

THE SIGNING OF PEACE TERMS

CATHOLIC THANKSGIVING IN WELLINGTON.

(From our own correspondent.)

The signing of the Peace Terms was marked by Solemn Thanksgiving in all the Catholic churches of Wellington. Addressing the crowded congregation at St. Joseph's Church, Buckle Street, his Grace Archbishop O'Shea said:—"We are met here to-day to return thanks to Almighty God for having restored peace to the nations and put an end to a long and cruel war. But while we can and do rejoice whole-heartedly that this great war has ended, here, I am afraid, ends also our satisfaction. We cannot feel very enthusiastic as Christians about the terms of the peace such as they are reported to us, nor about the present and the future outlook before the world. It may be that the peace just signed has all the defects inseparable from a peace that is dictated by victors to vanquished, but it seems to me also that the men who are at present guiding the destinies of the Great Powers have not learned the lesson that the war should have taught them, and that they are striving to perpetuate the very things that brought it about and against which they professed that we were fighting. They made a bad beginning at the Peace Conference in omitting to publicly ask God's blessing upon and guidance in their deliberations. Small wonder, then, that the peace which has issued from their deliberations does not seem to have been received very enthusiastically anywhere. The reason is that the ordinary people have come to the conclusion that their interests have been subordinated to the ambition and the greed of militarism and commercialism. These were the two things that caused the war, each using and helping the other. For years before the breaking out of hostilities, practices were indulged in, in all countries, that apart from business would be regarded as immoral, and such inhuman practices were justified on the ground of being economically necessary: and now, when we expected better things to come out of the war, it looks as if the rulers of the world want to perpetuate and accentuate the old evils. It is no wonder, then, that we look to the future with a great deal of anxiety. Are Governments never going to learn that men and their happiness and welfare are of far more importance than all the theories of economics and industry, than all schemes of organisation and equipment? Are they never going to understand that men have souls as well as bodies, and that what may look like successful business may be the greatest calamity from the point of view of society? We hear a lot of warnings about Bolshevism these days. Remember that all that the public press stigmatises as Bolshevism in this country is not such by any means. But if ever Bolshevism and anarchy and revolution get a hold it will be because of the persistence in an inhuman social and industrial policy by the great financiers and capitalists and the Governments who make themselves their tools. They will be primarily responsible for revolution should it come. You may have wrong-headed extremists amongst Labor leaders who are sincere, but whose heads are filled with the rubbish they gather from Socialistic writers, who are completely out of touch with human nature. You may even have criminals in all countries in the Labor movement, who are in it for their own selfish ends. I grant this is possible, but the wrong-headed and the criminals would have no material to work upon, they would not be able to supplant honest leaders and men of reason and conscience, were it not for the greater criminals on the side of the wealthy and powerful. All the best that we have in life and civilisation is due to Christianity. The arts and sciences, freedom, and laws we owe to her. All that is true, all that is just, all that is sweet and gentle, all that makes life worth living, we owe to the Gospel of Christianity, and it will be only by a whole-hearted return to the teachings and principles of Christianity on the part of Governments and peoples that the world will retain its peace, its liberty, and its happiness."

At the Sacred Heart Basilica, the preacher was the Very Rev. T. Gilbert, S.M., M.A., Rector of St. Patrick's College. In the course of an eloquent address he said:—"The blight of the world during many hundred years has been the cramping influence of nationalism in religion. God is above nations, and His truth shall prevail. Let us therefore pray that our legislators may see to it that at least the broader lessons of Christian justice find sane consideration in their dealings with the people who gave them power. Let them ask themselves, 'Have the rights of oppressed nations against their overlords no parallels in the class wars that are surely coming?' Let them remember that if the world punishes nations for battenning on the industry of the downtrodden, so, too, the lip-patriots and profiteers will one day be arraigned before the bar of the nation, and Justice shall be judge. Let them remember that if they sow the wind of compromise and double-dealing the whirlwind of revenge will overthrow them. Let them remember that if they proscribe God in the springtime of life, the harvest will be fat with vices that shocked even a pagan world. Let them remember that the tribunal of nations has endorsed the claims of small nations to self-determination; and within the borders of a State minorities are as small nations. You cannot set bounds to the legitimate aspiration of a nation, neither can you quench the vital spark of a deep religious principle. Let our rulers in their dealings with the various sections of their people adopt an attitude of even-handed justice, substituting trust for suspicion, good-will for hostility, principle for expediency, loyal co-operation for jealous competition. We are a young country, but with the irresponsibility and nonchalance of a newly-emancipated schoolboy we have thrown aside the lessons of our elders, and lost our bearings in our new-found liberty. Let us be sane, and realise that God is God—of Whose kingdom there shall be no end, whether we exclude Him from our schools and try to blot out His lights in Heaven; for God's justice shall reign for ever and ever. Even against Odin and Thor and the whole hosts of Valhalla and their shattering hammers, God's word is as a withering fire; so, too, may it be in this young land against Mammon and his grisley crew of ambition and covetousness and envy. For us Catholics, as well as for the rest of the world, the lesson of the war, whereby we will build our sanctuary of peace, is Jesus Christ, yesterday, to-day, the same for ever, of Whose kingdom there shall be no end."

Fathers Langley, C.S.S.R., S. Mahony, S.M., Kimbell, S.M., and Campbell, S.M., were the preachers at St. Anne's, St. Mary's, Island Bay, and Kilbirnie Churches respectively.

REBELS.

Now while this tingling ecstasy is ours,

When touch and look are barbed with strange swift fire,

When Life's a melody upon Love's lyre,
Charming our tranced sense through golden hours;
Though hearts aflame reck not of faded flowers,

Time bides his day—ere glutton passion tire,
And only pale cold ashes mark its pyre—
Old tyrant Time, and waiting grins and glowers.

We will be rebels, dear, against his rule,

And, cunning plotters, thwart Time's envious sway;

Kind tolerance, with wise-eyed sympathy,

And self-forgetfulness, our hearts shall school

To keep alive, though passion wane and die,

Love's steadfast flame, when we are old and grey.

—ERNEST BLAKE, in the *English Review*.

THE MOST OBSTINATE

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