

strength; her prosperity and her power are all God-given;--and for a purpose. Even as He has made her the example and repository of human freedom;-- so must she therefore be the champion and protector of the freedom of the world.

More than to fight and win this war; is America needed in it to preside over the council of peace that will come at its close:--to insure ~~that~~ that peace will be just and honorable, and therefore lasting.

And so I conclude that it is not to protect our commerce from attack: tho that were a just cause for war it is true. It is not to avenge the sinking of the Lusitania or its hundred of kindred disasters; appalling as they have been to the minds and hearts of men. It is not to punish the crimes of the Kaiser in torn and bleeding Belgium where humanity was forbidden by law, and the compassion of Edith Cavell made a crime punishable by death. It is true that these things have served to arouse us from our slumber just as the destruction of the Battleship Maine, awakened us to conditions in Cuba; but still these things do not constitute our cause of war today.

~~Four~~ ^{Four} or five thousand years ago; from amid the smoke and lightnings of Sinai there came forth three fundamental commands; like pillars of marble, upon which all the progress, peace and prosperity of all human society has since been founded. They are: "Thou shalt not lie"; "Thou shalt not steal"; "Thou shalt not kill". While these have found occasional violation in all ages and all climes, by some few of all nations; yet have all men everywhere and at all times admitted their sanctity and binding force, until now. But in these latter days, in ^{unholy} alliance, Prussia and

#4.

Turkey; Mammon and Mohamedanism;--Anti-Christ and Infidelity, have assailed all three, and have denied to the rest of mankind all sanctity of plighted word,--all right to property,--the sacredness of human liberty or even human life.

Keeping hid their true purpose for almost half a century they have by every means that wealth and science and perseverance could command, mobilized every engine of destruction that the most devilish ingenuity could devise; and placed their secret armament ready for use; and trained their soldiery into unheard of millions and an army of undreamed of dimensions. And then at last when all was ready,--and when by every human calculation they were prepared to crush and conquer the whole world; they have boldly flung their battle flag to the breeze, declaring their most solemn treaties were mere scraps of paper and that "right" had no place in their lexicon, and that the rest of mankind were mere slaves, to be exploited for their profit, or slain for their glory. In this world-wide conflict the whole race has been hurled. Mankind has been overwhelmed, submerged, inundated in a veritable deluge of suffering,--a sea of human woe and misery, whose waves reach even the mountain tops and from which there is no ark of safety. In the blaze of this awful conflagration we read a new meaning in the words "~~All men are created~~ free and equal". We no longer say, "These colonies are and ought to be free"; or "Cuba is and ought to be free",--but "~~Mankind is~~ and must be free"; and it is the duty of all men everywhere to maintain this freedom at whatever cost.

#5.

thru slow and tedious ages God has been trying to teach men to avoid the mistake of Cain and awake to the fact that each is his brother's keeper. It has been a long, dark, dreary night of ignorance and sin, but at last the faint glimmering of dawn appears. America could delay, but certainly could not thwart God's plan for the liberation of the world. How much nobler it is to take the place He so manifestly intended we should, in moulding the outcome and event of the stupendous changes thro which we are passing. The night is almost ended. The Dawn is at hand.

As President Wilson has said,

"This and other great nations represented in this struggle for freedom are heralds of the dawn,--and soon we and our allies, marching shoulder to shoulder shall emerge into the full light of perfect day."

We are in this war because it is part of God's plan; because we are sons of sires who wrote "All men are created free and equal"; and because we realize at last if we would "secure the blessings of liberty for us and our posterity", we must also secure these blessings for all mankind.

We are in the war finally because men of plain, hard, business, common-sense, have at last grasped the utility of what they so long deemed the purely Utopian dream of the poet, as when Burns sang:--

"Then let us pray
That come it may
As come it will for a 'that
That man to man
The world all o'er
Shall brothers be for a' that."

We are at war with Germany because there is an omniscient destiny,--a beneficent Providence,--that guides and rules the affairs of men and Nations. It was God's hand that piloted

#6.

the Flagship of Columbus' fleet to these shores. It was His hand that saved the Mayflower from storm and disaster. It was God's hand, back of Jefferson's, that wrote the Declaration of Independence and the same Almighty hand back of Washington's sword made that Declaration good. And so for an hundred and forty and two years God has kept this Great Republic for a purpose.

In August 1914, the welfare of the whole human race was at stake. Human society was confronted by the most gigantic juggernaut of all history. Little Belgium,--- the martyr kingdom, first threw her form in front of the impending monster. The sacrifice barely served to stay the ruin a few brief hours: France flew to the rescue, but all in vain: Russia and Italy poured out their millions of blood and treasure, but to no purpose. Great Britain threw her all into the breach, and for a brief period seemed to win, but soon she too was compelled to cry for succor.

And so it stood in April 1917. Every other Great Nation on earth had been weighed in the balance and found wanting, Bleeding humanity,---homeless ~~widowhood~~ motherhood, and starving children, and dying patriotism, all turned their eyes, and stretched their hands, and lifted their voices in one last despairing appeal, to the only source on earth whence help could come. And thus the opportunity has come for which God planted this Republic and has protected her thro' the years and seasons since:-- the opportunity for this Nation to be used of God for the salvation of the human race:--- that is why America is in the war:-- that is why America will win the war:--and greater than all that, that is why America will be the controlling factor, --the chief influence in that greatest event of human history:--

When the war drum throbs no longer, and the battle flags are furled, in the Parliament of man, the federation of the world.