

The Waiapu Church Gazette

WAR.

(By The Editor)

It is said frequently that all the great words of our English language are monosyllables. Perhaps the most terrible words can too be so classified. The word at the head of this article is not difficult to spell or pronounce, but what dread import lies in it! Alas! it is all too frequently in use nowadays. And this no matter what men do to avoid it. Recently a writer declared that it would be better not to talk about war, as if the mere fact of ignoring the name would prevent the thing. Unfortunately, auto-suggestion of this kind is neither spread universally enough, nor do the facts of the world situation warrant such an ostrich-like attitude. War is in the air, and it will take a miracle to prevent it from becoming an actuality. It seems as if Mussolini is determined to light up the powder magazine, willy-nilly.

A STRANGE SIGHT.

It is surely a strange spectacle that we are witnessing to-day. The excuses for the projected invasion of Abyssinia is that the country is barbarous, that slavery is practised, and that the natural resources of the land are unexploited. The Cross is to be replaced by the Sword—or lethal gas and air bomb—as a civilising agent. Not the Christian missionary, but the soldier, is to be the deliverer of a nation from its bondage of corruption and inefficiency. "Incidents" are being freely reported in the Italian Press to influence public opinion against the "savages" of Ethiopia, and with unctuous self-commendation the highly civilised Italian is setting about, via media of a modern war, to enrich a great country with its own high culture. The case so stated, seems to our own untutored mind rather extraordinary, and it raises a question of very far-reaching consequence to the Christian Church. Does this latest threat to the peace of humanity mean that Christianity is a failure, and that the dogs of war are to be successful where the Gospel

cannot win?

We may presume that Italy is a Christian nation. The seat of the Vicar of Christ is within its borders, and the Dictator is a son of the Church. Is he then setting forth on this enterprise with the blessing of the Pope, or is he being wilful and disobedient?

We will not be rash enough to deny that the forces of law and order have often gained an advantage for the teaching of our Lord, but where will history give us an example of one nation saving another by an aggressive war?

WHERE DOES THE CHURCH STAND?

This question does not only affect the Church of Rome, but is equally applicable to the whole Church of Christ on this earth. If it comes—as come it will if war eventuates—to a matter of taking sides, on which side will the Christian nations of the world be found? A policy of non-interference will not absolve us from our responsibility. To allow Christian Italy to carry out this new evangelism will mean that we endorse her attitude, and accept her argument. That will imply that we agree with the proposition: A nation low in the scale of civilisation can be redeemed by force.

DO WE AGREE OR DO WE NOT?

If we do, then instead of praising Samuel Marsden, we should regard him as a poor blunderer. He stood alone and unarmed before the native inhabitants of these islands, many of them newly come from a cannibal feast, and some with unpleasant memories of their only encounters with the white man, and he preached the Gospel of God's Good News to them. And they became civilised and Christianised as a result.

But according to the Mussolini idea Marsden was all wrong. He should have landed from a naval vessel, and brought a few hundred soldiers with him, and said: "The Bible or the Sword."

Put so badly—and how else is there to put this case?—few of us will hesi-

tate to stand on the side of Marsden. But, if that is so, what are we going to do about the projected Italian invasion of Abyssinia?

THE CHURCH'S DUTY.

It is obviously the bounden duty of the Christian Church to protest, and, if possible, prevent the butchery that threatens humanity. It can also be done. The world is but a neighbourhood, and if Pope, Archbishops, and Moderators wish they can win now, make it clear that this is an un-Christian and devilish venture, in which no follower of our Lord Jesus Christ can engage. By a swift stroke of organisation—made possible by our easy international communications—the leaders of the Church of God have an opportunity to demonstrate to an expectant world that the Spirit of Christ lives and reigns in the hearts of His disciples the world over, by declaring the Italian intention anathema.

Abyssinia may not be all that it ought to be. Neither for that matter is Italy, nor any other nation. But WAR is not the way to improvement, and if the Church is silent or divided on this issue, it may well be that it will be regarded with an ever-deepening distrust and cynicism by a race that "thought it was the Church that would have redeemed"—not only Israel—but humanity.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CHURCH MUSIC.

(To the Editor of the Church Gazette.)
Sir,—I have read with much interest in the last issue of the Gazette, the paper prepared by the Rev. W. T. Drake, on "Church Music," which was read at a recent meeting of the Hawke's Bay Clerical Association. Your readers were encouraged to make comments upon it, and I should like to say that so excellent a paper is worthy of the consideration of all those who are responsible for the music in our Churches. The paper had evidently been very carefully prepared, and it deals with a subject that is of no little importance in connection with the musical portions in