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The Christian Year

Editorial

THE EPIPHANY, JANUARY 6th, 1918.

TAKING A LONG VIEW.

Who does not know the Epiphany picture—the mysterious men from the East, the guiding star, and the costly gifts? The Church's Year has brought us once more to the contemplation of the old picture of childhood. It comes to us at the beginning of a New Year of War, with its old sweet messages of hope, peace, and the triumph of goodness. It tells us that the Child of Bethlehem is King, and that always and everywhere He has His worshippers, and those who delight to do Him honour. It foretells the coming of the Gentiles to Him. It speaks of representatives of every nation falling down before Him and offering their gifts.

Throughout the nineteen centuries which have passed since the Wise Men from the East worshipped the Child Who was born King of the Jews, there has been a great gathering of the peoples about that King. In spite of much apparent failure, grievous backslidings, and hypocrisies, neglect of his first principles, blasphemous distortions of His teachings, in spite of War and its indescribable horrors—in spite of all, there has been a great, noble, and varied assemblage of the nations of the earth about Him. In villages, in cities, in valleys and upon mountain sides, on continent and island, in the first few tragic years of the Church's life—the time of fire and blood, in the age of heresies and questionings, in the age of prosperity and temporal power when the world was with the Church, in the time of Reformation, the breaking up of the old order, in our own age with its many and distracting forces, with its complex organization, with the stain of the most awful war of history upon it—in every age, under every condition, there have ever been those who have joyfully worshipped the Child of Bethlehem, who for His sake and in His Name have been ready to do and to suffer, to deny themselves, to shun sin, and to take up His Cross.

There has been a great gathering of the nations there. *In part* what that first Epiphany foretold has been fulfilled. Yes, *in part*, but in part only. Even in the midst of War the Church cannot forget the Missionary Work which presses upon Her in all ages and under all conditions, even under War conditions! There are places about that Throne which never have been filled, there are gifts which never have been offered. Those places must be filled to make clear the meaning of the Epiphany picture.

Every missionary appeal is an appeal that those empty places may be filled, that those gifts may be offered. The nations of the Earth need Him desperately. They need Him nationally, socially, individually, need Him as men who sit in darkness need the Light—in their hands are priceless treasures, in their natures is an unknown, unfathomed capacity for holiness and righteousness, worship and service. We are entrusted with the responsibility of helping to fill those empty places about the Redeemer's Throne, and so fill up the number of His Elect, and hasten His Kingdom.

The talent of penitence is the brand of God's saints.

We are all inclined to look at things at too close range. The present has so great a fascination for us that we forget to place it in its proper place in relation to the past and the future. What the average person lacks is what is sometimes called the power of perspective or the long view.

We had an opportunity last week to hear Dr. John R. Mott speak on Russia and it was certainly a speech that will live for a long time in the memories of those who heard him. He has had a good opportunity to study Russia at first-hand not only as head of the great International Student Movement and as International Secretary of the Y.M.C.A., but also during the past summer as a member of the diplomatic mission sent to Russia by the President of the United States. He has watched the changes that have taken place there since he first visited Russia twenty years ago, and what he has seen, supported by his study of the character of the people, leads him to believe firmly that there are bright days ahead for that great nation. "I hear," he said, "much that distresses me in the hasty judgments regarding the great Russian people to-day. The time to stand by an ally is in the darkest hours of that ally. This Bolsheviki party no more represents the great Russian people than a small faction in New York can be said to represent the people of the United States." Russia is undergoing, at one and the same time a threefold revolution, political, social and religious. She has swung in an incredibly short time "from an extreme benighted and cruel autocracy" to the opposite extreme. She held alone for three long years a line 1,200 miles in length. She has buried over 3,000,000 of her sons and brothers and fathers, while over 2,500,000 more have languished in horrible prison camps and millions more are suffering from the diseases inseparable from warfare. In the words of the great Russian writer, Andreyev, "How weary and fatigued are our soldiers. Behind them are three years of joyless war with scarcely a gleam of hope to relieve the gloom; a mendacious autocracy with its Sovereign Leader holding the illustrious sword in one hand and the sharper's reserve card of a separate peace in the other; commanders greedy of gain and of honours; constant whispers of treason and treachery! How we have wearied of these abominations!" And then came the possibility of peace, of freedom, and plenty. "Why should they face bullets, lose their life, their sole, precious life, when perhaps to-morrow this longed-for peace will come and bring all its gifts?" To intensify this longing, thousands of German propagandists, with millions of dollars at their disposal, have been working day and night poisoning the minds of the illiterate masses against the other members of the Allies and holding out false hopes for the future.

Dr. Mott did not minimize the seriousness of the crisis, but he did not hesitate to urge in the strongest possible language that the Allies should stand by Russia in her hour of trial. She has strong leaders, and a wonderful peasant class and "will come back." "She will rise because of her wonderful physical vigour and vitality, and because of her penetrating mentality, her great courage and con-

structive power." There must be a counter-propaganda, and there must be sympathy. The principles of the present revolution are sound and, although there will probably be darker days yet, if we will but "take the long view" and remain true to her, she will not disappoint us. "Some day this terrible war will be over, and the spectre and nightmare will be behind us. The ships will come home with our soldiers and the lanes of the sea will give place to peaceful commerce. Then the family of nations for which we are fighting will be a real family, and I prefer with you to have Russia in that day sitting at the board."

For the first time since the outbreak of the war the King has issued a call to prayer. Let us answer the call in a whole-hearted manner. It is time that we realized the part that God must play in the war if we are to reap satisfactory results from it.

We have received so many requests lately to publish appeals for worthy objects that we have been compelled to refuse all except those that come with the endorsement of one or more of our Bishops. The Free Hospital for Consumptives, the Hospital for Sick Children, sufferers in France from the war, Italian refugees, etc., are among the many such. We regret exceedingly that we cannot open our columns to all these, but if any of our readers are anxious to contribute and wish to obtain the name of the treasurer of any one or more of these we shall be glad to do what we can to help secure it.

There has been confusion in the minds of some of our readers regarding the Treasurership of the Committee formed in the United States for the purpose of sending relief to Armenians and Assyrians. We therefore wrote to Mr. Woodbury G. Langdon, New York City, Treasurer of the Assyrian Relief Committee, for some information, and in reply he states that the two treasurerships are "one and the same thing, since I turn over all the money I collect to Mr. Dodge, the treasurer of a much larger committee, although much more recently established than our own, for the reason that Mr. Dodge has discovered some method of sending money safely to Europe which is unknown to me." The committee of which Mr. Langdon is Treasurer "is a special committee for the relief of the Assyrian Christians, generally known as the Nestorians."

The Anglican L.M.M., under its new Secretary, is already making plans for the future. Taking advantage of the visit of the Primate to Toronto early in January in connection with the meeting of the Committee on Prayer Book Revision, a United Service of Intercession has been arranged for, when it is hoped to fill the Church of the Redeemer with men. The address of the Primate will be on "The Care of the Hour to Canada," and one cannot urge upon the Anglican laymen of Toronto too strongly the advisability of being present. The quotation on the notice being sent out is very much to the point, "When members of our Churches, and laymen especially, give themselves with as much effort and purpose to prayer as they have done to other forms of helpful service, the Kingdom of God will come in the world."

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