

he gives you flour, sugar, or what not, because he has faith in the promise to pay that is printed or written on it. He takes it on credit. Every time you take a cheque or a bank note or a Treasury certificate, you are extending credit—relying on a promise to pay. Cancel or discredit all these multitudinous scraps of paper and the business world would be stricken as lifeless as the moon. All its stores of goods would hang as so much immovable dead weight—at least until some other means of moving them was painfully evolved.

The distinctive symbol of civilization is a scrap of paper. Nothing but faith in a promise could make civilization possible. Contempt for a scrap of paper is simply contempt for civilization.

The War and the Future

Under this title an important manifesto has been issued by the committees of the Laymen's Missionary Movement of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. In frank terms it recognizes the spiritual declension of the times and the need for a re-assertion of God in our national life, beginning with the individual. One of its forcible passages is as follows:

We are living in months of strain and crisis, pregnant with danger or with hope for our nation and for mankind. These crucial issues of danger and of hope will not be decided by the success of our arms alone. They lie, beyond the scope of our army and our fleet, in the hearts of our people. For it is possible for a nation to gain the whole world and lose its own soul. In the light of Eternal realities, it is of little avail that we win the war, unless we emerge from it purged and dedicated to the purposes of God. . . . We are occupied with our determination to defeat Germany. We relieve our hearts by providing comforts for the troops, and are too little concerned with the deeper and yet more momentous issues.

The relation of the Christian Church to missionary problems which will arise when the war is over, is carefully considered in this manifesto, and there is no doubt that many matters of great moment will have to be faced in due time. Meanwhile, it is for us to watch and pray and work that the Church may be revived in view of the needs which will be keenly felt before very long. We sincerely trust that the manifesto will be available over in Canada and circulated by our own Laymen's Missionary Movement, for the wider the appeal for renewed consecration, the more certain will be the issue in a revival of missionary effort in all parts of the Empire.

The True Spirit

One who has lived for many years in Berlin and who writes with a remarkable insight into the German temperament, as well as with a profound knowledge of the German situation, expresses the following suggestive opinion:—

What the German cannot grasp is that the most educated nation in the world should be called Huns and barbarians. He thinks that a man whose mind has been trained in the schools, whose science is profound, whose discipline is perfect, cannot be other than the very perfect flower of civilization. He has yet to learn the lesson that all his vaunted science has not made of him anything that the world loves; and that a finer flavour of purer culture belongs to nations who work righteousness, who are faithful to their promises, and whose conduct in war, as in peace, is generous, and chivalrous, and just.

This is a principle which is capable of a large number of applications. The teaching of the New Testament is clear that the essential things are those inner principles of faith and love which are at the basis of all true life. This is the fundamental requirement of our Lord and of His apostles. The intellectual is good, but the moral is better, and the spiritual is best, and whenever Divine revelation is put first, the moral and the intellectual find their proper place and realize their proper power.

Cheer for the Obscure

There are many who can point to some human instrument by whom they were led to the Saviour. The immediate occasion may have been the preaching of a sermon, the reading of a tract, or personal intercourse with a Christian, and they couple their conversion with the name of the speaker or the writer who brought them into saving touch with the Lord. But there is always the question whether there were no other agents at work. They doubtless received earlier impressions of divine truths which prepared the way for the act of saving faith. In the great day when sowers and reapers will rejoice together it is most likely that those who stand out in our minds as having led us to Christ will share their reward with others whose influence on us was none the less real because largely unrecognized by us at the time. The fact is that God divides up the work of the conversion of a soul, and almost invariably uses more than one human agent. It is rare that only one person is instrumental in bringing a soul to the Saviour. It may happen that a godly mother, whose teaching of her child in early years is backed up by a holy life at home, is the means, in later years, of leading him to a personal trust in the Redeemer without any other Christian influence having been brought to bear upon him. But such cases are exceptional. The Apostle to the Gentiles affirms that while he had planted, Apollos had watered, and our Lord reminded His disciples that one sows and another reaps. So that the Sunday School worker must not be discouraged if, while faithfully and lovingly commending the gospel to his class, he sees no apparent fruit to his labours. It may be that the Lord of the harvest has made him a sower, and that to another will fall the privilege of reaping the golden grain.

It will be worth while to describe a case of conversion which might, at least in some respects, serve as a type of what has occurred in countless instances in the past, and which is being repeated in the history of many a soul to-day. A praying mother brings up her child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She not only instructs him in Biblical truths, but makes his salvation a subject of earnest prayer. In course of time he attends a Sunday School where kindred truths are week by week instilled into his mind as he passes from class to class. At the age when a boy begins to think himself too old for the Sunday School, he leaves, and goes out into the world to earn his living, still unsaved. His mind has been stored with truths, but he has never yielded to Christ, in spite of earnest appeals on the part of his teacher to do so. Being now out of touch with spiritual associations, and finding himself at an age when we like to test everything by our own reason, he learns to challenge the truth of what he had been brought up to believe. He breathes a new air of liberty; he means to see life and have his own way; he finds it convenient to doubt; and so a few years later we find him liking to call himself an Agnostic and the Gospel old-fashioned and even absurd. But his mother's prayers cling to him, and he cannot entirely shake off the impressions of early

years. At the same time, his conscience is often impressed when he contemplates the godly lives of one or two of his workmates, and he finds himself doubting his doubts and saying to himself, "After all, there must be something in the old Gospel: I wonder if it is really true." The evidence of a holy life is beginning to have its effect and he commences to say less and think more. A book on Christian evidences which has been given him silences some of his mental difficulties and stimulates his interest in the things of God. One evening he enters a place where the Gospel is being proclaimed, and the preacher's message reaches his conscience. He is now thoroughly awakened, his sins press upon him, and he longs for peace. Passing by an open air meeting he is arrested by the singing of a hymn which comes back to him with familiarity, for he had often sung it in his childhood days; and as he drinks in the words of the speaker he realizes that as a sinner his only hope is in Christ. After the meeting is over he lingers behind, and is approached by one of the workers. The young man is in earnest and that night he is led to the Saviour, to the great joy of the worker who was on the watch for souls. His address is taken and a letter from the leader of the meeting, with the booklet it encloses, are the means of bringing him peace and assurance. Now, in this case, who was the instrument that God used to that young man's conversion? Was it only the personal worker who pointed him to the Saviour? All he did was to put the finishing touch to a work in which several individuals were concerned.

A large piece of stone is being struck with a hammer. Blow after blow descends, without any apparent effect. The stone seems made of adamant; several blows of the heavy hammer have fallen, and still no result. But at the next blow the stone is shattered piecemeal. Was it only the last blow that broke the stone? Were all the previous ones useless? We think not. Their work was to render the shattering of the stone possible. So it is in the work of saving the lost; God divides the work of conversion, that no flesh should boast in His presence. As far as the work of building up the soul of the believer is concerned, it is even more obvious that God divides it among many labourers. Very many, indeed, are the human instruments employed in moulding the lives and characters of those who are heirs of glory; and every one is necessary. And so it is an honour to be one of even the most obscure of God's servants, and an encouragement to steadfast, patient sowing beside all waters.

A NATION'S PRAYER.

Lord, a nation, humbly kneeling,
For her soldiers cries to Thee—
Strong in Faith and Hope appealing
That triumphant they may be!
Waking, sleeping,
'Neath Thy keeping,
Lead our troops to victory!
Of our sins we make confession
Wealth, and arrogance, and pride,—
But our hosts, against oppression,
March with freedom's flowing tide!
Father, speed them,
Help them—lead them;
God of armies, be their Guide!
Man of Sorrows, Thou hast sounded
Every depth of human grief;
By Thy wounds, O heal our wounded,
Give the fever's fire relief!
Hear us crying
For our dying,
Of Consolers be Thou Chief!
And, if victory should crown us,
May we take it as from Thee!
As Thy nation deign to own us,
Merciful and strong and free.
Endless praising
To Thee raising,
Ever Thine may Britain be!