



Editorial



Spiritual Values

There is much disappointment in many quarters over the apparent lack of spiritual results from the war now raging in Europe. When it broke out it seemed such an appalling calamity that we readily concluded that men and women all over the Christian world would be led to call on God as never before, and that the greatest Pentecost since apostolic times would follow. The signs of the unusual presence of God with men which we looked for have not been manifested. Churches are no better attended than formerly. The week-night prayer meeting is still a much neglected means of grace. The Win-One Movement, which was organized in the Toronto Conference last autumn has been disappointing in its results. So far as the work of the Church is concerned it is carried on in the midst of discouraging conditions which have been intensified by the war, rather than otherwise.

Evidence accumulates that the powers of evil are at work among the soldiers to a most alarming degree, and that many clean, upright young men have yielded to temptation and degenerated sadly since they enlisted for overseas service. Designing men have sought to profit in forbidden ways by war contracts.

Such are the views entertained by many of the moral conditions prevailing in Canada at the present time. But, how far are these due to the war? Men who have been guilty of graft have not descended to their low moral level because of the war. It gave them the opportunity for which their years of unethical training had fitted them. The moral conditions among the soldiers are probably no worse than they would be if the same men had been brought together to study agriculture rather than the science of war, and been allowed to live in the midst of conditions similar to those which surround them in the military camps. It must not be forgotten that some of the worst men in the country have enlisted. Bring a company of bad men together anywhere and they will create an immoral atmosphere which the weak will find it difficult to resist. The war has revealed moral corruption which existed before hostilities began. It is not necessarily demoralizing to the men who for conscience sake and to fulfil an imperative duty took part in it. Germany is at war because she ignored the teaching of the New Testament and turned the truth of God into a lie. England is at war because she determined to be true to her Treaty with Belgium and defend the weak. There is untold spiritual value in the motive that prompted her to draw the sword. It cannot but strengthen the moral fibre of the Empire and in due measure make possible the abundant blessing of God.

In thousands of homes since war was declared there has been unceasing prayer for loved ones on the firing line, while inexpressible sympathy and anxiety throughout the Christian world has found expression in supplication that God would overrule this conflict for good and speedily bring it to an end. Men and women have prayed as never before. It is doubtful if throughout the modern Christian world there has ever been such a sense of dependence upon God as during the period covered by the war.

The motives prompting the great majority of the young men of Canada to enlist undoubtedly mark a consecration to duty of untold spiritual value. They have turned away from the life of selfishness and ease to the service which may involve the supremest sacrifice a man can make. The spirit in which their parents

and loved ones have seen them don the khaki is of the kind which only they possess who are actuated by a sense of duty and loyalty to noble ideals.

When John R. Mott returned from Europe, where he had seen the horrors of war and the self-sacrificing spirit which suffering develops, he said, "There were no selfish men in Europe." Never has there been so much unselfishness in Canada. Never has the spirit of sacrifice been so exemplified among all classes in the Dominion as during the past twenty months. No one seems to doubt that when the war is over some of the nations which have been long oppressed by despotic forms of government shall find the freedom to which they are entitled under democratic institutions. It may be that according to our standards of judgment spiritual results are very disappointing. Perhaps we ought to change our standards.

Victory and Need

On another page we publish in part the report of Rev. R. B. McAmmond on a series of remarkable evangelistic services which grew out of the recent revival movement at Jenshow. In each case these meetings were initiated and for the most part carried on under native leadership, without assistance or direction from a foreign missionary. Mr. McAmmond says:

"These meetings have been a revelation to me of the latent possibilities of our Chinese Church. I told them to go and conduct their meetings in their own way after much prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and these are the results. Truly the day is coming swiftly when our prayers will be mightily answered. It is coming, but are we worthy intercessors at the throne of grace?" Again he writes out of a full heart: "Would that we might get a cable message, telling us to press the battle home, for the Church was on her face before God, and victory must be on our side! Prayer is power and the kind we believe in. Let us have a ceaseless backing—it is our greatest need at this time."

Be Fair to the Indian

During a visit to the Lake Winnipeg district two years ago, we met a man who remembered distinctly the arrival of James Evans, the first Christian missionary at Norway House. Probably at every one of our mission stations in that north country there are men and women who were born years before the night of paganism in this village was relieved by the first rays of gospel light. In even the more progressive and responsive bands a majority of the people are at most only one generation removed from heathenism. In others a majority of the Christians of middle age were themselves led out of pagan darkness into the Gospel light.

In Alberta we heard a chief declare in Council that "when he was a boy a man was the same as a coyote," in so far as concerned the value placed upon human life. In a northern British Columbia mission we were discussing the question of moral laxity in the relations of men and women. Surprise was expressed that the Gospel had not effected greater improvement in this regard. "When I first visited this village, twenty-six years ago," said my informant, "there was less appar-

ent impropriety in these matters for the simple reason that no one was safe outside his own house at night." At Port Simpson it was my great privilege to clasp the hand of an old Christian (then dying) who as a young man saved the life of the first missionary when a hostile chief sought his removal by a murderous attack delivered in broad daylight and in the presence of his congregation. That event occurred years before the first trip of Dr. Crosby up the Coast. Those were the good old days! Slavery was a recognized institution and the fiendish despotism of the medicine man was universal and unchallenged.

To-day men marvel that superstitious fears and pagan practices among these children of nature should have survived, "after all the missionary work that has been done among them." Every moral lapse is advertised as further evidence, either of the failure of the Gospel or of the hopeless lack of character among Indians. A bit of sympathetic observation on our Canadian reservations leads one to ask rather, "What must these people think of *our* morals, and of the religion under the influence of which our characters have been formed?"

Two generations ago the great race of Crees, extending all the way from Hudson Bay to the Rockies, was without a written language. To-day many hundred read the Bible in their own tongue and hundreds of others read and speak the language of their white brothers. A score or more from Brandon Institute are with the colors in defence of British institutions and ideals. Homes by the hundred have taken the place of former hovels or tents. Throughout British Columbia almost every Indian Church—and there are some good enough for any village—has been provided wholly or in considerable part out of the offerings of a people barely one generation removed from paganism. East and West eight native ordained ministers in good standing have a place on our station lists. In the face of these facts who shall say that the Gospel has failed, or that it has a hopeless field among our Indian brothers in Canada? Rather, its glorious work has just begun.

Report of West China Mission Council, 1916

BY A. J. ELSON.

The Twentieth Annual Council of the Canadian Methodist Mission, West China, was held at Luchow, January 6th to 20th, 1916. Owing to the vastness of the field covered by our Mission, and the length of time necessarily occupied in travel to any centre; from Chungchow, our most eastern station, to Chengtu, requiring three weeks overland, an attempt is being made to work out some form of Council organization that will be representative in character. This year five members were sent from our twenty odd missionaries stationed in Chengtu, two came from Chungking, and one from each of our other eight stations. These fifteen men, chosen by three gatherings which correspond to District Meetings in the home church, together with the Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Kilborn, met in Luchow to consider the work of our Mission, and lay plans for the ensuing year. While this form of representative organization is doubtless a step in the right direction, it is clear that there is still room for improvement. Either a larger representation or the division of the field into two Councils will be the inevitable solution of the problem.

It was with a deep realization of the solemn importance of their task that the delegates gathered. Every man's heart and mind were awake to the unprecedented opportunities and open doors for aggressive Christian work that abound on every side. On the

other hand, every man knew that stern facts must be faced and, with full appreciation of the burdens that owing to the war the home church is called upon to bear, realized that greater sacrifice and devotion than has ever been seen before would be necessary to even maintain the work already established. Every man felt that, during the present financial stringency, we must be content with an irreducible minimum of expenditure, and that, while as far as possible continuing our efforts to reach the masses, we should largely lay stress upon the more thorough preparation of our Chinese Church for a great "forward drive" at the earliest possible moment after the close of the European war.

Much interest was aroused and much inspiration derived from the written reports of work for the past year presented by each one of our missionaries. These were humble but accurate presentations of what God had wrought among the heathen through them. Discouragements and disappointments were freely told, but so also were wonderful stories of God's power as manifested in human lives. A note of triumph ran throughout all these records. We can take space to mention only one particular field—that of Jenshow.



NEW INDIAN MISSION CHURCH, KITAMAAT, B.C.

The story of the wonderful awakening that has come to that district reads not unlike a modern edition of the Acts of the Apostles. Many have been added to the Lord and many more who have been professing Christians for years caught such a glimpse of the life hid with Christ in God as they had never before dreamed of. And still the work goes on. It is expected that these reports of work will shortly be available in printed form to the church at home.

An encouraging feature is the success and development of the Chinese Home Missionary Society. This represents, as its name implies, an organized effort on the part of our Chinese Christians to preach the gospel to their own people and to the aboriginal tribes. This year a delegation is being sent to visit these tribesmen and begin work among them.

It was felt by Council that the time has come when higher standards must be required from candidates for the ministry. Provision was made for yearly reports from the foreign pastor regarding the candidate's course of study, his development in pastoral efficiency, and preaching ability and the value of his wife to the work. At the Annual District Meeting the candidate will be asked as to his general reading, his faithfulness in Bible study and prayer, evidences of spiritual growth, the fruit of his preaching, his methods of reaching outsiders, his personal habits and freedom from debt. Before being received as an evangelist he must also graduate from a Higher Primary School.