

The Missionary World.

CLERGY and other Christian leaders who desire to make the national Day of Prayer on the first Sunday in the New Year a spiritual epoch in the lives of their people, will do well to prepare for it by a steady presentation during December of the missionary aspect and issues of the war. It is only as we recognize the great mission in which our nation has a share—the mission of spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom of God throughout the world—that all other questions will be seen in their true perspective. Abundant material of the most compelling interest is at hand, the study of which will fertilize all the great possibilities which surround us.

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Half the world is said to be at war—about 28 millions out of 52 millions of the land area, and about 900 millions out of the 1,800 million inhabitants are more or less directly involved. Whether we turn our eyes to Japan, or to China, or to the Straits Settlements, or to the islands of the Pacific, or to India, or to Africa—east, west, central, south—we see everywhere traces of the vast conflict; and now, at the time of writing, Turkey has come into the arena, and behind her, related or unrelated in ways we cannot yet forecast, is the great “house of Islam,” and the whole conception of Pan-Islamism, which may or may not prove an active force. To the Christian mind, the question as to whether these countries be for or against our nation in the great conflict of material forces must be secondary to the question of the influence which that conflict has upon the spread of the Kingdom of God.

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The daily papers and the monthly magazines make it easy to establish the contact of the war with actual missionary work. The two cannot be sundered. The C.M.S. Hospital at Mengo is to be used as a Government base hospital, should need unhappily arise; German prisoners of war were interned in Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone. The L.M.S. *Chronicle* gives

letters from its missionaries in several war zones, notably the frontier of German East Africa and Samoa; the Wesleyan *Foreign Field* has an article on its mission in German Togoland. Missionaries have been working actually in Tsingtau, besides the large group of missionaries of many societies in the west of Shantung province. The missionary force, with some exceptions, has had to be temporarily withdrawn from Syria and Palestine and Turkey. Work has become very difficult for German missionaries in British territories, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of British and American missionaries to aid them, and the desire of the Government to treat them with every possible consideration.

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No less pervasive is the effect of the war upon the home base of missions. The paralyzing condition of the first two or three weeks has lessened everywhere. Financial problems are being adjusted, at any rate temporarily, in neutral countries, in Great Britain, and in Germany, where men actually engaged in the trenches are remembering to send their subscriptions to the Basel Mission, and numerous women widowed, or otherwise bereaved by the war, are contributing nobly to missionary funds. In France the condition is most serious, as a statement in the November number of *Our Missions* (F.F.M.A.) shows. Urgent and generous aid is needed there. More serious than finance—though the problems of support in the future will press even more heavily than those of to-day, in view of the inevitably large increase of taxation—is the withdrawal, in some countries, of missionaries and missionary students into the ranks for fighting purposes, and, in all the belligerent countries, the ghastly waste of young and vigorous life. Some of the private information which reaches us as to the life and witness of these young missionaries in the fearful privation and peril of the trenches is deeply moving.

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Is the war, then, to sound the death-knell of missionary advance? Of these alien things, lying so close together, is war

to destroy missions, or is it possible that the cause of missions, or what it stands for, has in it a life that can rise up and destroy not only the results, but the very root of war? Faith has a ready answer to that question, though no one has reasoned out an adequate statement as to how the great reversal may take place. We are all learners together, and the humblest and most ardent learners should be those who are set where they are bound to teach in this hour of priceless opportunity.

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In addition to the usual missionary periodicals, help may be had from pamphlets such, in particular, as "Papers for War-Time" (Oxford University Press, 2d.), which are being issued fortnightly under the editorship of the Rev. W. Temple, with whom work a group of men and women of various political creeds, but all "one in the conviction that in Christ and in His Gospel lies the hope of redemption and health for society and for national life." The first four papers are on "Christianity and War," by the Editor; "Are we worth fighting for?" by the Rev. Richard Roberts, a well-known Presbyterian minister; "The Woman's Part," by Mrs. Luke Paget—a singularly tender and beautiful study; and "Brothers All: The War and the Race Question," by Mr. Edwyn Bevan, whose book on *Indian Nationalism* has been so warmly received. These papers, with their strenuous thought and living purpose, are invaluable as an equipment for those who guide the minds and prayers of our congregations.

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More directly missionary is the fifth pamphlet in the series—"The Decisive Hour: Is it Lost?" by Mr. J. H. Oldham, whose article on "The War and Missions" in the *International Review of Missions* we referred to last month. This pamphlet, which is having a very wide circulation, presents the whole missionary situation, and suggests lines of hope and possibility.

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A further important aid is offered in a set of outlines for united study called "The War and After" (price 3d.), issued by

the National Laymen's Missionary Movement, 3, Tudor Street, London, E.C. They are less simple than the study outlines noted last month—of which, however, some 12,000 copies are already in circulation—but for men and women who are really facing the issues of the moment, they are luminous and suggestive. In place after place the need is being realized for some means of focussing and directing thought. Every congregation should aim at having at least one group working on these outlines. References are freely given to inexpensive recent literature illustrative of the topics to be discussed.

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While these notes are being written, an invitation to help in an effective project comes from a well-known northern Church. From 5 to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays in four successive weeks before Christmas, a Discussion Meeting, limited to about forty persons, is being held. One of the "Papers for War-Time" is taken each week; the members read and think beforehand; one of the clergy presides and conducts the closing intercessions; a selected speaker opens with a ten, or at most fifteen minutes' address, summarizing the pamphlet and throwing out points for the discussion, for which half an hour is reserved. After Christmas it is hoped that regular study circles may be formed.

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Several great problems, missionary in nature, are brought into new prominence by the war, and claim thought of a kind which should help towards their solution. One, as Mr. Edwyn Bevan's pamphlet suggests, is that of racial relationships. Church and Empire are called to face it together. Some of the recent statements as to the Japanese as immigrants read strangely now that Japan is our welcomed ally. As to the splendid loyalty of India to the British Throne, the Bishop of Calcutta well says:

"India's amazing response . . . must mean some wonderful new departure in the relation of the races and in the place which India will take in the future counsels of the Empire."

This is one of the topics raised for discussion in "The War and After." It reaches very far, and it cannot be shirked. It meets the Christian Church insistently in America and in South Africa, where black and white live side by side. And it threatens, in the heat of war fever, to invade Europe with its poison. Over the whole world, whether near at hand or far afield, the Church needs to clear herself of the entanglement of racial prejudice and hatred; the deliverance of the Church is retarded by any member who gives racial antagonism in any form a place in his heart, however unthinkingly. Such antipathies are alien to the spirit of true patriotism, what the Japanese call "love-country-heart."

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Another great problem made real by the war is the impact of our western civilization upon Africa and the East. People are asking anxiously what effect this war between professedly Christian nations will have upon non-Christians and upon the young Churches in the mission-field. The answers which come give food for thought. Without doubt the war is a terrible stumbling-block, and it is well that conscience should awake. But as we try to see ourselves through the eyes of other nations, the problem widens far beyond the war. "The natives have learned already to distinguish between 'English' and 'Christians,'" writes one missionary. "The sight of one drunken Englishman does more harm to the Christian African than the war," says another man of wide missionary experience. Bishop Cecil, of South Tokyo, in his Diocesan letter writes: "A wise missionary said, 'This war will put back the cause of Christianity in the East a hundred years,' but a catechist answered, 'It should not make much difference. People know that Christianity has worked very slowly in leavening the western nations.'" The darkest spots of our country are known in the farthest East; it may be that a conscience awakened in war-time will turn its searchlight also on to what we harbour even in times of peace—forces of evil which threaten now to invade even the

camps where our young recruits are preparing to fight for King and country.

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The Church of Christ in our country has before her a supreme task at this time—a task which can by no means be fulfilled wholly on the battlefield, a task as full of cost and pain as it is of ultimate reward. Throughout our parishes we are giving of our best young manhood from every rank of life ; the women and those who tarry with them are abiding in prayer for those sent forth. Sorrow is being borne with quiet heroism, adversity is being bravely met. There is courage as high at home as on the battlefield. Some of us thank God, though not with eyes that are blinded, that we are British-born. But what is to be the outcome of this great and devastating war ? God forbid that racial antipathy or rancour, desire for enlarged territory or increased trade at the expense of any other nation, should have any root in us at all. Even honour and self-defence, though great, are inadequate in return ; they will not compensate for the awful and still but half-realized cost. Nothing less than a new Britain in a new Europe, making with a new Asia and Africa part of God's new world, will satisfy our desire and our prayer. And this will come to pass not through any automatic purging wrought by war, nor by the victories of our armies in the field, but through the working of moral and spiritual forces in our hearts at home. The crying need of foreign missions is a new home base. There are tokens that on the Continent God is beginning a work of spiritual revival both in Germany and in France. We as a nation need a fresh call into the pure, clear light of God, that in it we may let Him do His purging, quickening work, if the end of this war is to be the beginning of a nobler service in the world. It is towards this that each Christian leader can guide his people in preparation for the Day of Prayer.

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