

preach this gospel to all our Canadian people, throughout all the provinces, till it reached every man in whose heart there beats the fervid pulse of devotion to his country. I believe that here lies the solution of many of our present problems, that we should try to insert into our common everyday affairs that marvellous thing that held our men together on the front line, that mysterious life-bond that made them one—comradeship. If we could so make Canadians one, in response to the lure of a common danger the call of a common cause—the danger, disintegration; the cause, Canada.

May I say to you, ladies and gentlemen, that if this Conference can succeed in making every school and educational institution in this country a means by which the spirit of unity and comradeship shall be instilled into the rising youth of our country, the next generation will see a Canada greater than any of us have dreamed.

IV. Lastly, the War has re-asserted *The Supreme Place of Religion in Character-making and Nation-building*. I hope nobody will think that I say this because I am a preacher. I hope the day is coming to Canada when we shall think that religion is not the business particularly of a preacher, but that it is the business of man. And I hope, too, that we shall get done talking about things religious in apologetic tones, and with bated breath. Surely it has come to be recognized in this day that religion in a nation is the architectonic quality of the soul that makes a nation what it is. A nation's religion informs it, makes its ideals, supports those ideals, fortifies the courage of men in making these ideals, and shows the way to finer and higher ideals. Our armies were nourished in this Canada of ours in religious homes. In these homes they drank in the passion for freedom, for honour and faith with their mother's milk. In the homes in which they were born, these eternal principles held sway. Our men were taught those principles, not only with the articles of their faith, but in those simplicities that are nourished by our holy religion, and by the working of that unseen and mighty Spirit, that energizes for goodness and truth in the hearts of men. I do not define religion by any church creed. Let me define religion in a broad and generous way. Religion is the thing that makes men right with their spiritual environment. There are, after all, in our spiritual environment, only two great facts. One great fact is God. We believe in God, as we never believed in Him before the war. Men come back with a greater conviction of the reality of that great Fact. The other fact in the man's spiritual environment is man. Religion is the thing that makes a man right with God and right with man. No other man is religious.

We have gained in the war a great conception of God. I went away to the army with a conception of God of which today I might well be ashamed, so vague, so

complex, so unreal. I want to say very humbly that these men at the front taught me something about God. Then I went back to my Book again. I was surprised to see, looking up at me from the old Book, speaking to me in those great words of the great Master of us all, the old, old definition that made God simply man's Father. And this old word "father," like the word "duty," flamed into new and splendid meaning, into a new, glorious dynamic. For out yonder these men learned for the first time the meaning of that word Father, learned it when in the dugout by the sputtering candle they sat down to write "Dear Dad," or when, on returning to the Reserve Lines, they found a letter waiting them from home far across the sea, and tearing it open they saw at the close the words "your father." A new conception of "Father" came to them and they simply lifted this conception into the spiritual realm, and they learned anew that God yonder was a Father to them.

Religion is not a wedge to drive men from each other, though God pity us, the Churches have made it so. Religion is the deepest heart-bond of humanity. It should draw us into one. Religion is the thing that makes men forget all differences, makes them run to one another and cleave to one another in a great living unity.

I close with one utterance, which I beg of you to accept in the utmost simplicity of belief, for it is true, and unadorned in its truth. I have said that the religion of the front line was something that made us forget our distinctions. I am talking here to men of different religions, and I make this declaration without fear, that wherever your religion separates you from men it is wrong, and wherever it makes you draw to your brother it is right. We knew no conditions under the whine of the shells. The shell is a great converting agency. There is nothing like a shell to make a man think clearly and truly about the biggest things.

One day at Valley Cottage a man was brought in badly wounded. It was a rotten place where we were working in a cellar with the wounded; shells were humming over our heads. I saw this young fellow was not to live very long. I went to him, knelt down beside him, and said, "Donnelly, would you like me to have a little prayer with you?" and he said, "Yes, sir, but I am not of your religion." I said, "You are an R. C., are you?" "Yes, sir." Well, by God's inspiration I had the sense to say, "My dear chap, it really doesn't matter; we have the same God and Father, and the same Saviour; shall I try?" He said, "Yes, sir." I looked around among the men for a cross, remembering that the cross was to him a very precious symbol, and it was my symbol, too, though a Presbyterian minister. I could find no Cross. I went to a little bush and cut two pieces of a twig, tied them together in this form, and went back to Donnelly, now lying very white and still. I said to him, "Donnelly,"