

massacre and destruction, causing misery to countless millions. Who knows that future science may not bring them under control, and social security may not come within reach of every class and race of men?

Secondly, man is essentially a moral being, endowed with a sense of right and wrong, and an innate tendency and urge to seek the right. Moral standards may change with time and space. What is considered right now may not be considered so tomorrow. What is regarded as right in the East may not be regarded so in the West. Our ignorance and our imperfect environment must necessarily bias our views and cause a distorted concept of what is truly right. Imperfect and partial our judgments may be the fact still remains that every human being will always judge in his own way what is right and what is wrong. A tribe may take a good deal of liberty with other tribes, but within the tribe there is always a certain amount of moral discipline. A nation may commit acts of aggression upon another nation; within that nation such acts would be regarded as criminal. Even the gangsters and thieves have their own ethical codes. Such codes of restraint and standards of morals may be to some extent motivated by the instinct of self-interest and self-preservation, but one is inclined to believe there is in it a seed of absoluteness which transcends the bounds of the individual. Times were when conquest pure and simple was not regarded with moral disfavor. The exploitation of one group by another was heartily supported without any feeling of moral doubt. Much of it is still going, its subtle veneer hiding it from the moral indictment of the unobserving. The fact remains that more and more man is seeking a moral basis for his acts, even acts of criminality. "War to end war," "Fight to make the world safe for democracy," "War to eradicate injustices," "War to rid the world of a certain ism," "war to establish a new order," even "War to make friends," are some of the slogans used to rally popular support. Whatever they may be, truths or lies, they point to the irrefutable fact that man is essentially a moral being. He can only be called upon to perform acts of sacrifice (conscious acts of self-denial) on a moral basis.

From the very crude beginnings of superstition, this spark of moral sense has flowered through countless centuries into the power of religion as we know it today. From a perverted and crude state of relativeness, it has crystallised into a persistent search for the Absolute. Every race has its special form of religion, some may be considered more advanced than others. Each religion has its characteristic emphasis, and particular rites and symbols through which the Absolute is expressed and interpreted. Disregarding the outward differences, one finds the central core that is common to all. In the past, attempts have been made to suppress man's religious activities; again and again, men have been persecuted because of their religious beliefs. States have attempted to rob their people of their religious liberty, even the church itself had tried to suppress the individual's right to search for himself religious truths. All these have failed. Even now attempts are being made in certain parts of the world to blot out religion in a wholesale manner. Apparently and temporarily they seem to be enjoying a certain degree of suc-

cess. These shall also inevitably fail. It is inconceivable how the search for the absolute good can be permanently rooted out of the hearts of men. On the contrary, in spite of the evils that have been committed in its name, it has demonstrated its power as a constraining influence in human society, and in countless cases through all the past centuries transformed lives of evil to lives for good. By pronouncing and upholding high standards of moral good, it has in many instances sown the seeds and actually brought forth important changes in social behavior. Now we only see through the mirror darkly. What further and revolutionary changes can be wrought, as man's search for the Absolute deepens and widens, as man's moral conscience becomes more sharpened, no one would be able to predict. In fact, many are looking to the powers of religion to divert the forces that natural science has unleashed from channels of destruction and waste into channels of constructiveness.

Given a life that bids to be eternal, given a feeling of kindredness that is universal, given a power and an urge to know the truths of life's evolving processes, and given an eternal urge to comprehend the Absolute, what more assurances do we require to face life and its problems with cheer and hopefulness?

However, such faith must not be passive, but active; not static, but dynamic; not blind, but intelligent. To be sure, life will continue, the soul of man will continue to grow in truth and goodness, but the tempo of that progress entirely depends upon the activity and effort that is called forth. Acknowledging with honesty the wrongs that are here and now, facing with valor the suffering that besets us now, but firmly rooted in the faith of the good that is going to be, we must strive to rebuild out of the ruins something grander than before, something that will outwardly bear witness to the faith and hope that is within.

—=o=—

The Church—Today And Tomorrow

H. A. WITTENBACH

I HAVE just received a questionnaire from the Home Church which has caused me to consider the situation confronting the Church in China and I wish to share with friends in China some of these reflections.

(1) Gains and Losses through the war in China.

The losses are very obvious. For instance, before the war I was engaged in a Rural Reconstruction project in the Tsangshing District of Kwangtung. This work has been completely destroyed. In our three main centres, we have lost our buildings, our cattle, poultry and literature and other equipment. The members of our cooperatives have been scattered and some of them killed. Villages to which we had loaned money at low interest for various projects have become defaulters. Poverty is worse than ever before. One of our village dispensaries has been destroyed, though the other has

developed into a community hospital and the doctor, who has stuck gamely to his post, has rendered invaluable service.

The gains, however, are perhaps of greater importance. A new relationship has arisen between the Church and the State. There is a new recognition by the Government of the trustworthiness, the spirit of loyal, self-forgetting, danger-defying service of Christian workers.

The award by the Central Government on October 10th 1939 of the Order of the Red Precious Stone to Bishop Hall is an instance of this recognition.

This means that a new responsibility will be placed on the shoulders of the Church in the task of post-war reconstruction.

This is the problem that should be in the forefront of our minds and our prayers.

Jesus steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem, the final step and at the same time the initial step in the setting up of the Kingdom. But along the way He healed the sick, comforted the sad and converted the sinner. He was the supreme example of the practical visionary, never too busy or too tired or too inspired to serve, yet never for a moment losing the vision.

This brings us to the second question.

(2) Dangers of the Present Situation.

These I take to be two:

- (a) Preoccupation with the financial problems of carrying on under war conditions, and
- (b) Concentration on relief-work or war-time evangelistic campaigns.

Both of these are very necessary tasks but they must not be allowed to fill our minds to the exclusion of planning for the future.

(3) What is the Challenge of the Church Overseas to the Church at Home in these days?

Our call to the Church at Home should be couched in almost exactly the same words as I have used above, for, in these days of world-war, the dangers are the same.

(a) Preoccupation with the financial problem of maintaining the work at home and abroad, and

(b) Concentration on war-relief work or war-time evangelistic campaigns.

The Churches at Home should be sending out more missionaries, men of vision and wide ability and with powers of leadership combined with a readiness to learn and a spirit of adaptability. That means her best men. At the same time, or alternatively, she should be sending more money to train more and better-equipped Chinese workers.

If, as we believe, the world's troubles are the result of man's refusal to understand or to follow Christ's teaching, then surely we must, apart from fighting for Christian principles (and we are). Don't let us be misled by cynics who speak of economic or such-like

bases for war. The war in China, and the war in Europe are wars of ideals, of first principles) we must also, I say, apart from fighting for principles, plan for a far wider and deeper and more efficient propagation of the Gospel. The call is literally, "Your money or your life." Christian People must give as they have never given before or the Church will be wiped out as it has been in Russia and as it threatens to be in Germany and other Nation-worshipping countries.

The Church of Tomorrow

I am prepared to be told that what I have written above is trite—a collection of mere generalities. I freely admit it. Let us, however, not ignore these facts because they are trite. Once we have our basis facts clear, we can commence to think constructively.

What is to be the place of the Church in post-war China?

Here is the question we should all be considering lest the day find us unprepared. As Synods and as individuals, let us get down to this subject. Could some of our Christian statesmen, Chinese and foreign, give us some articles in the Recorder on this topic?

The Quest For God*

S. R. ANDERSON

JESUS bequeathed to us one of His profound and universal life-secrets when He said,

"Ask, and it shall be given you;

Seek, and ye shall find;

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." (Luke 11:9)

Tell me what you ask of life, and your answer will reveal what life may be expected to give to you. Of course the result may not be just what you expected, and if you ask for some temporary satisfaction or something of no real value, you will doubtless be quite disappointed or even disillusioned. But the true seeker looks for the high value—the pearl of great price. And Jesus drives the truth deep by repeated emphasis—"Ask—seek—knock."

Unknown areas of truth wait to reveal their mysteries to the one who earnestly and persistently seeks. Did some of us older ones once fear lest all interesting discoveries had already been made, and lest all important truth would be too old by the time we had a chance to deal with it? And have we not realized, as we have kept our interests alive, that limitless revelations of truth still await the earnest seeker? For you who are today on the portal of a new adventure this would seem to be the most challenging truth that one could pass on. Ask—seek—knock.

This truth applies with equal force in all areas of life—in electrical, industrial and chemical engineering—in educational, social and political reform, seek, and ye shall find. Every advance in any

*Baccalaureate sermon of the Shanghai American School delivered in Community Church, Shanghai, June 9th, 1940.