

WOMEN'S Christian Temperance Union Of New Zealand.

Organised 1885.

"For God and Home and Humanity."

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The White Ribbon.

For God and Home and Humanity.

WELLINGTON, DEC. 18, 1917.

A VISION OF JERUSALEM.

The news that Jerusalem is now in English hands has thrilled many hearts throughout our vast Empire. After being centuries under the rule of the Crescent, once more the flag of the Cross is hoisted o'er its walls.

Amid the many visions of Jerusalem that memory calls up, there are two that linger longest in our mind. The first is the picture of the Man of Sorrows as He weeps over the city and voices the tragedy not only of Jerusalem, but of the world: "How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

The twin picture is that of Calvary, with its mighty sufferer. The shadow of the cross falls athwart all our memories of Jerusalem. At this Christmas season, while we commemorate a Saviour's birth, it is well to remind ourselves that the birth of Christ does not convey a full lesson. Calvary, with its cross of suffering, succeeded Bethlehem with its peaceful cradle; the multitude of the heavenly host praising God and singing "Peace on earth, good-will to men," was replaced by a howling mob shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The babe of Bethlehem becomes the "Man of Sorrow and acquainted with grief."

To-day He broods o'er a sin-stricken and suffering world, as of old He wept over Jerusalem. Still He voices the same tragedy, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have life." To-day He says to our nation, as to Israel of old, "Return unto Me, O backsliding Israel, and I will heal all thy backslidings, and love thee freely."

The call to sacrifice has come to us. From our shores have gone forth the flower of our young manhood. They went not because they loved war, but because they believed duty called them. All through our land is heard the cry of weeping and lamentation. "Rachel weeping for her children, and will not be comforted, because they are not." May the Christmas season bring comfort to all sore hearts! May they realise that the Eternal Father gave His well beloved Son to redeem a world from sin, and pray and work that the ordeal causing the sacrifice of many sons may lead our Dominion, our Empire, our world, up from the mists of sin and sorrow on to the golden heights where God resides among His own.

We look upon the dark war cloud and see it glowing darkly red with the waves of suffering and shot athwart with the golden gleams of sacrifice. If we are true to the best in us, we will see our Empire emerge from this crucible of suffering with the gold of national character purified, and the dross of national sin refined away.

The constant prayer of every Christian citizen should be, "Lord, send us statesmen, not time-serving politicians." The politician looks around and says, "The evils of intemperance, impurity, and other evils are among

us; we can't reform, let us license and regulate the evils." But the statesman, beholding with clearer vision the things which make for our eternal welfare, sets up the standard of national prohibition, and exalts the white ideal of purity before men and women alike. He is working in harmony with all the unseen forces for righteousness, and though only by slow degrees and much education, still the race begins to climb up to the ideal set before it. The politician is a materialist, and his aims are physical only. The statesman recognises that the most powerful influences are unseen, and his aims are spiritual.

"God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath He will restrain."

What benefits can we see coming from this trial? Under the iron flail the different parts of our Empire are being welded together into one harmonious whole; the right of every adult to an equal voice in the government of the country is being realised; the iniquity of a system which allows huge acres to be kept as deer parks and pleasure grounds for the few, while the many are crowded into unwholesome slums, is being brought home to us; the right of every child to be well born is now recognised; also its right to a mother's care is allowed in Mothers' Pension Acts.

Ceaseless war is waged upon the twin evils of drink and impurity; the need of an equal standard of morals to save us from national corruption and decay has been shown.

God shows to us a vision splendid of a nation, a world redeemed from evil by the spirit of a glorious sacrifice. He calls us to translate this vision into a reality; if we fail, our doom is sealed.

When victory shall come to us, it will come as a little babe cradled in the arms of a Madonna, who is the Angel of Sacrifice.

"But, Britain! Britain! what if it be written

On the great scrolls of Him who holds the ways,

That to the dust the foe shall not be smitten

Till unto Him we pledge redeemed days?

Not of our own might shall this tribulation