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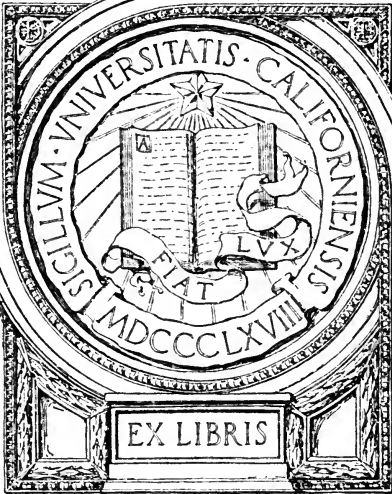
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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE CHURCH

BY

CHARLES GORE, M.A., D.D., HON. D.C.L., OXFORD
BISHOP OF OXFORD

AUTHOR OF "THE PERMANENT CREED," "THE NEW THE-
OLOGY AND THE OLD RELIGION," "THE QUESTION
OF DIVORCE," "THE RELIGION OF THE
CHURCH," ETC.

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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS: THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE CHURCH

SURELY the Christian Church, in all its parts and members, should welcome the project of the League of Nations and organise itself into vigorous unanimity to press it to the front in the attention of all civilised peoples: both as a practical proposal made to us by our most experienced and most trusted statesmen and as a proposal profoundly congenial to the Christian spirit. This is the thesis which I seek to maintain in this paper.

THE PROPOSAL OF THE LEAGUE

The proposal, I repeat, comes not from wild idealists but from practical statesmen, from President Wilson and Mr. Taft, from Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Grey and Mr. Balfour, and from others in the allied and neutral nations, to say nothing at present about Germany and Austria. Such men cannot be accused of seeking "peace at any price," or of failing to appreciate the supreme importance of prosecuting the war with unremitting energy to the furthest pos-

sible point of success. But they will not be satisfied with military successes. They demand also this pacific measure—the organisation of a League of Nations. They regard it, no doubt, as difficult of realisation but not as impracticable. They speak of it as the most hopeful, perhaps the only hopeful, basis of a just and enduring peace.

Something will have to be said later about the details of the scheme, so far as they have been formulated or outlined. But let us take it now simply in its most general idea—that of a League of Nations to maintain and enforce peace, with an international tribunal to decide “justiciable” disputes between nations—that is such questions as having been embodied in treaties or coming under the head of some accepted international law admit of settlement by judicial process—and for the greater matters of controversy an international court of arbitration which must at least have all such matters fully laid before it by the contending nations, and have time allowed to it to make proposals and to have them listened to and considered by both sides, before either nation or group of nations could go to war or mobilise its forces for war without becoming the enemy of the whole League; and the authority of the League is to have behind it the sanction of economic pressure to be exerted by the whole League—such as the boycotting of a recalcitrant nation—and, at the last resort, the armed force of the whole League to support its action.

THE REACTION IN POPULAR PHILOSOPHY

Now it represents a great change in international politics that our responsible statesmen should accept as practicable such an embodiment of a supernational authority. But it is not too much to say that this idea of a League of Nations is, through the welcome these statesmen have given it, taking the place formerly held in men's minds by the idea of the Balance of Power.

The idea of the Balance of Power was rooted in the principle of selfishness—the corporate selfishness of nations. Every nation, it was assumed, would seek its own ends undeterred by any consideration for its neighbours' welfare. The only way to minimise the threat of war, arising from jarring interests, whenever one nation should have the strength to crush another, was to organise such combinations of nations in rival alliances as to balance one another and to produce an equilibrium in which the chances on either side of victory or defeat would be so equalised as to reduce to a minimum the probability of any nation being willing to take the risk of war.

There was here no appeal to any higher motive than national selfishness. On the moral plane the idea of the balance of power among the nations was of a piece with the idea which was at work in the industrial world, the idea of free competition between individuals or classes; each individual or class, or group of individuals or classes, being supposed to have no motive which could

effectively be appealed to than the motive of unlimited acquisitiveness, the desire to sell its goods or its labour in the dearest and to buy the goods and labour of others in the cheapest market. The good of the world, it was imagined, would best be secured by this principle of unrestricted competition, in which appeal was made, in industrial or political life, to no other motive except intelligent selfishness, individual or corporate. Intelligent self-interest, science and commerce, without any higher moral appeal, were relied upon as the instruments of progress and peace.

Such a philosophy was at its zenith in the middle of the last century. But we have seen its setting. Long before the war the philosophy of selfishness had been discredited alike in the internal life of nations and in their mutual relations. Within the nations it had led to the commercial exploiting of the weak by the strong, and to disgusting extremes of poverty and wealth; and, in reaction from these abuses, it threatened us with civil wars, the wars of labour against capital. Society appeared to be tending to disruption. In the wider relations of nations, it kept us perpetually on the edge of the dreaded gulf of war, war made far more horrible by the progress of science; and the "Balance of Power," on which it had bidden us fix our hopes, had shown itself quite powerless to deal either equitably or successfully with the problems of insurgent nationality such as presented themselves in the break-up of the old Turkish Empire, which the great nations had taken

upon themselves to solve without war, and had conspicuously failed.

Thus, the philosophy of selfishness, the basis of the theory of unrestricted competition in commerce or of the balance of power in international politics, had become widely and generally discredited. Commerce and science had shown themselves at least as efficient instruments of tyranny, injustice and war as of fraternity and peace. The world was disillusioned. Its nineteenth-century ideals were dimmed or discarded. And then the dreaded thing suddenly happened. The great war engulfed the world and holds it still in deepening desolation and anxiety—"men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth."

We simply cannot face the future without some fundamental "repentance" or change of mind in the nations—corporate repentance on the widest scale. We cannot face the prospect of a peace, patched up with whatever balance of success on one side or the other at the end of this war, which shall leave every nation to expend its resources again in piling up gigantic armaments and entering into rival alliances, ready, as soon as an interval of time has supplied a measure of recovered strength, to break out again in renewed war. Equally we dare not face the future in home politics on the basis of class war. The two prospects together threaten our civilisation with nothing less than dissolution.

We have read skilful pictures drawn by imaginative

artists as from 3000 A. D. of another civilisation, a recently recovered civilisation, looking back with horror upon the dark ages which had followed the total break-up of our present civilisation under the twin hammers of social and international war. We could not be amused at these cleverly drawn pictures. They had a horrible verisimilitude. "The giant forms of empires on their way to ruin" is indeed a familiar feature in the world's history. We read of the decadence of civilisations in the past almost unmoved. But we had never contemplated the dissolution of our own civilisation—a relapse into barbarism after all its boasts of secure progress. It is this terror which has frightened us out of our old philosophy of unlimited competition. At home we see that we must substitute the true ideal of freedom—the welfare of the whole body and of each individual member of it as dominant over the selfish ambitions of its more capable members. In some broad sense we have almost all become socialists.

But Mazzini has shown us that it is not enough to think of the world in terms of nations. It is not enough to secure the supremacy of the nation over the individual or the family. And there is no logic in breaking off at this point. As the individual is a member of the nation and must subordinate himself to the welfare of the whole, so is the nation to the whole body of nations—to humanity. There, too—in the international relations—we need a socialism to subordinate nations to the good of the race. This is the great repentance—the deliberate change of mind—asked of us.

It is true that during the dominance of the old philosophy of selfish individualism there have been prophets of a truer faith who showed how rotten was the basis upon which we were seeking to rest our civilisation. Such were Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin, and such was the man just mentioned, who was truly the greatest prophet of democracy—Joseph Mazzini. It is true, also, that there were good Christians, such as William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury, who broke in upon the accepted assumptions of our political and industrial life with the insistent and imperious demand for mercy and justice. And a kindly and Christian human nature was always and everywhere mitigating the remorseless dogmas of philosophers and economists even in the regions of trade or politics.

But the spirit of the age was against them. The philosophy of individualistic competition was the dominant spirit; and the most remarkable feature of the whole situation was that the Christian Church, in the main and in all countries, was content to be silent, drugged by the dogmatic assurances of a false philosophy into acquiescence in principles which practically excluded the fundamental Christian maxims from any application to the world of industry and to the relations of nations to one another.

As we contemplate the history of the world during what may be called the period of industrialism, which is the period also when the idea of the balance of power held sway amongst nations, the silence of the Christian Church—the absence of any corporate protest in favour

of the fundamental principles of human fellowship and peace—the acquiescence of the Church in economic selfishness and a narrow patriotism appears as one of the most remarkable instances of moral blindness which history presents to us, at least as remarkable as the earlier blindness of the Church to the sinfulness of persecution and torture as instruments for disseminating or defending the religion of Jesus Christ, or again as remarkable as the blindness of the post-Reformation Church to the iniquity of slavery. But it is not too late for the Christian Church to recover its true voice. The old dominant notes are now hushed. A great change of mind and ideals has come over the world, both the world of industry and the world of international politics.

With the former region—the world of industry—we are not here concerned. But in the latter region the change is marked by the rise of the demand for the League of Nations. It affords the Christian Church the greatest opportunity it has had, since the war began, to make its distinctive contribution to the influences telling upon the nations and to show the special quality of true Christian patriotism.

But is it really the case that there is a distinctive kind of patriotism which is Christian by contrast to the patriotism which commonly possesses men? Has Christianity really anything to do with international politics? That is the question, and the reasons for an affirmative answer are profound and convincing.

CHRIST AND PATRIOTISM

1. That Jesus Christ was a patriot, who felt in His blood the passion of the love of country, is apparent in His agonised cry over apostate Jerusalem. Let it be taken for granted that He gave His sanction to patriotism, as a divine instinct, like the love of home. But like every "natural" instinct it is full of self-assertion and sin; and Jesus of Nazareth stands at the head of the great succession of Israel's prophets in claiming that patriotism shall be purged and curbed and reformed. This is evident in His whole relation towards that intense patriotism which characterised the Jew. It was an acute form of what we now call "nationalism," the demand for national independence and, beyond that, for Jewish supremacy in the world. Such an arrogant claim on the part of so insignificant a people as the Jews in face of the Roman Empire is to be accounted for by the religious faith which lay behind it. The prophets had foretold the supremacy of Israel. The world was to find its centre in Jerusalem and its temple; and from that centre the authority of the sacred law was to be supreme over all the nations. It is true that, as the prophets were interpreted by Jesus Christ and His Church, it appeared that their meaning had been misunderstood and perverted by Jewish patriotism. Still the common interpretation lay on the surface of the prophecies.

When our Lord came into the world the Pharisees

had indeed settled down to acquiesce in the supremacy of Rome—all the more readily because they had been badly used in the period of Jewish independence by the Hasmonean priest-kings. The Sadducees, in like manner, were content that their ruling family should hold a position of local administration under Roman control. But the heart of the people never acquiesced. The spirit of nationalism still dominated them. Of this nationalist movement the Zealots were the fanatical leaders. And we can best understand the attitude of Jesus towards this movement if we think of one of the twelve, Simon the Zealot.

We can understand quite well how he would have interpreted the proclamation of the Kingdom and the coming of the Christ, when it began to be whispered that the new prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, was “he that should come.” If the awful majesty of Rome seemed to make Jewish pretensions ridiculous, doubtless the Zealot expected the miraculous arm of God to be bared to effect the impossible upheaval. Was “anything too hard for the Lord”? But when he joined the company of the disciples of Jesus, he found himself subjected to a bitter disillusionment. Nothing, it appeared, was further from our Lord’s intention than to head a movement of Jewish emancipation. Nay, when it became evident that the people of Israel was, in bulk, rejecting Him, it appeared also that in His eyes Israel was doomed, and the most solemn and definite announcements came from His lips that Jerusalem and its temple were destined to immediate and complete overthrow at

the hands of the Gentiles. The judgment of God, awful and irreversible, was upon them.

This did not mean that the purpose of God would fail. As our Lord's intention made itself gradually manifest, it appeared that a catholic church, in which Jews were to have no prerogative position, was to take the place of the Jewish nation-church. The "whole world" was the horizon of Christ.

Perhaps no harder claim was ever made upon the heart and mind of a man than was made when Simon the Zealot was bidden by Jesus Christ steadily to contemplate the irretrievable ruin of his nation and its sacred shrine, and then, instead of bursting into tears and wringing his hands, to be so detached from the anguish of his nation that he could look out with an eager joy for the fulfilment of the purpose of God—the coming of the Kingdom of which the ruin of Israel was but the necessary prelude. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

This piece of imaginary biography, which cannot be far from the truth, can effectively show us how far the patriotism which Jesus sanctions is from common patriotism. The patriotism which is common is always narrow or selfish. It always claims God and His power for its own nationalist ends. It is a spirit of corporate selfishness. But the patriotism which Jesus can bless always sees the nation as the instrument of a divine purpose wider than itself. The nation is the

servant in a cause which is to minister impartially to the good of all mankind.

Thus it is hardly possible to exaggerate the restraint and the claim of sacrifice which Christ laid on the instinct of patriotism. It is true, indeed, that no such claim is now made on us, British or Germans or Frenchmen or Serbians or Belgians, as was made on Simon the Zealot and on his Jewish brethren. We are not required to contemplate as lying in the purpose of God the extinction of our national independence and the ruin of all that we associate with the name of our country. For that we thank God, indeed. But it is a severe yoke that is laid upon our popular patriotism. We are required to humiliate its arrogance and to banish its selfishness. We are required to value our nation as an instrument for ends that are wider than our nation. We are required, practically, to remember that in the sight of God, in the judgment of Christ, no nation has any prerogative right, that He cares equally for every race of every colour or capacity, and that He lays it upon each nation alike to make the most of itself and its resources in order that it may better minister to the needs of all mankind, and maintain the universal and impartial interests of justice and freedom and peace.

CHRIST AND CATHOLICITY

2. This impartiality of God in the face of all that divides men was at the heart of the teaching of Jesus

Christ about the fatherhood of God. He has no special regard for the important people—the rich, or the learned, or the powerful. He cares for all alike with a solicitous, exacting and particular love. He makes on all the same claim for a universal and particular care for others. Even the barrier of nationality goes down. It was true that He was sent only “to the lost sheep of the House of Israel”—that His direct mission was only to Israel. He even spoke a word which savoured of contempt in the hearing of His disciples to the woman of Canaan, when He was beyond the borders of the Holy Land. But we cannot but believe that He, who had so wonderful a power of reading men’s hearts, saw that she would bear the strain of this rebuff, and that He spoke the word of seeming scorn in view of the welcome into which it was to break. He found the essential quality of faith in the Canaanitish woman, as in the Roman centurion. And this in His eyes was the only essential quality. He anticipated the judgment that “with God is no respect of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him.” He talks about “the whole world” and not Israel as the sphere of the Gospel. Finally, He sends His disciples to “make disciples of all the nations.” Thus St. Paul, the apostle of catholicism, was true to the spirit of his Master, and expounded truly His inner mind. And St. Paul’s glorious assertion of the principle of catholicism marks an epoch in human thought.

It is true that a certain conception of the unity of

humanity gained possession of the Roman Empire, apart from Christianity. But it involved the inclusion of all races under a single government. Again, a certain cosmopolitan ideal is represented by Stoicism. But Stoicism never showed any signs of power to convert the world. It was a "monastic" philosophy for the elect "wise man." Its ideal was detachment, not love. But St. Paul proclaims a jubilant gospel of universal brotherhood in Christ without distinction of race or class or sex—a fellowship of all mankind in a catholic church.

When you come to work out the realisation of this idea in history you see how ingrained in the heart of man is the pride or narrowness which resists it and often appears to defeat it. St. Paul faced the full force of this resistance. The church in Jerusalem, which seems in the early chapters of the Acts to be aflame with love, so as to ignore the limitations of private property and to have "all things common," exhibits this power of love only so long as all the brethren are Jews who "keep the tradition," and breaks out into resentment and active hostility, hardly to be restrained even by James, the Lord's brother, as soon as it appears that Gentiles and Jews are to be on equal terms in the Church of Christ. This reaction of Jewish narrowness failed of its baneful effect upon the Christian development on the whole; partly through the influence of St. Paul, but even more because the small strictly Jewish element in the early Catholic Church was swal-

lowed up in the inrush of Gentiles, and was obliterated in the destruction of Jerusalem.

Then there was no further difficulty about the catholic idea within the Roman Empire and its vast power. It is true that from very early times Christianity got beyond the Roman Empire, as at Edessa, and Christianity outside the Empire showed separate tendencies. It is true also that within the Roman Empire, before it broke up, racial jealousies and distinctive tendencies showed signs of being formidable disruptive forces within the church. The theological animosities represented by the Nestorian, Donatist and Monophysite schisms owed more than has been commonly suspected to nationalist feeling in Syria and Africa and Egypt.

Later, as the Eastern and Western Empires drew apart, theological and ecclesiastical divergencies followed the political separation. And, when the great schism occurred, it was at least as much due to political jealousies as to theological questions. It was the first great and conspicuous failure of the principle of catholicism within the church. Still, in the half-converted West, where the new Europe was in the making, amid the seething life of the new nations, the idea of the catholic, supernational fellowship, centring in the Papacy and thence wielding authority, was a majestic and dominant influence, showing at times splendid capacity, but making also, consciously or unconsciously, tremendous concessions to unregenerate human nature,

as in the matter of war or the use of force for the interest of religion.

Athanasius had thought it certain that there could be no war among Christians and that a converted race would at once "beat its swords into ploughshares." To his mind the abolition of war between Christian nations was so much a matter to be taken for granted that it could be urged as an incontrovertible argument for the divinity of the Christ who showed this pacific power. And other fathers had thought it inconceivable that force could be used among Christians in the promotion of truth or suppression of heresy. Such a use of force they held to be flatly contrary to the fundamental Christian method of moral persuasion.

These anticipations were sadly falsified. The fact is that the "conversion" of Europe was at best a lamentably incomplete and superficial process. The use of civil force and military violence to "convert" or destroy heretical or non-Christian individuals or peoples became the accepted and consecrated method. And within the catholic nations the Church showed little effective power to prevent wars. This was in part because Christianity inevitably compromises in the matter of war. It has never refused, it never can refuse, to allow to an unjustly attacked nation the right or duty of self-defence. And what constitutes the justice or injustice of an attack always remains an ambiguous question on which national feeling is hotly enlisted. But no doubt the main cause of failure was the natural love of war. In the books of Samuel "the

time that kings go out to battle" is a mere synonym for the spring, when the restraint of winter upon military expeditions is over. War was the natural occupation of kings. And it remained so in the mediæval period. Religion, embodied in the Catholic Church and centring in the Papacy, had not influence enough, even in the zenith of its power, to restrain the mutually aggressive ambitions of mediæval monarchs.

Later the Holy Roman Empire became a shadow. The political power of the Papacy declined. The modern nations formed themselves with all their separate tendencies and interests. Then when the Reformation came, though it was at the start a religious rebellion against enormous abuses in the Catholic Church, yet it fell in with the disruptive tendencies of developed nationalism. Separate national churches formed themselves in Germany, England, Scotland, Switzerland, and Scandinavia. Russia had already its national church owning no connection with any Western church.

Thus over the greater part of Europe the separatist national tendency almost obliterated the very idea of the catholic, supernatural religion. Even within the limits of the Roman Catholic Church, after the Reformation period, the idea of church-fellowship ceased to have any considerable influence on the conditions of war or peace. Political interest determined the relation of one nation to another with very little reference to whether the rival nation was of the same religious communion or no. And so we come down to the present world-war, when the nations of Europe and America

and Asia and Africa are waging terrible war with one another, without any question having been raised at all whether those who are being attacked and destroyed are Catholic or Orthodox, or Anglican or Protestant, or whether they are Christian, Mohammedan, or heathen. The very idea of the restraining, pacific power of catholic fellowship seems to have vanished from the earth.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHURCH

But man's necessity is God's opportunity. The world's despair is the church's hope. Some way of peace for mankind must be found, or the whole slowly-built fabric of human civilisation, after all our self-confident boasting of our science and our education, will dissolve into ruin.

The expedient is proposed of the League of Nations. It will rest, confessedly, on no religious basis and will have no authoritative religious sanction such as the Middle Ages would have provided or professed to provide. Nevertheless, it will rest upon the idea of a fellowship of humanity, supreme in its interests over all separate national claims, a fellowship based on justice and the rights of weaker as well as stronger nations—an idea which has mainly had its origin in Christian thought or imagination, and which is the product of a civilisation at least deeply leavened by Christianity and to which the name of Christ is still the name above every name.

Let the Church of Christ, then, marshal all its

divided forces to welcome and keep to the front in the attention of mankind this League of Nations, based on the recognition of the fellowship of nations, and force it into practical realisation. So it may give new life to the idea of a catholic supernational fellowship. So it may revive the longing for a catholic church worthy of the name. So it may not only make the nations feel that Christ is the Prince of Peace, but also make the greatest possible contribution to the widely-revived aspiration after religious reunion amidst the separated fragments of Christianity. A conference of free nations to determine their disputes may be the harbinger in the remoter future of a really ecumenical council of Christendom.

And for the purpose of promoting the League of Nations, Christendom, even a divided Christendom, can already act as if it were, what in its central being it still is, one body. I have long been persuaded that the best immediate way of promoting religious unity in our own country is for all the fragments of the Christian Church to act together, as if they were one, on the moral and social questions of the day. Let us join to attack the questions of housing, wages, fellowship of employers and employed, commercial dishonesty, secret commissions, intemperance, and sexual morality, so far as they affect public policy. In the country as a whole, and in each town and district, let Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and Protestants sit together in common council, and act together and bring the weight of their combined moral influence to bear on these grave ques-

tions of public policy. So far as their religious principles admit, let them join in prayer together on neutral ground. So they will learn to know one another and act in common. This will be the best basis for religious reunion of a deeper kind.

So, on the wider field of international relations, let us adopt the same method. The Head of the Roman Catholic communion and the Anglican Bishops of the Province of Canterbury, acting with unanimity in their convocation, and the leaders of the Free Churches, have all given the weight of their support to the proposal of the League of Nations. Let them not be content to act apart. Let them combine in England and America for the same purpose. Let them organise themselves for a propaganda.

Cannot the same be done by the Roman Catholic Church in the countries of its communion, under the leadership of the Pope? Let the same be done in the small remnant of neutral Christian nations. If we cannot, as I feel sure we cannot under present circumstances, have an Ecumenical Christian Conference, such as the Archbishop of Upsala proposes, let us have co-ordinated action in all Christian countries, by all portions of Christendom on behalf of the League of Nations.

The difficulties of the proposal are no doubt portentous. Let us consider at least briefly the conditions involved in the formation of the League, that we may not appear to underrate the difficulties.

1. What is needed is that the League of Nations

should not be left unarranged and undefined, as a remote prospect somewhere beyond the peace; for if the peace is arranged on some other basis, the moment for a fresh organisation is not likely to arrive. What is needed is that the League shall be the central article of the peace, the basis and guarantee of the whole new situation. This will be possible only if the nations, as well as their leading statesmen, are already prepared and well informed as to the principles of the League. This, again, requires an active *propaganda* to begin at once; and, for my own part, I do not see why, within the Alliance, progress should not be made at once with the formulation of its terms.

2. The League will fail of great part of its effect if Germany and Austria do not enter into it. But here we encounter a gigantic difficulty. A profound suspicion attaches itself in the mind of the Allied statesmen and nations to all the pledges or promises of the German Powers. Nothing at present can restore confidence in the intentions of their rulers. Thus the greatest promoter of the League would be such measure of military success on our side as would permanently and publicly discredit the militarist party in Germany, and bring to the fore the pacific and democratic elements in German opinion which really favour the cause of human liberty. That such elements of opinion exist in large force there seems to be no doubt. But the League asks that they should become dominant. The League should be, as President Wilson called it, a League of *Free Peoples*. But the change in the balance

of forces in Germany is only likely to be brought about by the failure of the military projects of the ruling class. To bring this about is the military problem of the immediate future. Only let it be observed that so far is the promotion of the League of Nations from being antagonistic to the vigorous prosecution of the war that to all appearance its success depends upon the war being not only vigorously but successfully carried on, to the point of fundamentally discrediting German militarism.

3. On the other hand, we have in Russia a lamentable spectacle of the failures and crimes of liberty. We do not despair of an emergence in Russia of ordered liberty. But undoubtedly the prospect is dark. And the present failure of Russia has not only enormously weakened the Allied cause, and the cause of liberty in Germany, but it has added a quite fresh difficulty to the formation of a League of Nations which should include Russia. The other nations cannot make a league with chaos.

4. The idea of the League which subsists in the minds of the statesmen draws a distinction between minor or "justiciable" causes of dispute between nations—what one may call questions of detail—and the greater questions in which those vast but vague interests, the honour and security of nations, are involved. The former are to be submitted to an International Tribunal for settlement; the latter to an International Conference or Court of Conciliation for discussion and mediation, the terms of the League requiring that each nation should be

willing to give time for the Court or Conference to meet and review the situation, and make suggestions—time also for the suggestions to be considered—before war is declared or the forces of either party mobilised. Here the weight is thrown upon the value of delay. But no one can fail to see that where so inflammable a quality is concerned as national honour, delay, though it affords valuable assistance, may not suffice to subdue the storm.

5. The League cannot, of course, come into effective existence unless it has behind it sanctions which are sufficiently formidable. The sanctions proposed are the use by the whole League of an economic boycott of any nation which either refuses to submit to arbitration in the case of justiciable disputes, or refuses the required delay in the greater causes. Again, behind this economic boycott would be the use of armed force. An international agreement must bring into existence an international force to be used at the last resort against the offender. Now all this is a novel machinery, involving, no doubt, innumerable difficulties of detail and principle. It is necessary especially that free commerce and free passage by sea and land should be the normal principle between the nations, only to give way to the principle of exclusive dealing where the situation has arisen which requires and justifies weapons of warfare against an unduly aggressive nation. It is necessary again that the whole question of organizing an international force for land and sea should be studied

and brought out into effective solution by the time of peace-making.

6. It is hardly possible that there can be an effective League of Nations without some principle for the reduction of armaments being agreed upon. Here again we touch a matter of tremendous difficulty.

7. Finally, the whole question of the representation of nations great and small on International Courts and Conferences bristles with difficulties. It is probable I should only betray my ignorance if I were to venture on this ground. But it is manifest to all that there is a real danger of the great nations, if they are represented proportionately to their power, overwhelming the weaker nations and acting to their detriment. It will be very difficult to secure the rights of the smaller nations as they exist at present, and of national groups which emerge into nations in the future. In all these matters, as in others, the entrance of America into the war—detached as America is over European questions—is an immense advantage. But no doubt the difficulties remain portentous. As we confront any careful statement of them by an expert hand we feel like Plato's Socrates, when he was propounding his ideal republic and trembling before the expected waves of obloquy and ridicule which his proposals would excite. Apart from difficulties of organisation and difficulties of detail, there is no question that any proposal, however moderate, to limit by international or supernational control the judgment of a nation about what its

own honour and interests require will excite against it a very deep and widespread passion of national pride.

THE GROUNDS OF HOPE

Upon what, then, can we rely for hope and resolution? I think upon three main considerations:—

1. The first is the despair of the future which fills the minds of the people of all kinds when they contemplate the tendencies of national rivalry as they existed before the war and led to its outbreak, unless they can be profoundly modified or effectively restrained. We simply cannot bear to think of making a peace, however just a peace, and then leaving the nations, after a period of exhaustion, to watch one another with the old jealousy, and build up armaments, the one against the other, with more than the old lavishness of expense, and a scientific ingenuity sharpened tenfold by experience, and form alliances as of old, one against another, until another world-war breaks out. If this be all that can be looked for, I say, despair possesses us. Nothing less confronts us as the inevitable issue than the ruin of a civilisation which it has taken so many centuries to build up: both its economic ruin and the ruin of its culture and its freedom. I suppose that it is this dread that has made the greatest practical statesmen in many countries propound and support a project which seems to vulgar eyes so idealistic as the League of Nations. It does demand a vast change of mind in the sentiment of nations towards one another. But our

practical statesmen recognise that nothing else than such a world-wide repentance can save the situation from ruin.

2. Our second ground of hope is the progress and the international sympathies of democracy. In his splendid "Complaint of Peace" Erasmus, in 1517, ascribes wars to kings and peaceful tendencies to "the people, the ignoble vulgar." "If the military transactions of old time are not worth remembrance, let him who can bear the loathsome task only call to mind the wars of the last twelve years; let him attentively consider the causes of them all, and he will find them all to have been undertaken for the sake of kings; all of them carried on with infinite detriment to the people; while, in most instances, the people had not the smallest concern either in their origin or their issue."¹ "As to the people; in all these countries the greater part of the people certainly detest war, and most devoutly wish for peace."

I cannot but think that this represents still the truth as it is in general. It is possible to imagine a militarist and bellicose democracy; and certainly where a nation has been robbed of its territory a republic will be as determined to recover it as a monarchy. But, on the whole, it remains true that if there were nothing but really democratic nations, whether republics or constitutional monarchies in form, the warlike tendencies of the world would be enormously reduced; and

¹*Complaint of Peace*. English translation (Headley Bros., 1917), pp. 43, 100.

the more international sympathy and intercourse came to prevail among democracies, the less chance there would be of war. In England we believe that, on the whole, the working people will give the readiest welcome to the League of Nations, and will be the least afraid of what it involves.

Now all appearances point to the progress of democratic feeling and the democratising of institutions as the tendency of the future. The violence of the Russian reaction is not likely to terrify the masses of the people. Thus our second hope lies in the strengthening of the principle of democracy; and, if we cannot get rid of secret diplomacy, yet we can feel a rational confidence that, the more democratic nations become, the more afraid will their statesmen be of contracting any serious obligations on behalf of the people of which the people are not cognisant.

3. But in the last place—and this is the point of this paper—we look with a profound hope to the Christian Church. True, there is no rapid road to heal the divisions of Christendom. But there is no reason why in welcoming and promoting the League of Nations the Christian Church should not even now act as if it were one. The same agreement to act together is feasible on all social and moral questions so far as they affect public policy. In the case of the League of Nations the heads of the Roman, the Anglican, and the chief Protestant communions, both in the British Empire and in America, either have spoken in assent already or are likely to do so very soon. Why should not all the

portions of Christendom in every nation combine into a single body to welcome and to propagate the principle of the League? For, indeed, it is its own voice that the Church hears echoed back by the statesmen who propose it. True it is we are a long way off a reunited Christendom—such a supernational fellowship of men as the Catholic Church should be. True it is that the League of Nations will be on no professedly religious basis, and will exclude no nation on account of its religious beliefs. Nevertheless, there can be few practicable measures which would be so strong a witness to Christian principles as the formation of a League of Nations to promote and maintain peace, and nothing would make the peoples of the world understand what Christianity stands for better than the spectacle of a divided Christendom reunited at least to promote this purpose.

Thus we can face all the grave difficulties involved in a League of Nations with resolution and courage, relying on the hope which springs out of the heart of despair and finds in the dissolution of the old order the promise of the new—on the sound instinct of democracy triumphing over dynastic ambitions—and on the reviving spirit of Christianity, the idea of catholic fellowship. It is the will of God.



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