

Canadian Churchman

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Editorial

WHILE the subject treated in this column last week is still fresh, it is both interesting and instructive to note some recent utterances of other Church journals upon this urgent issue—"The New Armageddon," the real fight for real Peace.

The *Church of Ireland Gazette* agrees that the signing of the Treaty is but the beginning of the making of Peace: "Whatever view is taken of the Treaty, which has been subjected to very varied criticism . . . there is one ground of hope that it will lay the foundations of a lasting settlement. In the fore-front of the Treaty stands the League of Nations, and throughout reference is made to the League as a competent body to deal with the many complex problems with which the Treaty is concerned. . . . It is this great instrument for reshaping the destinies of the world which differentiates this Treaty, whatever its faults of omission and commission, from any other Treaty that has ever been signed. We believe with the President of the League of Nations Union, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, that the 'ideal of democracy and freedom and permanent peace,' for the sake of which the war was fought, can be maintained and developed by the machinery of a League of Nations, provided always that 'free peoples supply the spirit that will make the machinery ever more and more effective.'"

In a well-balanced editorial on the eve of Peace Day, the English *Guardian* presses the fact that if the world is to possess God's gift of peace, it can be bestowed only at the hand of men who will diligently and vigilantly fight for its release: "The world has learned, tardily enough, that peace is the foundation of all things, that war, on the modern scale, convulses its remotest corner, that it brings scarcity and privation to the Red Indian on his Reservation as surely as it brings ruin to the peasant in Picardy or in Flanders. If civilization is to endure, if mankind is to fulfil its upward destiny, war must be made impossible. Our one outstanding duty is to make war upon war. Let us be under no illusions. Peace is about to be signed; we have now to ensure it, and the ensuring is likely to be a painful process. . . . Only a universe bent heart and soul upon peace can keep the cannon silent. The primary scourge of humanity has still to be obliterated. When week by week we publicly pray that noble prayer which sums up one of the dearest aspirations of history, 'Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem,' let us remember that peace is not the gift of God alone. The evil which comes by the hand of man must be eliminated. The impulse is from above; it is for us to give it form and substance and to rid the earth at last of its most abiding peril."

That in view of this demand the easy going indifference of merely good intention is at this moment utmost disloyalty to our Lord, is the bold warning of the English *Challenge*: "Until all men are led into the way of the truth that is in Christ Jesus it is presumptuous folly to expect that by a sworn covenant, however solemn, war can be banished from the earth. . . . The lassitude and inertia of so many who mean well, really involve the surrender of the field to the powers of darkness. To do nothing is to betray the cause of God. The drift of mankind always sets to the same end. All that the forces of evil need to demand of good men is that they stand aside. The rest follows.

Nothing is surer than that mankind, unless it fights hard against war, will awaken once more to find itself faced by the old necessity to choose war as the lesser of two evils. The men of peace must show fight. By the Covenant of the League of Nations every Briton is enrolled a member of an international brotherhood which seeks to labour tirelessly for that peace that passeth all understanding, which the world without God cannot give. . . . Under God there is no other remedy to prevent those very ills, to which our flesh was heir, becoming the ills beneath which our posterity will groan, and, groaning, call us accursed."

The Canadian *Presbyterian and Westminster* gets at the same fact by urging us to bank most of all on the spirit behind this new international experiment: "It is clear that the League of Nations will not accomplish what is hoped and expected of it unless it is backed by public opinion. It is in the prevalence of the spirit which gave birth to the League even more than in the organization itself that our best hope lies. And it is at this point that peacemakers will find another and most important part of their work. There is a spirit in the world which is opposed to the League, and it is not confined to any one nation. When we read that in the British House of Commons a considerable number of the members greeted Premier Lloyd George's reference to the League with laughter and that one member exclaimed, 'Nobody wants it,' we understand what we have to contend with. Of course it is not true that nobody wants it. There are multitudes who see in it the world's hope, who believe with General Smuts, that it 'will yet prove the means of escape for Europe from the ruin created by war.' But the scorners in the House of Commons—and they have their counterpart in Canada—do not want it. What they see is that Britain and her Allies at present are on top, and they wish to maintain that position by the well tried means of a huge army, an invincible navy, and a skilful diplomacy. The conception of a League of Nations, an ordered world society, in which it will no longer be the privilege of the strong to impose their will upon the weak, but in which the case of the smallest and weakest nation will find a hearing and a righteous settlement, is to these people but the vision of an 'idealist,' a theme for laughter. It can easily be seen, then, that it will be the work of the peacemakers to cultivate the other spirit. . . . It is time for the Christian spirit to assert itself and to declare that, though reparation must be made and justice must be executed, it will not be satisfied until those who lately were our enemies become our friends, until beneath the overarching fatherhood of God it establishes the world-wide brotherhood of man."

However clear be any single conviction, it is always reassuring to find others equally zealous with you for the common good, thinking and working by the same route and toward the same goal. In this new movement we undoubtedly have, as DR. SYMONDS said recently in his Montreal pulpit, "the sowing of a mustard seed of true peace." It is a seed planted by the Spirit of God. Whatever may have been its political sources, to the Christian it is but another evidence that God, ever present in the affairs of life, ever seeks to turn the wrath of man to His praise. The tiny seed must not be destroyed. There's quite a new meaning to-day, to the old petition:—

Give peace in our time, O Lord,
Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only Thou, O God.

The Christian Year

Baptism and New Birth (SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY)

THIS is a time when among many professing Church people there is very vague thinking with regard to the regenerative value of Holy Baptism. There is a suspension of conviction especially in regard to infant baptism wherein the subject has no opportunity either to choose or to co-operate. It does not seem, on the surface, to be morally justifiable, that, without co-operative effort of some sort, even Heaven's grace should be able to achieve so great a spiritual transformation as is involved in regeneration.

SALVATION SUPERNATURAL.

It may be of some help to keep definitely in mind two important things:—

(1) There is a natural tendency in mankind, under the deteriorating influence of an hereditary taint, to degenerate. This is not an archaic interpretation of human life; it ought to be fairly obvious to anyone who thinks carefully about human nature. Left to himself, without moral effort, and the help of sustaining spiritual forces about him, and from above him, man would readily sink beyond the level of the beasts.

These spiritual forces do not inhere in human nature, but come upon man through the channel of his spiritual life, as contrasted with his human, from a source outside of and beyond himself. All spiritual resources, whether they operate directly upon us or indirectly through conscience, are of God. "Every good and perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of light." "It is not of him that willeth . . . but God that giveth the increase." Everything depends upon man's acceptance of grace in time. He may resist the spirit and shut out grace; but in the first place, and always, spiritual help and power are from Him who willeth that all men should be saved.

Salvation is therefore supernatural. Its processes are reasonable and intelligible, but its powers are like the wind that bloweth where it listeth. Those who are born of the spirit are born of the power of God.

DEAD WITH CHRIST.

(2) Something was accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus which had a potent and decisive effect in the realm of the Spirit, both in subduing the powers of sin, and in releasing and strengthening the resources of God for the saving of life. All who are identified with Christ in His Kingdom are partakers of the benefits of His death just as if they had died with Him. Of this effectual participation Jesus appointed baptism as a token and covenant. He pledged to this external mark of covenant relationship the regenerative energies of God's grace as efficaciously as if the one so baptized had actually entered with Him through the gate of death into the triumphant glory of the Resurrection. And inasmuch as these energies are of God and not of man they are subject to His will, and are, therefore, reasonably, as effective in infant baptism, until they are stayed by voluntary opposition, as when accepted by moral choice.

"So many as are baptized into Jesus Christ are baptized into His death—that like as Christ was raised from the dead . . . even so we also should walk in newness of life." "According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration." "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."