

From Week to Week

"Spectator's" Discussion of Topics of Interest to Churchmen

ONE would like to see the principles of peace and goodwill more abundantly manifest in the public life of the world than is now apparent. Five times we celebrated Christmas with the horrors of war overshadowing us, and our thoughts were perpetually with our fine fellows in the midst of strife. Now for the second time we celebrate the same great festival under nominal peace, but we haven't to look far to find that underneath the surface the fires still burn, and even the surface itself is covered here and there with the old malady. The leaven of malice and wickedness still works in society, keeping it in a ferment of turmoil and misunderstanding. It seems to be useless to lay the blame with this or that people. It appears to be madness to lay all the folly at our own door and act as though that of itself would bring everybody else to a right frame of mind. Human experience does not seem to warrant us in leaving our homes or our possessions unguarded and unprotected on the assumption that our confidence will induce reciprocal respect and safety. We have no evidence of a conclusive character to prove that a nation throwing itself absolutely on the honour of the world, will, by that act of faith, preserve its integrity and lead mankind in the paths of peace. "Here is the son come, let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours," seems to be the suggestion of such an act. Yet peace and goodwill is the better way. It is the breath of the Christmas teaching, and we should never lose sight of that far-off goal towards which every devout disciple must direct his weary footsteps. While it may appear necessary for Christian nations to guard their hard-won privileges and responsibilities, may we not cast out all enmity and hatred from our hearts. May we not make this, and all seasons, an occasion of renewed faith in the power of God's spirit to turn the unruly wills and affections of men—our own included—so that mankind may dwell on the face of the whole earth as members of the one family of God? Let us begin this Christmas season with a new outpouring of our hearts in prayer, first of all for our own enlightenment and then for the enlightenment of the world that the way of Christ may be made known upon earth, His saving health among all nations.

The Canadian delegation at the assembly of the League of Nations now in sessions at Geneva is attracting much attention to this country, and to its own personnel. The Honorable Mr. Doherty has had his opportunity in moving the deletion of Article X., considered by many to be the climax of the whole covenant. The Honorable Mr. Rowell has stirred the leading men of Europe by his vigorous advocacy of the rights of the Assembly as opposed to the Council of the League. Sir George Foster has made a name for himself as a preacher of righteousness and a pleader for European repentance. The impression that these gentlemen have left on their associates arises, not so much out of what they have said, as their manner of saying it. Diplomats of the old world are reputed to be experts in so expressing themselves that it is difficult to know just what they really mean. If necessity requires, their words may be interpreted at home as conveying one idea, while abroad they have quite a different significance. That kind of

thing is not unknown in Canadian public life, when different interests seem to demand different treatment. When, however, our representatives go abroad these little considerations are forgotten and men of the old world have been made to sit up, as our statesmen poured out their convictions with startling clearness and emphasis. They represent the spirit of the new world. The men of Africa, Australia, North and South America will do the same thing, and it will be a surprise to the writer if the deliberations of the League of Nations do not mark a new epoch in international conferences. It will be a wholesome change to have diplomacy conducted by the rules of common sense.

"Spectator" is not at all sure that Mr. Rowell speaks the full mind of Canada when he pleads for the strengthening and determining influence of the Assembly of the League of Nations. If we understand his argument, as cabled to the press, Mr. Rowell is applying the principles of democracy in their fullest power to this assembly. The League of Nations consists of two sections. First, there is the Assembly where every member nation has its due representation. Above this Assembly stands the Council, which has a limited membership, so organized that the Allied nations in the recent war have the preponderating power if they act together. This is intended to be the dominating factor in the whole league, and it was so constituted that the principles for which the Allies fought and were victorious should be preserved in safety. Canada may or may not be represented on this council. Mr. Rowell's argument seems to be that the powers of the Assembly should be strengthened and the power of the council correspondingly weakened. This, no doubt, is a more democratic ideal, but what does it involve? Here is an Assembly made up of representatives from all corners of the earth—every little republic in South America, the Balkan States, China, Greece, Spain, Africa and in time Bulgaria, Turkey, Austria, Germany and all sorts and all conditions of people. Each state, great and small, has its own voting power. The decisions of such an Assembly would represent the "average" ideals of this conglomerate constituency. Its ideals might be higher than the lowest, but they would certainly be a long way lower than the highest. Apply this to international adjustments and it is not difficult to see that Canada's ideals could not find expression in such company. Democracy has not reached the status of a divinity. The British Empire and her allies had to fight desperately for the preservation of her civilization. Would that preservation be more secure in the hands of this amalgam of nations than in the hands of those that saw and suffered for a precious possession? If we stake all on the principle of democracy no doubt Mr. Rowell is right. Is that kind of democracy safe for the world?"

"Nothing is more unprofitable than a life absorbed in making profits."—The Christian.

Let Thy grace accompany me all the days of my life, that I may, by a holy conversation, and an habitual performance of my duty, wait for the coming of our Lord, and be ready to enter with Thee at whatever hour Thou shalt come.—Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

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