

THE CONTINENT

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For the Second Draft

Does your church want to do something patriotic?

Here's something.

The men of the next army draft are now pretty accurately identified. Classification of men registered but not yet mobilized has been practically completed. Virtually all of Class 1 will be summoned by the forthcoming call.

But it will likely be eight or ten weeks yet before these young men are drawn away from their homes. And that is the time which churches should "buy up" as a patriotic opportunity.

In these coming two months your church ought to pay more attention to the men of the congregation who are going out to cantonments in the next contingent than to all the parish beside.

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It ought to be sane and respectful attention, of course. These youths are not to be intruded on as if they had become public property. They must not be nauseated by the flatteries of gushing women nor exasperated by the patronage of officious men.

But well within the limits of this warning there remains abundance of privilege to make these manly young men feel the deep respect with which they are regarded by the citizenship of a nation depending on their faithfulness.

They must be assured and reassured that they have been superbly honored by being intrusted with their country's future.

The grandeur of the purposes which they are challenged to serve should likewise be exhibited to them in the most vivid lights.

Sympathy for the sufferings of war-torn peoples abroad; indignation at the malice that began and the brutality that has attended the present conflict; gratitude for the richness of the American heritage; hope of the deliverance from war and oppression which this struggle should bring to humanity—each and all of these great emotions ought to be impressed, under the highest voltage of intelligent conviction, on the heart of every drafted soldier before he sets out for camp.

And above all there ought to be burned into his soul, at a white heat of idealism, the supreme consciousness that the only worthy soldier under the stars and stripes is a clean soldier and a free soldier—a soldier who does not love fighting but is glad to fight for what he loves—a soldier who, loving righteousness and purity, keeps himself righteous and pure for that sake.

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The special point in directing the attention of the churches to this need, lies in the fact that it is the churches that can do such a service most naturally and effectually.

It is an inner and spiritual task essentially—a preparation of mind—a shaping of thought—an inspiration for the soul. And a majority of these young "selectmen" have been under the influence of some church, during childhood at least, in just such character-molding relations.

And at an hour when perhaps for the first time in their lives duty looms up with an imperative claim, even those who have thought themselves to have outgrown the church, can hardly fail to listen with fresh respect if the voice which spoke to them of duty in earlier years—the voice of the church—speaks maternally again.

Young men marching out into any unknown future are always sensitive and susceptible. And when the unknown future is lurid with war, this sensitiveness must be intensified a hundredfold.

To that mystical combination of fear and hope which marks the

military recruit, any honest friendship can address itself with manifold advantage. And the church is idle indeed which does not avail itself of this entree for cheer, encouragement and counsel.

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Practical ways of serving these embryo soldiers will suggest themselves readily where a true brotherly interest is present.

One thing which should quickly propose itself is the importance of giving them some idea of the kind of life they are going to.

A church could hardly win otherwise more gratitude from the conscripted men out of its neighborhood than by inviting them all to a gathering or a series of gatherings, in which the life of the cantonments is explained in detail by those who have been there.

When the first contingent of the national army entered the training camps, the homesickness and bewilderment of the men made not only a pitiable but a dangerous chapter in mobilization.

That dismay and discontent quickly passed away. But the second contingent ought not to suffer even temporarily so painful an experience. They will be saved from it if they hear beforehand of the adjustments which all normal men quickly reach by accepting cheerfully the new relations.

So obviously important is this preparation that there is little doubt that military officers will respond to almost any community's request for some man of the vicinity to come home on leave and speak thus encouragingly to his prospective comrades. Other persons of military and camp experience also can be found in most places to advise about the transition from civil to military life.

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Such encouragements, if afforded to the men through the churches, will open the way for dealing with more profound things.

Brotherly talks by physicians and others on personal hygiene can penetrate from considerations of bodily health and how it is preserved to considerations of moral health and spiritual strength.

Assuredly every church should see to it that no young man from its neighborhood fails to apprehend where the worst enemy of country and army and man is lurking—the kaiser's most useful ally—in the hell of sensual indulgence.

And of course all this must be topped and overtopped by the quiet, firm and clear word of pastor, Sunday school teacher and Christian neighbor, telling each young man that the church expects every son to do his duty—to his country and to his God. Patriotism and religion ought to be so linked for each reachable soldier that they will never come apart.

The first contingent went into the cantonments with many Christians included who did not show their religious colors there for weeks. The Young Men's Christian Association workers had to dig them out after their church cards arrived from home.

The second contingent ought to be exhorted, in so far as it is Christian at all, to go into camp carrying its Christian banner high—to declare its religion openly the first day and stick to it.

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Every church ought to do all this without fail. But it ought not to do it alone—if it can avoid it.

Being a duty for every church, it ought to be done by all the churches of every town (or every neighborhood, at least) conjointly.

Think out your own church's duty. Then compare notes.

The Busy Man and His Bible

BY CHARLES R. ERDMAN

MOST BUSY MEN have no Bibles. Many of them have in their rooms or homes books so named; they occasionally hear some ministers refer to the Bible; they may even believe that it is a good book to be read—by other people; but they give it no place in their lives, they bestow upon it neither time nor thought, they regard it as belonging to a world quite foreign to themselves or they consider it to be the peculiar possession of certain professional students and teachers. But in no sense do they hold it to be their own. This is true of men in Christian lands, of those who have come from Christian homes and even of some who have religious convictions and are endeavoring to lead Christian lives.

In spite of Bible schools and churches and Sabbath schools the prevalent neglect of the Bible is as astonishing as it is deplorable. Let any popular audience be asked to indicate how many persons present have read a chapter during the previous day or five chapters during the preceding week or the whole New Testament at any time during their lives, and the audience itself will be surprised at the showing. It was of the students in one of our most famous universities that an American professor remarked, "Their ignorance of the Bible is absolute and profound." The busy man of today is therefore almost certain to be indifferent to the Bible or to feel justified in his neglect of a book which he supposes few people are reading.

The World's Most Important Document

The busy man needs the Bible. No matter how one may be employed or what his sphere may be, he cannot safely neglect the book of life. The Bible is the most practical book in the world. It affects the physical health, as it reminds one continually of purity and temperance, of the perils of anxiety and passion, of the need of sobriety and self-control. It is essential to the intellectual life. As a great educator has declared: "The Bible is the most important document in the world's history; no man can be wholly uneducated who really knows the Bible, nor can any one be considered a truly educated man who is ignorant of it." The testimony of Carlyle, Macaulay, Ruskin, Froude and a host of others reminds the busy man that he cannot afford to neglect the world's greatest classic.

Most important of all, the Bible stimulates the moral and spiritual life. A popular preacher used to say: "The Bible holds its influence over men not because it is thousands of years old but because it is a present answer to present needs." This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book. The busy man, most of all, is tempted to lose sight of things unseen, and to find his confidence in things eternal growing less real. Nothing has such power as the Bible to renew our trust in God, to deliver us from self and from doubt. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

Where There Is a Bible There Is Time to Read It

The busy man can know his Bible. He can find time for its daily reading, he can become familiar with its contents, he can enjoy its vitalizing influences in all the experiences of his crowded active life. Some of the busiest of men have been the most devoted students of this book. We all remember the practice of that great Christian general, "Chinese" Gordon, who always found a morning hour in which to be alone with his Bible and his God. None will forget the proficiency of Mr. Gladstone as a student of the Scriptures. One of America's most eminent surgeons is a lover of the word as well as a leader in his profession. A machinist, who worked at his trade ten hours a day and never took a vacation for thirty years so utilized the fractions of his time that he became a Bible teacher of wide repute and convincing power. The busy man needs to be reminded that "where there is a will there is a way."

The busy man needs some method in his use of the Bible. He must set aside a definite time; he must open the book with a specific purpose. He may form the familiar resolution "to carry a portion of the Bible" with him and "to read at least one chapter every day." If so, he may become a member of the Pocket Testament League, which has been instrumental in leading tens of thou-

sands of British and American soldiers and hundreds of thousands of men and women in all the leading countries of the world to become daily readers of the Bible.

One may appoint his "quiet time" in the morning or in the evening and then undertake the consecutive reading of some gospel or epistle, with the purpose of reading the same book again and again until he can recall its incidents or feels familiar with its arguments and attains some real mastery of its contents. Again, one may become interested in some new translation or version or in reading in some other language than English, and so more easily fix the attention upon truths which because familiar are only partly comprehended. Or one may determine to find what the Bible teaches as to some great problem of human life, as to some phase of the life and ministry of Christ or as to events still future.

The busy man should not expect to find much time for Bible reading, but he should regard the brief allotted time as sacred, and he should plan to use it to the very best possible advantage. His supreme aim should be to find daily some message concerning Christ and some truth which he can apply to his own experience. Even the busy man must not forget to pray as he reads, to yield his will to every holy suggestion and to ask for divine guidance. One who will so search the Scriptures cannot fail to find in them eternal life.

FOLKS · PLACES · AND · THINGS

THE fine art of what the slangy street calls "passing the buck" is not unknown nor unpracticed in circles ecclesiastical. Sometimes indeed a reflective critic might judge that the feat is practiced even more artfully in church than in politics.

A certain young candidate for the ministry was recently, on the ground of heretical views, denied ordination in the presbytery where he had a call to an important church. The presbytery's refusal was decided, and the world was given to understand that here was one presbytery at least which would not tolerate the introduction into the church of any dubious doctrine.

But as a matter of fact, behind the scenes there was a great deal of sympathy expressed for the young man and much evidence of the feeling that the church would lose a great deal of practical force and religious earnestness if he was to be permanently excluded from the ministry. So it happened, very shortly after the adverse decision of presbytery was announced, that a certain presbyter, whose reputation as a pillar of orthodoxy stands second to none, sought out a denominational official of wide general influence and spoke in substance after this fashion:

"This young man ought by all means to be ordained as a Presbyterian minister. He has the gift for it and the spirit for it, and will be highly useful in the church. But our presbytery simply can't afford to ordain him. You know that we are much too conservative. Now, can't you hunt up a liberal presbytery somewhere and get the young man a call inside its bounds? Then he can go there and that presbytery can ordain him and it will be all right."

The denominational official in question listened sympathetically, said he would try, and actually did succeed in carrying out that very plan. The young man got a call to a church in a liberal presbytery, and the said liberal presbytery ordained him promptly and gladly. So presbyterial reputations are now safe all the way around.

One of the Folks.

The Continent endeavors in its regular weekly department, "The Bible Day by Day," to provide for business men and others a stimulation to engage in daily Bible reading. The daily comment is linked with a Bible passage in a way to deepen spiritual values. During the absence of Dr. Robert Freeman in Young Men's Christian Association work abroad this department has been supplied without special announcement by such eminent religious leaders as Cleland B. McAfee, William Chalmers Covert, Robert Hugh Morris, Murray Shipley Howland, William H. Phelps, Selby Frame Vance, Walter R. Cromeans and William Rivers Taylor