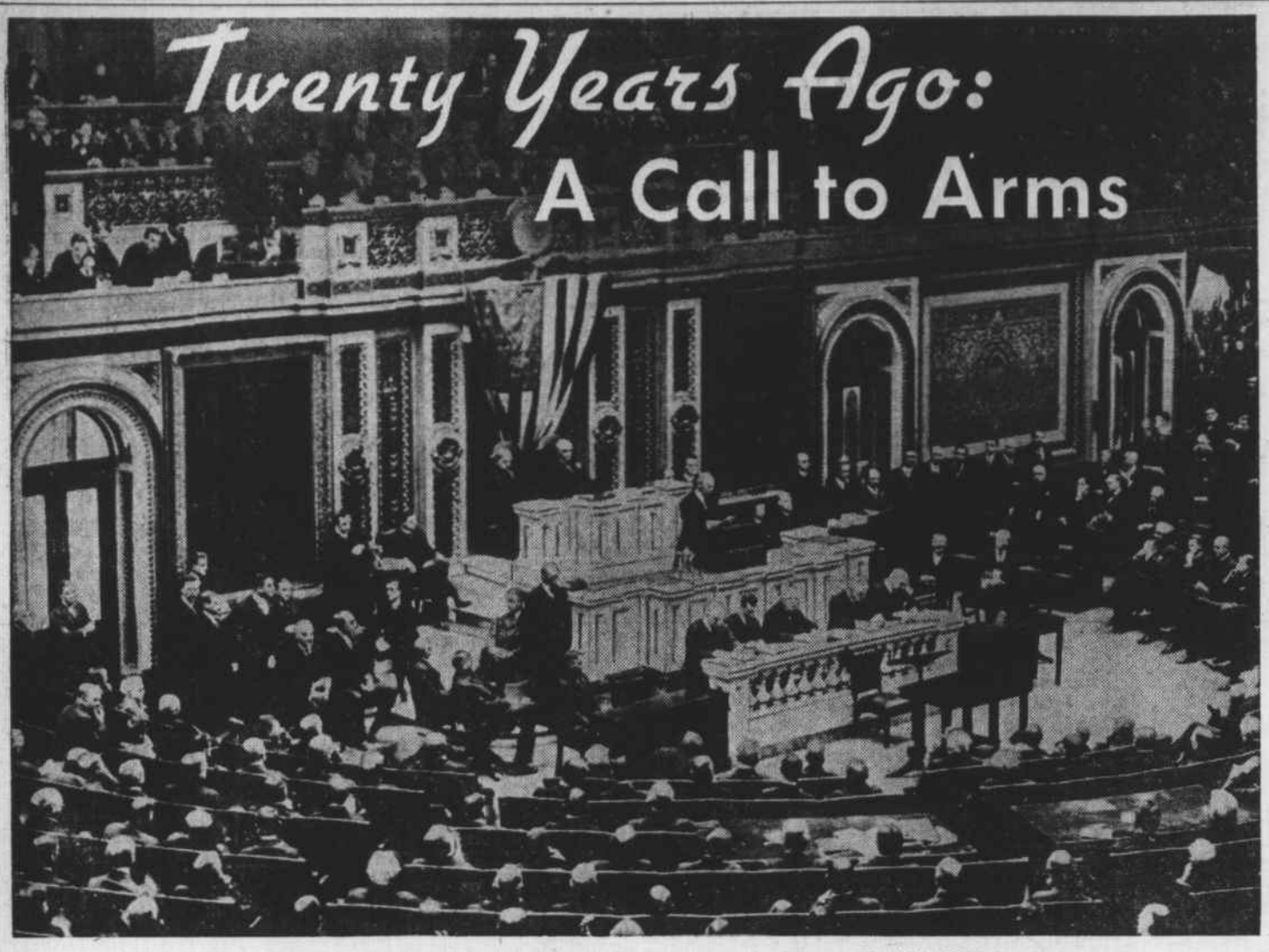
Twenty Years Ago: A Call to Arms



President Woodrow Wilson delivering his war message to congress, April 2, 1917.

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

FOR two months it had been apparent that the march of events was slowly but surely turning the footsteps of a nation toward the path which would lead it into the gigantic conflict raging across the Atlantic. And, ironically, this was the nation whose people only two months earlier had re-elected its Chief Executive partly because of the plea in his behalf: "He kept us out of war."

The first significant step in this march of events had been taken on January 31, 1917. The German high command, gambling desperately to end the two-year stalemate, announced that on the next day it would begin unrestricted warfare and that American shipping entering the war zone would be limited to one vessel a week.

When Secretary Joe Tumulty entered the office of the President in the White House and laid on his desk a copy of the Associated Press dispatch containing that news, Woodrow Wilson read it slowly, then re-read it. A look of surprise, then incredulity, then stern determination passed across his face. "Tumulty, this means war," he exclaimed. "The break that we have tried so hard to prevent now seems inevitable."

The next day the President met with his cabinet and told them of the "astounding surprise" of this latest act of that "madman who must be curbed"—Germany. But even with this crisis thrust upon him, he was determined not to do more than sever diplomatic relations with Berlin nor take any action until there was an "overt act" on the part of the Central Powers. He repeated that determination the following day when he appeared before the congress to tell it that we had broken, diplomatically, with Berlin.

The First Overt Act.

During the next month that "overt act" was committed. The Ancona, an American ship, had been sunk in the war zone. Again Woodrow Wilson appeared before congress to announce a policy of "armed neutrality" and to ask authorization for mounting naval guns on our merchant ships.

The house readily granted him that authority but the senate, with 76 in favor of the resolution and 11 opposed—enough to block the unanimous consent necessary to bring the matter to a vote—wrangled for three days. Then at 12 o'clock, noon, on March 4 the session came to an end. Four minutes passed by, during which time the United States technically had no President. Then Woodrow Wilson stood before Chief Justice White, raised his right hand and again took the oath of office to guide the nation through the four stormy years which he realized full well were ahead of him.

During the next two weeks events marched slowly to a climax. On March 20 the cabinet again assembled in the executive offices of the White House. The President told his aides what they already knew — three more American ships had been sunk by German submarines. Several American seamen were missing. These were "overt acts." What was the next step for the American government to take? The congress was due to convene on April 16. Should he call it in extra session before that date?

Unanimous for War.

Their advice was that he should. They were unanimous for war. So he issued a proclamation calling congress together on April 2.

Then followed a period of waiting—waiting—waiting. The cabinet met at regular intervals but the matter of war was not discussed. Between meetings the President spent most of his time in his study on the second floor of the White House. There, day after day and far into the night, Woodrow Wison wrestled with his problem, went through his Gethsemane alone.

Came the second of April. The senate, a continuing body, convened officially and after 12 minutes adjourned. Over in the house

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON

of representatives they were electing a speaker and other officers and ratifying committees. After eight hours and ten rollcalls they were ready for business. In the White House the President was dining with members of his family. As they finished, a delegation from congress arrived with the message that the senate and the house were ready to receive a communication from the President.

Outside the Capitol a great throng milled about, kept in order by two troops of cavalry that had ridden over from Fort Myer. Inside, the galleries of the house were packed. Even the seldom-used diplomatic gallery was filled. Two outstanding figures in it were Ambassador Jusserand of France and Ambassador Spring-Rice of Great Britain. The day they had long hoped for had arrived.

A moment after Speaker Clark had called the house to order, the doors at the rear of the chamber opened and a doorkeeper announced: "The vice president of the United States and the members of the United States senate." In the midst of a hushed silence Vice President Marshall and the elder statesmen of the republic filed into the room and took their seats. Then, as the slight figure of a scholarly-looking man appeared, congressmen and spectators alike surged to their feet in a storm of handclapping and cheers.

Wilson's Momentous Message.

It died down as Woodrow Wilson stepped to the reading desk just below the dais where Marshall and Clark sat. He began to read.

"I have called the congress into extraordinary session because there are serious, very serious choices of policy to be made, and made immediately, which it was neither right nor Constitutionally permissible that I should assume the responsibility of making."

His hands trembled slightly as he turned the pages of his manuscript. His voice was low. His listeners leaned forward to catch every word as he recounted the events of the past two months and stated his bill of particulars against the German government.

"The present German submarine warfare against commerce is a warfare against mankind. It is a war against all nations . . . The challenge is to all mankind. Each nation must decide for itself how it will meet it. The choice we make for ourselves must be made with a moderation of counsel and a temperateness of judgment befitting our character and our motives as a nation. We must put excited feeling away. Our motive will not be revenge, but only the vindication of right, of human right, of which we are only a single champion."

Through the hushed chamber there was a rustle of uncertainty, just the slightest hint of impatience. What was he going to ask of the congress? And then . . .

"With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character of the step I am taking and of the grave responsibilities which it involves, but in unhesitating obedience to what I deem my constitutional duty, I advise that the congress declare the recent course of the imperial government to be in fact nothing less than war against the government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of a belligerent which has thus been thrust upon it and that it take immediate steps not only to put the country in a more thorough state of defense, but also exert all its power and employ all its resources to bring the government of the German empire to terms and end the war."

So it was to be war! As the President uttered those words, Chief Justice White, who was sitting in the front row of chairs below the speaker, dropped the hat he had been holding and brought his hands together high over his head. That explosive sound set off a torrent of noise which filled the chamber for a moment, then died down quickly as the low voice continued:

". . . We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their government acted upon entering this war . . .

". . . We are glad, now that we see the facts with no veil of false pretense about them, to fight thus for the ultimate peace of the world and for the liberation of its people, the German peoples included; for the rights of the nations great and small and the privilege of men everywhere to choose their way of life and obedience. The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the trusted foundation of liberty . . ."

And so on the quiet voice continued for 32 minutes—interrupted no less than 23 times by the applause of its hearers. At last it came to that most splendid passage of all:

"It is a distressing and oppressive duty, gentlemen of the congress, which I have performed in thus addressing you. There are, it may be, many months of fiery trial and sacrifice ahead of us. It is a fearful thing to lead this great peaceful country into war, into the most terrible and disastrous of all wars, civilization itself seeming to be in the balance; but the right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free people as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at least free. To such a task we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured.

"God helping her, she can do no other."

Keeping Up With Science

By Science Service

Air Moisture Causes Costly Losses in Power Transmission

Important Discovery Is Made at Harvard

Cambridge, Mass.—Losses in high-tension power transmission are expected to be considerably reduced through the discovery at the Harvard graduate school of engineering that moisture in the air is the hitherto unsuspected cause of the costly inefficiency of the porcelain and glass insulators used on the lines.

The discovery, made by Prof. Chester L. Dawes and Dr. Reuben Reiter, was enabled by their perfection of a high-voltage bridge with which it is possible to detect the tiniest flaws in high-voltage insulation, a problem that has troubled electrical engineers for some time.

With the instrument, scientists can now enter an entirely new field of research in insulation and thus possibly bring man closer to his dreams of managing tremendous amounts of power safely and efficiently by revealing the causes of insulator "flashovers" which so frequently paralyze power lines.

Tentative findings also indicate that one of the causes of radio interference is due to high - voltage "static" discharges over the surface of these insulators.

Unknown for Thirty Years.

That moisture in the air could cause such flashovers and shortcircuits was unknown during the 30 years that insulators of this type have been in use until the two Harvard scientists began a series of delicate measurements with the Dawes bridge. These showed that atmospheric humidity, or moisture in the air, produces not only a pronounced power loss over the insulator but that the loss is greater over a period of time than if the scientists began with a clean insulator. The greater the moisture in the air, it was found, the greater is the loss. Cleaning the insulator by vigorous rubbing with a chamois cloth, however, was found to return the power to its initial value.

This led to the assumption that a permanent deposit forms on the surface of the insulator and decreases its efficiency, an assumption later confirmed by observations through a special "dark-field" microscope which readily reveals minute surface irregularities. The deposit, it was found, takes the form of millions of tiny islands which, because of difficulties of observation, are not visible with an ordinary microscope.

What Causes the Leakage.

The islands are formed, the two scientists believe, by the activating effect of high-voltage corona, or electrical discharge, on the air and the moisture contained in it. This action causes the nitrogen in the air and the moisture to form nitrous and nitric acid, which, acting with the metal of the insulator cap and tin, form the deposit. The exact composition of the islands is being further investigated, however, by chemical, X-ray and microscopic means.

Under normal conditions of the corona and atmospheric humidity, the resulting power leakage probably amounts to only a watt or so per hour for each insulator. With the accumulation of deposit, however, this loss increases with time, and for some systems may amount to a tremendous number of kilowatt-hours per year.

More important, however, according to Prof. Dawes, is the fact that the deposit is semi-conductive, and reduces the length of the insulating path over the insulator surface.

Natural Acid May Be Used to Protect Plants

London.—Arsenic, lead, copper and other mineral poisons now used to protect plants against fungus, bacterial and insect enemies may find practicable and harmless replacement in an acid naturally formed by living plants, suggests Maurice Copisarow, Manchester biologist.

The substance is known as maleic acid. Experiments have shown that it exercises an inhibitory effect on the growth of micro-organisms of decay, and Mr. Copisarow suggests that its effect may extend also to viruses hidden in dormant seeds and to insects in early stages of development. This same natural inhibitor, he adds, is probably transformed into the natural accelerator of fruit ripening, ethylene, by a chemical change involving the liberation of carbon dioxide.

'Parapsychology' New Approach to Old Scientific Problem

Search for Truth of Thought Transmission

PARAPSYCHOLOGY! A new scientific term to describe a new scientific approach to an old subject.

Making its bow at Duke university, a new journal, and the first in its field to appear under the sanction of a recognized university, will be devoted to clairvoyance, telepathy and other arts of mind-to-mind communication without benefit of the inventions of science.

"Para" means beside. In the Greek from which it comes, it also had such meanings as "amiss, faulty, irregular, disordered, improper, wrong," according to the Oxford dictionary. These latter meanings are probably not intended by the sponsors of the new journal devoted to parapsychology, however, for the editors, Prof. William McDougall and Dr. J. B. Rhine, are convinced that men can transmit ideas without recourse to wires, radio, postal facilities or even speech—"extra-sensory perception" they call the art.

Man Seeks to Pierce the Veil.

For many centuries man has sought the means for looking into the minds and hearts of his fellow men. Perhaps it is because communication arts, amazing as the radio and telephone, telegraph and television are today, lag still behind the fleetness of human thought. Perhaps it is because of the truth of the saying that words are but a cloak to hide thoughts. Man has need to supplement the clumsy inadequacy of his language skill; he needs also to pierce the veil of human deception.

Science Must Decide It.

Science is always the balance wheel that can protect men against wishful thinking and what the mental physician calls a flight from reality. Scientific research, careful and unemotionally conducted, should set aside doubts and blast unfounded hopes in this emotionally charged field just as it has to so large an extent in the physical and biological sciences.

If there exists a way to reveal our thoughts to others without the medium of voice or post or printing press, then the persistent conscientious research of enthusiasts in the field of parapsychology should demonstrate it.

Brain Keeps Growing but "Brains" Don't, Says Dr. Hrdlicka

Washington.—The brain inside your head continues to grow until the age of fifty or sixty years.

Evidence for this invisible growth, detected by measurements of great numbers of human heads, is reported here by Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, noted anthropologist of the United States National museum.

That the human head continues to grow, until old age sets in, is demonstrated by Dr. Hrdlicka's own measurements of American heads. Foreign scientific studies reveal the same growth phenomenon in other peoples.

Dr. Hrdlicka has concluded the most logical cause for this head growth is that the brain itself is growing, since there is no evidence that the scalp or bones of the vault thicken with age. The chance that frontal sinuses would account for the enlargement is also discounted, since Dr. Hrdlicka explains that they attain their full growth when the adult is still fairly young.

Continued slight growth of the brain does not serve to improve intelligence in adults, so far as is known. That is, the new idea of a growing adult brain does not, so far, alter psychological views, that only in exceptional individuals does absolute intelligence increase after about twenty years.

New Type of Human Skull Is Found in Germany

Stuttgart, Germany.—A skull of an entirely new type of ancient human being, older than Neandertal man, has been discovered in a gravel pit at Steinheim, near here. It has been subjected to critical scientific examination by Dr. Fritz Berckhemer of the Wurttemberger Museum of Natural History.

The skull was very little broken, and lacks only the lower jaw and a few fragments of the facial bones. It resembles the Neandertal type especially in the characteristic pronounced eyebrow ridges, the wide nasal opening, the massive upper jaw, and the rather low cranial arch. It is markedly different in being shorter, relatively wider, and much more rounded off at the back, and in having considerably less back-slope to face and forehead. In these respects it is more like modern man.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By REV. HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, Dean of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

Lesson for April 4

GOD THE CREATOR

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31.

GOLDEN TEXT—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Gen. 1:1.

PRIMARY TOPIC—When God Made the World.

JUNIOR TOPIC—In the Beginning—God.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—God the Maker of All.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—God in Creation.

From the completion of the great Gospel of John, which took us back to that time "in the beginning" when the Living Word "was" and "was with God and was God," we turn to the first book of the Bible, which is, as indicated by its title, a book of "beginnings." We find in it not only the record of the creation of the heavens and earth, but of man, and the beginnings of his history, the entrance of sin into the world, the beginning of God's revelation of redemption. It is indeed a most important book, fundamental to an understanding of the rest of the Bible.

Genesis has been the special object of attack on the part of critics, and especially by those who saw in its account of the creation statements which apparently did not square with the announced findings of science. Fortunately, as men make advances in scientific discovery, as well as in the understanding of God's Word, they are beginning to realize that there is no real conflict between the established facts of science and a proper interpretation of Scripture. When there is an apparent clash it will be found that either the Bible has been misinterpreted by men or they have mistaken a hypothesis of science for a fact.

We are in error when we talk about the Bible's being confirmed by archaeology or by science. If the United States naval observatory should find that its master clock does not agree with the observation of the stars, it would not assume that the universe had gotten out of order. It would know that the clock is wrong, and would make correction. Science does not confirm the Bible; the Bible confirms true science.

The account of creation may be considered in two great divisions.

I. The Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1-5).

"In the beginning God"—what awe-inspiring words! How fully and satisfactorily they state the origin of all things.

Men ask us to believe their theories, but there is no cosmogony offered which does not call for a measure of credulity. Man cannot explain the origin of matter, the origin of life, the origin of rational life. These three great gaps and many smaller ones his theories cannot bridge. Man asks us to take his word for them. But we prefer to take God's Word.

Study the entire account of creation. Space here forbids more than the briefest reference to its perfect order and symmetry, its completeness, the self-evident fact that it is a true account of the working of God. It is so received by thoughtful men and women of our day. Even scoffers have long since ceased to speak foolish words about "the mistakes of Moses."

II. The Creation of Man (vv. 16-23).

"Let us" is an indication that the Holy Trinity was active in creation. God the Father is mentioned (v. 1), the Holy Spirit (v. 2), and without the Son was nothing made (John 1:3).

Man was created in "the likeness and image of God." This undoubtedly refers to a moral and spiritual likeness. Man is a moral being, possessed of all the characteristics of true personality. He is a living spirit, with intelligence, feeling, willpower. This image, no matter how it may have been defaced by sin, is that in man which makes it possible for us to seek him in his sin and beseech him "to be reconciled to God." "Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter, feelings lie buried that grace can restore."

Notice that God gave man "a helpmeet unto him," that he established the family as the center of life on this earth. He gave man dominion over the entire creation, and his restless pioneering spirit still carries him on to the complete realization of that promise. He provided not only for man's spiritual and social needs, but also for his every physical need. Surely we may say with Moses that "everything that he (God) had made . . . was very good" (v. 31).

A Man of Sorrow

One reason why Jesus was a man of sorrow was that He saw as none other the pain and sin and woe of the world.

A Hard Road

The hard road of sin is always so crowded that it gives little room for turning around and going back.

Determination

He only is a well-made man who has a good determination.—Emerson.