

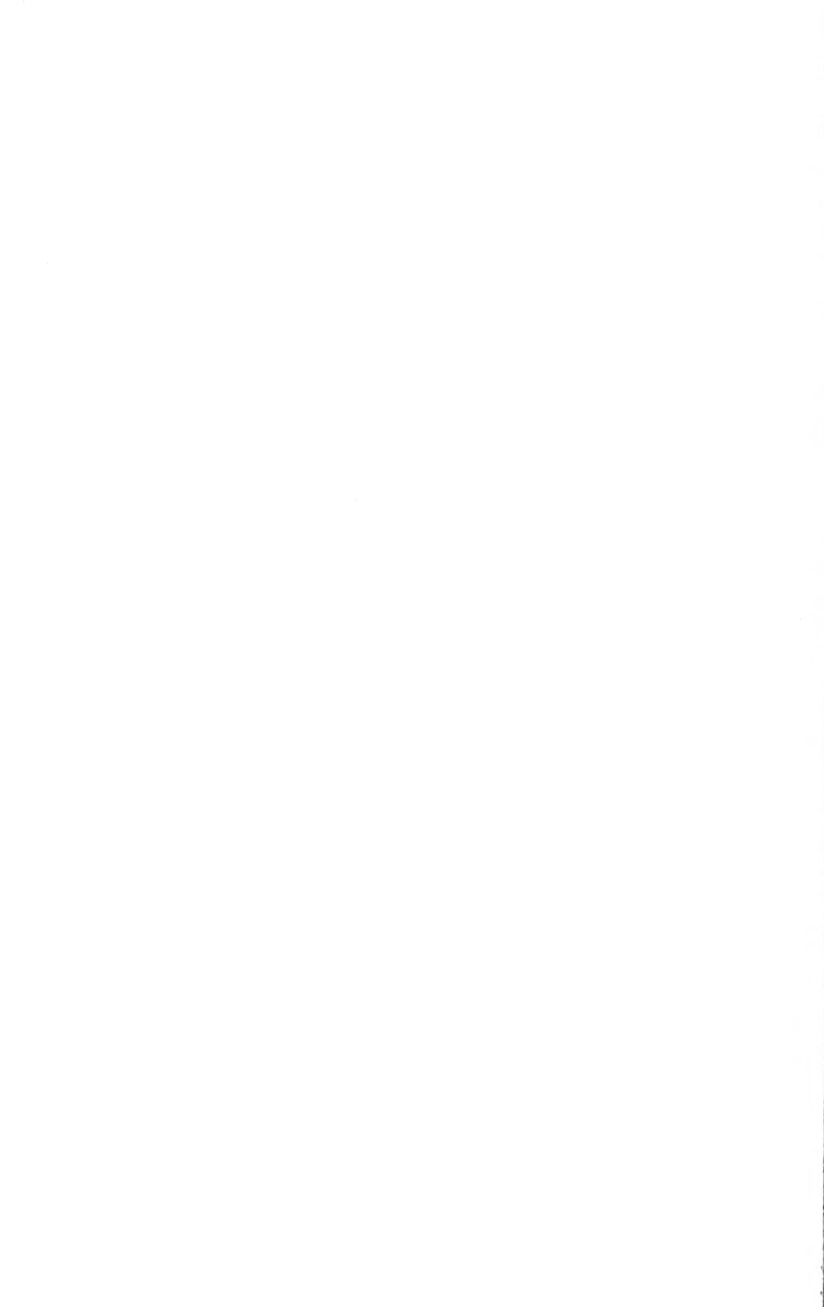
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INTRODUCTION

BY THE BISHOP OF LONDON

THIS book is just what I expected it to be, when I asked my dear brother Bishop to write it for our edification this Lent. It is clear, pointed, and original.

It is about the war; it *has* to be about the war, for the war is and must be in our minds and on our hearts morning, noon, and night; but it gives us what ought to be our right attitude towards it, not complaining querulously about it, not glorying in it, as if war was a good thing in itself, but bracing us to meet it bravely, strongly, and in the fear of God.

I do not want possibly to misrepresent by trying to explain beforehand the strong and clear line taken by the Bishop; the book will speak for itself.

I will only say for myself that after six months of war I keep coming round again and again to what I put before the diocese at the beginning; it is "drinking the cup."

No words can exaggerate the horrors of war, or the iniquity of those who will turn out to have been responsible for it, just as nothing can exaggerate the crime of those who brought our Lord to the Cross.

But "the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" He said; and the cup drunk in that spirit redeemed the world.

So may *this* cup, if drunk in the right spirit, redeem and ennoble the world; and it is to help us to drink it in the right spirit that the Bishop has written this book.

Every chapter begins with a sentence of the Lord's Prayer, and he will indeed be a dull reader who does not pray the Lord's Prayer with greater meaning after reading it. I write this short Introduction on "Innocents' Day," and who can help thinking of those young and blameless lives laid down so uncomplainingly in this war on the altar of sacrifice? May this book comfort the many who mourn them and lead them to see, as one mother wrote so nobly after losing her greatest treasure, "It does not seem lonely to think of this noble band of young knights going forth into the other world together."

Their deaths have indeed ennobled and glorified the world. "This Lent," as the Bishop says, "may well be the most wonderful we have ever kept."

A. F. LONDON.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS is only an attempt to seek the guidance of the Lord's Prayer with regard to the present war. The Prayer, in itself, cannot mislead us.

"There in truth we have the supreme rule and criterion of Faith, the divinely sanctioned *Lex Credendi*—no ready solvent, indeed, for theological controversies, but a law that lifts the heart to a higher plane, where it can abide in peace, unaffected by the alternations of intellectual light and obscurity." ¹

Neither thought, nor feeling, nor will can go astray under such direction. The freedom it gives us, the gentle restraint it imposes, are exactly what God means for us. Within its limits and confines we may indeed walk at liberty.

I hope that most of what is written in these pages may find its justification in the Lord's Prayer.

H. L. S.

Christmas, 1914.

¹ G. Tyrrell, *Lex Credendi*, Pref. p. xiii.

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I

Our Father which art in Heaven

I

TEN years ago a work was published containing the Lord's Prayer translated into no less than five hundred languages. Such a book might seem at first a mere curiosity, a strange witness to the infinite variety and complexity of human speech. But unity underlies the variety. It is throughout the same uplifting of the heart, the same sense of weakness and dependence, the same appeal to the one God and Father of us all—above all, through all, in all.

The languages of the present combatants are not overwhelmingly numerous. They are not unfamiliar to most of us. A very few pages would suffice for the printing of the Lord's Prayer in all the speeches and dialects you would be likely to hear in the districts over which the war has swept, or in which it is now raging, or which it threatens to approach. French, English, Russian, German; think of it only as written in these; and then go on to think of the millions standing under arms who say that prayer every day of their lives. Picture for a moment the

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homes they have left behind them ; the quiet of an English village, the peace of the Bavarian Highlands, the cottage in the Vosges, the far-off home on the Russian frontier : there it was they learnt the prayer, —Our Father—Pater Noster—Unser Vater—Notre Père : there at the altar, there in the home it is being offered for them. They were taught it as children ; it has stood by them, shaping consciously or unconsciously their thoughts of God. There came to them the call to arms ; the ordered speed of mobilization, hours of monotonous travelling, delays and advances, the weariness of long marches, the movements hither and thither, perplexed and wondering, till they found their place in the fighting line.

Yes, and then the hard fighting ; just holding their own under terrific pressure, or just gaining inch by inch the barely perceptible advantage. It is war in war's fiercest and sternest mood. All that makes war horrible is there. No need to picture it, for it is past imagination. Ask for no details : they do not bear telling. But it is all there ; all that people have in mind when they count our faith a failure and scorn the impotence of a Gospel of Peace. What does "Our Father" mean on the lips, what place has it in the hearts of men locked, as it were, in such a conflict as this ?

And yet they said it ! some perhaps as being the only prayer they knew ; some with a fuller sense of its universal fitness ; some with a very deliberate sense that it meant all men ; very few, we may believe, with any wish to narrow its limits, to exclude any human being from its intention.

We make a great mistake if we measure the mutual hostility of combatants by the destructive work on which they are engaged. The bitterness of personal animosity, by which the lives of too many quiet people are ruined, is a different thing from the impulse which flings one army on another. "Take two hostile armies," writes J. B. Mozley, "and the total amount of anger is in almost spectral and unearthly contrast with the hideous mass of injury. It is like a tempest without a wind. The enmity is in the two wholes—the abstractions: the individuals are at peace."¹

"Our Father" may very easily be infinitely more remote from a life of quiet selfishness than from the strife of war.

"Our Father," the variety of speech, of dialect, is in itself significant. We do not want to make the German say it in English, or the Englishman in German. We do not want to merge the divers tongues into some eccentricity of a universal language. A nation's language is a wonderful thing. It is the very express image of all that goes to make it a nation; its past, its present, its future. History is summarized in it; destiny is foreshadowed. National endowment and character and aspiration have shaped and toned it. The nation's language is the nation's soul. Let none be scornful of another's language. That was the old Greek's blunder. Proud of his own delicate and musical speech, its infinite flexibility, its music, its strength, its literary wealth, another man's

¹ "University Sermons," 4th edition, p. 109.

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speech was despicable to him: the very word "barbarian" was derived from the thought of a jargon no reasonable being need attempt to understand—and he perished of refined contempt. Never despise another's speech. To learn a new language has been compared to entering a new world. No one who despises can ever hope to understand. And the language represents the nation, with gifts that God has given it, and a work that God has set before it, and a call from God for it to hear and answer. None are likely to forget how our sense of this, our duty towards a people, valiant beyond words, whose only fault seemed to be that it was small amid the larger powers that surrounded it, led us to draw the sword in its defence. We still say "Our Father" in our own tongue wherein we were born, and others say it in theirs. But the words that He gave us and bid us use are spirit, and they are life; and the life and the spirit underlie the diversities of speech, and will outlive them. If the diversity of language stands for that which pushed unjustly or pushed to extremities involved us in the war, the unity of spirit underlying the words shall stand for all that which is mitigating the asperity, softening the harshness of war even now, which will make war rarer as time goes on, till at last there shall be war no more.

"Unser Vater," "Notre Père," "Our Father." It is dangerous, even where it is tempting, to deal lightly with what bears the stamp of religious intention. But it is worse than dangerous; it is blind and blundering and heartless to think lightly

of it when the words rise from the simple hearts of suffering men. They do not mean nothing. They are heard not according to the complete intelligence of those who speak them, but according to the infinite pity of the One who understands us all, the Lover of our souls. The dissonance of our speech, the dissonance of our contending ambitions are for Him, not us, to resolve. Prayer bears, it may well be, even now more fruit than we imagine. War, thank God, has its alleviations; its splendours of unselfishness, its swift forgetfulness of wrongs, its startling generousities. Brotherhood, ignored in time of peace, has strangely enough been learnt under arms; and it need not fail to help us towards a wider and more comprehensive brotherhood uniting the children of God who are scattered abroad.

II

“Our Father which art in heaven.” It is right, perhaps, to say something about a special trouble that is likely to come to good people at such a time as this. Not the trouble of ruined fortune, or home made desolate; but the trouble that is felt when the foundations of our faith are shaken; when words almost force themselves to our lips, words that we are afraid to say; when thoughts are shaping within us, taking form and outline and substance that fill our hearts with fear; when the old words of joy and trust falter upon our lips.

For a war like this revives in a dreadfully urgent

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form the age-long question of pain and suffering in a world over which faith assures us that God rules. So much has been written lately about all this that it seems quite unnecessary to touch on the wider aspects of this particular subject. We may take, as typical of the present position, the case of a religious man who has had his difficulties, and seems to have found his way out of them. He has come, it may be, to believe that a painless world would be a world not "regenerate but degenerate, poorer not richer"; he has learnt, when he hears of great masses of suffering, to divide the suffering amongst the sufferers; for each, it is clear, is bearing his own, and no more than his own, part of it; the accumulated vastness does not make it worse. He has come to understand the purposes pain serves, and the good that comes of it. He sees it as educative, bracing, inspiring. He rises higher, and the infinite significance of the Cross of our Lord explains much that was dark enough before. The higher aspects of suffering—redemptive, vicarious—have become extraordinarily clear and appealing. He has arrived, God guiding him, at the position which many probably hold in the present day. The "overwhelming" mystery of pain and suffering no longer overwhelms. It is lifted and pushed away. It is explained to an extent that makes complete explanation a thing not past praying for. It has, like most difficulties, its hard, irreducible minimum that still holds out. But it no longer stands alone; it is like many other things about which neither the head nor the heart asks further explanation until, as

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN 7

it is said, the "day dawn and the shadows flee away." *It is my duty, he says, to bear pain if it comes, and I hope I shall be able to bear it; it is my privilege to relieve pain wherever I meet it, and I am glad to be allowed to do so.* We can never now think of God as indifferent to it, for He has borne it. Whatever else it may do, it no longer clouds our vision of God's love. It has ceased to work on that plane any longer. That is not, to use a very commonplace expression, that is not where it hurts!

But then there comes the war, the greatest, the fiercest, the deadliest that the world has ever seen; and war has horrors all its own. David, bidden to choose, chose anything rather than war. For, first of all, it is man destroying man. Human science and human industry produce weapons perfect for their hideous work. Human skill, trained to perfection, directs and uses them. It is no blind force; it is deliberate, brilliantly skilful purpose. It means to do its worst, and does it. It may or may not adopt a deliberate policy of fear, of maddening, torturing terror towards defenceless non-combatants; yet it leaves insanity behind it, as it drives feeble old age and helpless infancy wild with fear before its face. It finds out the tenderest place in human life and drives the sword into it; the holiest, and profanes it. It ravages the beauty of God's world; and touching, as at Rheims, the sacred home of a nation's faith, it destroys (as the French writer said) not a life but an immortality. And all the while it is not blind, not unreasoning. It is thought-out, planned-out, persisted

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in. It may or may not be sound reasoning ; but people feel not only the horror of it, but feel with a bitterness, not felt in other things, that God could stop it—"if He pleased." It would not need, they feel, some strange, unlikely interference with the course of nature ; they have been schooled not to expect that. No, but just a quiet act of wonder, a mighty deed, secret in man's heart, not the "breaking of the bow," but the blessed breaking of the heart of pride. "O, let the wickedness of the ungodly come to an end, but guide Thou the just." "Break Thou the power of the ungodly and malicious ; take away his ungodliness, and Thou shalt find none." They are not in the ordinary sense "Pacificists" ; they find no fault with those who, after infinite effort all in vain, bade England draw the sword. We could not, we cannot avoid it : but cannot God ? "Turn Thou us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned." And so, in spite of themselves, they find their faith in Him shaken ; and never more severely than when they are bidden, or bid themselves to set their thoughts on the foundation-truth of God's fatherly love ; and just as the Lord's Prayer falters on the guilty lips of one who cannot forgive them that trespass against him, so here, at the very outset, it falters on the lips of one who feels as though God had forgotten to be gracious, and had shut up His lovingkindness in displeasure.

"Our Father." They do not find it hard to use His other names of Power and Majesty and Awe ; but this, with its wealth of tender compassion, seems dreadfully difficult now. Fathers and mothers (and every one knows what war may mean for them) may

feel that they have been misled. He bids us look within ourselves to learn what He is to His children ; and we try in all simplicity to do so ; and we cannot, no, not by way of discipline or chastisement or achievement of far-off purpose, imagine in ourselves the silence, the delay of help, the refusal to intervene which we seem to see in Him.

“He sitteth over all from the beginning.” “He is King, be the people never so impatient.” “He is working His purpose out.” “The fierceness of man shall turn to His praise.” Yes, but the heart broken in sorrow and in love asks more than this : not the promise of a future triumph, but some token of a present compassion. Omnipotence is not enough : it is splendid ; but it seems remote.

It is not wise, even in the bitterness of sorrow, to reject the ordinary considerations that have brought comfort to troubled souls. It is splendid to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. It is hard to think of a nobler use of life than to offer it as a sacrifice to God in the cause of justice and right. The blessed hope of eternal life and of the heavenly country and of the good things that God has prepared for them that love Him are not things which even passionate grief should refuse to think of. We are sometimes too distrustful of the ancient consolations. We conceive too readily that we know all about them, and say that they are no comfort to us. Sorrow’s creed should include them, and not pass lightly over these unquestioned articles of its belief.

But if it asks for more, let sorrow learn at least as

much as this, that we wrong God if we let ourselves regard Him as an untroubled spectator of His world's misery and His children's pain.

"In all their afflictions He was afflicted." "There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in Heaven." The splendid assurance of the ancient prophet and the simple conviction of the popular hymn stand side by side. Each is clear that this must be so; and it is not a figure of speech. It is, for you and for me, an ultimate truth.

The Cross is its supreme and universal witness; for the Cross is not an incident in the life of a Saviour; it is a manifestation of the very Heart of God. "When Reason cries, 'If God were the loving Father of whom you speak, He could not endure the misery of His children; His heart would break,' we answer 'Yes, of course, it does break; look at the Cross.'" ¹

Readjust them as we will, there is still a tendency in our thoughts to ascribe to God the Son a tenderness of pity which we do not ascribe to God the Father. It is fatal to do that. What we acknowledge of the glory of the Father we acknowledge of the Son without any difference or inequality. And the fulness of the Divine Glory is the infinite perfection of the Divine Love; and if love means suffering, God must suffer! He is not above all only, He is in all, through all, ever active, ever at rest—ubiquitous, unconfused. Spare us, you say, these terms of paradox. Yes, gladly, but they lie,

¹ William Temple, "New Faith and Modern Thought," p. 169.

we believe, at the heart of the pathetic difficulty that is troubling you. For though we see through a glass darkly we need not see through a distorting glass distortedly; and we have a disastrously distorted idea of God's omnipotence, if it is to us the sort of thing that casts a shadow on God's love.

Try then to say, "Our Father." He is not far away; He is with us in this stricken world of grief and terror and confusion and pain, His world which He has made, and pitied and redeemed.

St. Paul,¹ under an unjust suspicion of a certain hardness, could call God to witness, "Because I love you not! God knoweth." God cannot appeal to another; because there is no greater He must swear by Himself! "Because I love you not?" "Yea I have loved you with an everlasting love."

III

Every one knows, of course, the saying often quoted, the saying of a saintly man, "I hope to say one fairly good Lord's Prayer before I die." He felt, no doubt, that his repetition of the great prayer was a deeper, ampler thing than it had been in times past. He saw the promise of greater depth and amplitude in time to come.

What is our own experience in the use of it? "Our Father," each of the two words may well set us thinking. For "Our" implies at once a wide comprehensiveness, and a real relation. It includes

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 11.

ultimately all God's children, and it involves a real love and care for them. Faced with anything like a sharp inquiry as to what we mean when we utter it we should find it difficult to say, or we should have to own with shame the extraordinarily narrow compass of our real care for others. Honestly, we think very little about them; or we see them vaguely through the medium of our own egoism. "Our" and "us" is only a very formal modification of the "my" and "me," which we might actually be saying, unless they were prohibited. Prayer moves uneasily, despondingly between a comprehensiveness that is without real content, and a narrowness of outlook, challenged by the very first syllable of the Lord's Prayer. "After this manner pray ye," and we come to grief over the first word!

Does the war, the time of unexampled strain and sorrow have any bearing on this? Is it likely to help us, not only to pray the Lord's Prayer better, but to gain the spirit, the outlook, which the first words of that prayer involve? There seem to be two ways in which the war and all that it means may tell upon us.

For first it may amount to a real dethronement, a real eviction of "self" from the place which, unconsciously perhaps, it has been allowed to occupy in our lives. The very shape of the Cross, we have been told, suggests the victory over self: it is simply "I" crossed out; and indeed our selfishness must be of an exceptionally vigorous and "malignant" growth if it survives the discipline of times like these.

I am ashamed, I have no time, it hardly occurs to me to think of myself. The words of course sound still self-conscious, as though the soul were not yet set free. But let the words alone; and we may well thank God that the wretched little stronghold of selfishness is being threatened, invaded, knocked to bits by the severities of a time of great common sorrow and strain.

Everywhere it is so! There on the battlefield, where some young life, that might have begun here at home to fall a victim to the selfishness of luxury or comfort or success, is winning by God's mercy the splendour of self-sacrifice; here in England where, while we go quietly about our work, our hearts are far away with those who have left us to stand for their country's defence; here where, for very shame's sake, we dare not grumble at life's little troubles and petty inconveniences. Grumbling and complaining are, of course, at once the expression and the nourishment of selfishness; it feeds and grows stout on such food. Imaginary slights, fancied injuries, we dare not so much as mention them. The times are too great, too solemn to find room for them. Little aches and little pains, little fads and little fancies; they found voice, they claimed importance, we made vastly too much of them, before the war came and swept them all away. The strange little accomplishments on which we rather prided ourselves, and which helped, it may be, to make us critical and scornful of others; the needs of the times find little use for them. They were well enough in their way, and there may be room for a chastened

use of them when peace comes back. A great violinist, maybe the greatest of them all, is ready to sacrifice the exquisite skill of his fingers if only he may handle a gun! The very phrases "my" and "mine" seem out of place. Good people are getting rid, as fast as they can, of their superfluities. The nation claims, and claims justly, to commandeer the property of individual citizens for the service of the nation as a whole; and we ought to rejoice if anything of ours is really wanted for the nation's use. In all these ways, and in countless other ways, the hard and stubborn citadel of selfishness is being assailed. The most insanely self-centred person in the world is driven by sheer shame to think of others.

Nor is it merely in this eviction of self that the effect of a time of strain and sorrow is found. Never was it easier to extend the compass of our prayers; not by the formal inclusion of other men and other needs, vaguely realized, faintly sketched, in listless prayer. No, for the old order, the order of our instinctive egoism, is actually reversed. For the first time, it may be, in all our lives, others come first; they stand in the very forefront of our prayers. The defence, the comfort, the deliverance which we used to ask for ourselves we pray God to grant to them. That selfish urgency on our own behalf with which we used to weary God's patience has slipped away. God hears its tiresome voice no longer. We cannot, indeed, claim for ourselves the calm dignity of St. Ursula in the great picture at Cologne with half a city sheltered under her mantle; but we are no longer thrusting

ourselves on God's attention. We have sunk back into our proper places, good enough and too good for us, in the great host of His innumerable children. Almost to our own astonishment we find that we are simply anxious and concerned to press others to the front for defence, for success, for relief, for comfort, for the light of His countenance, for the comfort of His voice, for the healing of His touch. It was not so in the old days. Of course, when your wife was ill, or your child had to face an operation, you managed without much effort to think first of them; but that was a little private matter, hardly to be compared with this. It was acute then; it is chronic now. Whether it be a thought of the people over-the-way in their bereavement, or the sailors and soldiers in their peril, or the wrecked homes of the Belgians, or the sight of regiments off to the war, or the glimpse of a man who looks as if he had been wounded, your heart has room for them, and they find place not as pale phantoms, but as real objects of love and pity and pleading in your prayers, "*Our Father which art in Heaven.*"

Need we lose these friends when the war is over? Must self of necessity return to claim his old place in our affections and our prayers? It need not be. No one can forecast the future; but it is safe to say that the time of peace will afford abundant opportunity for the use and exercise of that thought and care for others which is almost inevitable in the time of war. Self slumbers now; the opportunity of Jael in the old days is ours to-day. Drive through the very head of self the nail of a good resolution; and pray God that

what has been the sheer necessity of hard times may become the joy and privilege of happier and quieter days.

But war does more than assail the stronghold of self. It changes values, it breaks down barriers, it obliterates distinctions, turning to one great purpose the whole stream and current of human life. We see it on the map, where the firm lines of frontier are merely incidents on the passage of invading armies; where some tiny eminence starts into sudden importance as the turning-point of an empire's fortunes. We see it strangely enough in finance, where, for two or three days of crisis and panic, it was impossible to say whether any security was secure, whether anything was worth anything, and movements were in progress which might end simply enough in "a mass of failures and a bundle of securities;"¹ utter depreciation on the one hand, matched on the other by values enormously enhanced. It is traceable in the markets of the world. No one blames the merchants of our modern Babylon for the skill and industry with which they have met the insistent demands of a luxurious age. They are mostly to be pitied when they cry that "no man buyeth their merchandize any more—merchandize of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk and scarlet."²

You see it, from another aspect, in the splendid comradeship of the army, where student and peasant,

¹ Bagehot, quoted in *The Round Table*, September, p. 688.

² Rev. xviii. 11.

master and servant, are standing side by side; and where the special privilege of rank is the privilege of special exposure to danger. For the time at least all values are judged by their use for national service. Efficiency means efficiency for war. We need not assert that capacity for military service is the supreme capacity, that its fitness for war is the criterion of the nation's soundness. Great and splendid as the temper is that goes to make the good soldier—fearless, disciplined, patient, self-effacing, self-controlled—it may not be permanently supreme. We do not necessarily claim that it is; but for the moment it is that which is required. For other forms of efficiency there is small demand. The greatest leveller, perhaps, short of death, is war.

Who, as a matter of fact, in the presence of it is likely to stand upon ceremony, to claim exemption, to make much, or indeed to make anything of social position or pride of birth? It is not as though it simply levelled us and taught us each his place. It is not a *dead* levelling. For while it makes short work of artificial distinctions, and draws us closer to one another, it sends through us all the hallowing and quickening influences of mutual sympathy and mutual service.

Oh, let no one forget or undervalue one at least of the special privileges of a time like this. There is a formality in polite society called an Introduction. Very likely in these days of diminished convention its rules are less rigid than they were in the Victorian age. Then, indeed, they were inflexible. You longed

to know some one ; you wanted very much to speak to him ; but you had to wait for an introduction ; and often when the formality was accomplished you were disappointed. He was not what you expected. There was less in common between you than you supposed. War is a time when formalities are easily dispensed with. It breaks down barriers. All sorts of prejudices, distinctions, mistrusts, conspire to divide men and to make mutual approach an awkward and uneasy thing ; but in sorrow and anxiety heart goes out to heart. You need no formal introduction to one whose pride, whose anxiety, whose grief is identical with yours. Bad news, it may be, has come to the village. The blinds are drawn at the Hall, standing in its stately reserve behind the park gates ; and the blind is down at the cottage too ; and the whole place is still and quiet as in the presence of the dead. For two lads, the one from the cottage, the other from the Hall—the Squire's son and the labourer's—have given their lives for the country, and have fallen in the war. "Your lad and mine," "my lad and yours." Who would think at such a moment of the sort of things which distinguish the one from the other ? Each has done his best, each has served his country ; they have passed together into the presence of God ; and the labourer's wife and the Squire's are just two women, weeping for their children, refusing to be comforted, because they are not.¹ And so it comes about that war, with all its train of suffering and distress, may yet bring us nearer to one another than

¹ Jer. xxxi. 15.

ever we were before. St. Paul speaks of God as "shutting all men up in unbelief in order that He may have mercy upon all."¹ So here in another sense He has shut us all up in the darkened house, the sunless room of anxiety and sorrow common to us all. He would make us know one another—high and low, rich and poor. "Our Father" in the fulness of its significance, the breadth and the tender constraint of its embrace, may still remain an ideal, high above us, in a world of many distinctions rather wilfully and cruelly emphasized in past times. But we are learning to think less of them, and more of that which is common to us all. God makes us recognize our need of one another, even as He makes us feel our need of Him.

Here is one little instance of the influence, leveling, uniting, inspiring, which a great sorrow exerts. It occurs in the *Times* of October 8. Describing a Mass for the Dead celebrated in the Cathedral Church of Nancy, the writer, after drawing a picture of the solemn and pathetic beauty of the scene, goes on to say—

"In all this there was nothing different from what must always be seen in any country at a time of national mourning. But there was something else. It was a time and an occasion, not only of national mourning, but of national pride. And it was also an occasion and a proof of national unity. In the choir, just within the rails of the chancel, was the prefect of Meurthe and Moselle. To an Englishman that may not seem in any way remarkable. But the

¹ Rom. xi. 32.

French congregation knew what his presence there meant. It was probably the first time for at least fifteen years that a prefect, wearing his official uniform, has taken part in a public religious service. That is what has been done for France by the war and the sacrifice of its soldiers' lives. The paralyzing influence of political differences and hostility has been swept away. The dead have not died in vain. The war has brought to bear on the life of the country a healing and unifying influence, and the thunder of the guns, which met the congregation as they went out into the sunlight, with the sound of Beethoven's march echoing and thundering behind them, meant something more than a menace to the foe and (as it was easy to think) a parting salute to the dead. It meant and means new life for the nation." ¹

¹ The *Times*, Oct. 8, 1914.

II

Hallowed be Thy Name

I

THE great vision of the nineteenth chapter of the Revelation has no doubt been in many minds during these months of anxious conflict. Think of it again : for it surely needs consideration. It is the vision of a royal warrior ; and in this respect it seems a step backward from the voices and visions of the earlier part of the chapter. For sounds from heaven have already been heard. The Bridegroom is waiting ; the Bride has made herself ready ; the Marriage Supper of the Lamb has been announced ; all seems moving towards the splendour of high festival, and the seer, overwhelmed by the reassuring fulness of the Revelation, falls prostrate at the feet of the angel guide.

It is the method of the writer of the Apocalypse to throw out hints of the next great scene some time before he begins to enter upon it ; and here it might seem, indeed, that we are on the very threshold of the hall of feasting : we hear the strains of festive music, and catch the splendour of pure white robes, and see in the faces of happy guests the blessedness of those who are called. Then the heavens are opened. It is

a wider vision ; the whole depth of the stage of vision is revealed. Hitherto we have had an open door, a sanctuary gate. Here "I see heaven opened." The veil is flung right back to "disclose the glorified Christ."¹

But it is neither as Lamb nor as Bridegroom that Christ is revealed. With what might seem a strange reversion to an earlier scene, He appears as a warrior armed for a conflict which still lies in the future, which is yet to be fought and won. He wears, indeed, the diadems of a widespread empire, of provinces and dominions already subdued, His sword has seen service, His garments are bloodstained ; but the great and final struggle still awaits Him and those who follow Him, the armies of heaven on their white horses, clad in white linen pure and clean.

This feature of the Apocalypse, this clear and near vision of good things to come, swept away by the yet nearer vision of a more immediate strife and conflict, answers to a constant feature in human history. Again and again, in great things as well as in small ones, we find ourselves very nearly in possession of that on which our hearts are set. Conquest and achievement, rest and peace come sometimes very near us ; as though, indeed, that which some day we shall arrive at were already ours. And then we find that they are further off than we thought. The hope inspired by the vision is not taken from us ; but we are certainly bidden to be patient, and patient, it may be, for a long time.

¹ Swete, "Apocalypse," p. 250.

Are we right in pressing so urgently the suggestions that come from the details of this strange book? From a literary point of view it may be regarded as a special instance of a sort of writing that was popular and attractive alike in pre-Christian and Christian times. Pseudo-Gospels have their counterpart in pseudo-Apocalypses, full of luxuriant and occasionally grotesque imagery. Need this fact in any degree weaken our warmest enthusiasm for the Revelation of St. John? Can we trust ourselves along the paths of thought to which any minute study of its details seems to conduct us? Strange indeed have been some of the conclusions arrived at by what was intended for a scrupulous and unwearied study of it. Need we fear to venture rather boldly on what might seem a similar venture?

Those who have no time for special study may be glad to read, in passing, words of one well qualified to speak on this subject. Dr. Swete, in emphasizing the distinction between St. John's book and the Jewish apocalypses which preceded it, writes of it: "It breathes a religious spirit which is not that of its predecessors; it is marked with the sign of the Cross, the note of patient suffering, unabashed faith, tender love of the brethren, hatred of evil, invincible hope; and notwithstanding the strange forms which from time to time are seen to move across the stage, the book as a whole is pervaded by a sense of stern reality and a solemn purpose which forbid the approach of levity."¹

¹ Swete, "Apocalypse," p. xxix.

The book, indeed, is wonderful, not only in the great lines of its truth to great principles, but even in the "insight and foresight" that inspire details of minute description which in other books it would be unprofitable to make much of.

Of course, then, the Royal Warrior has a name! Names play so large a part in the Revelation of St. John. Names of mystery, names of wonder, names by which God calls men, names by which men are taught to speak of God, names of tender intimacy that no men know save those who bear them, names won and names lost, names of beasts and names of battles, names inscribed and names erased, names still hanging on like ancient labels to those who no longer have a right to them! "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead."

What name, then, bears the Warrior on the great white horse? Ask, and the answer of the amazing vision is not *one*, but four. One, written perhaps on His forehead and catching the eye of the seer as he looks down from the many crowns towards the eyes of fire, a name ineffable, mysterious, undecipherable, which no one knows except Himself; another the splendour of His title as the final and only perfect revelation of God to man, "His name is called the Word of God"; a third the name of His renown, His repute, they call Him Faithful and True; and the last, plain for all men to read, displayed where the military mantle falls across the thigh (St. John remembers perhaps some equestrian statue he might have seen

at Ephesus¹), "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." It does not seem straining the sense of this wonderful passage to see in it a suggestion of four aspects of the Name of God. God's Name means, of course, and as we have been taught from our very childhood, God's revelation of Himself in relation to man, God as He has made Himself known to us; and the four² names St. John seemed to read in the vision have each its own significance; the Name of mystery, the Name of revelation, the Name that human experience has learnt to give Him, and the glorious Name of an acknowledged dominion, when the kingdoms of this world shall have become indeed the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

II

"A name which no one can read but He Himself." It seems to bid us think of the limits of human knowledge. There not only may, there must be, depths in the Divine Wisdom which we cannot fathom, truths which at best we can only faintly apprehend. Over against the beautiful clearness of much which may be known of God we have to set that which may not be known. We know in part, we

¹ Swete, "Apocalypse," p. 255.

² A Roman of good family and personal distinction used often to have four names: his personal name, the name of his gens or clan, the name of his family, and a name won by distinguished service in peace or war. But it is doubtful whether the vision makes any allusion to this fact.

prophesy in part—"partial" is the word with which St. Paul describes the totality of that which we know at present. It is with no morbid or formal underestimate of our present knowledge that he speaks of our seeing through a glass darkly. No one ever spoke more rapturously than he of the abundance of revelation, almost dangerous in its fulness, that he had been permitted to enjoy. How he marvels at his own astounding privilege; of the joy of making all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, hid in past ages but now made clear! Nothing could be further removed than this from the temper that speaks bitterly of either the uncertainty or the scantiness of our present knowledge. It is amazing in its fulness, wonderful in its clearness. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see," "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries" (the divine secrets) "of the kingdom of heaven." It is not the little, it is the much that we know that strikes him.

But nevertheless we are still in spiritual childhood, thinking, reasoning, speaking as children; with strange prejudice and defective judgment, with weak or passionate reasoning, with impatient and exaggerated speech. We have not put away childish things. And so there will be to the very last, until the eyes closed on earth are opened in heaven, questions which it may be unwise to ask and impossible to answer. God has a "Name which no one knoweth but He Himself."

It can hardly be that this Name, ineffable, even unthinkable, will after all contradict the simpler

names by which He bids us know and address Him. It will not disappoint or frustrate the hopes that faith and patience build on that which may be clearly seen. The clouds and darkness that are round about Him, would not, were they removed, contradict the righteousness and judgment that are the habitation of His seat. To see Him as He is, would crown, not crush, the anticipation of His servants, who not having seen, have loved. "The half was not told them." His glory, His love, His beauty can only exceed "the fame which we have heard."

"When I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought."

But when we get impatient with what we cannot understand, or think less of our religion because it does not explain everything, or reject the discipline of delay, surely we do well to remind ourselves of the mystery of the ineffable Name—a Name which no man knoweth but He Himself.

III

"His Name is called the Word of God." Here is indeed a link between the Apocalypse and the Gospel and Epistles of St. John. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His Glory."¹ "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen

St. John i. 14.

with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life."¹ Our thoughts pass at once from that which is withheld, kept back, to that which is freely, fully given to us, who see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

We are apt to be hasty in our use of great words. Such words as "inscrutable," "inexplicable," "mysterious" are no exception to the rule. It is with them as it is with the word "impossible." That word we certainly use, and use freely and desperately, when there is really no excuse for its employment. Long before any serious estimate of our resources has been made, or any real thought of alternative methods; before we have made the very slightest venture; we call a thing impossible, and absolve ourselves from attempting it. It is an exaggeration, and a very serious one, to use such a word as "impossible," when at most the act in question is rather unusually difficult, a little delicate, or a little out of our ordinary course. We carry forward into later life the sort of despair which we all remember in our childhood. We despaired over our sums, over our music, over our grammar; until we were left to discover that the new problem was only a very slight modification of an old one; and that unconsciously we knew already the way to solve it. And so it is with the whole family of words that mean that we cannot know. They are useful enough in their way, but they lend themselves very easily to the indolence of despair. The insoluble problems

¹ St. John i. 1.

of life are not, we venture to say, a vast and indiscriminate multitude; there are not "hosts and hosts" of them. A French detective story describes the adventures of a certain criminal, who worked and worked with extraordinary success in a variety of vocations and disguises. Pressure at last was brought to bear upon him, and he took to flight. In each stage of his retreat he left behind him one or other of the disguises by which he had imposed upon the credulous. There was, after all, *only one of him*. This is, of course, a very rough simile, possibly out of place in a serious matter; but indeed it is true that our "hosts and hosts of problems," our "crowds of difficulties" may be successfully and most reassuringly diminished when so many of them may be recognized as merely alternative forms of others. This may or may not soften the severity, and blunt the poignancy that belongs to misgivings of which we cannot be rid: but it does certainly save us from the unsettling and restless feeling that a world on which God's face shines and which God's feet have trod is a place about which we can only say that it is no good trying to understand it.

There is real strength, real repose for the minds of those who have learnt to reduce difficulties to the simplicity of their "lowest terms," and to see them as forms and instances of the few, one dares to say few, great difficulties for the solution of which may God in His love give us courage and patience to wait. The savage, when he deals with figures, is said to make a desperate spring from five or six to a

“great many thousand.” The mathematical brain sees a clear distinction between a million and a million and one. Through earth, through sky he can follow the sure sway of mathematical certainty. He can build up on solid foundation his airy palace of perfect symmetry. Over and round it stretch the incalculable spaces of the infinite; but he does not despair even of that. He cannot force his laws upon it; but he dreams at least that there, too, there may be something analogous to his laws; just as the old philosopher, wondering at the beauty of musical harmony and its effect in that very part of man that is most divine, was induced to think that the soul itself by nature is, or hath in it, harmony.¹

It is best, then, not to use incautiously the great words which mean that we cannot know; certainly not before we have tried to make the most of that which is within reach of our knowledge; within reach; for He bids us ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened. There are three, not two, regions of spiritual knowledge. To the known and the unknown we must add a third, *the knowable*. It is not a well-sounding word; but we must learn it, for it describes a region whose size, for most of us, is as vast as its fertility, its area as great as its hidden resources. The spiritual map is like the celestial one, stars by the million, stars whose light has hardly come to us; it is like the map of earth with its chronicle of regions once inaccessible, now open to all men;

¹ Hooker, “Ecc. Pol.,” V. xxxviii.

once deemed inhospitable; and now men go to them to find health; once held barren, and now they give us most part of our food; lands of corn and gold and jewels, over which but a century ago was written the title *Terra incognita*. No man's land; hitherto unexplored; open but not entered; accessible but uninvestigated; marked on the chart but rarely visited; how true it is of great regions of that spiritual map which lies before us when we think of St. Paul's great phrase, "that which may be known of God"!¹

Pressure hard and stern is upon us all. And if through our own fault we have been thoughtless, heedless in the past; if we have taken scant pains to acquaint ourselves with God, we may be at a loss. We are told of the difficulty of making an army while war is actually going on. Yet that is what is being done; and we who may feel that we have to do hastily what should have been done before need not lose heart. We may not be able to gain on a sudden what other people have won by steady Bible reading over a course of many years. Still less perhaps can we achieve that quiet and stillness of the soul in which God's voice is most plainly heard. We must not race through the Bible, nor set about the long business of the study of Christian evidences. *Ne multa, sed multum*, "not many, but much," might be a guide to our thoughts.

Much might be gained by a careful use of the Psalms. Curiously enough the mention of the Psalms

¹ Rom. i. 19.

arouses a contradictory spirit in some minds. People quote the specially unintelligible passages in the Prayer-book version, or they remind one of the tone and temper of the Psalms of malediction. It might be well at a time like this simply to pass some difficulties over as things that need not really trouble us. Certainly they need not deprive us of the confidence with which we approach so glorious, so sustained a revelation of what, for want of a better word, may be called the Character of God.

Countless books have been written about the Psalms, and a very special value attaches to those, which, setting theory aside, have been content to record what the Psalms have been and meant for men in times of special danger and distress; times when it is absolutely impossible to think of men as using the merely habitual language of religion, or seeming to find strength where no strength was to be found. There are few things more glorious than the extraordinary clearness and variety of the witness borne to the inexhaustible resources of this Book. It has been tried to the uttermost, and God's servant has loved it.

There is a very beautiful lecture by Dean Church contrasting the Psalter with some other forms of early sacred poetry which have been suggested for comparison with it. By a glorious wealth of quotation he illustrates the three great features which distinguish it from all else: its idea of God, its idea of man, its vivid sense of the direct, close, immediate relation of the soul of man to God. "This, I need

not tell you, is the idea of religion which appears on the face of every single Psalm. It is the idea of the unfailing tenderness of God, His understanding of every honest prayer, the certainty that in the vastness and the catastrophes of the world the soul in its own singleness has a refuge, is linked at the throne of the worlds to its own reward and strength, is held by the hand, is guided by the eye of One who cares for the weakest as much as He is greater than the greatest of His creatures."

And there is no mood of mixed and varied feeling, no tone of absorbing emotion in which this sense of what God is to the soul does not express itself. Grief, self-reproach, shame, even despair, reviving hope, tender confidence, affectionate all-surrendering trust, appeal, entreaty, security, repose; all are there.

"What was there," he continues, "anywhere else like this intensely human outpouring of affection . . . so exulting, yet so reverent; so tender, yet so strong and manly and severe; so frank and unconstrained in its fears and griefs and anxieties; so alive to its weakness, yet so willing to accept the discipline of affliction, and so confident of the love behind it; so keenly and painfully sensitive to the present ravages of evil and sin and death, so joyfully hopeful, and sure of the victory of good?"¹

There were times when the Psalms were the common possession, the treasure of the simplest Christians; times when, as the ploughman guided

¹ R. W. Church, "Gifts of Civilization," p. 424, etc.

the plough, he would be heard singing gently to himself "something of David." They have, it is to be feared, very largely passed away from us. It may be that elaborate chants with high-reciting notes have helped to rob us of them. We should do well to get hold of them again. It is wonderful how even the daily use of them month by month brings us, if only we say them carefully, the thoughts, the encouragements, the comforts that we need. Even more wonderful is the growing sense they give us of the reality of God. It grows upon us, faint it may be at times, but rising again to incredible strength of absolute conviction.

And it seems to come in some such way as this. The Psalmist is no faint, bloodless phantom. He is, of course, plural, not singular; many, not one. He is of all ages, all conditions, all experiences. He is a king and a servant, a priest and a layman, a soldier and a shepherd. He is many, not one; he has "seen the world" in a way that leaves little more to be seen. He has touched the extremes of sorrow and of joy. It is the voice of man rather than the voice of a man that speaks.

"Man" speaks: and it is well, perhaps, to anticipate a thought that is almost sure to occur to people in the presence of such an assertion as this. We have, for better or for worse, a poor idea of abstractions; they are faint and elusive, their voices, if they have any, are toneless and unconvincing; unindividual man is like undenominational religion, there is so little, so poor a residuum left. *Nec vox hominem*

sonat, "Nor does his voice sound like a human creature," the old line in the Latin Grammar rises in men's minds when they hear of the voice of anything so abstract as Humanity as a whole.

It is not so here. Each note, each syllable is clear and distinct. The sorrowful sighing of the prisoner, the cry of sudden fear, the voice of him that is in misery and at the point to die, the complaint of the oppressed, the protest of the utterly despised, the poor and needy; the calmer accents of confidence, the voice of hope that begins to see the first flush of dawn, the gladness on which the light has begun to shine, the triumph cry of one who has been in desperate trouble and now is out of it, who feels the ground firm under his feet and the way clear before him; each voice is unmistakably clear and convincing. These are not imaginary difficulties and perils, not fancied rescues and deliverances. It is not fiction, it is fact from beginning to end.

And all this reality is in immediate contact, in essential correspondence with the corresponding reality of God. It is God who strengthens, God who guides, God who comforts, God who uplifts. "When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord, and He heard me." "When I said my foot hath slipped, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." "In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart Thy comforts have refreshed my soul." "God is our hope and strength, a very present help in trouble." *Obviously real men* finding all that man needs in *an absolutely real God*, that is the real meaning, the unbroken music of the

Psalms. God may be known, and He would have us know Him. Side by side with the Name of Mystery there is set a Name of most generous Revelation; even before the Word Incarnate declared, as He alone could declare it, the Name of the Father.

For far transcending all this is the knowledge of God that is ours in Christ. A little book like this must observe the limits necessarily imposed upon it. It cannot venture on any detailed consideration of the teaching of our Lord. Yet those who have learnt, and those who expect, and those who merely think that it may be possible to see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, will be turning to the New Testament and to the four Gospels as, perhaps, they have never turned to them before. The words and actions of our Saviour become strangely luminous when we read them with hearts stripped of pretence by sorrow and need. Tears do not always dim the eyes, they clear them sometimes; and there are passages in the Gospel that are read most easily through tears. "Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee!"¹

It is a joy to think how many are at this moment sustained and comforted by the words of Christ, only because to-day, after so long a time, they try to understand Him and to take Him at His word.

But the revelation of God in Christ has its central point, its compendium, its summary in the Cross; and to the Cross a man must turn if he is to learn the mind of Him, whose Name is the Word of God.

¹ Isa. xxvi. 16.

He alone who knows the hearts of all men knows what is in men's hearts to-day ; but it is impossible to doubt that faith is passing through a time of fiery trial. There are those who count Christianity a discredited failure ; who ask where God is all this time ; who find it anyhow impossible to believe that God is good. (Factory girls in the East End are using language of this sort.) There are lips, indeed, that are framing the unaccustomed accents of prayer ; but there are lips, too, accustomed to prayer, that are unable, with anything like sincerity, to frame the familiar accents. We think of the Cross to-day, not as it gleams in unassailed supremacy on the dome of St. Paul's : rather it seems to incur once more its old shame, its ancient reproach. It is strong, but it looks weak ; it is the wisdom of God, but it can easily be thought foolishness ! And yet it is working wonders : it finds itself where He who bore it and died on it must love to see it at work. It marks the soldier's grave ; it is uplifted before the dying eyes ; it is cast into the bitter waters, and, strange to say, they lose their bitterness.

And yet faith is difficult, it is hard to believe ; and the unsettlement, if it occurs, goes right down into the foundations. It is not the insecurity of a pinnacle or a gable ; it is a rift, a fissure, in that on which all else rests, if the Love of God seems insecure. Can we strengthen in any sense our faith in the Witness of the Cross ?

Shall we begin with a very simple question ? We all know that when St. Paul first went to Corinth

he went in the strength of a determination in which his mind was quite made up. He determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The words are severely exclusive. But what did he mean to exclude? Did he mean merely to exclude the attractions of eloquent speech, or subsidiary and less important parts of Christian doctrine? It seems hard, if that be so, to explain what sounds like real extravagance of language: "I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling." Is it not possible at least that for the time being, until they had grasped the significance of the Cross, he, as it were, bade them banish all other thoughts of God, all other ideas about Him, and look simply and solely at the crucified Saviour, with no thought of God save that of suffering, self-sacrificing Love?

Now, that is just what a great many religious people dare not or will not do. They tremble for their orthodoxy; they fear to "confound the Persons." They believe, by inference, in the Love that gave the Son to be the Saviour of the world; but it is by inference; and the Love that is an inference is a remoter thing than the Love that suffered and died. Why did He not come Himself? is sometimes—aye, and not scoffingly—asked; and even instructed Christians find it hard to get rid of a misgiving which somehow haunts the neighbourhood of Calvary; which, if it does nothing else, somehow makes it hard to accept the revelation of helpless, patient, derelict Love, dying in shame upon the Cross, as

the vision of what God bore for man. It is the Son—not, they say, the Father. It is Christ—not God. Behind it there lies something else; the dignity of a great surrender, a pity that supplied a Saviour, a generosity that kept nothing back. He gave His Son, we know it, we try to thank Him for the gift; but, for the time at least, may not our eyes rest rather on the Gift than on the Giver? It is the Cross, pure and simple, that seems to help us most as we face the intolerable sufferings of a time like this.

This is not a theological treatise, yet it may be well to say that many people are apt to emphasize the distinctness of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity till it is dangerously like separateness. "There is among Christians not a little popular thought, which, meaning to be orthodox, is, in fact, more or less Trinitheistic; and which, just because it so far tends towards plurality of God, goes some way to provoke, and account for, the correlative popular tendency and tenderness, towards Unitarianism."¹ The words are Dr. Moberly's, and they stand out in strange contrast on the pages of a little book like this, with their high precision and their hard terms. But, indeed, the remedy for theological difficulty (and this *is* theological difficulty) is more, not less, theology: and things are serious when we cannot surrender our hearts to the simplicity that is in Christ.

"We may say, indeed, that the Son is not the Father; although it is almost, if not quite, impossible to assert such a negative without overstating it." "To

¹ Moberly, "Atonement and Personality," p. 84.

say that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Spirit, whatever element there may be in it of truth—and of course there is truth in it—is yet to say, to our apprehensions, too much. For each is God, the one God; and all are inseparable. You may say, no doubt, that the Father was not Incarnate. But the Son who was Incarnate was the complete expression in humanity of the Father. He was the actual, and adequate, revelation of the Father, the brightness of His glory, the express image of His Person.” “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father”; “I and the Father are one.” Dr. Moberly writes elsewhere in a very careful note as to a comment on a passage in the Athanasian Creed, “I suppose that this means that each Divine Person is to be received as the one God as entirely and absolutely as He would be held to be, if we had never heard of the other two.”¹

This may well seem an incursion into regions of thought which lie beyond the scope and compass of the present attempt. Let us come back from it, ashamed, it may be, of having gone so boldly and so far. But if, indeed, the words of one of our greatest modern teachers—and such is Dr. Moberly—be true, we need no longer doubt that in the Cross we see the whole heart, the whole mind, of God; the absolute and unconditional revelation of His love. *Sic Deus dilexit*, “So God loved,” is the message of the Cross, even though for the moment we forget how the verse ends!

A personal reminiscence may not be out of place.

¹ Moberly, *l.c.*, pp. 84, 167.

Some forty years ago I was with my father in an antiquity shop in Innsbruck. I found in an out-of-the-way spot a crucifix of unusual design and form, and showed it to him. He looked at it rather gravely for a moment, and then said rather seriously, "You may have that if you wish," and bought it for me. He did not himself possess a crucifix, and we had an idea that he did not particularly encourage us in any elaboration of the externals of devotion; but he bought me that, and I have it before me as I write. It is an instance of the boldness that does not hesitate to pourtray the Eternal Father. There is an instance of it in the National Gallery, but it is not like this. For here the Father is Himself upon the Cross; not nailed there, yet somehow between the Cross and the Saviour who hangs upon it. The figures are in contact at every point. The heart of the Son rests on the heart of the Father, His feet upon His. The hands of the Father support the Son, one at the wrist, one at the heart; and the robe of the Father's Majesty floats across the body of the Son! It is an attempt, perhaps an unwise one, but an attempt all the same, to identify the Father and the Son in the love and suffering of the Passion!

But perhaps, after all, we have made more of these difficulties than there was need to make. There must be many fathers in England, aye, and in other countries, who, had the choice lain open to them of going or sending, would have gone rather than send; would rather have faced suffering and death than send to death or suffering those far dearer to them

than their own lives. Let them try to believe that their sorrow has its place in the very heart of God Himself. "Having yet one Son, His well beloved, He sent Him." You gave your son; yes, and He gave His. "The Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world."

But the Cross is even more than this; it is not only the supreme revelation of the Divine Love; it is the recognized and acknowledged symbol of the great principle of the Christian life. It represents an ideal, a way of life, a line of conduct that is perfectly clear and definite. It stands for self-sacrifice, self-surrender, self-denial for the sake of others, deliberately undertaken, persistently pursued, carried, if need be, to its uttermost in a death like that which Christ our Lord died, unresisting, upon the Cross.

But the Cross is not the end. It is the deliberate conviction of Christians that this way of self-denial, this way of the Cross, this way of death, is also and essentially the way of life; not accidentally, but as by the working of a law as constant as any law of Nature; and not for some, but for all of us. Remember two great and central utterances of our Lord, "Verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

Such a theory of life does not go unchallenged either in practice or in thought. It is challenged in practice by the selfish lives of professing Christians. St. Paul speaks, weeping, of a set of people whom he

calls the enemies of the Cross of Christ. He means those who, bearing the Christian name, outrage the Christian ideal by self-indulgence and worldliness. It is challenged, not thoughtlessly, but, as it were, on principle, by those who are ready to declare that self-assertion, violent self-assertion if need be, is the secret of achievement and advance; that might is right; that the fine thing is to have a giant's strength and to use it like a giant.

If ever good fortune takes you to Copenhagen, you must pay a long visit to the Museum of Northern Antiquities. Circumstances have conspired to make it one of the most perfect and interesting collections in Europe. The lower story of the building is devoted to the early history of Scandinavia, and illustrates with extraordinary completeness the manners and customs of those Danes who were for so long the terror of England, who burnt our homes and slew our people before King Alfred met and overcame them. Again and again, amongst their charms and trinkets, you find the hammer of Thor. It is an inverted **T**, and a small ring at the end of the long arm serves to suspend it. The last, and the crowning object of interest, on the lower floor, is a small charm of this kind, with a difference—for the ring has been removed from the end of the long arm and fixed again above the place where the two arms meet. Surely it is suggestive. One pictures a very poor convert to Christian faith, too poor to cast away even a common trinket of iron; so he has *adapted* it: with the conversion of the man goes the inversion of his charm.

The hammer of Thor inverted becomes the Cross of Christ. "And now," says your guide, "you must go upstairs"; and you find yourself in the very heart of a Christian civilization.

But the Cross inverted becomes the hammer.

The present war has been boldly, yet not unjustly, described as a War of Principles. It is unjust to credit individual Germans with the conceptions and ambitions of their rulers and teachers. But the nation as a nation has been schooled into the acceptance of ideas about which there can be no mistake. Bernhardt has been adopted as a national classic, and his book, so widely circulated in England, has made his meaning perfectly clear. The nation is to be made strong; and with amazing learning and great intellectual skill, Bernhardt indicates how it is to be done. "The method with which the author marshals his knowledge is admirable." "The arguments are not heated, and the statements are seldom extravagant." "We may say, in short, that up to a certain point this book is an exemplar of what is required from a thinker who handles a great question of human destiny."

"And therein lies the tragedy. The whole sum of these vast spiritual resources is placed at the mercy and at the service of an immoral obsession. They are the tools of a twisted conscience, of a bad will. Behind it all lurks the conception of civilized society as a system of forces which, just because it is intelligible, can be captured, exploited, and made to serve the selfish ambitions of a single nation. Humanity is treated as though it were mere *prey* to that section of

the race which can prove itself the most violent and the most astute. This is the mind of Mephistopheles.”¹

We were accustomed in the old days to think of conflicts between the Crescent and the Cross. The crescent is perhaps a sufficiently ambitious emblem; it promises, by gradual increase, the glory of the full orb; it is a quiet emblem, though, indeed, the victories of Islam have been achieved by methods that hardly answer to the silent retreat of the shadow from the surface of the moon. Here, indeed, is no crescent; and a nation acting on the principle that might is right, scorning the blessedness of the meek, blessing the war-makers, hinting at least that the Teutons made a mistake when they became Christian, and that they had done better had they followed the lines marked out by national genius, would hardly wish to bear the token of the Cross. Rather would it go back upon its past, invert the saving sign, and make of it the old emblem of violence—the hammer of Thor. Was it not foretold that if Germany lost the spirit of Christ, the spirit of the old gods would wake from its slumber? Have we not heard the ring of that hammer on the defenceless homes of Belgium, on the walls of the very house of God?

Crucem gerentes salva gentes! “Save the nations that bear the Cross.” That is the motto of a fine old English family. May we at home, as they in the field, bear ourselves as men who have drawn the sword, not so much against a nation as against a principle that inverts the doctrine of the Cross of Christ.

¹ L. P. Jacks, *Hibbert Journal*, Oct., 1914, pp. 44, 45.

IV

But third, the Heavenly Warrior bears another name. It is the name of His reputation, of His renown. "He is called Faithful and True." It is not the name, the name of Mystery, which He alone knows. It is not the name of His Eternal Sonship, the Word of God. It is rather the name He has won for Himself in the hearts of those who have trusted and served Him, His name in the long record of human experience; men find Him faithful, men own Him true.

And just because it is the name of human experience of Him, His name in the hearts and on the lips of men, it is a name that is still in the making. He has not made it yet. He wins and then, again, He loses it. He wins it when our faith is strong and we trust Him. He loses it when our faith grows weak and things go wrong, and there seems to be in a disordered and distracted world no sign of His power, no mark of His presence, no token of His love. At times it shines out with steady and splendid clearness; at others it becomes so faint that we can hardly read it. It glows out like the broad stream of light from a lighthouse; it fades and leaves us in the dark. Look at the first verse of the eighteenth Psalm. What an outburst of irrepressible praise it is! "I love Thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my defence; my God, my strong rock, in Him will I trust. My shield, and the horn of my salvation, my strong

tower!"¹ Read it, not in the chill of quotation. Listen to the man saying it; how words fail him when it comes to saying, or trying to say, what God, proved and tested in desperate adventure, has shown Himself to be; faithful beyond all expression, true beyond man's highest hopes! And then there are Psalms in a different key: Psalms of a quieter strength and confidence. Trouble is in the air and things are beginning to look dark; yet the man has comfort enough and to spare, he can lend a hand to others, he can cheer and sustain them. "My soul truly waiteth still upon God, for of Him cometh my salvation. He verily is my strength and my salvation. He is my defence, so that I shall not greatly fall."² But things get worse, it is all that the man can do to hold his soul in peace: why is it so restless? why is it so disquieted within him? "O put thy trust in God; for I will yet thank Him."³ But indeed the hold on God gets dreadfully uncertain, the sense of anything like security terribly weak. He summons the memories of the past. He would reassure himself by the thought of what God has been to others and in time past. "Our fathers hoped in Thee: they trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them. They called upon Thee, and were holpen: they put their trust in Thee, and were not confounded. *But as for me!*"⁴ "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what Thou hast done in their time of old."⁵ "We make our boast of God all day long; and will praise Thy Name for ever.

¹ Ps. xviii. 1.² Ps. lxii. 1, 2.³ Ps. xlii. 15.⁴ Ps. xxii. 4-6.⁵ Ps. xliv. 1.

But now Thou art far off.”¹ So again, with even a more personal and pathetic note. “Yet do I remember the time past, I muse upon all Thy works : yea, I exercise myself in the works of Thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto Thee : my soul gaspeth unto Thee as a thirsty land.” History has indeed been described as a cordial for drooping spirits ; but is it always so ? does it really save a man from the overwhelming evidence, or what looks like evidence, of present misery ? It might, but does it ? May not the very remembrance of what God was, make it harder to bear the terror of His seeming absence, the wonder of the hiding of His face ? Surely we are only too conscious that when comfort of this sort is offered, the answer is, “You tell me indeed what God was ! What I want to know is, what God is. You tell me what He has done ; I long to know what He is doing.” “Where are Thy old lovingkindnesses and Thy tender mercies which have been ever of old ? Is His mercy clean gone for ever ; His lovingkindness come utterly to an end for evermore ?” Yes, and the very deepest, saddest note of desolation is not missing. *F’ai tout perdu !* “I have lost all !” That is what was heard again and again upon the lips of the poor Belgian exiles ; and sometimes you hear it in the Psalms. For a moment all is darkness and all is gone ! It is perilous work. It is very nearly unbelief, for the strain is all but intolerable : neither sun nor star appears for many days ; no small tempest is upon them ; all hope of being saved seems taken away.² It

¹ Ps. xliv. 9, 10.

² Acts xxvii. 20.

seems as though God were untrue to Himself: losing His right to the names which the love of His children gave Him, as He loses His place in their confidence and trust. We trusted and He has failed us; we thought Him true, and His Word has failed. "Is His arm shortened that it cannot save? is His ear heavy that it cannot hear?"¹ "Why should He be [they are strangely bitter words] as a Mighty Man . . . that cannot save?"²

We write thus because we believe that the present war is straining, and will strain, the faith of many good Christians as perhaps it has never been strained before.

Here is a letter from one who has served God with extraordinary patience and fidelity and quiet joy through a long lifetime. "We all want more faith. I do, I know. Why does God allow such awful things to be done? and what can we fix our minds upon to help our faith? At night I can't sleep often, for wondering why such awful things are allowed, when God could end it all." They are very simple words; they are not foolish, they are not hysterical, they are certainly not lightly said. They are the direct result in a quiet, pious soul, rich in Christian experience, of what has been happening in France and Belgium. Yet this is one whom the more penetrating grief of personal bereavement has not yet touched; yet one whose life has had its full share of sorrow, and whose faith has never failed before. How will it be with us when, perhaps,

¹ Isa. lix. i.

² Jer. xiv. 9.

we see with our own eyes what, hitherto, we have only read of; or when the bitter losses that have come to others, come to us? It may be so already; it may be that as time goes on our faith will be tried as it has never been before.

It could hardly be otherwise. Our national resources are being tested to the uttermost; the national character is being put to the proof. The loyalty of our colonies and dependencies; the strength of our defences, the valour of our troops, all is being tested. Our faith in God cannot escape the trial. The very sense of strain is a mark of its vitality. It is part of our very love for Him, of our zeal for His honour that we should be troubled when He seems unlike Himself. The hard thoughts of Him that pass through our minds; the wild words we are tempted to utter; our very refusal to use the language, easy and familiar once but impossible now; the rebellious spirit that we cannot keep under; they are not unprecedented, they are not wicked. He has heard them on the lips, He has found them in the hearts of some of His truest servants. The Bible is full of them. They lie within easy reach of His forbearance and His forgiveness. Men have thought and said them all down the ages. God knows what they really mean. But side by side with all these utterances of a faith strained to breaking point, these bitter complaints of distressed and distracted souls, let us place the unbroken witness of the victories of patience, endurance, and fortitude, the simple experience of men who waited for the Lord and were

thankful that they had been given strength to wait.

For the sense of God's faithfulness, the assurance that He is true, is not usually the easy acquisition of calm and peaceful days. Very often behind the clear strength with which a man can say that God is faithful lies the indelible memory of a dark time in which it was hard to say anything of the sort, in which it seemed almost impossible that he would ever say it. "I held my tongue and spake nothing; I kept silence, yea even from good words!" "My soul refused comfort." Yet he stands possessed to-day of that of which nothing is likely to rob him, and God has won in that man's heart, in that man's experience His name of great renown. He is called Faithful and True.

V

And last, there shines, written on the border of the royal mantle, the splendid title of His ultimate and complete dominion. "He has on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Final victory! What a light the present war, as one looks out over the field to-day,¹ seems to cast on such a phrase! For we are told by those who seem to understand that the final result of the war can hardly be questioned. They tell us we shall win. Nor has the work of the last few days been in any

¹ Christmas, 1914.

sense in vain. The position is what we have learnt to call satisfactory. But isolate a single day ; look at it apart from the thought of the promised result. What does it look like after all? Splendid gallantry, infinite courage, absolute self-sacrifice ; guided, directed, concentrated, released by the incredible prudence and sagacity of leaders whom we can trust. At the back of it all there is the whole wealth of a nation that is ready to spend its last farthing to secure a successful issue ; yes, and the unspeakable power of a nation's prayers. And all is going well, and there is no reason for discouragement. There is, on the contrary, every reason for hope.

Yet what is really happening? Oh, to our ignorance, to us who do not understand, it seems so piteously small! It is no good looking at the map of Europe. We shall want that, they tell us, some day ; but not now. No, nor yet the map of France—you will not understand it from that. No! but just a large scale map of a bit of the Belgian frontier, on which you may look, and look perhaps in vain for the tiny villages that mark our progress, for the little crests, the points of vantage we have secured. Alas for the vain hopes of a swift and easy victory, if ever such hopes were ours! They are strangely out of tune with days on which the best we hear is that an attack has been repulsed with grave losses, or that villages have been gained just house by house. There seems (of course to our ignorance) such a strange disproportion between the enormous pressure and the sometimes barely perceptible advance. Yet

those who know are not dissatisfied. It is what those who understand the methods of modern warfare have learnt to expect. These are the sort of steps by which the victory at last will be reached. Those who fall in the earlier combats win the day as surely as those who fight in the last decisive struggle. It is at least as glorious to have laid down one's life at Mons as to ride through a surrendered capital, or through a shower of roses on the happy return home.

Christian people have something more than a firm confidence in the permanence of Christianity. Christian faith involves something more than the survival of certain doctrines, or the spread of a particular form of religion. It is not Christianity that will conquer the world; it is Christ! The truth is enshrined in the very heart of our Eucharistic creed; "whose Kingdom shall have no end." "Crowned, enthroned," that is the plain imagery in the New Testament, of the Christian hope. He *expects*, and we expect for Him, that final triumph which is already promised, the powers of which are already working in the world. It would be neither wise nor charitable to urge men to express too definitely the form in which so great a thought may be embodied. The universal prevalence, the unquestioned authority of Christian ideals and standards, of "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost"; an empire of truth and love; a realm from which all that defiles and loves a lie is for ever banished, may carry us far—but not far enough. A kingdom implies a king; and personal loyalty must

find its satisfaction in a person. The thought of a commonwealth of bliss is something far less than the thought of the reign of Christ in us and over us all for ever.

“Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned
Unto earth’s remotest end,
Glorified, adored, and owned.”

This is the Christian’s hope. He rides by swiftly, the Warrior on the white horse, the folds of His mantle flutter in the breeze, but we can read what is written on its border, “Desire of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” He has a name written, “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Nevertheless the vision, like the end of war, may be for many days! We are only likely to be mistaken if we attempt to say how far from the beginning, and how far from the end we now are. In the war, what was hastily judged the beginning of the end proved to be at most the end of the beginning. So, too, in the work which God’s Love has undertaken, this redemption of a sinful world, this refashioning of men and women in the Divine likeness; we may still, for all we know, be living in the early stages of it. The words “slow” and “fast” are simply meaningless unless we have some real standard of time by which to judge them: and indeed we have not. “He who took a million years to mould a block of old red sandstone, is willing to take a good many thousand years to mould humanity into His own likeness.”¹

¹ Dean Inge, “Speculum Animæ,” p. 22

But it is not merely a matter of patient waiting. Faith has not to bear a strain without relief. The final victory is anticipated, and we have foretastes of it in achievements which are His and His only. They convince us of the presence, the activity of a power that must at last prevail. They are the partial triumphs of a Love and Wisdom that must ultimately triumph over all. The great artist, challenged for a specimen of his skill, had no need to elaborate a perfect picture. With one sweeping stroke of complete mastery he drew a faultless circle: and he alone could do it.

It is so with Him whom already we acclaim as King of kings. The soul yielded unreservedly to His will, the nation that turns from its darkness to His light, become in Him what nothing else can make them. "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." "All men that see it shall say, This hath God done, for they shall perceive that it is His work." Right in the very heart of the absolutely wrong you find the absolutely right. In the very place in which you say, like Abraham, the fear of God is not,¹ you find the sort of goodness that puts the ordinary pious man to shame. You discover Christ when you least expect to find Him. The dark days of decadence and defeat are pierced by the glory of His appearing, and at the brightness of His presence the clouds remove. You are face to face with the power which, you are certain of it, *must* prevail.

¹ Gen. xx. 11.

III

Thy Kingdom come

I

IN October last, about three months after the Declaration of War, the *Times* published a striking article entitled, "The Day of the Young." It begins with a quotation from a young soldier's letter.

"It's a great war, whatever. Isn't it luck for me to have been born so as I'd be just the right age and just in the right place?'¹

"That is how, a correspondent tells us, a young cavalry officer writes from the front; and there are many middle-aged men amongst us who must envy him. We have lived in our own youth an ordinary life of routine through long inconclusive years, and now suddenly comes a time in which the future of the world is to be made, more even than it was in the wars a hundred years ago; and we ourselves can have little or nothing to do with the making of it. But this young man, and thousands of others, who were undergraduates, or shopmen, or ploughboys a few months ago, are now making history; and

¹ *Times*, Saturday, Oct. 24, 1914.

they in their old age will have stories to tell to their grandchildren such as no man has ever told before; or they will be remembered as having given their lives for their country in the most momentous of all its struggles. And they have, too, this greatest of good fortune of all, that their cause is beyond dispute the best for which England has ever gone to war. The undergraduate who last summer term was playing his pleasant games, and making his pleasant little academic jokes, to whom the world was a charming if rather bewildering place, is now suddenly a man with a plain and glorious duty before him, a man like those Greeks who fought at Marathon and Salamis with Æschylus himself, the poet of the great age that was prepared for a victory in which he took his part."

The article is followed by some lines of poetry; not new but old, the bravest lines, perhaps, that were ever written.

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers!
 For he, to-day, that sheds his blood with me
 Shall be my brother—be he e'er so vile,
 This day shall gentle his condition;
 And gentlemen in England, now abed,
 Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap, while any speaks
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day."

Here then it is, this astounding fact, this joyous response to a call to suffer and perhaps to die, this impatience of delay, this burning desire to be at once at the front. There is no mistaking, no denying it. The song of the soldier on the march is not a device

for keeping up his courage. He cannot help it. There is no need to encourage, there is no chance of stopping it. It is the irrepressible music of a high spirit and a joyful heart.

It is splendid, yes, and it is sometimes heart-breaking to hear it. And we old people who have seen them off, and sent, maybe, the best part of our hearts with them, shuffle back home, saying little, but thinking much; wondering at it all, this strange, transfiguring gladness that has touched the heart, that lights up the face of the lad who has got his heart's desire and is on his way to the hardships and perils of the front. You cannot mistake it: it has been so ever since he joined the army. It does not wear off; and even if what we think the "worst" comes to us, you will very likely hold side by side the message of death and the last letter, aflame with the same ardour, radiant with the same high-spirited joy. You cannot set it down to ignorance. Some indeed may think little of what lies before them; but the older soldiers feel it as well as the recruits. You dare not criticize it; for a man who is ready to die an unselfish death for an unselfish reason is, in some sense, above criticism. It is not the excitement of a great adventure, still less is it war-fever of any rough or savage type. You and I have letters which make us wild with any stupid and insolent suggestion of such a sort. We know our boy, gentle, considerate, well enough to make us want to drive that hint back down the throat of the man that made it. It is not fierceness that has got hold of him. It is a bitter

tongue like yours, not an ardent heart like his, that St. James speaks of as "set on fire of hell!"

II

Oh, we may wish, and wish rightly, that the same spirit might be stirred and called to service in some cause, some field less awful, less wasteful than the horrible business of war. It is a very partial justification of a monstrous thing that it stirs a high and fine spirit. It is to the shame of our peace that it fails so often of the high enthusiasms of a time of war. Yet we are wrong, when, because we hate and dread war, we discredit or suspect the high and glad and unselfish eagerness with which our brothers rise to meet its demands. How is it, we rather ask, that the call to arms in a just cause uplifts and inspires a man as it so clearly does?

May we not set in the very forefront of our answer, that men are happy because they know that they are wanted, and what they are wanted for? No word in the repeated appeals of the War Minister is more telling, when it gets to a man's heart, than that word which stands in big print on all the proclamations, "Wanted." Your king and your country "want" you! It is the one word of magic that gets the best sort of recruit. It arrests the thought of the poor idler who seldom thinks at all. It is a sort of revelation to him. He had been accustomed to think, he had indolently let himself believe, that there was no real need for him in a crowded world. It rouses a

man habituated to some dull monotony of wearisome work, holding a place that twenty others were ready to fill. Aye, but it speaks in yet more trumpet tones to the man who is quite accustomed to be wanted. It is the watchword of his daily duty and his daily happiness. He is hourly thankful that men want him. The word has something sacred about it already. He is wanted here, he is yet more urgently required there ; and he is restless until he has given in his name. For some, at least, modern life has got unspeakably complicated and puzzling. Men are entangled in a host of semi-engagements, *let in* for a multitude of conflicting and aggravating obligations, busy in a crowd of things, half of them not quite worth doing. They long to be out of the wood and on to the road. They have felt all along that if any call rang out clear, urgent, imperative, they would love to obey it. It is come, and their faces light up as they hear and answer it.

And then there is the clear and definite character of the work that lies before them. No thought of the infinite complexity of the task, nor indeed, for the time being, need any thought of the horrible detail of it, stand between them and the clear vision of a great aim, a great issue that lies before them and binds them to their splendid duty. The thing has got to be done. The man is on his mettle. It is no question, or hardly a question, of special brutalities and outrages ; of a sword so disgracefully misused that it must be wrenched from the hand and broken before the eyes of the savage who wields it. It is no

doubt our duty to question, as far as we may, the accounts of such enormities ; to accept them, if they must be accepted, as instances of mad and horrible wickedness that hardly touches (please God) the conduct of the war as a whole. The larger instances, the treatment of Louvain, Namur, Malines ; the terror that has driven the Belgians, wild with fear, homeless and hopeless, to seek the shelter of our shores ; these cannot be viewed in such a way. They do not misrepresent ; they represent with most painful accuracy a spirit avowed, a policy deliberately adopted, by those who are responsible for the cruelties they thus inflict. They are meant, and they succeed well enough, to strike a full agony of fear into the hearts of defenceless people—to frighten, as it were to death, those whom the sword does not touch.

Yes, and behind all this, avowed, acknowledged, gloried in, there lies a theory with regard to military power, its purposes, its rights, its ultimate significance which is absolutely fatal to the peace and welfare of the world. And with this compromise is quite impossible, acquiescence is iniquitous : like evil itself it can be met only in one way ; it can only be resisted to the uttermost.

That is the real tragedy of it all ! No one wishes to deny to Germany that which may be her due ; a great sense, it may be, of the duty of the individual to the State as a whole, a strong and fiery patriotism ; a keen appreciation of a great part that the nation must play in the history of the world, of her vocation, her gifts, her work ; a fine sense of the burdens that such

work imposes ; a fine readiness to bear them. All this and more burns like fire, is strong as steel, in page after page of Bernhardi's great book. This is the sort of thing that children must learn at school, it must be set to music, the whole nation must be worked, drilled into it. There is a certain undeniable splendour in it all. It is the discipline under which, you cannot deny it, the nation has become strong for its purpose. Yes, but behind it all, just as you might find it at the back of a giant's strength, or at the back of a superhuman cleverness, there lies the sheer evil of a perverted will. Such a will has called it into existence, sustained and inspired it ; and now, like some great centre of telephonic communication, addresses and directs the movements of the German host. Oh, we may be all love and pity for them who, like ourselves, are called to sacrifices and sufferings such as have hardly been since the beginning of the world ; but the issue is plain : for here is something fatal to the peace of the world ; it must be met, it must be broken. Here at last is something for us to get at, to reach, to crush, behind the poor bodies of the soldiers it is flinging into the fight, behind the thunder of its guns. It is intangible, but it is not invulnerable. We may shrink from the grim work that lies between us and it. We may long that we could find and fight it, that perverted evil will, otherwise than thus ; with other weapons than the cruel instruments of war : but we know no other way. King, country, aye, and the spur of conscience, call us to the field. We must go, to conquer it, if it be God's

will ; to die, if need be, in a cause that has a right to claim the supreme sacrifice that a man can offer.

And, third, there is the joy that belongs to those who have, consciously or unconsciously, got hold of the real secret of the right sort of life. It is in serving others that we find out what it is to live. It is best, for the time at least, to use language of the most general type ; for the full and clear and unhesitating conviction of the blessedness of self-sacrifice may not be theirs, nor perhaps is it ours ! Let us look for a moment at ourselves. What is our own relation to this master-truth of Christian life ? There is perhaps, first of all, the ghastly unreality of lives essentially selfish which use nevertheless extraordinarily daring language about the joy of self-sacrifice. It is pure theory ; for such people seldom think of pleasing any one save themselves. The self-sacrifice that is well to the front in their professions is strangely absent from their performances. Luxurious, exacting, hard on others, and with a curious skill that helps them somehow or another to avoid the pressure of life's burdens, they will still sing the praises of self-sacrifice. They claim to be bearing the Cross. Or we may think of those who make occasional and somewhat half-hearted excursions into the regions of unselfish action. They have heard that the "gold of that land is good," and they would like to have their share of it. They see that something like it gives joy to others. They want at least to know *how it feels*, and so they make their timid venture, and perhaps, led by God's grace, they push forward and learn the blessedness of the great

release, of the escape from self; or perhaps they are disappointed and turn back and are joined to the uneasy and disheartened ranks of the disappointed philanthropists, so soon wearied of trying to be kind. Far finer, far happier, are the lives of those who, not indeed of conscious choice, but in quiet and patient acceptance of a hard lot, lose self for the sake of others. Those who have worked and lived amongst the poor will understand it. The East End mother of the better sort often bears quite uncomplaining the whole burden of family care. She takes it as a matter of course. She sees nothing strange, nothing specially hard about it; she has simply ceased to think of self; and dreary as the outlook and the surroundings sometimes are, she finds a real joy in serving those she loves.

“Everywhere, in every day that passes, in more ways than we can dream of, self-sacrifice is redeeming human life; and this mixed, bewildered world is led forward and brought nearer to God by the lives of those who give themselves for others. Constantly we fail to see that this is so, and sometimes would not want to see it; sometimes we are too busy, or too stupid, or too self-centred. But it is the truth of human life: men rise themselves and raise others by the sacrifice of self; and in war the greatness of self-sacrifice is set before us with a plainness and intensity and vividness that we cannot miss. Men, with all that we have to make us love life, face death for their country, their duty, their comrades; and the world sees it, and some learn what it means.”¹

¹ F. Paget, “The Redemption of War,” pp. 7, 8.

It is no small part of the reward of the obedience of these our brothers, who have heard and answered their country's call, that the burden, the perplexity of thought for self has gone clean away; that in the strength and freedom of self-sacrifice they rise above themselves; that a strange new gladness shines in their faces, and rings out in their songs.

III

We need, one and all of us, a greater enthusiasm for the kingdom of God; and perhaps the thought of the war will help us to gain it. Those who have puzzled over that strange book, "Manresa," the exercises planned out by Ignatius Loyola for candidates for his Order, are not likely to forget the first of his "Meditations." The plan of the book is deliberate and carefully worked out. Much in it, as for example the application of the five senses, in order, to the various subjects proposed for consideration, seems difficult and deterrent: yet men are bidden to work through it all; forbidden, as it were, to proceed to a new point until they have mastered its predecessor: it may take months, but still by that rule they are bidden to proceed. It was to shape a man, by sure, slow process, to a life of stern and inexorable demands; to make the sort of man who would go anywhere, do anything, lend himself with infinite flexibility to the demands of the moment, stiffen into stubborn resistance, die rather than yield. The book represents a discipline extraordinarily

effective during a long course of years in producing the character it set itself to produce.

But discipline presupposes a disciple, just as the task of direction implies that there is movement to direct. There is no steering a boat that has no way on it: the tiller moves with perfect ease, with absolute ineffectiveness in your hand as the boat lies calm and idle, or floats down stream. Oh, what an amount of breath we clergy, for example, waste in sermons based on false estimates and mistaken suppositions; when we reckon on enthusiasms that have no existence; helping people to attain that for which they have betrayed not so much as the slightest symptom of desire: bidding them strive for that which they are by no means convinced is worth striving for! It is not until you have made a man see that the goal is worth reaching that you can expect him to pay anything more than a polite and utterly meaningless attention to your pleasant discourse on the way to reach it. Perhaps no series of instructions is more needed than one which might demonstrate to an ordinary well-meaning, easy-going man that the thing we Christians seek is really worth seeking; that there really is a pearl of great price; that there really is treasure hid in the unsuspected (or possibly suspected!) field. It is poor work to set one's self to control, when incitement is what is needed. Enthusiasm must be kindled before it can be directed.

And so "Manresa" starts with a splendid and enkindling Prelude. For the King is on His throne,

surrounded with the grandeur of His royalty. He is "more legitimate than Charlemagne, holier than St. Louis." His task is to unfold the plan of a campaign on which He has set His heart. He explains the tyrannies He intends to crush, the wrongs He means to right, the glory He is to win, the fair lands He hopes to acquire. He promises that they who share with Him the toils of war shall share with Him the fruits of victory. He Himself will bear His full share of hardship. No bed shall be harder, no food rougher than His. The private soldier and the Sovereign shall fare alike.

And then, with a clear memory of his own soldiering, Ignatius pictures the inevitable result of such an appeal; the flashing eyes, the tumultuous acclamations of those who surround the throne, as they clap their hands on their swords and swear to follow their King wherever He may lead them.

It is all very warlike, very Spanish; the court is the court of the King of Spain, just as the hostile lands are the unknown territories of those days, full of strange tyrannies, monstrous evils, horrors unspeakable. Victory is rather easily attained; for in many places the mere mention of the name and the fame of the King will be enough. The rewards of service are represented by provinces and estates of which, quite innumerable and of indescribable wealth, the King will have the disposal!

The whole scene may want resetting, the appeal may have to be reshaped, written over again. It may not be the thing that stirs the heart of the

twentieth century. But it stirred beyond all bounds of control the heart of the sixteenth. It is a fine and glowing conception, and, at all events, that which it claims to represent remains unchanged. We still pray, "Thy Kingdom come."

IV

Quite recently protests have been made against the free use of war metaphors and war imagery to illustrate Christian aims. Such uses have their risks; but at present it is impossible to refrain from them. Indeed a much more strenuous Christianity, a much more generous acceptance of our Lord's claim to whole-hearted and self-sacrificing service may very well be, for all of us, a practical result of the discipline through which we are passing. But it is not only because they may emphasize one aspect of Christian life to the exclusion of others that war metaphors are perilous; not only because they might tend to depreciate the quieter imagery of commerce and industrial fidelity that our Lord marks with His approval in the parables of the kingdom. There is another risk; the risk of using rather contentedly the language of peril and danger, of fierce conflict and desperate endeavour, of hard resistance and costly triumph, when, to say the least of it, much milder metaphor would better suit the actual facts of Christian experience so far as we have come into contact with it. No one who remembers St. Paul's almost rapturous sense of the fitness of the military metaphor is likely to quarrel with a very free

and confident employment of it. How he loves it! The very accoutrements of the Roman soldier have a fascination for him; they are so like the spiritual equipment of the soldier of Jesus Christ.¹ Even the punitive expedition, perhaps the least appealing form of warfare, just getting pirates and plunderers out of their holds, reminds him of bringing insolent thoughts, lodged in strange inaccessible places, under submission to Christ. The good warfare, the good fight: we have quoted the phrases so often that we have almost forgotten the vivid freshness of their first utterance.² His picture of Christ's triumph is drawn from the triumph of a Roman general with the hosts of captives, and the fumes of incense, and the splendid procession up the glorious hill. "Come and take your share of the hardship like a good soldier." "No man on active service entangles himself with the things of this world, that he may please him that chose him for the campaign." Surely we can understand it, when every ounce of burden has to be taken into account. Imagine a soldier, if you can, standing before his officer, and laden with the superfluities of civil life! More might easily be added; but this is quite enough to show us St. Paul so enamoured of a metaphor that he cannot easily keep away from it; that he returns to it again and again, sure of its fitness, its special adequacy for the facts of Christian life as he had come to know them—as they appeared to him. Yes, to *him*, but not necessarily to us; for

¹ 2 Cor. x. 5.

² 1 Cor. ii. 14.

is Christian life, as most of us are content to live it, the valiant, strenuous, and glorious thing that it was to St. Paul? One side issue of the war may be that it will teach us more reserve, more caution in the use of military language! We certainly use it with considerable freedom. Shall we use it so inconsiderately, now that a great struggle is teaching us what war really is, and what it costs us? The army with all that belongs to it stands in a new light to-day; a thing fearful in its intense reality. Our men who enlist pledge themselves to face danger and suffering such as we dare not picture. The whole nation has thrown its heart into the struggle. The issue is a matter of life and death. Ceaseless vigilance, incredible endurance, passionate loyalty, the strength of absolute unity. These are essential; they are matter of course. So, and so only, may we hope to win the day.

We do well to ask ourselves what measure of reality and sincerity there has been hitherto in the fiercely warlike terms in which we have spoken and sung of the Christian life—"Marching as to war," "The trumpet call obey," "Take to arm you for the fight the panoply of God," "Fight the good fight with all thy might." It is all sound and good; it is all implicit in our Christian obligation and in our baptismal vow. But how thoughtlessly, how listlessly we have used the big words! Tested by our complacent attitude towards the horrible evil around us, by our faint and intermittent and half-hearted struggle with our own particular and besetting sin,

by the sort of fight we make and the sort of vigilance with which we are satisfied, how can such language stand; as we face the inexorable demands, the absolute and primary requirements of an actual state of war? Let us pray to be delivered from the inconsistency of braggart language coupled with cowardly inaction. The soldier language on the lips must be justified by the soldier spirit at the heart.

V

How can we hope to rouse ourselves, to rouse the general conscience of Christians, to anything approaching an adequate zeal for Christ's kingdom, anything like the love and longing for it that there ought to be? "The Kingdom of God," familiarity, formality, insincerity have conspired to rob it of its meaning, to take the splendid sting out of its appeal. It has been lost in the clouds of abstraction, or cheapened down into something so timid, so limited as to be barely desirable at all. It has suffered grievously by its identification with a Church, all stained and feeble and divided, that includes so much that you would expect to find outside it, and excludes so much that should find itself at home within. Nothing is harder than to revive the lost vigour, the strength and the beauty of a great phrase that has been ruined by the familiarity of misuse.

It must make the hills re-echo again as it did when Christ's herald announced its coming on the banks of Jordan, and men came streaming from

Jerusalem because they had heard the rumour of it. Its message must shine like the fiery cross to summon all loyal men to their King's side.

Long ages of careful preparation had made God's people ready for it in the ancient days. They might be strangely mistaken as to its real meaning and purpose, what it would bring men, and how it was to be set up; but the thought underlying Daniel's¹ vision had got hold of them. He, in visions of the night, had seen in due succession the clumsy animal forms, that stood for the kingdoms of the world, rise and fall. One rough, one cunning, one swift, one brutally defiant in its strength, and so on; each had lumbered by and passed away; and then had come the vision of a Sovereignty, human and divine, of peace and justice—a kingdom that should not pass away. Poor Jewish people! they had known by bitter experience the meaning of those successive tyrannies; they had felt the heavy weight of gold and brass and iron, the savagery of bear and leopard and a strange beast fiercer than them all. They longed for that other kingdom so surely promised, so slow to appear. They painted it in fantastic colours; they decked it up with vulgar ornaments; they claimed for themselves an exclusive and impossible place in it; and when it came they missed it, for they did not recognize it. They put it from them and deemed themselves unworthy of eternal life. But yet they kept the thought of it ever before them, they supremely wanted it, the oldest still hoped that

¹ Dan. vii. 1 *seq.*

they might live to see it. It was held that a prayer that did not name the Kingdom was no prayer! There is no room, in a little book like this, to speak at length of how, in Christ, the kingdom that was promised came. He chastened and corrected the mistaken conceptions men had formed of it. He revealed it to us as inward, spiritual, the rule of God in the hearts of men; He gave it its laws; He described the methods of its growth, the character of its members, its struggles and trials, its final victory. It was even then already come; for in His coming it came. Its powers were already at work in the world. Evil was dislodged and retreated before its advance. Already the powers opposed to it, the strong man armed that kept his goods in peace, had felt the touch of its irresistible strength. Christ had seen Satan falling like lightning from heaven. All things, already, were possible to him that believed. Cleansed and purified, inspired with a new hope, sure and unailing, the ancient prayer was to be for ever on the lips of His people, the ancient longing for ever in their hearts, "Thy Kingdom come."

We spoke a few pages back of the inspiring and uniting influence of a common cause. We rejoiced over the enthusiastic joy of those who had in answer to the call of their king and country offered themselves to the service of England in her hour of need; a clear road before them; a great and plain duty awaiting them; the splendour of serving others lifting them above the disheartening thought of self. Why,

it seems inevitable to ask, should there be less of this, so often none of this, with regard to the essentially splendid enterprise of the kingdom of God ?

To side with God in a struggle in which God really claims our service ; to win for God His throne in the hearts of men ; to bring the bleak, hard lovelessness of life under the rule of His love ; to fight and overcome for Him and in His strength the blighting and devastating powers of evil ; to pierce the darkness with His light ; to bring His help and His comfort to those who need it : if anything like this is within our power ; if this is the task to which He calls us, it is hard indeed to believe that men of goodwill will at the same time recognize and refuse it. It seems, indeed, as if by some mistake or other religious teachers misunderstood what men really want ; just as sometimes in a shop a dealer will go on offering you what he *thinks* you want, until you turn away disappointed, while all the while the thing you really want lies close at hand ; only he does not think you want it !

A very little investigation, a very little knowledge of modern life, is enough to reveal the existence of hosts of people aimless, or dissatisfied with their present aims ; at liberty or strangely entangled with business that is not business, pleasure that has ceased, or will swiftly cease, to please. In their clearer moments they have to own how extraordinarily unimportant even their most important engagements are. Their output is ridiculous when compared with their income : their service is lamentable when

measured by their capacity. They do so little where indeed they might do so much.

“Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say, Because no man hath hired us.”¹ Certainly, in the parable the men were speaking the truth; and so too perhaps are these. No recognizable call has ever come to them; no invitation at all in the sort of language that they speak and understand. The Church perhaps, if they are wealthy, has kept its eye on them as potential subscribers, and over-thanked them for a gift which has cost them nothing; such thanks rather sicken a straightforward man: or work has been found for them, or made for them, disappointing in its futility or in its curious unsuitability to their qualification. No man has really hired them! Not for what they can recognize as real work; not for business; not for the necessary and simple labour of a real vineyard, an actual and well-managed estate! There are large numbers of men, and larger numbers still of clever women, genuinely anxious to get out of the doubts and entanglements and misgivings of a life that seems to lead nowhere and to nothing. Has not the kingdom need of their service? Will they not answer to its appeal? Yes, we venture to say, if we can make them see what it really means; if we can make it seem a real and splendid thing. We want the skill of St. Ignatius, the skill that made God’s kingdom seem the one thing in the world, with a right to claim and a power to use the most various gifts of the most various men. We must go to them

¹ St. Matt. xx. 7.

with something better than the timid proposal of what is sometimes all too narrowly regarded as "Church work."

We are not going to exchange the ideals of the kingdom for those of mere philanthropy. The failure of so much of our good-doing in the past, as well as the more conspicuous failure of our evil-doing, has rested on our forgetfulness of God. We shall look to Him more than ever we have looked before; we shall go forth in the strength of the Lord; we shall make mention of His righteousness only; we shall reckon on His guidance; we shall count on His help: for the war will have taught us a profound distrust of civilization apart from God. We shall hold for certain that He alone can really liberate, really uplift men, really satisfy their needs. We shall not forget our prayers, our Communion. They will have a new intensity, a new significance, for men and women on active service in the cause of Christ. His Name will be always in our minds, and, perhaps, as we come to trust one another more, and know one another better, it will be rather frequently on our lips. We shall know what we are aiming at, and for whose sake.

But with this will go a clearer and a wider vision of our field of work, and of His will regarding it. We may have our own small sphere of action, utterly subordinate, just a part of a part contributory to the total splendour; but it will be splendid with the splendour of the whole; glorious with the glory of God's great intention.

It is weary work, one may believe, digging endless trenches, or unloading foodstuff, or watching with ceaseless vigilance for a foe who makes no sign. Yet each has its place, none can be spared in the work of a great campaign.

VI

Oh, that lips of fire might speak worthily of the kingdom of God: "Thy saints give thanks unto Thee. They show the glory of Thy kingdom and talk of Thy power: that Thy power, Thy glory, and the mightiness of Thy kingdom might be known unto men."¹

"All nations shall do Him service: for He shall deliver the poor when he crieth: the needy also and him that hath no helper; He shall be favourable to the simple and needy, and shall preserve the souls of the poor. He shall deliver their souls from falsehood and wrong, and dear shall their blood be in His sight."² So the Psalmist of old lifted up his voice to praise God's rule. Our own hymns of the kingdom take up the great theme:—

"Blessings abound where'er He reigns,
The prisoner leaps to loose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed."

But we need to translate it not merely from Hebrew into English, it must pass from the poetry of sentiment into the reality of everyday life.

There seems to be at the back of German

¹ Ps. cxlv. 10-12.

² Ps. lxxii. 13, 14.

aggression the audacity of a conviction that the world is to be saved by being Germanized. Let us keep the form and change the terms; let us avow our belief that society is to be saved by being Christianized. The dreadful revolt from Christianity has raised up to-day a new standard, a new ideal, the Superman. "Needless to say that this superman might be more properly called the superbrute."¹ It may, or may not, be true that even this monstrosity may serve to remind us of those characteristics of strength and self-realization which belong to complete human development. But when we look for perfect Manhood we find it already achieved in Him, our Lord, most strong, most gentle, chiefest of ten thousand, altogether lovely.

Let us be bold to believe just two things.

First that Christ our Lord is indeed the King of the ages, that the world has needed Him all along, and needs Him sorely to-day. It is probably true that we are still quite at the beginning rather than nearing the end of the Christian era. What He has achieved is small in comparison with what He waits for our faith to accomplish. He is in this sense "yet for to come." There has been enough, and more than enough, to justify our fullest confidence. Anything like a careful study of history will show how at each great crisis in affairs He was revealed as the Master of the situation. Again and again He, and He alone, has solved the apparently insoluble, wrought that which seemed impossible.

¹ Tyrrell, "Lex Credendi," p. 66.

We are all too timid, too distrustful. We need more of the spirit that glories in the Cross, that makes its boast in God all the day long, that "lifts up its hands" in praise, in adoration, in action, "in His Name." "Thou shalt show us wonderful things in Thy righteousness, O God of our salvation: Thou that art the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of them that remain in the broad sea."¹

The war, for one thing, has taught us the enormous capacity of human intelligence; never more wonderful than when it works, concealing itself all the while. Only this morning² there was an account of the method by which the enormous masses of the Russian army are controlled and directed. It was not a picture of a general encouraging his troops by his visible presence, seen here and there in the fighting line. It showed us a quiet spot, miles removed from the vast Russian front, yet in contact with it at every point. "Here, detached and with minds free from the hurly-burly and confusion of the struggle, the brains of the army are able to command a perspective of the whole theatre of war, which a nearer location might utterly destroy."

We are quick to see how far any such image as this fails to represent the truth about our Lord. But it may serve to make us understand how real, how entirely effective may be the guidance, the support of a Commander who remains unseen, of a Wisdom that, for its own wise purpose, hides itself. Such a Wisdom is most at work when least we see it.

¹ Ps. lxxv. 5.

² *Times*, Nov. 1, 1914.

We are wrong if we allow ourselves to believe that the victories of our faith, the victories of Christ, in the past, are in any sense isolated and incoherent instances of a power on which we dare not reckon for further achievements. Whether we fix our thoughts on Him—who was and is and is to come—or on the great principles which His victories reveal, or again on the infinite variety of conditions under which, in spite of which, He has prevailed; we see even from our own narrow outlook no sign, no hint such as might make us afraid to go forth in His strength, with His word in our hearts, His name in triumph on our lips. In relation to Him no assurance can be misplaced; no confidence can be too great. *The Splendour of God*, was the favourite oath of William the Conqueror, and it seems, somehow, to have seized on a thought which our timid and apologetic tones about our religion have managed to lose.

And second, we do well to remember that the separate parts of that which is so splendid as a whole often seem extraordinarily unimportant and commonplace. It is hardly likely to fall to many of us to add great and fertile provinces to the dominion of our King. But going about the world with eyes watchful for opportunity, and with the quiet and sustained confidence that where things are wrong it is because He is not allowed to manage them; and that He knows how, and is willing if only men will let Him, to set them right, we shall often be able, by His grace, to make our little addition to His realm.

The well-worn story (it needs an apology!) of the English children in the Roman market-place is often used as an interesting event in the conversion of England; but it also illustrates an interesting trait in the character of St. Gregory. "They would," he said, "be angels if they were Christians." That, it seems, was the possibility that was always uppermost in his mind. The fair faces of the children set him thinking straightway about the joy of bringing them to Christ. The accident of their tribal name made him want to make them angels. The quick wit with its little play on words was one thing; the ready apprehension of Christian possibilities was another and a deeper thing. Plain children, from homes with far less attractive names, would have given him other, but no less cogent, reasons for wishing to make Christians of them. We learn, at all events, that the practical business of spreading Christ's kingdom was never far from his mind. Almost everything reminded him of it.

That, again, is part of the soldier's skill. With what extraordinary and minute attention those maps must have been studied which represent the battle-fields of the last few days; and studied always with regard to the necessities of the war! A possible line of advance, a possible place for the guns; how slowly possibilities are dismissed by men really bent on their purpose!

We do not wish to press an impatient zeal for the conversion of souls; nor have we in our mind the special duties of the clergy. We appeal rather to

that great body of quiet, earnest laymen, who love our Lord and who believe in religion, when we ask for this steady, unobtrusive effort to win for Christ a larger and more dominant place in English life. He must have His right place in their own lives first. They must have made quietly and solemnly their own submission to Him; come to Him; taken His yoke upon them; learnt of Him. It is part of our common honesty that we cannot ask others to do what we have not done ourselves. There need be no high language of assured perseverance, of untroubled peace, no wealth or parade of Christian experience; they are not necessarily asked to preach to others; but they will know enough to believe for certain, and to say, if need be, without hesitation that more, not less, religion is what modern life needs; they will be able to add their voices to the many and authoritative voices declaring that no society is safe, no morality secure, when God is thrust aside. It is a legitimate part of an Englishman's pride that he is able to say, in the matter of gross injustice, or wanton cruelty, or reckless indifference to suffering, that such things are, thank God, impossible under British rule. Under no other conditions could we view with complacency the wide-flung sovereignty of the British flag. A man should have at least the same strength of conviction with regard to the rule of Christ. *This injustice, this selfishness, this lust of gain, this hopeless misery, would be impossible if Christ were King.* St. Paul had a fine ambition to preach Christ where Christ was not named. There seemed to him to be a special

glory in adding new territory to the Kingdom. We ought to feel the same desire in regard to departments of life ; of pleasure, business, expenditure, over which His control is uncertain and ill-defined. We should feel it yet more strongly, yet more passionately, with regard to those strong and prevalent forms of evil which openly challenge and defy Him. "Impregnable" is a word to be used sparingly, cautiously. Again and again our maps have borne the names of fortresses that were held impregnable, until obstinate siege, or planned assault, or heavier guns, or some irresistible heroism of self-sacrifice laid them low. Religion will never shine out in its attractive splendour until it shows itself less timid ; less tolerant of admitted evil, than it has been for some years past. It must no longer keep within the narrow and narrowing limits of what is cynically supposed to be its sphere. Faith was in a bad way when, in the face of rapid scientific advance, it was content to stake its existence on the fact that there were some things science cannot explain. Religion is in a poor way when it seems satisfied with making the best of that docile minority who find their way to church, or confining its attentions to the few and fewer matters which are contemptuously regarded as its "business."

The call to arms revealed a wonderful spirit latent, unsuspected, in the hearts of average men ; a readiness to serve and suffer which we hardly thought was there.

There are hosts of men of good will ready to side with religion if only they saw it in its proper glory ;

clear in its aim, strong in its purpose, undaunted, and unashamed; claiming for Christ that which belongs to Him—that dominion over the hearts and lives of all men, “at all times and in all places,” in all things, which is His right.

IV

Thy Will be done

I

“VIOLENT fighting ; heavy losses !” we are getting accustomed to such announcements. We have almost abandoned the vain attempt to realize what they mean. Those who try to tell us exhaust the whole vocabulary of horror—utter ruin, havoc, hell let loose ! They speak of what they have seen as a ghastly nightmare. They almost wonder whether they have really seen it. Men, otherwise unwounded, come out of it, broken, nerve-shattered, as though by exposure to a strain that human nature is too weak to withstand. There are those amongst us for whom it is hardly safe to think of such things ; the haunting thought of them is more than they can bear.

Ah the sheer horror of that on the remotest outskirts of which we stand ! Only just here and there, as though by a whisper from afar, we come to know it. We know it may be the agony of some broken heart, some desolate home, some maimed and shattered frame : but there are thousands and thousands of them. We hear of things only when they are past and over. What must it be to stand in the thick of

the fight, to see one company after another urged forward, mowed down by shot and shell, rent, mutilated, shattered? What must it be to go the night rounds with nurse or surgeon and look with heartsick wonder at what war has done; war's work for a single day? It is even worse to think of the battlefield on which night has fallen; where the wounded and dying lie unheeded, uncomforted, in agony, alone! "God's will!" Surely one's first impulse, one's natural instinct, is to start back from the very mention of it.

There is a strange and ghastly passage in the Book of Amos.¹ It is a dreadful picture of a city stricken with the plague. Two, one a kinsman, the other whose task it is to burn the dead, come near to an empty-seeming house, all dark and desolate. "Is any one here with thee?" they ask; and from some dark corner comes a voice that says, "No." "Then shall he say, Hold thy peace, for we may not make mention of the Name of the Lord." The words are indeed obscure and puzzling; they may imply a sort of panic-terror of God's name; they may possibly suggest a desolation so complete, a ruin so absolute that God's very name, the mention and remembrance of Him, seem out of place—a sort of utter despair to which it seems "the less said about Him the better!" It is a weird little incident; it seems to stand alone in the Bible; there is nothing even remotely resembling it; nothing anywhere else to throw light on it. But it is strangely arresting. You think of the terror and havoc of the plague. You see the man crouching

¹ Amos vi. 10.

in the corner of the lonely house, the sole survivor. "Any one beside you?" "No"—"then hush!" (we are left to guess what he was going to say; possibly some usual word of pious commonplace) "for we may not mention the Name of the Lord."

So indeed it might be here; for war is so horrible, so costly, so cruel; its passion is so violent; its fierceness so pitiless, so unrelenting; its inflictions so widespread, so indiscriminate; its hand so heavy on the innocent and unresisting, that it seems as though some terrible force, armed for destruction, had broken loose, had got right away beyond God's ken, beyond His control. It might seem as though there were no room, no place, no possibility for the pieties of ordinary life. Whatever God's will may be, this lies outside it. It is no good, some might think, to attempt to bring the two ideas, the grim horror of war and the will of a loving God, into simultaneous focus. Think of them, if you like to do so, alternately. It is hopeless to think of them both at once; or shut your eyes till this is over; and then recover, if you can, the old confidence and the old language that you love to use about God. You are running risks with your faith if you bring it into the line of fire. Remember the old story of the Ark of the Covenant and what happened when the sons of Eli carried it into the battle. It fell into the hands of the enemy. The Philistines captured it. "He delivered their power into captivity; and their beauty into the enemies' hand."¹

¹ Ps. lxxviii. 61.

II

One or two hints may be interposed here for those, and there must be many such, to whom God entrusts the sacred task, the high privilege of bearing comfort to the sorrowful, the anxious, the bereaved. The first word must be one of confident and unhesitating encouragement. Anything like experience goes to teach one that almost anything that is kindly meant is kindly taken; that simple, loving words, spoken by those who mean what they say, have an almost sacramental grace with which God's goodness enriches them; that they are the vehicles of a consolation far greater than you would expect. It is so with letters. You write to some one who is well-nigh broken-hearted; and you are profoundly dissatisfied with what you have written. You cannot imagine its doing any good. You doubt about sending it. *Stamp it with a prayer and post it!* The writer knows a case of really overwhelming sorrow where a schoolboy's letter, if only by its extraordinary artlessness, brought laughter into eyes brimful of tears.

But now for a word of caution. The great drama of the Book of Job is a standing witness against the heartlessness, the blunder of conventional comfort. The only tolerable moment in the performances of those "comforters" of his was the time in which, at the outset, they sat silent and astonished, for they perceived that his grief was indeed great.¹ They were too well equipped, they were too professional. They

¹ Job. ii. 13.

had not, so far as we know, felt the touch of sorrow themselves; but they were sure that they knew all about it. They had made up their minds, so that no new experience affected them. They had theories of cast-iron into which facts must be made to fit. Job's distraction and perplexity were therefore far nearer approximations to the truth than their satisfactory explanations. His wild words were far more to the point than their framed speeches. They were very much shocked at him; but God was grievously displeased with them.

So, in the present instance, it is well to be careful what is said. It is not well, for one thing, to speak widely and indiscriminately of all that happens, that shocks and appals us, as the will of God; as though God willed these cruelties, these horrors, in the same sense that He wills the welfare and happiness of His creatures. Think of those wonderful passages in which God, as it were, takes us into His confidence and tells us what He would have done if only men would have left the way open to Him.

“O that my people would have hearkened unto Me: for if Israel had walked in My ways, I should soon have put down their enemies and turned My hand against their adversaries!”¹ “O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.”² Think above all of our Lord; never look aside, away from, beyond Him, if you want to know God. “How often would I have gathered

¹ Ps. lxxxi. 14, 15.

² Isa. xlvi. 18.

thy children together even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!"¹ The implications of such words seem indeed irresistibly clear; they cannot but mean something like alternative fulfilments of the will of God; one primary, original, natural as it were, representing the free and unhindered and unmistakable operation of His unfettered beneficence and love. "I would have fed thee with the finest wheat flour, and with honey out of the stony rock would I have satisfied thee"²; the other secondary, unwillingly adopted, into which He has been driven, as it were, by those who will not hearken and will not obey. The words of utter sadness, so often heard on human lips, "if only," find their place on His. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."³

Nor does there seem much reality of comfort in a sort of distinction that used to be drawn between what God wills and what He permits, for in common language permission is easily associated with leave and licence; or it gathers round it ideas of half-hearted and weak consent. God's permission, unless the use of such a phrase is carefully guarded, suggests a sort of half or hesitating approval. To most simple-minded people, God's permission of what is so horrible is at least as hard to conceive, as that the horrible thing is His will.

And surely it is unwise to seek a parallel, an apology, for this horror of a modern and civilized war

¹ St. Luke xiii. 34.

² Ps. lxxxi. 17.

³ St. Luke xix. 42.

in the convulsions, the cataclysms by which, they tell us, the world was made habitable, the great struggle for existence in which the best equipped survived. Plenty has been said about war from that point of view, and men have a shrewd suspicion of the sort of materialism to which it might easily lead them. It is no solace for a wounded soul. Nor yet again is much help to be found in the thought of wars of ancient days. We have passed far away from the times when war seemed the main business of life, its splendour, its glory, its pride. We cannot feel about it now as we feel about it in days gone by, when its rough savagery seemed hardly out of place in a life itself so rough. It is not the same thing now, as when in old days the mountains of the north disclosed their secret and let loose their hordes, like a devouring fire, on some outworn and decadent civilization that had lingered on too long, with time given to repent and unrepentant. Of course had we been merely getting soft and weak in bearing pain, it might have been a fine thing that we should be brought to face and bear it; but it was not only that with us. We were not careful only about our own pain; we were becoming gentler, more considerate about the pain of others. It was not mere selfishness that made us rejoice as year by year the realm of suffering was invaded by patient investigation, reduced by marvels of inventive genius. Allowing for all the strange and inconsistent elements in modern civilization, the evils it was content to tolerate, the injustices it still involved, it nevertheless was making for good. We

were learning that it is better to do good than to do evil ; to save men's lives than to kill. Nor is it on the shirkers, the self-sparers, the self-shelterers that the brunt of battle falls. It is on the valiant, the self-sacrificing, those who " offer themselves willingly among the people." ¹

Is it not, indeed, desperate and intolerable ? Is it not heart-breaking after so long a time ; when, perhaps, there would seem real justification for the hope that we had seen the end of wars between Christian and civilized peoples, to find ourselves thrown right back from all that we had hoped for ; back into the awful misery of a war like this ?

We might well shrink from the difficult and delicate work of bearing comfort to those in really deep sorrow, well think twice before invading the sacred silence of the house with the drawn blinds. But distrustfulness of self is no disqualification for the task, and no one at such a time is likely to be greatly helped by any sort of cleverness. Even if you think yourself the first visitor, One, depend upon it, is there before you. Pray, as best you can, before you enter, and, maybe, " it shall be given you in that hour what you ought to say." The instinct that guides love on its way is a wonderful thing ! It is very safe to trust it.

III

But to return from this digression. We are almost driven as we face the horrors of war to think that

¹ Judges v. 4.

here is something that hath broken loose, got out of hand, beyond God's providence, outside His control. Is it really so? Stand on some headland, looking out to sea, on a wild and stormy night. You get the same impression as that of which we have spoken—the wild winds, the restless waves, the fury of the gale! And yet you may say to yourself what the Psalmist said, "Wind and storm, fulfilling His word." They are not outside the laws by which nature is ruled and ordered. "The winds and the sea obey Him." The same forces are at work as those by which we get our pleasant breezes and our healthy changes of temperature, the wholesome sweetness of the air. War, of course, is different, you will say, from all this, and you are not wrong; for other forces, the forces of human aggression and violence, the stubborn ambitions of the human will, have roused it, and are hard at work in it. Yet even so there is no ground for believing that it lies apart from God's purpose. Even there God may be "working His purpose out!"

How familiar those words are! They are laden with the cheery optimism of the missionary meeting. Yet even the peaceful conflict of the Gospel has its dark and perplexing moments, moments when God seems to be working His purpose out by wasteful and ruthless means. What of the wholesale slaughters of old days in China and Japan? What of the early history of Uganda? What of the blood of martyrs and the seed of the Church? "Thou lettest us be eaten up like sheep, and hast scattered us among the heathen. Thou sellest Thy people for nought, and

takest no money for them."¹ Yet never was God's purpose more surely worked, never were the foundations of His kingdom more firmly laid, than in the days when fury got loose, and God seemed silent and to take no heed! Yes, and here too, in the war, we may venture to believe He is working out His purpose. Not, indeed, as the freedom of His perfect love would work it; but in the form and after the manner that man has forced upon Him. If, as indeed we may justly hold, it has been forced upon us, it has also, in a deep mystery, been forced upon Him. Can a man rob God? Yes, says Malachi, "in tithes and offerings"²; but human pride and aggression have robbed Him, they have constantly robbed Him, of something infinitely more dear than "tithes and offerings." They have robbed Him of His delight in the happiness of His children, of His joy in our peace, of the fruit of His age-long toil, of the costly labour of His patient love.

Yet God is still working His purpose; "Thy will be done!"

How shall we say it? What shall we mean, as we look on all this so awfully unlike God's will; and yet, we persist, not outside but within it; not excluded from those "all things" which work together for good to those who love God.

First, we shall pray with real and high confidence that He will direct aright the issues of the war. The more intensely we feel the horror of it all, the pain, the desolation, the loss of life; the more earnest will

¹ Ps. xlv. 13.

² Mal. iii. 8.

be our longing that the sacrifice may not be in vain. We shall be doubly guarded against the use of such words as "wasteful," "useless"; for they may be, for all we know, false and misleading. It might well be a fixed habit of mind, an almost instinctive movement of the heart and will, to turn from the account of the heavy losses, or from the dreadful list of "casualties," or from the chance sight of a wounded man, and with a swift uplifting of the soul to God to pray that this may not go for nought. The words of the "Dies Iræ" may without irreverence be used in such a sense—

"Tantus labor ne sit cassus."

The very costliness with which, the world being what it is, God's will has to be worked out should make us all the more eager that God's will should find effect.

But second, we must be quick to recognize, thankful to acknowledge, the splendours of courage, self-sacrifice, tender thought for others, which perhaps go further than anything else to redeem war. It may be hard to recognize God's will in the appalling whole; it is blessed to see it all clear and simple in acts of wonderful and perfect beauty such as those of which our papers tell us every day. Chaplains write and tell us of the astonishing patience, the utter unselfishness, of our suffering soldiers and sailors—"The most beautiful thing in the world." The words are not used carelessly; it is well to think what they really mean—that perfect flower of high and noble action, springing from the blood-stained soil of war. Pray that God's will may be done thus. It is of incalculable,

inconceivable value, for "so, in the midst of all that is strange and terrible in war, there is raised up before the eyes of men the glory and the beauty of self-sacrifice; and those who in their dulness miss the signs of it in daily life, can scarcely fail to take it more or less to heart when all the world is ringing with it. It would be hard to say how much mankind has owed in this way to the example of soldiers and of sailors; how much their dutifulness and endurance and devotion may have done to keep up for us all the standard and the sense of duty, to save us from slipping back and settling down into the selfishness of a safe and comfortable life."¹

Two men are lying side by side grievously wounded: one an Englishman, the other a German. The Englishman hears the bitter groaning of the other. He turns with a painful effort on one side and gets at his water-bottle. He shakes it, and finding that there is just a little in it, he unscrews it and manages to get it to the other's lips. Could God's will be more swiftly and completely done?

A wounded Frenchman sees a minister of religion standing near him. It is, as a matter of fact, a Jewish Rabbi; but the French soldier, thinking him to be of his own faith, asks him just to give him his blessing, and to hold the crucifix before his eyes. It is done. The Rabbi bends over the soldier, and, murmuring some word of comfort, holds the cross so that the man can see it; and is shot and killed as he does so.

We are constantly hearing of things like these.

¹ F. Paget, "Redemption of War," p. 9.

We may well thank God for them, and pray that they may be multiplied again and again. They run like an unbroken thread of gold through the dark pall of strife. They touch the war-cloud with a gleam of pure and unsullied brightness. They make us wonder whether, after all, God's will is not done more perfectly under the stress of war than it is in the listless, idle days of peace.

Or we shall think of those who are ministering to the sick and wounded. It is a striking coincidence that the same year which had given to the public the *Life of Florence Nightingale* should see the beginning of a great European War. The mind reverts to the early days in the Crimea; it recalls the chaos, the helpless, hopeless condition of affairs into which she managed to force her way, and with extraordinary strength and wisdom contrived to begin to set things right. That was sixty years ago; and it is well to remember and to thank God for the unprecedented advance that medical science has made since then, the infinite contrivance, the unflinching courage that brings healing within the actual range of the instruments of death.

Never mind the paradox: do not dwell too much on the strangeness of the inconsistency that human hands should be so swift to heal the wounds which human hands have inflicted. Louis Pasteur spoke words that should be remembered, when his great Institute was opened in Paris in 1888—

“Two laws seem to-day to stand in strife: one a law of blood and death, which, ever planning new

weapons of war, compels men to be ever ready for the field of battle, and one a law of peace, of work, of health, which only thinks of saving man from the scourges which afflict him. The one seeks conquest by violence, the other the solace of mankind. The latter sets a human life above all victories; the former would sacrifice a hundred thousand lives for the ambition of one man. The law we serve seeks, across the carnage, to heal the cruel injuries of the law of strife. The dressings taught by our antiseptic methods can save ten thousands of our soldiers.

“Which of these laws shall win the day? God alone knows. Of this we can be certain, that French science, loyal to the law of humanity, will press on, to advance the frontiers of life!”¹

Or once again, remember those who are ministering to men's souls, working under conditions so utterly unlike the quiet pastoral ways of ordinary life. Some, of course, they will find to whom the assured ministration of the Sacraments, the Bread of Life, the Word of Absolution, will mean all in all. It is an encouraging fact, vouched for by those who have a right to speak, that really large numbers in our army have learnt to value these Divine gifts. But often it must be otherwise, and he who longs to serve and help the wounded will find himself face to face with the infinite pathos of suffering, heroically borne by men splendid in patience and in self-control, yet knowing little of the language of religion, not much accustomed to

¹ Translated from a speech quoted in “Pasteur and after Pasteur,” by Stephen Paget.

speak or think of God. It is comforting, indeed, to hear from one who has been serving in a hospital in France that his main impression is of the extraordinary power of the Gospel of God's love. Yet with what loving tenderness, with what clear conviction, with what brotherly sympathy, with what respect, the minister of religion must approach our wounded men if he comes as the representative of our Lord and of His compassionate Love; and as we pray, "Thy will be done," how much there is that comes within the compass of that petition! The blessed instinct that seems now and again to guide a man to the very spot where his help is needed, the fearlessness of the soldier in the breast of the priest, the right word at the right moment, the simple sincerity with which heart speaks to heart, swiftiness with no touch of roughness, directness with infinity of love. They are high gifts, but they are not withheld from those who humbly seek them; and the plain man who has gained them will not fail in his great task.

We are familiar with the pictures that hint at the presence of God's angels on the battlefield. It is represented as a wonderful place for the doing of God's will. Pray that human hands and human hearts may have their full share in the joy of that doing.

IV

And last there comes the simplest, the hardest and the most familiar use of the words as they are spoken by people who, in time of bitter sorrow,

try to yield their wills in submission to the will of God.

“Casualty lists,” surely it is well that a better name, “the Roll of Honour,” has been found for that record of courage and sacrifice and pain which fills each morning so large a space in our newspapers! You recognize a name or two, and your heart fails you as you think what it means for your friends; and then the day comes when the cruel blow that has fallen on others falls on you, and you read the telegram, which brings you the message of your own irreparable loss. So it goes on until the whole nation seems to be just Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they are not, and the land is like the land of Egypt. “There was a great cry; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.”¹

It is not a matter on which to theorize; it seems better to wonder and thank God for the way in which men and women are, we know not how, borne and supported through troubles such as these; not crushed and beaten, not embittered or rebellious, but strengthened, purified, refined. The old image of the gold and the furnace holds good; it is still true; “God proved them and found them worthy of Himself.”²

It may not be wise to attempt to discover the secret of their calm strength. It comes of God; not necessarily in the special sense that He is sought and found, but simply because He is there: He could not be away.

¹ Exod. xii. 30.

² Wisd. iii. 5.

There was a striking picture shown in the Royal Academy not many years ago,¹ just giving the first moment of an overwhelming grief. It is a beautiful room, the home of a prosperous, newly-married couple. The husband sits by the bed. He has been called home from the hunting-field by bad news; he is booted and spurred, and his hunting-crop lies on the floor beside him. But for all his haste he has come too late, and he is just touching reverently and lovingly the dead hand of his young wife. It is the first moment of utter sorrow; but yet Christ, swifter than any one else, is there. Not come in answer to prayer; not "realized" by any effort of faith; but simply there, as any true friend might be, as One who really loved them; because they need Him.

Faith, of course, "realizes"; but faith does not create: it recognizes, but it does not produce, as it were, the Divine object of its recognition. It finds Christ: it does not bring Him. People pass on most wonderfully from unconsciousness of His Presence to sense of His Presence, to recognition, to acknowledgment, to conscious reliance and trust, as more and more awakening faith lays hold of the things of God; but He has been there all the while.

"Yes, God was good: on that one thought
The whole day we were leaning;
Yet we dared not put it into words,
Lest it should lose its meaning."²

¹ By Mr. Byam Shaw.

² Faber, "Hymns," p. 396.

Surely there is something repellent and wounding in that form of comfort which lies in anything like a suggestion that the life thus swiftly ended might have brought cause for sorrow had it been prolonged. It is very cold comfort at best ; and it goes out of its way to hint at that which, please God, should not be.

It seems better to allow for the best ; to believe that the life, had it been spared, would have been full of usefulness, full of happiness, blessing and blessed ; yet even so to own that it could not have been spent better than it has, used more usefully than it has been used. Oh, it is good to get clear once and for all of the entanglements and hesitations that have got round our thoughts. The background questions as to the rightfulness and wrongfulness of war, have nothing to do with *this* ; this clear reiterated call to the blessed plainness of simple duty, this high-souled response, this acceptance, as though by the descending fire,¹ of the offered sacrifice. Forecast the brightest future that you can ; imagine the life going on from strength to strength, to the fullest freedom of fullest service. Even so, could it be better spent, than when it is offered thus, in a conflict which truth and justice forbade a Christian nation to refuse ?

“His mother and I have been talking it over, and even if we never see him again, we would not wish the past to be different from what it has been.”

But we miss the true measure of a man's life, unless we try, so far as we may, to estimate its

¹ 1 Kings xviii. 38.

influence over the lives of others. "Influential": what a strangely misused, degraded sort of word it has come to be! How it has slipped away from the realities of moral power, to merely official position, to the power of social eminence, to the vulgar tyranny of wealth! How far it has got from that earlier imagery to which it first belonged! for it comes from the old language of astrology, when stars were believed to control the destinies of mankind. Few people, when they speak of influence, mean anything of such a kind as that—that shining, silent splendour, with its mysterious ascendancy over human life. How unlike it all is to the backstairs work, the secrecy of intrigue, by which so often influence is secured and used! Yet take influence in its better sense; think of it as the quiet power of a good example, the steady process by which as the years go on men come to be trusted, as they prove themselves worthy of trust. Think gratefully of the influences that have told on your own life. Yet all said and done, when it is asked what influence the health of English society needs most, and how it may be most swiftly and most effectively exerted, may it not be, after all, by these star-like instances of hardship bravely borne, of pain suffered in silence, of death and death's terrors set at nought by men to whom duty was dearer than life itself?

England, please God, will be a better England for this war; and it is natural, amongst other considerations, to think of the younger brothers of those who are the heroes of to-day. They have, depend

upon it, their ideas representing more or less clearly the sort of thing which it is finest for a man to be and to do. It is not unlikely that in many instances this ideal has, up to now, been strangely inadequate and unsatisfying. Some vague idea of athletic skill, or social success, or a widespread popularity; a football player, a jockey, a comic singer, may have sufficed. All is changed now. The house, be it castle or cottage, has a hero of its own. His portrait hangs upon the wall. It is not easy to be selfish, or cowardly, or untruthful, or boastful, or stupidly frivolous in the presence of it. Such an example is not in vain. Not very long before the war, England had in Captain Scott and his companions of the Antarctic expedition examples of uncomplaining heroism which really went a long way to lift our hearts towards higher ideals of duty and self-sacrifice. We learnt to admire things worthy of admiration. With far wider diffusion, with far deeper and more intimate penetration, ideals of heroism and unselfishness are pressed home, right into our hearts, as the war runs its costly and glorious course. Those who die for us are not merely dying for the defence of England; they may be dying in a very real sense for her salvation.

And last, perhaps to many of us first, there comes the wealth of consolation that is stored in the sure and certain hope of Christian belief, the hope "full of immortality,"¹ as the Book of Wisdom calls it. People are reticent about it in the present day, partly,

¹ Wisdom iii. 4.

it may be, as a kind of reaction from too easy and fluent speech about it in past times ; partly from a sort of fear lest over-attention to another world might make us miss the opportunities or neglect the duties of this world ; partly, it may be, through the prevalence of materialistic thought ; partly because we read our Bibles too little.

An old doctor who had passed through a time of great sorrow, and had received countless letters of sympathy, complained with a sort of surprise at the astonishing absence of those special consolations which he believed all Christians accepted. It is not unlikely that others have noticed this as well as he.

And so it is that sorrow finds us strangely unprepared. Like some man who is really richer than he thinks himself, we have indeed resources at our disposal far greater than we suppose. For the uncertain anticipations of old days have become the certainties of a clearer revelation. The probabilities of speculative thought have become the assurances of simple Christian faith. And yet for many men these comforts are not ready to hand. They are like money on deposit—they are not immediately available. No one in sorrow is likely to want to study arguments ; and it would be judged heartless to refer people who can hardly bear their load of grief to the books, and there are many of them, which have been written in support of Christian hope.

“ Wisdom to cure a broken heart
Must not be wisdom preached.”¹

¹ Faber, “ Hymns,” p. 404.

Yet it is quite certain that the life has not come to any sudden or premature end ; it is quite certain that its promise is not doomed to disappointment, its powers and capacities have not been developed in vain. It is quite certain that life here is only, at most, the short prelude to life hereafter.

And thus, when a man, with these, just the bare outlines of it all in his mind, opens his Bible, and kneeling yields himself to the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the vision becomes clear and bright. There are the many mansions in the Father's house, there is the welcome of the Father's love. There is the better country, that is a heavenly ; the rest that remaineth for the people of God. It is no longer a dreary, colourless outlook, it is a land of life and love ; it is no longer desolate and lonely, for Christ and Christ's servants are there. It is no longer dark, it is the light of God's presence. The bitter sense of separation yields, at least begins to yield, to the assurance of a union that death cannot destroy. The horror of loss is broken by the clear hope of a happy meeting.

The old hymns of the heavenly country sound a new note : they are no longer the exaggerations and dreams of sentimental piety ; they are just attempts (and surely in some sense inspired) to tell that which is beyond all telling. Here and there, of course, are lines and verses over which the plain man stumbles—things which he honestly wishes had been left out. They jar on him. They sound too soft, too sensuous, too reposeful for the strong, vigorous, manly soul that has passed away. But they are right on the

whole, and the best of the hymns are certainly very good.

“ Oh, how glorious and resplendent,
 Fragile body, shalt thou be,
 When endued with so much beauty,
 Full of health and strong and free,
 Full of vigour, full of pleasure
 That shall last eternally !”

And the vision of it all grows clearer, and the grasp of it surer, till the old commonplaces are vivid with fresh truth, for, indeed, death is but the gate of a fuller life : not loss, but gain.

V

Give us this day our daily bread

I

THE Bible always seems suspicious of routine. It is more than a little distrustful of fixed habit. It sees danger not only in unbroken health or in undisturbed prosperity, but also in the regularities with which a settled order surrounds men, the smooth and easy running of the wheels of life.

“They come into no misfortune like other folk, neither are they grieved like other men . . . and this is the cause that they are so holden with pride.”¹ “To-morrow shall be as this day,”² or more simply and directly, “Because they have no changes ; therefore they fear not God.”³

A special instance of this, in remote times, was the fear that was expressed about the settling down of God’s people in the assured possession of the promised land. They were told to be extra careful there. The more adventurous uncertainties of the desert had in some way kept them dependent upon God. It would be easier to forget Him when there was less adventure, more room for calculation ; and

¹ Ps. lxxiii. 5.

² Isa. lvi. 12.

³ Ps. lv. 20.

when men seemed called upon for a larger co-operation with God in the supply of their own wants.

We are familiar, of course, with exaggerations of this distrust in our own day. The vagabond always has a touch of contempt for regularity. Men are apt to use rather eagerly the advantages of civilization and to be ungrateful in their abuse of it. The latest fruit of civilization has been a rather complicated return to the simple life. But it is well to think over the ancient warning, and that in two respects. First with regard to the life of habit, and then with regard to the possibility that modern civilized life, which is merely a long name for the life which most of us are living, may have in some way or other imperilled our contact, vital and conscious, with God.

There is, after all, so much to be said for fixed habits. Dr. Martineau, in one of his sermons, speaks of a special value that belongs to them, as freeing a man's mind from a thousand paltry decisions that would have to be made, had not habit already decided the matter. It is indeed a pleasant and attractive picture that he draws of the man of simple habits, simple food, simple dress, simple amusement and exercise, emancipated in a wonderful way from the trifles over which so many people waste time and trouble, and free for thought and trouble about more important things. It is to his mind, in a true sense, the human parallel to the unanxious life of "the fowls of the air." It is a real gain when a man can induce things that need not be thought about to place themselves under the regime of habit. He is a foolish

pedestrian who insists on loading his hands with a host of articles that might better be thrust into his knapsack.

It is not hard to picture the man who has achieved this art. He has relegated to the sphere of habit all that it is safe and good to treat in such a way—food, clothing, financial anxiety; for of course he lives honestly within his income. He has got the sort of freedom, he has won the wealth of leisure that surprise an old-fashioned person when he secures for the first time the help of a shorthand and type writer. Nothing need be thought of but that which really needs thought. There is much in our lives that is all the better for being, as nearly as possible, mechanical; and the right sort of habits makes such things as mechanical as they can be made. For then the real mind of the man is free; he can think of others, he can think of God; he can, if he has the heart for it, seek simply and solely the kingdom of God. He can use his mind and his soul, just as a man uses a pair of free hands to pick the flowers, to help the helpless, or lifts them upstretched, outspread in prayer to God.

But habit is a good servant, yet a bad master: a creature of habit is a poor creature! Why is this? What is the matter with that life of habit which the Bible distrusts and at which so much more or less justifiable satire has been directed? We all recognize, at least in others, a regularity whose very precision is almost maddening. You cannot but suspect and distrust it. Life, you feel tempted to say, has no

business to be so regular as that! Of course it is well to be punctual. But does he *never* come across anything that has a right to make him late, at least for dinner? His hours in which he makes a rule to suffer no interruption; is he never, or only so very seldom, really wanted with an urgency that would justify us in disturbing him; is there not ground for suspicion in all this smooth travelling along a rough and jolting road, in this life so little troubled when there is trouble all around? Is there not something inhuman in this face that changes so little, never really lighting up, never conspicuously downcast? "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." Of course the Bible is full of blessed words about inward peace. "Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." "Great is the peace that they have who love Thy law." "He shall not be afraid of any evil tidings, for his heart standeth fast and believeth in the Lord." "The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds." But this is not that. It is deafness, not calm. It is insensibility, not self-control. He is like a man shut up in an empty house with the bell silenced, with the telephone disconnected; isolated, imprisoned in the fortress of his own habits.

For habit, unless you keep a watchful eye on it, is only too ready to enlarge the sphere of its control; to get into its power all sorts of things that do not belong to it. No one (by way of illustration) blames a busy man for making large use of a typewriter; yet

natural instinct seems to dictate limits to such a use. You would hardly typewrite a letter of sympathy addressed to one in great sorrow; nor perhaps would a real poet show the wonder of his "dark speech" upon the Yōst. Heart and hand must work together. The whole man must throw himself, with no intervening mechanism, into the work. Habit must break, if the whole power of love and pity and thought are to be poured out in full expression. There are, indeed, instances in which the life of habit may be wonderfully full of the presence and power of God; the less significant things, the food, the raiment, part of an automatism that in no sense conflicts with the Divine Converse; the mind ever alert, like a woman listening while she knits, to hear the Master's voice. But there are instances too when the dominion of habit is disastrously successful in excluding the entrance, resisting the control, of God.

God is still the great Exile, excluded from the fabric of His own temple, the stone which the builders refused; from the inn where there was no room for Him; from the dull little Samaritan village on the way to Jerusalem; from the heart at whose door He has waited so patiently and knocked so often. And He sometimes seems to find His way more easily through the very irregularities of the life irregular, than into the obdurate consistency of the life of habit.

The prophet Zephaniah¹ uses a metaphor common in his day when he speaks of those in

¹ Zeph. i. 12.

Jerusalem who are settled on their lees. It is an image drawn from wine-making. "New wine was left upon its lees only long enough to fix its colour and body. If not then drawn off it became thick and syrupy—sweeter indeed than the strained wine, and to the taste of some more pleasant, but feeble and ready to decay. 'To settle upon one's lees' became a proverb for sloth, indifference, and the muddy mind." ¹

"All this starts questions for ourselves. Here is evidently the same public temper which at all periods provokes alike the despair of the reformer and the indignation of the prophet : the criminal apathy of the well-to-do classes sunk in ease and religious indifference. We have to-day the same mass of obscure nameless persons, who oppose their almost unconquerable inertia to every movement of reform, and are the drag upon all vital and progressive religion. The great causes of God and Humanity are not defeated by the hot assaults of the devil, but by the slow, crushing, glacier-like mass of indifferent nobodies. God's causes are never destroyed by being blown up, but by being sat upon. It is not the violent and anarchical whom we have to fear in the war for human progress, but the slow, the staid, the respectable. They are only disturbed by the hasting advent of the Day of the Lord." ²

With regard to the second point, the strange forgetfulness of God that seems to come with a

¹ G. Adam Smith, in his "Book of the Twelve Prophets," vol. ii. p. 54.

² *Ibid.*

swiftly advancing civilization, there is no need to repeat what has so often been said. Yet here it is; said again, and that so shortly and so well, that the words may well be quoted, "We were exalted in the nineteenth century as an age of astonishing progress. One after another the forces of nature have been harnessed for the service of man—steam, electricity, magnetism, chemical and many other agencies. Science has climbed from height to height, and given us a new command of earth and air and sea—even of space and time. As the twentieth century opened it seemed as if new vistas of hope undreamed of before were opening before mankind from its own efforts alone; as if the triumphs of the human mind might almost take the place of the overruling Power that made the world." ¹

Surely such words state clearly the wider aspects of the difficulty and the danger of our times. But the same risk is with us in the ordinary course of daily life. There is no reason in it. God, of course, remains as the Author of our being, as the Giver of all good gifts. Things come from Him just as truly whether they come with that kind of immediacy which seems to belong to simpler days, with that uncertainty and insecurity and mystery which precede the discoveries of science, or whether they come to us by surer processes, and by a more elaborate transmission. It really makes no difference. Yet perhaps the very effort of faith that God asks of us (and surely each generation has to make its own characteristic

¹ Dr. C. R. Parkin, in the *School Guardian*, Nov. 14, 1914.

effort), is the strong determination to trace the wonder of God's love as surely, as clearly, as gratefully in modern order as in ancient mystery, in the processes of civilization as in the simplicities of old time, as surely in the controlled electric current as in the flash of the lightning. When Mr. Rudyard Kipling writes as he does, of airships and modern locomotives, and wireless installations, and ocean liners, we are conscious of a special debt to him for making a wonderful new poetry out of these wonderful new things. And religious faith must make its effort and discover God as surely in the new ways as in the old; giving us our food and helping us on our way as truly as He did when a man tilled his own field, and struck his path by the light of the stars.

It will not be easy; still, for many years to come, contact with the simplicity of nature will be the simplest contact with the things of God. It is delightful to think of John Keble walking home at sunset, and framing the wonderful beauty of the evening hymn. It is a pity to have robbed it of its first verses.

“’Tis gone, that bright and orbèd blaze,
Fast fading from our wistful gaze;
Yon mantling cloud has hid from sight
The last faint pulse of quivering light.

“In darkness and in weariness
The traveller on his way must press,
No gleam to guide on tree or tower
Whiling away the lonesome hour.

“Sun of my soul! Thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if Thou be near:
Oh! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.”

How swift, how instinctive is the uplift of the heart to God! partly, of course, because the man's heart was so full of God's love. Yet sundown should still bring us into contact with God, even though it is marked only by the hands of the watch or the switching on of the electric light. The world we live in is the world in which we must seek, yes, and find, the Presence of God.

II

Quite suddenly a great change has come upon us. No one dares forecast the future. Nothing any longer is to be taken for granted. Nothing comes as a matter of course. Nothing is secure. Actual danger may be nearer at hand than we suppose. The strangeness of our darkened thoroughfares¹ is in itself a most striking symbol of the utterly unusual conditions under which we live and try to work. It is true that the dangerous privilege of our insularity may give us a sense of security which may be itself a peril. But no reasonable person, no unselfish man, can think only of England; the best part of England is already overseas, or is preparing to follow those who have gone. We who are left behind are incapable of meeting the claim which for the time overrides all others. Our lives, in the present crisis, are less valuable than the life of any poor lad (God bless him!) who can bear the labours of the great campaign. Belgium is homeless, desolate, in many places starving.

¹ Christmas, 1914.

The food that *must* be supplied, aye, even if we spend our last farthing on it, is the food needed by our soldiers. Strictly speaking, all that we are entitled to is what they can spare us.

There is enough for us at present ; yet even as we take it we do well to think of the wonder of having it. That, no doubt, formed the subject of a good many harvest festival sermons in this strangest of all strange years. The ordinary wonder of the harvest was surpassed by the wonder of a food supply, unbroken, untroubled, at such a time as this. It was a good harvest, swiftly and easily garnered. But the special cause for thankfulness was to be found, not in the fertility of the field, or the successful toil of the husbandman. Our thoughts were directed to the un-sleeping vigilance of the fleet at sea. There it was that we had to look if we would know the secret of our abundance. They watching over us, God watching over them ; surely the thought is enough to shake men out of the dull ingratitude that takes God's gifts for granted, and never thanks Him for them. It surely should be considered ; the quiet patience of that unceasing watch ; the constant strain on men and officers ; peril ever close at hand ; thousands of lives ready for that supreme act of self-sacrifice of which already the fleet has given us examples ; and under the cover, the shelter, the strong protection of it, the merchant ships bringing their precious burdens to our ports. "Thank God, and the British fleet, for my good breakfast," was suggested the other day as a suitable form for grace at meals. The imagination

has got quite accustomed to the ordinary mercies of everyday life ; it can hardly have got accustomed to this. Even our daily bread has something of sacred mystery about it. It is like that water from the well of Bethlehem which David desired. His soldiers knew he wanted it, and they broke through the Philistines' lines, and got it and brought it to him. But David would not drink it, "he poured it out unto the Lord."¹ It was blood rather than water,² blood of men who had gone in jeopardy of their lives. It is rather for the altar, the simple altar of God's earth, than for the table of man. David, at least, feels himself unworthy of it ; God shall have it, not I !

Thoughts like these may very likely seem far-fetched and overstrained ; yet remember how even the Scotch fisher girl flings her scorn at those who, dainty and fastidious and stupid, miss the pathos of the hard and risky work by which common food is won. It is better to err on the side of insight and reverence than to sin by thoughtlessness and ingratitude. It is easy to make too much of food. Most people do so ; gluttons and epicures, the dining rich and the drinking poor, the greedy and the fastidious, the crowds who pamper the body and starve the soul, those who waste their money on multiplication of meals and their thoughts on the elaboration of menus. But it is easy, in another sense, to think too little. Ever since the world began the taking of food has been an almost instinctive point of contact with the thought of God. The pious habit of saying grace (unhappily fallen out

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 16.

² Lev. xvii. 10.

of use) has had its rude counterpart from the very first. A libation was poured, a fragment was offered to God, or to gods, before a man might feed himself. We know, of course, Charles Lamb's delicate sense of the difficulty of asking God's blessing upon a too sumptuous banquet. It were better to simplify the banquet than to omit the grace. Now, at all events, from our King downwards, men are feeling uneasy about luxury. Lent will be for most of us of necessity, for all reasonable people by choice, a time of very simple fare; a good time, therefore, in which once more to make our meals an occasion for a real uplifting of the heart to God; not without thought, not without wonder at the mercy of our daily bread.

III

“Give us this day our daily bread!” Two considerations seem pressed upon us in time of war. For first one thinks of our soldiers and sailors, and how their daily bread comes to them. They do not speak of food; they call it rations. It is the fixed, determined, equal portion which a man wants if he is to bear the toil of his incredibly hard work. It is very plain and simple; it includes no luxuries; it is of the quality and the quantity which best sustain a man under the strain and pressure of war. One is thankful to think of the little comforts with which the solicitude of his friends supplies the soldier on active service; but these are extras; they do not come into the account. Few things in war are more wonderful than the elaborate

perfection of the system by which the work of commissariat is carried out, the care that is taken lest it break down. Think of it for a moment, and then set over against it the splendours of heroism, the miracles of endurance, the ceaseless watchfulness, the high and generous spirit of the men who fare thus. We need not think just at present of their case when arrangements break down, when supplies are delayed or fail. Think rather of the days when all goes well; and plain, sufficient food is at hand to refresh a man after the day's work, and to fit him for the labours that await him. It is, so far as the body is concerned, the secret of an army's efficiency.

No one wants, perhaps, to impose this monotonous adequacy on the ways and habits of ordinary life; but we certainly want some such principle to help us in making social conditions at home more reasonable than they are. It was Bishop Westcott who spoke of efficiency for one's work as the best guide in the difficult matter of justifiable expenditure. No doubt such efficiency involves some unexpected items; just as it excludes some which common opinion would include.

It is quoted here only to serve as a very broad and general standard; but even so how harsh a judgment it passes on things as they are, on the over-feeding and the under-feeding, the excess and the want we see around us! This is not merely a question of poverty and wealth; a poor man may be selfish enough to waste in drink the money that is wanted for his children's food. Be that as it may,

does not the contrast, broadly speaking, between East and West London, seem to show a commissariat hopelessly dislocated, utterly broken down? Why are the waggons discharging their loads with reckless prodigality in one place, failing to reach another; lumping down supplies in one spot; seeming to forget those who, silent in the trenches, are bearing perhaps the sternest severities of the fight? Have we, who live in comfort, no real desire to send them further on their way; to be content with that which is enough for us, and to share more generously with others? Many, no doubt, either of necessity or of choice, are cutting down their expenditure; they will not find themselves any the worse for it; quite possibly by extra usefulness they may be justifying more nearly than ever before, the amount of their weekly bills; and even if greater hardships are ahead of us, it will be a great thing that we should learn how few things we really want. To live on rations may be to us the beginning of—it is no mere play upon words—a more rational way of life.

And in the second place, war brings us face to face with indescribable suffering and hardship, with pain and death, borne for our sakes. We are often told, even in time of peace, that we think far too little of those on whose monotonous lives of toil and privation our lives of comfort and culture rest. We are slow to realize it. There are of course the grosser cases of fortunes made in ways that will not bear the light; of regular dividends derived from shameful businesses; of a cheapness that cannot but involve

intolerable conditions of labour. But there may be added to these the commonplace selfishness of those who are careless of the comfort of others, thoughtless of the trouble they give, content with their own happiness, slow to think of the happiness of others. Stricken with individual selfishness, or with the corporate selfishness of the set, the caste to which they belong, they are utter aliens from the brotherhood of mankind. The little world in which they move is all they know and all they care for. It is the universe so far as they are concerned. We heard the other day of some elderly valetudinarians who grumbled because their favourite seaside resort was disturbed by the presence of the troops!

That is the sort of caste-narrowness which the war must make short work of. Oh, the splendour of the brotherhood over there; there where the chief privilege of rank seems the privilege of special danger, where all that is private or personal is lost and merged in the heroism of a common effort and a common cause. Day by day they are bearing the intolerable strain. Belgium first, and then the French and our soldiers, then the Russians; torn with shot and shell, shivering in the trenches, wounded and unheeded in their pain, dying in agony by the thousand. Then, behind that rampart of heroic self-surrender, behind the fence of their valour, the stone wall of their magnificent endurance, are the like of us; are you and I; safe because they are fighting for us, peaceful because indeed the chastisement of our peace is upon them, unwounded because they are wounded for us, alive

because they die. All reverence, indeed, be to those who, sending forth their sons, their brothers, their husbands, are bearing, it may be, their full share in the great offering; but here we are, too young, too old, too feeble to fight. Capable, it may be, of many things; yet utterly incapable of offering just that which our cause and our country really ask; fought for, suffered for, died for; we who cannot fight for ourselves, so helpless in the hour of need. Surely, if we have been slow to see it, we see it plainly now, this great mystery of vicarious suffering woven into the fabric of human life. All the high language of the supreme sacrifice of the Cross has its echo in our hearts, as we think of those innumerable lives laid down, those streams of blood shed for us. We can do nothing! We must be content to be suffered for, to be died for—only there must be an answering generosity in our own lives. We dare not, cannot, live for ourselves.

There is a French term without any exact equivalent in English, *Bouches inutiles*. It is used in time of siege and straitness to describe those who have to be supported, without being able to render corresponding service. It is not used with any intentional harshness. It states what under such conditions is a hard fact. Yet even so it is a bitter and humbling name to bear. A man's spirit would rise to escape, if it were possible, the reproach of it. *Give me at least the chance of proving that I am not so useless as you think.*

We at home are not suffering the hardships of

a siege; there is so far, for most of us, bread enough and to spare. But the phrase that speaks of "useless mouths" should set some of us thinking; the prayer for daily bread, answered as God answers it, lays on us all the obligation of daily work. We are simply wasting supplies, unless we are making ourselves useful.

IV

This is often regarded as the simplest petition in the Lord's Prayer; and under certain conditions very simple it is. So it must have been for those who were first taught to use it. There was just the fishermen's toil, rough and sometimes dangerous, uncertain and insecure; but still, as a rule, enough to provide the necessities of daily life. There were the few plain wants common to the disciples and the little world in which they lived. So it is in many places to-day. There are the teeming millions of India and China; the great homogeneous populations of the villages and the plains. There are our own artisans and agricultural labourers here at home, asking little more than work to do, and strength to do it. There are our armies in the field, our navy at sea, quite content if no hitch or breakdown in the arrangements hinders the arrival of supplies. Wherever men are faring alike, with no uneasy sense of superfluity, using for plain hard work the strength food gives them, clear that they are doing their work and that they are claiming

no more than they want for the doing of it, the prayer seems still to keep its old simplicity. "Give us"—surely not "me"—"our daily bread."

It is almost a crime to hint at complications where people do not suspect them; where men are innocent enough to believe there need not be any. But when a person in fairly comfortable circumstances uses the prayer, it would be interesting to know more or less exactly what he means by it. What does he mean by "us"? what does he mean by "bread"?

What does he mean by "us"? He may find it difficult to say; for here comes back upon us the puzzling alternative mentioned in an earlier chapter of this book, the alternative between a comprehensiveness so wide as to be meaningless, and a narrowness utterly at variance with the whole teaching of the Prayer. Narrowness! it finds its lowest degradation where "us" means really "me." Happily such egoism as that does not, as a rule, attempt the irreverent unreality of prayer. It is easier to keep our selfishness to ourselves than to set it barefaced in the presence of the Almighty. Yet there may be self-deceit. How much of our half-conscious thought and purpose has self for its theme and self as its object! How many a plea for others is at heart a plea for ourselves! Selfishness shares with conceit the quality of the most elusive of all vices. It wears all manner of garbs. It is refined, pathetic, timid in one case; brutal, outspoken, unashamed in another. It is hard to associate the

brutal selfishness of a hard-drinking labourer with the plaintive exactingness of the habitual invalid. Yet each is at heart the same; the same in its fixed determination to secure for self as much as can be got, and its carelessness of the wants and claims of other people.

God forbid that any one should speak lightly of what might seem to be the next, the most natural extension of the compass of our prayer, as we place before God the needs of those who are near and dear to us, and give them, inevitably, a foremost place in our prayers. "I and the children whom God has given me"!¹

But then there comes a wider extension; natural enough, yet not without attendant dangers, as we think of ourselves and of those to whom social conditions and common interests, common pursuits, and common recreations unite us. Give "us": the limits of inclusion are vague and indistinct: it would be extravagant to say that those outside the social circle, outside the limits of friendship, are excluded; yet it is possible that our prayers may be marred by social exclusiveness, by class prejudice; far too much thought of the comfort of the inner circle, far too little of the needs of those outside it. The prayer is often little more than a deprecation of anything like sudden or extensive change. It expresses a desire that we and the like of us may enjoy a continuance of our present comforts; that neither increased taxation nor any serious loss of income

¹ Isa. viii. 18.

may deprive us of what we are accustomed to enjoy.

We try to get beyond all this; to widen if we can the narrow circle of our prayers by the faint reminiscence of some one we promised *always to pray for*, of some bit of the world just a little more real to us than the rest. Like Bishop Andrewes, we think of those whose piteous case, whose desperate need appeals to our compassion, "the outcast, the homeless, the unburied; those who labour in the galleys and in the mines; those who are vexed with unclean spirits; those who are warring at this moment with extreme necessity and with unequal prowess; those whom the Devil doth importune to destroy themselves."¹ We picture the old saint, the master of so many of us in the art of prayer, pressing on God's mercy the claims of those who were in his day what the "submerged" are in our own.

We would do the same; for we want to make the "us" of our prayer more inclusive: but the wider reach has little grasp. There is still a very prominent "I," standing out in strong relief against a very shadowy "they"; just as in a poorly painted picture the few vigorously drawn figures in the foreground break away from the flat and lifeless forms behind them.

The real remedy seems to lie less in the effort to remember others than in the power to forget ourselves. *Repoussé* work (and how exquisite it may be!) is wrought not by thrusting forward, but by hammering

¹ "Private Devotions of Bishop Andrewes."

back. Beat back what wants to be beaten back, and what ought to stand out will stand out. Take care of the suppressions ; and the eminences will take care of themselves. If I can hammer back self, if I can only get him where he ought to be, "others" will come to their places in the front.

What we cannot or will not do for ourselves, God's providence often does for us! To know one's place, to take one's place, to keep one's place, to fall back into one's place ; they are words which express at least half of the secret, the double secret of rest and effective work. God never does a deed of greater mercy than when He gently and firmly puts us in our places. He is no less merciful when He addresses my self-assertion and bids me "give place" to a "more honourable man than" me, saving me from the dangerous ignominy of a false position, than when He bids my diffidence "go up higher."

"Fall back into the ranks." War, the great leveller, has begun to do for us what peace seemed slow to effect. Not by any laboured effort after self-depreciation, or just appreciation of others ; not by any balancing of our claims as against the claims of other men ; that is not how it has come about ; not by the construction of channels, but by the sweeping inrush of the sea. War has made what was difficult and laboured, instinctive and inevitable. One great hope, one great fear, a struggle in which all must bear their part, a sorrow we are all sharing, have united as never before we were united, have given to our prayer, to our work, a comprehensiveness that is not vague,

an intensity that is comprehensive. We say "us" and "our," and we begin to know and mean what we say.

"Our bread"—yes, actually that; food for our sailors and soldiers; shelter, clothing, victuals for the refugees; decent treatment for our prisoners and the interned; medical care, the utmost care if it may be, for our sick and wounded; and for ourselves!

Ourselves! Notice how at last we have fallen into our proper place. We have found it, not by any elaborate process of laboured self-depreciation. We are quietly content with a verdict that tells us that, as compared with those who are defending their country, we matter very little indeed. We have our part to play; we must do our best by prayer, by work, to help those who are fighting for us. But it is hardly too much to say that we instinctively hate the very thought of luxury at a time like this.

"Bread"; really, simply, honestly, we have not the face, the heart to ask for much more.

What a strange, fantastic content the word must have had, what a host of needless things it must have included, if it meant anything in the days before the war! How we stretched it to make it cover all, and often more than all, we could afford to buy! For surely and steadily for many years past the standard of luxury has risen for the average man. Thoughtful people have warned us against it. Newspaper correspondences have discussed it: but it has gone on rising. And perhaps there has been no inconsistency between piety and practice more glaring than the

contrast between what Christ bids us ask for and what we have accustomed ourselves to want.

There is room in life for splendour; more room, perhaps, than has been allowed it; in God's service, in great national affairs, in buildings that serve high purposes, in our memorials of great work and great worth. Those are the things which splendour may well be invited to adorn. But over-dressing, over-feeding, personal self-indulgence, what is there worthy of splendour in these? Personal luxury has always been the precursor of national decay. It is a bitter provocation flung in the very face of the poor. It is disastrous for those who seek it. It is the commonest form of that love of the world which is actually death to the love of the Father. We might almost thank God for the stern discipline which to-day so sternly rebukes it.

V

It may be premature just now to look beyond the war and try to imagine what lasting effect it is likely to have upon us all. People are clear that it will affect, and affect permanently, the whole fabric of the nation. Things will never be as they were before. It would be unwise to attempt here any forecast of its larger issues: but the Lord's Prayer, and this petition certainly, indicate some changes that it may make in our personal lives. The earlier part of the chapter has spoken of the tyranny of routine, of the mischief of unbroken and unquestioned habit. Habit, like ill-temper, like the fretful whimpering of a

spoilt child, seems sometimes to persist simply because nothing sharp enough, peremptory enough occurs to interrupt it.

All sorts of people are secretly out of heart with the life they are leading ; they cannot defend it ; there is no apology for it : and yet it goes on. They have that fatal inadequacy, impotent for good, called *half a mind* to break with it. It is wasteful, unreasonable, unsatisfying. Yet why to-day rather than to-morrow ? Why this week and not next ? Why I rather than anybody else ?

Such questions are not likely to harass and hinder men to-day. For life is shaken to its very foundations by such a war as this. "Thou hast moved the land and divided it : heal the sores thereof for it shaketh ; Thou hast showed Thy people heavy things : Thou hast given us a drink of deadly wine."¹ God has placed in our hands the "cup of trembling" : "the earth reels and is removed out of its place."² No natural convulsion : no shock of earthquake ever shook men as this war is shaking us now. Already habit and routine are being roughly broken for most of us. The quiet regularity of ordinary life, the ways we have always gone are like paths over which the tide has swept, the tramlines of a city that suffered an earthquake. It is no use dreaming of no interruption. Interruption has come to burst the door if we do not open it.

And if God spares us to see the end of the war ; something more than a task of reconstruction awaits

¹ Ps. lx. 2, 3.

² Isa, xxiv. 19.

us. We are not to be content with rebuilding on the old ground plan, or on the old lines. Certainly we shall not with the insolence of past days challenge disaster by reproducing the old architecture on a more splendid scale. "The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars."¹ No one, when London was ravaged by the Great Fire, thought of rebuilding the city with the narrow streets, the squalid alleys that had invited the ravages of the Great Plague. If habit, dull, thoughtless, thankless, unreasoning, has held us in the past, at least now and for the present habits are broken; and if our ways want changing, now is the time for change.

The prayer for daily bread offers three suggestions.

1. It would be a great gain if we could renew, under the conditions of modern life, the primary truth of our immediate dependence upon God. "The God in whose hand is thy breath and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified?"² It is, it always has been, the special indictment of an advanced civilization. There is so much in it that, unless we are on our guard, obscures the vision hinders the thought of God. We want in a sense new eyes to see Him as clearly in the calculable as in the incalculable; as clearly in the rule as in the exception; to recognize His gifts as instinctively in the good that comes to us through many hands, as in those which seem to come directly from Him. We want a new poetry, a new set of parables, to discover for us the mysteries of the kingdom in the

¹ Isa. ix. 10.

² Dan. v. 23.

sights and sounds of modern life. We must get out of the thankless habit that takes as matter of course things that are none the less wonderful, none the less precious, because they have become regular.

2. We want the wider and more unselfish outlook which is indicated by the word "us." We may indeed enlarge the scope of our prayers, but that is not all; it is not even the simplest and easiest way to set to work. The war is giving to many who were before strangers to such a desire, a real longing to be of service and to offer help. It has brought many, for the first time in their lives, into practical contact with the lives of the poor. Our own sorrows have given us a new and tender pity for the sorrows of other people. The claims of our country have overridden all other claims; and social distinctions almost vanish, where the one distinction lies either in the sacrifice of active service, or the sacrifice that surrenders our dearest to the call of duty. The most coveted honour, the most splendid decoration is neither the heritage of birth, nor the reward of learning; still less can it be gotten for gold—it is bestowed on valour. God has simply taken away the wall of partition. He has made us all one.

Surely we shall not undo all this when the war is over. We shall still have master and servant, still employer and employed, still rich and poor. But we have seen each other face to face; we have worked together and sought to help one another. We have not here at home had the splendid, the thrilling comradeship of the battlefield; but we have had its counterpart as we drew close to one another in work and

sympathy, in sorrow and in joy, and brotherhood comes at last to mean something for us.

We have learnt at last to care for, to work for one another, and that, after all, is what gives its meaning to that "us" which has been too often so meaningless, so much too narrow, or so much too vague in the Lord's Prayer.

3. We want a simpler, a homelier, a less wasteful manner of life. Many have pleaded for it; and some have sought simplicity by very complicated paths. Speaking broadly, no one has liked to begin. The "Champagne Standard," the "Motor Standard," have been invented as names to indicate the constant rise of a nation's luxury. But apart from such standards many of us have been uncomfortably conscious of foolish expenditure on things which no one really wants; bought either in senseless imitation of others, or to gratify desires which it would have been better to restrain. Dress has become extravagant, and often, surely, immodest. Meals have been multiplied, and if not increased, at all events have become more costly and more elaborate. Hospitality has lost much of its proper motive, and still more of its quiet friendly kindness.

Bishop Creighton used to speak, in Confirmation addresses, of the extraordinary blessedness of the offer of a fresh start. It is a Divine gift of the highest value. And the offer of a fresh start in the matter of domestic expenditure has come to us to-day. For the present, indeed, sorrow and prospective poverty and the knowledge of the hardship and privations of others

are almost forcing simplicity upon us. *Fashionable Mourning* seems, does it not, a curious paradox, at least in word?

There is always a special element of hopelessness in that which is unreasonable. Why it began no one knows; why does it go on? no one knows; why should it stop? again no one knows. The unreasonable dislike, the irrational dispute, the groundless quarrel, the foolish argument, they all share the same misery. The unreasonable is also the interminable.

Robert Browning,¹ with his wonderful instinct for great principles manifest in small events, with his insistent habit of getting at the reason of things, once noticed a boy at the street corner whimpering, fuming, threatening he knew not whom, with he knew not what; just as an infant goes on fretting because there is no reason why it should cease; a passer-by dealt the boy a sharp blow, and the boy cheered up. "Why," asked the poet, "was that? What had that sharp blow to do with the sudden cessation of that dull fretfulness?" Indeed a staggering blow has come to us. By sheer compulsion, by a sense of heartless inconsistency hardly less strong than compulsion, our luxurious ways, our habits of self-indulgence, our waste of money have been made to cease. "What fruit had ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?"²

There will be much rebuilding when the war is over; but few will wish to reconstruct the wasteful, foolish, wicked life of luxury, the fantastic folly of the

¹ I heard him speak of this in an Italian village. H. L. S.

² Rom. vi. 21.

former days. We shall want to live more simply than before. Our modest and reasonable requirements, the things we really want for health, for work, for recreation, for helping others, will come within the compass of our prayer. We shall be in no dilemma ; we shall not be ashamed to ask for them, when we pray for daily bread.

VI

**Forgive us our trespasses : as we forgive
them that trespass against us**

I

NO attempt will be made here to deal with international relations. Any question as to how far we ought to "forgive Germany" is really unpractical. In a very true sense our soldiers themselves are forgiving Germany every day ; for hard fighting is one thing, personal enmity is another ; and while we ourselves are driven to force the inconvenience of our precautions on German subjects resident in England, it would be hard to prove that either hatred or groundless distrust has much to do with them. Personally we may show ourselves as kind to individual Germans as we can be. A little girl in East London has been in the habit of bringing a bunch of flowers each Saturday night to a German lady whom she loves. She has done so all through the war. Her brother went down with one of our sunk cruisers, and the lady hardly expected her flowers that week. But the girl came all the same next Saturday, and in mourning, bringing the flowers as before !

Nor is it necessary to read the history of the past ten years to see if the war could have been avoided, to discover rash and random words of provocation ; for between us and all that, there stands the moment, marked by Sir Edward Grey's speech in the House of Commons ; the close of the unwearied effort to preserve peace, written for ever in the pages of the White Book. If ever war was forced on an unwilling people, so this war was forced upon us.

Nor is it wise to speak as though the Spirit of Vengeance, the temper that refuses to forgive, were likely to play much part in the ultimate settlement of the terms of peace. That is not the way in which such work is carried out.

If indeed God grants us victory, so that it falls to the Allies to impose terms of peace, there will be no doubt a stern determination that what has happened shall never happen again, to secure peace for Europe, and freedom for each nation. That would not be secured, it might well be forfeited, by any vindictive humiliation of Germany ; it is a system rather than a nation that must be crushed. If penalties, even the extreme penalty, have to be exacted from those who have murdered rather than fought, it is a matter rather of judgment than of vengeance. If it seems, as it well might seem, that there are those in whom the spirit of reckless and unscrupulous aggression is almost incarnate, it were better to leave them to God's judgment and their own consciences, and to the inevitable consequences of their exploits than to inflict on them the ignominies inflicted on Napoleon

the First. We were horribly enraged with him, we were strangely afraid of him; and we treated him in a way, which by its dull insults won for him a sympathy, which under other conditions he would not have gained, and gave his closing days a pathetic lustre that does not fade away. It is very doubtful indeed whether the question as to "forgiving Germany" has any real meaning, any practical answer for you and me! And yet it is impossible to doubt that this clause of the Lord's Prayer has a special bearing on times like these. We may use it with a new significance, with fresh confidence and hope.

We must not yet speak confidently of victory; but if God grant it to us, the next few years may find the Allies in a position bearing a remarkable likeness to that of the Allies of 1815 at the end of the last great war of allied Europe against a military despotism.¹ The political settlement of that date cannot be considered here: but one great social result of it claims special and careful attention; for it included the universal abolition of the slave trade. Professor Gilbert Murray,² speaking of the leaders of the Congress of Vienna, tells us, "They are not names to rouse enthusiasm nowadays. All except Talleyrand were confessed enemies of freedom and enlightenment, and almost everything that we regard as progressive; and Talleyrand, though occasionally on the right side in such matters, was not a person to inspire

¹ *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1914, pp. 74 *seq.*

² *Ibid.*

confidence, yet, after all, they were more or less reasonable human beings, and a bitter experience had educated them. . . . We find these men at the end of the Great War fixing their minds, not on glory and prestige and revenge, but on ideals so great and true and humane and simple that most Englishmen in ordinary life are ashamed of mentioning them; trying hard to make peace permanent on the basis of what was recognized as legitimate and fair; and amid many differences agreeing at least in the universal abolition of the slave trade."

It might seem indeed a disconnected and inconsequent addition to a settlement dealing with the rights of conquest and the basis of European peace. What, we wonder, made them so clear that, whatever else happened, the slave trade must cease?

Was it simply that trouble had brought them, in some sense, nearer to God? It is when His judgments are in the earth that men learn "righteousness." Was it that the touch of suffering had made them more ready to feel for the immense suffering of the slaves? Was it that war had drawn men into closer union with one another and broken the spirit of contempt and distrust? Or was it perhaps some unexpressed conviction that war is, after all, a sort of chastisement, bidding men search out, and then set right, what is wrong between them? In any circumstances it was a splendid addition to a treaty of peace.

II

Passing over, then, all difficult questions as to how far we need to be forgiven for our part in the war, or how we are to forgive Germany, let us turn to simpler things, and let us make bold to say that seldom was there more forgiveness; more desire to be forgiven, more readiness to forgive, amongst us than to-day. It is everywhere, in politics, in business, in daily life. It is not the mere necessity of presenting an unbroken front to a common enemy; it is the solemn presence of something really great, great courage, great suffering, great sorrow, that makes the things we quarrel and hate one another for look so contemptibly small. Death, in the deaths of those we know and love, comes very close to us; and who does not want to be forgiven and to forgive in that most awful Presence? But more than that; for, inconsequently it may be, but most inevitably this great disaster sends us back on the tracks of the past. There is not a more truly human touch in the wonderful story of Joseph than that where the brethren, conscious of their misconduct, their hardheartedness in the past, link it on to the misery in which they find themselves, "And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us."¹ So it is with ourselves. There is no need to attempt

¹ Gen. xlii. 21.

to establish any close connection between personal unkindness, domestic bitterness, social injustice, and our present distress. The impulse that makes us want to be forgiven and ready to forgive is swifter, stronger than any such reasoning process. It does not argue, it simply insists. It does not labour the point, or beat the bush to prove that we ought to be kinder to one another. It makes any other course of conduct impossible. It drives us with irresistible force. It compels us like the sudden death of some one whom we have treated hardly and unjustly, whose life we have helped to sadden and thwart.

We want to be forgiven, we want to forgive! We feel it at every point, in every aspect of our common life. It comes to us in the home, in society, in commercial and industrial relations. Every decent man or woman has a true touch of shame and sorrow for the past, a great wish that it had been better. The father sends his boy to the front. Whatever the lad has been; the very pride of your heart; or one whose ways in the past have made you anxious; not, as people say, "always quite satisfactory," who thinks of such things now? Right down in your heart of hearts there can be only one thought. You wish you had done more for him than you have. There is no difficulty about your forgiving him; you want him to forgive you. Home may have been discordant in the past. Home-life is not a very simple, easy thing in the present day. It has been out of gear; its wheels have creaked; its frame has

been strained. It has been hard to keep it together ; some have ceased to try. Rebellion and suppression have spoiled and embittered it ; and no one thinks he is to blame, and no one owns him (or her) self to be in the wrong. Misunderstandings have been frequent, and explanations have made matters worse.

And in upon it all has swept the overwhelming tragedy, the awful greatness of the war. Our wretched little disputes, our domestic bickerings, are like shrill talk amid solemn music ; like vulgarity in the chamber of death. They are not merely silenced ; they are rebuked, condemned. We have no heart for them now ; we want to be forgiven and to forgive.

And what about our social relations ? the bitterness that has parted rich from poor ? the contempt of class for class ? Shall we ever revive the old scorn with which we looked one upon another ? Will people talk any more about "the idle rich," the "degraded poor" ? One hardly knows which is the more splendid figure at the present moment. Is it the young officer, with all the happy memories of Public School and University behind him, with the brightest future England can offer ahead of him, with all the wonderful joy and vigour of his early manhood ? His men are praying him in vain to take just a bit more care. Yet he runs the risks he will not let them run. He courts the danger which he bids them avoid. He seems to care so much for them, so little about himself. We read the grievous loss of officers in the "casualty lists." It would take many years of effort, it would take more

than an eternity of talk, to remove the suspicions, the distrusts, which self-effacing gallantry of that sort drives clean away. Or is it the lad from nowhere in particular, brought up anyhow, a "bad" start in life; "bad" environment, with everything against him; spoiled, you would say, by the irregularities, broken by the disheartenment of uncertain, ill-paid work? You little knew what was in him when you spoke scornfully of him, or swept up him and the like of him in your summary of despair. For after all he is the man who stands firm and fearless in that iron wall of heroic resistance, to which you owe your safety, your very life. He is the man who shares his last drop of water with the dying German; whom the women and children of the terror-stricken villages welcome and love. He is the man who can face the worst and face it with a smile.

Class prejudice! it does not always find expression in contemptuous words; it often lies silent in our hearts. It is at the root of our false judgments, our thoughtless disregard, our unwillingness to know and understand, the blundering condescension of our philanthropy, our suspicion of those who wanted to be kind. It is a constant revelation to us, write those who have been in the thick of it all, this cheerfulness in suffering, this patience under pain, this courage in the face of death, this invincible generosity. An almost irresistible impulse is driving people to do all they can for our wounded heroes. It is not enough to subscribe to funds, to send money to meet their needs. It is almost pathetic to see on all hands a

sort of eagerness to give the gift a personal touch, a bit of tenderness ; something to make our men feel that they are cared for, thought of ; that we are trying to guess what they want and to let them have it ; to have it, as we get our birthday presents, with some one's *love*. It is confusing, it sometimes works out strangely ; a large cheque is very often a better thing than a gift in kind, or something of our own making. But it is not wise to be scornful of such enthusiasms. A really great and vital principle underlies them. The sense that we are paying a debt rather than conferring a kindness, that we are making a reparation rather than showing generosity ; the personal touch, the gift of ourselves as well as of our belongings ; these are, after all, the secret of all effective kindness. It is the mercy that is twice blessed. It is the sort of service which, when the war is over and its lessons laid to heart, will unite us as we have never been united yet.

How strange an adventure it seemed when you opened your door and begged to be allowed to receive a stranger, a Belgian, a wounded soldier as your honoured guest ! What an invasion of the sacred privacy of your home ! But how delightful it was ! What a pleasure to make him feel at home ! Is there not some similar kindness possible in the days of peace ? We shall visit the poor on easier terms, and with better mutual understanding if we can contrive that they shall sometimes visit us. Will not your " spare room " suggest the thought of a welcome to some one who, neither soldier nor Belgian,

would be all the better for your kindness and your care ?

“We are verily guilty concerning our brother.” The year of the King’s Coronation was marked by a very real awakening of conscience. No one is likely to forget the great meeting in Queen’s Hall for University and Public School men, or the speeches delivered on that day. It seemed as though indeed men of that type wanted to face their responsibilities, to learn what England claimed of them, to offer service where service was required. The movement spread, and in 1913 the Cavendish Association was formed to spread this spirit of service, of self-sacrifice throughout the land. Fine and stirring words were spoken on countless platforms ; and certainly they were not spoken in vain. Yet no voice ever reaches the heart so clearly as the voice of facts ; in a new and unexpected way God seems to be driving in upon our hearts what otherwise we might be slow to learn. We want to be forgiven, we want to forgive. For the war has drawn us close to one another. The mists and distortions of prejudice are cleared away. Let man look his brother in the face. How little we have really cared for one another ! how little we have done to help each other ! How hardly we have judged ! how foolishly and bitterly we have spoken ! God bade us love, and we have hated ; we have seen suffering, and turned away from it ; injustice, and not dared to stand up against it. We have bound heavy burdens and laid them on other men’s shoulders ; we have shirked or murmured

under our own. We have let the children die, and the women starve—or sin; we have wasted on luxury what we might have given for bread to the hungry; we have left the poor in their misery; the heathen in their darkness. We have built up our purity, such as it is, on the wreck of ruined women, our wealth on the toils of sweated labour, our comfort on the unheeded wretchedness of millions. We have been reckless of the happiness of others, angry if so much as a finger touched our own. We have been jealous of our rights, regardless of our duties.

No attempt need be made to trace any special connection between our social unsoundness, our unbrotherly spirit, and the outbreak of the war, or to speak of our unkindness to each other as “provoking God to wrath.” What is meant here is something simpler, more instinctive than that. Certainly the spirit of forgiveness is in the air. Like children in the presence of death we are sorry we have ever quarrelled, sorry we have been so unkind. We want the comfort of forgiveness; we are ready to forgive; we know now!

“England will be the better for this war.” Yes, we believe it; but let no one dream of a sort of general automatic betterment in which he personally bears no part, of which he does not share the effort, the cost. This Lent may well be the most wonderful we have ever kept; it ought to be so. But we shall need for it new and searching questions of self-examination, covering wider ground than the old ones to which

we have been accustomed. Many will be led, not to repair and amend, but actually to reconstruct their lives. Under God's hand the vessel, if only it show itself plastic, will take a new and a fairer form. It will only be broken if it refuse to yield!

VII

Lead us not into temptation : but deliver us from evil

THESE clauses are so closely connected that it seems simplest to take them together. They have a special meaning for us all in a time of strain like this. It does not seem necessary to raise the old questions as to the difference between trial and temptation. There is perhaps no real or essential distinction to be made. It is often our attitude towards it, our bearing in its presence, that makes the trial into a temptation. It is simply a trial until some half-consent, some hint of yielding on our part, some faltering of our loyalty, gives it a new and more dangerous character. "A man is tempted," says St. James, "when he is drawn away."¹ If this be so, we can better understand our Lord's words to His disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. With repeated urgency He bids them pray. "Pray, that ye enter not into temptation."² "Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." The trial was inevitable : the sifting like wheat was close at hand : the strain must come. It lay with the man, rather than with the circumstances,

¹ St. James i. 14.

² St. Luke xxiii. 46.

whether it was to be only trial, or whether it was to become temptation. It depended on prayer. It would, no doubt, be too much to say that this makes the whole matter clear: but what we know of ourselves, and what we learn from the lives of others, lead us to believe that we may be right in thus making the man himself the factor that decides whether the trial is to be temptation or not. It was a great trial; it would have been a great temptation but for the spirit in which by God's help it was borne. "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world." ¹

I

England is on her trial now. She is passing through the fire. She is being tested, sifted as she has never been before. Her power, her resources, her character, are to be proved by the severity of the greatest crisis in her history. Even the lifeless, the material things share the probation. The old things, the strength of steel and iron, the durability of material, the bending or bearing power of metal; and the new things, the submarine, the aëroplane, all that was contrived and planned since the last great war, stormy seas and boisterous winds and rough roads and hard wear are testing them; and despite the complicated machinery, the fragile lightness, they are bearing the strain.

¹ Rev. iii. 10.

And the men, they too are on their trial ; the long hours of vigilance, the frightful severity of the attack, the crash of shells and the hum of the bullets, the sight of others falling beside them, the pain of the wound, the jolting of the train ; and the quiet uncomplaining heroism, show how nobly the test is being borne. The marvel of that silent endurance is the wonder of the world.

We too, at home, have our trial to undergo. How are we bearing it? What are the chief forms that it takes?

For some it means either the sharp pinch of poverty, or such a loss of income as may well seem poverty to those who have to face it. It is hard indeed to think that people are likely to make much of small privations or trifling hardships. But the greatness of the occasion seems to demand more than the mere refusal to complain. We must learn to bear gladly, almost to welcome, that which stands for our share in the great struggle on which we have entered. The thought of the far greater sufferings, the peril and danger that others are bearing, should never be far away from our minds. St. Paul knew how to rejoice in his sufferings: and so should we. We must have got strangely wedded to our quiet and comfortable ways, if we make even a moment's difficulty about breaking from them at a time like this.

It tests the reality of our wish to be useful. "Usefulness" is a word which has of late received a special glory. It stands, as it were, crowned before

us. For Lord Roberts spoke of his last journey, his visit to the Indian troops, as seeming to be "the most useful thing" that he could do. To us of course that last visit has other aspects. It was a wonder of faithful friendship, of perfect understanding, of entire self-forgetfulness. It won him the most beautiful death an old soldier could die. But it was the "usefulness" of it that appealed to him: that was enough. The vague wish to be useful is spread far and wide; and there is abundance of opportunity. But no one who has experience of work on Relief Committees and the like, and benevolent enterprise of various sorts, can fail to recognize the vast difference that exists between a vague wish to be useful, and the patience, the regularity, the self-sacrifice, the perseverance that actual usefulness involves. People easily get tired, the "weary of well-doing" form a large and increasing class. They have always plenty to say for themselves; plenty to say against other people and other methods than their own. They expect to know without learning, to be efficient without preparation. They quietly, half unconsciously, elude the harder parts of the work. They see no need of accuracy. They are slowly proved useless, and they wonder why!

It tests our calmness and fortitude. It would not be wise to say too much at present about this; for there is a calmness in London at present which seems to rest mainly on a dangerous sense of over-security. What looks like calm is thoughtlessness; or it may even be lack of sympathy, real dulness,

hardness of heart. If that is so with us, it is no good sign. It suggests that in some way we have fallen out of the unity of Christ's Body ; out of the brotherhood of mankind. There is no direct remedy for insensibility of this sort. We cannot make ourselves feel. But we can own our failure ; we can see ourselves as we are ; dull, unfeeling, low down in the scale of spiritual development ; like some strange, half-sentient survival in the natural creation, with its slow and feeble response to the stimulus of its surroundings ; a poor, half-dead thing to find in the land of the living.

For many of us, then, nothing that can be described as a test of our calmness has yet come. We can only look forward, and wonder and pray. We have, indeed, seen the faces of those who have met and borne the strain of real terror ; and we can hardly fail to ask how if such terror came, it would find us. For when such strain comes, it shows with clear distinction what people are. There are shades and degrees of self-control and of moral collapse ; but, broadly speaking, it comes down upon us and sweeps to one side or the other those on whom it falls. Let us pray that we may not be found wanting ; that we may be amongst those whose self-forgetful calmness, whose blessed instinctive care for others will give comfort and strength ; not amongst those whose helplessness will burden others, whose fear will spread fear. We may pray, indeed, like Samson, that God will strengthen us "only this once."¹ But we are asking a hard thing ; for

¹ Judges xvi. 28.

self-control is, as a rule, a habit slowly acquired. The discipline of panic, the lesson it may teach us may be the discovery of our own weakness, our dependence at a crisis on those whom we ought to have had in honour, but did not.

II

Even now, perhaps, the vibrations from the storm centre are telling on our lives. People find it hard to settle down to anything, and some of us are conscious of a strange disinclination for our ordinary work. We are nervous and expectant, eager for the latest news, easily elated, easily depressed. It is worth remembering that there is a curious parallel to this in very early days. "The day of the Lord" was thought to be very close at hand. He might come at any moment; and He had bidden men watch for His coming.¹ An attitude of eager expectation seemed the fitting posture for such a time. But no one can stand long on tip-toe; and expectation deteriorated very rapidly into idleness, restlessness, meddling interference with other men's affairs. It may seem, indeed, a very commonplace and terrestrial turn for high aspiration, sacred watchfulness to have taken. Yet there it is! and St. Paul meets it with very simple and practical advice. St. Peter's counsel, in the presence of approaching catastrophe, is to be sober, to watch unto prayer, and above all things to have fervent charity, to keep the love "on the

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 3.

stretch," to be as kind as ever you can be to as many people as possible.

But apart from these, in the sanctuary of suffering, under the defence of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty, are those to whom the war means, or shall mean, heart-breaking anxiety, the sadness of irreparable loss. That is trial indeed! for faith and hope and love are strained almost to breaking point. It is the counterpart of that heroic struggle by which¹ the line of defence in France is held so long, just held, against the repeated and almost irresistible attack. No record is more sacred than the record of a soul's struggle with bitter sorrow; and for the most part such records remain unwritten. It is just the scraps of letters, the few and difficult words of absolute and entire sincerity that tell us how the battle has gone, where the strength seemed to come from, what really gave comfort and peace. Partly, perhaps, it was the sense of a great duty greatly done; of having offered one's best, and its having been accepted, of the supreme splendour of death in a great cause. Partly it was some clearer vision of the unseen, some real power (such as often comes to simple hearts) of seeing things as they really are, in the light of the Eternal; the clear conviction (so unlike the thoughtless commonplace) that "he is really better where he is; I would not call him back." But best of all, there may have been strong faith, faith challenged and assaulted, rising, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the full height of its stature, to the greatness of its

¹ Christmas, 1914.

supernatural strength, to the splendour of its certainty, that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

Perhaps what many of us feel about faith is little more than a sense of its potentialities ; we seem to see what it might mean for us if it were really ours, if we had faith as it were a grain of mustard seed ! But every now and then, and oftenest it may be from the heart of suffering, there ring out voices of certitude, assurance, victory, that reveal to us what faith really is, how it triumphs, how it sustains ; and we know that God is there ! “ When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” ¹

Let us be patient with others, patient if need be with ourselves. Calmness, light, anything like acceptance may come very slowly. It may at first be utter desolation : the cry of the desolate was heard from the Cross ; there may be passionate protest, there may be blind sense of outrage, violent language, tempestuous thought. You will find a great deal of it in the Psalms. We must not be shocked at others ; we need not be shocked at ourselves. God makes infinite allowance. He knoweth whereof we are made !

We are on our trial, we are living under strain. For almost any of us the strain may become in a moment intolerable. It is no good darkening and paralyzing the present by anticipation. The real

¹ Isa. xliii. 2.

tragedy of life does not admit of a rehearsal. "We know not with what we must serve the Lord till we be come thither."¹ "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."² We may pray for ourselves and pray very earnestly for those for whom "by love or any other duty we are specially bound to pray"³ that the heart-breaking sorrow may not come, that the cup may pass from us. We may gain a certain reserve of strength by going quietly about our work, by being extra kind to people, by thinking much about God, and by frequent and reverent reception of the Holy Communion. But what if it come?

We cannot promise ourselves, as we almost may in the matter of physical death, that there will not be much pain. There will be. There are no anæsthetics; and the agony is often long protracted, on what may seem the deathbed of our hope and our joy. We cannot count on bright vision and brave words. Our very religion, God Himself, may seem to have failed us. "Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him. But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."⁴

¹ Exod. x. 26.

² Gen. xxii. 14.

³ Bishop Andrewes.

⁴ Job xxiii. 8-10.

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