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TEN STATESMEN
AND
JESUS CHRIST

Books by

W. E. SANGSTER

THESE THINGS ABIDE

METHODISM CAN BE BORN AGAIN

HE IS ABLE

GOD *DOES* GUIDE US

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

WHY JESUS NEVER WROTE A BOOK

PROVIDENCE

PRAYER

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TEN STATESMEN
AND
JESUS CHRIST

A Christian Commentary on
our War Aims

by
W. E. SANGSTER, M.A.

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TO

MY FRIEND

T. CYRIL ELLAMS, ESQ.

AND ALL WHO

'REBUILD WITH GOD'

εἶπεν δὲ Ἰησοῦς
ὅτι χωρὶς ἐμοῦ οὐ δυνασθε
ποιεῖν οὐδέν

PREFACE

THE Church in England is not a department of the State. Even that branch of it which is 'by law established' and whose ministers officiate at State functions would not admit that she is a department of the State. The Church believes herself free to comment independently on national affairs. When she sustains the State in any corporate effort she does so by her own conviction, and if she fails in power with the community the blame does not belong to the secular authorities who have deliberately bound her but to the weakness of her own spiritual life, or the timidity of her leaders, or her failure to win influence with the common people in all the ways which are open to her.

There is no need therefore to justify a Christian commentary on our war aims to the people who feel that the Church's task in England, as in totalitarian States, is either to hold her peace on national affairs, or to say 'Amen' to whatever the State decrees. We have not so learned our liberties. To the people who raise the plain pacifist issue by asserting that the only Christian comment to be made on our war aims is that we ought not to have any, one must

simply say: 'Please believe that we are as conscientious in our views as you are in yours: that we have spent years of torturing thought on this problem and that we now have peace in our mind concerning our duty in this dark hour. We cannot act with strict impartiality as between the right on the one hand and the wrong on the other.'

Some people believe that these are not days for *thought*. They affirm that our whole mind must be given now to winning the war, and that it will be soon enough to talk about the new order when the time comes for establishing it.

But the thinking must be done before then. If our war aims are not critically examined, and clear conclusions reached regarding the limited achievements of arms at any time, we shall land in the bitter disillusionment of those humanistic idealists who called the last war (without any warrant) 'the war to end war' and then complained that it did not do it. One wonders what to wonder at most: the shallow thinking which coined the phrase, or the simplicity which was disappointed.

God will give us the chance to rebuild. He does not yet despair of our race. But those men and women will serve His purposes best who come to the longed-for hour of peace, not supposing the big task to be over, but who realise that it is just about to begin, and who are ready, eager, and trained, to rebuild with God.

I dedicate this book to them, wishing it were more worthy, but hoping that it will stimulate thought. Since Sept. 7, 1940, I have lived with the homeless in a public air-raid shelter, and every night I have spoken in others, doing my own small part to sustain the courage and faith of sorely-tried people. Sometimes they have questioned me concerning our ability to achieve our war aims, and what place religion has in life. The kind of answer I have given to that question, when they have pressed me, may be gathered from the pages which follow.

My especial thanks are due to my able secretary, Mr. P. E. Found, who cheerfully puts his shoulder beneath every burden I take on, and to my friend, the Rev. F. B. Roberts, who has not allowed his differences with me on certain issues raised in this book to prevent his reading my pages with the critical helpfulness he brings to all his work.

W. E. SANGSTER.

The Central Hall,
Westminster.

MANY OF OUR NATIONAL LEADERS

have taken upon themselves to explain why we are at war and what we are fighting for. The aim of this book is to show that the great words they constantly use are deeper than is commonly supposed and that none of these precious things can be achieved by the wit of statesmen or by feat of arms alone but,

in the last resort, is a gift of

JESUS CHRIST.

WHAT WE ARE FIGHTING FOR:—

I. LIFE

LIFE

THE RIGHT HON. L. S. AMERY,

M.P.

The Secretary of State for India and for Burma

HOUSE OF COMMONS

7 May 1940

'Some 300 years ago, when this House found that its troops were being beaten again and again by the dash and daring of the Cavaliers, by Prince Rupert's Cavalry, Oliver Cromwell spoke to John Hampden. In one of his speeches he recounted what he said.
It was this:

> "I said to him, 'Your troops are most of them old, decayed serving men and tapsters and such kind of fellows. . . . You must get men of a spirit that are likely to go as far as they will go, or you will be beaten still."

It may not be easy to find these men. They can be found only by trial and by ruthlessly discarding all who fail and have their failings discovered. We are fighting to-day for our **Life**, for our liberty, for our all; we cannot go on being led as we are.'

LIFE

'LIFE' is a blurred word. It is used in a wide variety of senses. A man slowly recovering from an operation is often said to be 'fighting for his life'. A woman who has reached old age and always had a sheltered existence is sometimes said 'never to have seen life'. A youth pining for a bit of pleasure describes himself as 'dying to see life'—even though he seeks it in some unsavoury night-club where every joke is suggestive and no decent man would leave a turn unstoned.

And now Mr. Amery says, 'We are fighting to-day for our life.' In what sense does he use the word here?

He cannot mean that if we lose the war we shall all be executed, any more, one assumes, than those of our fellow-countrymen who say that we must 'finish the Germans off for good this time' mean, in the event of our victory, to cut the throats of sixty-five million people. He means that *our way of life* is in danger: that the customs and traditions which we have built up, and which have shaped us, will be taken away if we do not conquer on the field of battle. And for our way of life, he feels—

and most of us feel with him—that life itself should be given up.

But a big question arises there.

Not *any* life is worth dying for: surely, only a rich, full, rounded life is worth a man risking all he has, and for nothing less than this should any statesman summon the youth of his country to the supreme sacrifice. There are *levels* of life. It is not a matter of *fact* merely: it is a matter of *degree*. One man is just alive: another lives intensely. One has developed his powers in one small segment of his being: another has brought them to maturity all round. Both are alive. But to say this is to utter the least interesting part of the truth, for, while both have life, one has infinitely more life than the other. They might be compared, not unfittingly, to a pauper and a millionaire.

It is worth labouring this point a little—and illustrating it. Suppose—if the fancy can be indulged—that Bill Sykes and Charles Kingsley met one day and went for a walk. I pick the names up at random (one a character in fiction and one from real life) simply because they are familiar and offer an immediate and striking contrast.

The name of Sykes is known even to people who have never read Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, but to those intimate with the story he is etched on the memory as a dark, sinister figure; low-browed and vicious, a blackguard without a redeeming trait. If he has

life, it is just the consciousness of some lewd desire and the means to its gratification.

Charles Kingsley hardly fits into the same world. A brilliant classical scholar, an able novelist, a minor poet, an amateur naturalist, and a power for social righteousness in an age which barely believed that the Christian religion had social implications at all. He was gloriously and powerfully alive, the fearless champion of whatever he stoutly believed to be the good.

Now, if Kingsley and Sykes went together for a wall, although they remained in each other's company and appeared to look at the same things, it would be absurd to suggest that they saw the same things, or derived a like pleasure from what they saw. If they went into a picture-gallery, Kingsley would be absorbed: picture after picture would have a message for him, and he would leave at the last with reluctance as a man finding it hard to tear himself away. Sykes would wonder why he went into the place at all, with a public-house just round the corner, and the art treasures of the world would be to him as a little coloured slime upon a canvas. His mind, on these matters, was dead.

If they went for a walk along the sea-shore, or in the country, the same experience would be theirs. Any shell or flower would be of interest to Kingsley. He could name it: classify it: answer

Sykes' questions about it—if there were any questions, which is much to be doubted. Sykes' mind had not developed along these lines.

If they came to a library, Kingsley would be keenly interested. The ancient classical authors would attract him : the shelves of the poets demand attention : the latest novelists beckon him to take a ' sample ', and he would linger lovingly over many a favoured volume, while Sykes looked on impatient at the needless delay. Books? poetry? philosophy? science?—all useless and foolish pursuits, not a bit concerned with filching his bread in his chosen way. His mind had never come alive on these vast issues.

If they came to an old church, their previous incompatibility would reach its climax. If Sykes could be tempted inside, it would be ' just an old church '. But to Kingsley it would be saturated with interest. In the fabric itself he would read the plain historical record from the architectural style : Norman, Early English, Decorated, Perpendicular. He could date the stained-glass windows and interpret their symbolism. Finally, he would yield to the unspoken invitation of the place and spend a while in meditation and prayer. Its silence would be loud to him of God's speech. There would be no sense of loneliness, for the Presence of the Almighty would overshadow him.

Yet, in all this he would have no intercourse with

Sykes, for Sykes on this side of his nature was dead. Or, more accurately, had never been born.

Both of these men are alive, but one has immeasurably more life than the other. Both breathe, eat, sleep, and talk, but one does very little else, and the other has a mind alert and a soul attune with God.

It was worth working the illustration out. If the distinction seems too sharp and overdrawn, it has at least the merit of clear contrast and will underline the pertinent thing: that life is not a matter of *fact* merely, but a matter of *degree*: that it does not consist simply in the possession and use of an animated carcass, but involves maturity of mind and richness of soul. The interesting question about any man is not simply 'Is he alive?' but '*How much* is he alive?' and on how much he is alive, or may confidently expect to be alive, turns the whole question of whether or not the nation should appeal to a youth to scorn superficial security and risk all.

The tragic truth, of course, is this. A man may risk all with prodigal courage and 'fight for his life' through a dozen defeats . . . and yet have no life at the end worth fighting for. I met an old army comrade the other day, a man who fought with the battalion through four years of war and who, when the Armistice came, seemed one of the rare veterans in a regiment of 'rookies'. The years

have changed him sadly. The thirst which laid hold of him in campaigning days has taken firmer grip with passing time. He is a poor, drunken sot now. He festoons the outside of a public-house all day long, catching the odour when he cannot get the taste. One problem is ever before his fuddled mind: 'Where is the next pint coming from?' He displays his medal ribbons with pitiful vanity in order to entice a drink from anyone he can scratch acquaintance with. A hero—who fought tenaciously for his own and his nation's life: and this is all the life he has!

You cannot win a full, rich, rounded life by arms alone. You may win the chance to win it, but not the thing itself. Life of this quality is a gift even more than it is an achievement. It is given by the richest Soul who ever walked this earth. He said: 'I am come that they might have life and that they might have it *more abundantly*.' [1]

Victory on the field of battle is only opportunity When the task seems finished, the task is but begun. If our armies conquer and our churches fail, the bigger battle is lost. It will be a mockery to say that we have 'life'.

It has been said paradoxically that the 'most precious things are lost in victory'. And why? Because a nation war-weary and spiritually moribund deceives itself with the illusion that the work is

[1] John x. 10.

over just when the hour comes to start. The pent-up passion for pleasure sweeps the people past the harder tasks which still remain, and the preacher is ignored or derided as a dealer in Puritan patter.

So spiritual rot sets in, and the essential 'life' of the nation ebbs. So bitter lessons have to be learned all over again.

Most thinkers on morals would agree that ethical thought has been much influenced in the last seventy years by the idea of evolution. Herbert Spencer's is the name which leaps most readily to the mind. Darwin's great hypothesis spread itself through every realm of thought, and an 'ethics of evolution' as well as a 'theology of evolution' grew up. The scientific basis simply expressed was, of course, just this. The merest speck of protoplasm was said to contain immense possibilities and, granted a favourable environment, would evolve in an amazing way. The mightiest possibilities had been *involved* in it and, in the true setting, could be *evolved* from it. The spiritual counterpart of this was quickly stressed. It was said that within these souls of ours, 'cleansed from sin's offensive stain', were immense potentialities, and the capacity to develop a life deep, rich, and many-sided could not be denied in any human soul. But it all depended on the environment—and the true environment of the human soul is God.

One has sometimes met people of shallow mind who have sneered at the quiet life of our country villages and smaller towns on the ground that there was 'no life there'. One has heard the complaint urged also about the quieter kind of seaside resort and an effort made to prove the point by stressing the fact that there are no large amusement parks there. Amusement parks, no doubt, have their place on the fringe of life, but it illustrates the confusion of common thought, and the want of definition in our use of the word 'life', that this fine robust term should be equated with amusement parks. There are people living in tiny hamlets more gloriously alive than millions herded together in big cities. It does not matter supremely whether you live in a large town or out of it: it does matter supremely whether or not you live in God.

I have read somewhere that during the reign of the Roman Emperor Vespasian, a certain official was banished from the Imperial City and retired to his country estate. He was sixty-three years of age when he was banished and, under his changed conditions, he took to cultivating his garden, and more particularly his soul. At the age of seventy, this is what he said: 'I have passed sixty and ten years on the earth—and I have *lived* seven of them.'

This is the question the Church would press upon every mature individual in the nation. Are you living or passing the time? Life in its fulness is

only found in fellowship with Jesus Christ. There is no abiding contentment for the heart in the most settled and cherished of our national customs. One must get deeper and more personal than that. The finest possibilities of our nature can only be developed by our God. Life we may have 'at a level'—but if we live outside Him we have not life abundant.

In the sense in which Mr. Amery uses it we have to fight for our life, but it is not the deepest sense of the word. This contest can be won and the harder one lost. There is a war within the war. Theological as the language may sound, our real enemy is sin. Everything we strike against is a disguise of sin. Complete victory crowned our costly efforts in the First World War, but who that glances over the twenty years of uneasy truce between the wars really feels that we faced with resolution the enemies which still remained? Unemployment was never effectively dealt with. Legislation for social improvement was impeded by vehement protests that we 'could not afford it', a cry which sounds criminally hollow now that we are spending twelve and a half millions a day on the war. The Church was pushed farther than ever from the heart of the nation's life, and dismal denominational statistics proved that it was only on a fraction of the population that any branch of the Church retained a firm grip.

The ' life ' for which we had been fighting through four bloody years seemed a very attenuated thing when we had it. Irresolute leadership, neglect of divine guidance in things national and personal, the immoderate pursuit of pleasure, the pre-occupation of the cinema, stage, and literature with sex—all had their part to play. And God was largely left out.

The utter absurdity of it: even to talk about ' life ' and leave its Author out. And this banality will return again, if God is not placed at the heart of life—the life of the individual and the life of the State.

Most people have heard the moving story told years ago by the organist of the great church at Fribourg. He was sitting, he said, on his stool one day, playing his famous instrument. The church was empty. As he played a stranger came in, listened for a while in the aisle, and then came and stood behind his stool. For half-an-hour he continued to watch and listen.

Presently he spoke: ' May I take the instrument? ' he said, and the organist refused.

Still the stranger waited. At intervals he repeated his request, and finally, without much grace, the organist unwillingly gave way.

The stranger took the stool, and sat for a few moments looking at the keys. Then he began—and immediately there burst forth from the eager

pipes grander music than that grand organ had ever yielded before. It filled the empty church. It dwelt in every hollow of the branching roof. It wakened sleeping choirs of angels. The stone pillars shouted aloud their praise. Overcome, the organist seized the shoulders of the stranger from behind and, as the melody died away, he said: 'Who are you?'

'Mendelssohn!' said the stranger.

'And to think,' replied the organist, 'that I nearly refused Mendelssohn the use of my instrument.'

It is a parable. Multitudes are refusing Christ the use of their instrument. He can draw from these human lives sweeter harmonies than we can draw. It may be our own life, but ours to yield to Him. He can remove the discords, take out the jarring note, and draw from lives as limited as ours the mighty music of heaven.

The Man who moved among His fellows offering abundant life was dead Himself at thirty-three. Crucified! Is this abundant life?

Yet, as we see Him hanging there, and think on the long pageant of successive ages, how plain it seems that 'death is dead: not He!' That worn and wearied body cannot deceive us: the resurrection is not *news*: it is but confirmation. No grave could hold the Life which used that body, for abundant life and eternal life are one.

Said Tennyson :

> ' 'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
> Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want.'

And to Tennyson, we say—and to the world :

> ' We want it, and we *have* it—in Christ.'

II. PEACE

PEACE

THE RIGHT HON. C. R. ATTLEE,
M.P.

The Lord Privy Seal

HOUSE OF COMMONS
5 *December* 1940

'It has been announced that a further statement on aims will be made at a suitable time. I am not in a position at the moment to state the date when that will be done, but it should not be thought, because there has not been set out a categorical statement of 14 or 19 or whatever points there are, that there is not a general understanding of what our aims are. Our aim is to try and establish a world of **Peace** and of free peoples. That does not mean the kind of **Peace** in which everybody is subdued to the will of one man or one nation. It means a **Peace** of free peoples such as we civilised people understand it, and what we are asking for ourselves we are asking for all other nations. We are asking for an ordered **Peace**. We realise that we cannot get **Peace** by just washing our hands and letting the others go to the devil, because one has to take responsibility if one wants ordered **Peace**. You have to replace the anarchy of the world by ordered **Peace**. We say you must base that ordered **Peace** on social justice, and recognise how much the world degenerated after the last war just because there were false foundations.'

PEACE

IT is one of the bitterest paradoxes of these tragic times that men should be *fighting* for peace. It is one of the hardest dilemmas presented by the pacifist to his peace-loving friends (who believe that war is sometimes necessary) when he enquires how a thing can be achieved by its opposite. It is one of the ironies of the hour that the deep, undeniable, and passionate longing of millions of people for peace should express itself in the massing of armaments and all the terrorism of modern war.

Yet that is the situation. Most of the people in these islands sincerely believe, with Mr. Attlee, that we are 'fighting for peace'. They recognise the superficial absurdity of the phrase, but they believe that war forces a twisted logic upon us, and just as the achievement of freedom requires its temporary loss, so, at some stages of the world's history, the establishment of peace requires the waging of war.

But peace is a spiritual quality. It is not simply the absence of armed strife: it is a state of soul. It does not reside in a certain mould of circumstances: it resides in the heart. No soldier or statesman can achieve peace. Their mightiest victories on the

field, and most magnanimous treaties at the table, can only produce at their best the *conditions* of peace. Another Versailles would not give us peace. A *better* Versailles would not give us peace. The bitterest disappointment is in store for anyone who thinks that peace is dependent on events. Gallantry and resolution in battle may do much in an ugly contest, and large-hearted consideration for a beaten foe will do more—but the sum of both of these is not peace. Peace is a legacy, and those who would possess it must study the last will and testament of Jesus Christ.

Wills are always interesting. They may be written in a line or stretched out to a lengthy legal document, but they never fail of interest. Whether the testator is leaving much or little, people who knew him are curious to read what he counted as treasure and how he disposed of his possessions when the hour for parting came.

Some people shrink from making a will: they foolishly suppose that it brings death nearer. Others enjoy it. It gives them pleasure to set down in black and white their appreciation of their friends and relatives, and to anticipate the help their benefactions will bestow. Some charitable bequests have benefited needy people for many centuries.

But no will ever benefited more people than the last will and testament of Jesus Christ. It is not long. It is concerned with one thing only: 'Peace

I leave with you; My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' That is the last will and testament of Jesus Christ, and with Dr. Watts we may say :—

> 'I call that legacy my own
> Which Jesus did bequeath;
> 'Twas purchased with a dying groan,
> And ratified in death.'

Unhappily, as is well known, some benefactions lose value in war-time. The economic disorder of the world has tragic repercussions, and old gifts, which bear a rich return when things are normal, cease to help when hostilities begin. Does that apply to the legacy of Jesus Christ? Can one have His peace in a world at war—and keep it when, hostilities over, the shallow philosophers who thought that that alone would spell paradise, find themselves still with an unsatisfied heart?

There can be no doubt that Christ *meant* His peace to garrison the hearts of His servants whatever disorder overtook the world. He is at pains to distinguish His peace from any counterfeit the world might proffer. He made reference to mighty and terrible historical events which would shake the foundations of life for some of His hearers and which were bitterly fulfilled a generation after He spoke. But His peace could not be destroyed! It was such a peace as 'man did not make and cannot mar.' It is that

central spot of calm which mariners say exists at the very heart of a typhoon.

Let us enquire how this peace is received and maintained, and whether it can triumph over boredom, monotony, worry, bereavement, and suspense.

This peace must be claimed.

There is an office in London in which are kept particulars of wills which have never been fulfilled. Money and lands have been left to people who have never come forward to claim them. Some of these legatees may be in the direst poverty, yet wealth awaits the simple proof of their claim. The pity of it! They queue up for public assistance when they might be befriending the needy themselves: they ask for help at the very time when they might be giving it.

But there is a wider tragedy than that. People surround us on every side who do not know that Christ has left them peace. Many of them are well-meaning and kindly people, but their care-worn faces reveal the nervous fret within. They sit beside us in buses and face us in trains, and their strained expression tells its own tale. If only they had peace! —the peace their Master left them and which is free to any dedicated heart which makes its claim.

This peace is one of the few gifts a man may always have.

Some of the choicest of God's gifts are necessarily

intermittent. Joy, for instance. God gives joy to His servants, but they cannot *always* be joyous. Sickness may overtake them, or bereavement. War envelops the community. In the nature of things, joy is driven away.

But not peace! When Bishop Bickersteth made his own solemn catalogue of the dark distresses of our pilgrim way—distresses which are all accentuated in war-time—he found that perfect peace could live with them all: 'sorrows surging round', 'loved ones far away', 'our future all unknown', 'death shadowing us and ours'—but not one of them can dislodge God's perfect peace.

Peace does not reside in circumstances.

It would be idle to deny the importance of circumstance, but it is very easy to exaggerate its power. Many people—even those with not inadequate means—express the opinion that they would have peace of heart if their incomes were larger, or taxation were lower. Others hold the view that if their work were of a different character, or they lived in another locality, peace would be theirs.

It is always the bias of human nature to put the blame on circumstances, and it is the harder to resist because it contains an element of truth. Life was hard enough in peace-time for people living on nothing but the old-age pension: in war-time, even with supplementary allowances, it borders on the

impossible. With the mind necessarily preoccupied by finding the bread of this life, it is difficult to find leisure for seeking the bread of any other.

Yet the facts are plain ! Peace does not reside in circumstances : it resides in the heart. It is not difficult to point to people who have moulded their circumstances in order to produce peace—and they have missed it ! It is just as easy to point to others who appear to be imprisoned in a deadening routine and denied the extra comforts for which our human hearts crave—and they have found it !

Edward FitzGerald, the translator of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám,* will always have his small but secure niche in English letters. He was a man who aimed to mould his circumstances that they might produce peace. He settled in the quiet life of a country town and passed secluded and leisurely days with books, music, and flowers. He was never short of money. When the wishes of his wife ran counter to his own, and seemed likely to disturb the even tenor of his days, he parted from her. And he kept doves —the birds of peace ! Yet, oddly enough, as most people agree who have scrutinised his life, he seems to have missed the prize. The blessing of inward peace passed him by.

Yet Paul and George Fox and John Bunyan had it in prison : St. Francis and John Wesley and Sundar Singh had it in poverty : St. Teresa, Catherine Booth and C. T. Studd had it in constant pain : George

Matheson in the semi-darkness, Kagawa in an odorous slum, and many a simple saint in London has it now beneath a hail of bombs. Clearly, it does not reside in circumstance : it resides in the soul.

When hostilities cease in the Second World War (the hour for which multitudes long and pray) it will seem like paradise—for a month or two. Then the heart will tell its own tale. Inward dissatisfaction will awake again and every honest heart which is strange to Christ will say : ' This is not peace.'

One's claim to it is established by the surrender of the heart.

Foolish as the statement may seem, anyone who deeply desired it could make peace *now*. You make it by taking it. Inward peace is not made with Germany; it is made with ourselves and the world and, ultimately, with God. If peace were dependent on perfect circumstances, the very dream of it must be abandoned at once so far as this world is concerned. Hostilities will cease, but there is still cancer, bereavement, our human liability to fatal accident, the hurt of waning powers. . . . A treaty can banish bombs, but not these tragic possibilities which are woven into the very fabric of our life and which will always prevent the perfection of conditions. And—if the phantasy can be indulged a moment more—seeing that every other person in the community is part of our environment, only the

perfection of all men in a perfected world will give us the land of hearts' desire.

Drawn out to their logical conclusions, our latent wishes, therefore, are seen to be absurd. Peace is impossible for mortals if these are the conditions of it, and God made us for mockery if there is no way to peace but that.

But there is ! He made and redeemed us for love, and His dying Son made us legatees of His peace. There is nothing to do but surrender one's heart and take it. The saints of all communions have long known the secret. Let me quote from a letter written on Christmas Eve 1513 by a simple priest to a noble lady :—

> ' Contessina, forgive an old man's babble. But I am your friend, and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got ; but there is much, very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it to-day. Take heaven. No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Take peace !
>
> The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see ; and to see we have only to look. Contessina, I beseech you to look.

Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering, and you will find beneath it a living splendour, woven of love, by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the Angel's hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty: believe me, that Angel's hand is there; the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Our joys, too: be not content with them as joys. They, too, conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and of purpose, so full of beauty (beneath its covering) that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage, then to claim it: that is all! But courage you have; and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country, home.'

'Courage, then to claim it: that is all!' More than four and a quarter centuries ago, the wise old man said it—and echoed what Paul had said more than fourteen centuries before that, '*Let* the peace of God rule in your hearts.' '*Let!*' It will!—as soon as the ego is dethroned and all the proud assertiveness of self against God is humbled to the dust. That is what we mean by self-surrender, for He who takes Christ takes peace.

One's claim is maintained by obedience to His will.

Dante said: 'In His will is our peace': not in the

fiats of dictators nor yet in the legislation of democrats as such, but *in His will.*

That is why peace seems almost to have vanished from the earth, because the will of God has been scorned and crossed. Increasing numbers of discerning men are coming to see that the world will only work according to the will of its Maker: on any other principle it breaks down. Cosmically and individually, 'in His will is our peace'.

He, then, who has established his claim to the legacy by the surrender of his heart, guards his treasure by glad obedience to his Benefactor's will. Indeed, the will of God becomes his rule of life and whole preoccupation. He does not even aim at peace directly. The Divine will for him fills his mind so that—as David Livingstone once confessed of himself in Africa—he half-forgets he has a soul. But it is no devilish and perilous amnesia: it is the forgetfulness of ebullient health: the heart at leisure from itself because it is garrisoned by the peace of God.

Said David Brainerd, the intrepid missionary to the Red Indians, in days when Red Indians still collected scalps:

> 'Filling up our time with and for God is the way to rise up and lie down in peace. O! the peace, composure and God-like serenity of my frame! Heaven must differ from this only in degree, not in kind.'

Who could guess behind this rapturous assertion a body racing to an early death by prodigious labour, immense hardship, and neglected T.B.? Who could see the youthful missionary, merciless with himself, teaching ' my dear little flock ' (as he called those savage men) the simple secrets of primitive horticulture by day and the open secret of primitive Christianity by night: toiling from camp to camp: coughing blood and winning from the hardest heart a wondering courtesy and glimmering faith, so that, when he lay down to die at thirty-two, the forests he had made his home were full of changed men who fashioned their lips in broken prayer and half-despaired of life without their god-like friend?

It was a comfortable night when David Brainerd had a little straw to lie on, and his food was mostly boiled corn, half-cooked in the ashes of an open fire, and the dangers from man and beast were almost beyond description. Yet he says :—

> ' O ! the peace, composure, and God-like serenity of my frame ! Heaven must differ from this only in degree, not in kind.'

He was doing what he believed God wanted him to do, and ' in His will is our peace '.

Here, then, is the simple truth. We need not wait for the end of hostilities: we may take peace now. If hostilities end and we are still strangers to this

peace, our delirious happiness will be short-lived. Peace can only come to the world as it comes to men's hearts. Pacts and treaties are opportunities and, with varying degrees of success, create the conditions of peace. But peace itself is a gift of God.

III. JUSTICE

JUSTICE

THE RIGHT HON. S. M. BRUCE,
C.H., M.C.

High Commissioner for Australia in London

BROADCAST ADDRESS

26 *January* 1940

'We entered upon this war because Germany, under its present Nazi rulers, having destroyed freedom, **Justice** and decency within its own borders, was determined by armed strength to destroy those things in the other nations of the world. Our war objective is to defeat Germany and to ensure that, after victory, the world shall be freed from the constant fear of aggression. We must determine that victory in this war shall be followed by a real peace, based upon security for all peoples, upon equity between the nations and on social **Justice** between all classes.'

JUSTICE

THE Countess of Oxford and Asquith tells the following story :

'In 1917 an Englishman, having been forbidden by his doctors to go on fighting, joined a caravan travelling down the pilgrim route through the mountain ranges of Persia to the Mesopotamian frontier. His companions were men of all conditions and ages : merchants, rustics, turbaned tribesmen, muleteers, camel drivers, mullahs, and lesser dignitaries of Islam.

'Huddled together they talked freely among themselves as the long day waned. One night, under a cold moon, some of the younger pilgrims were expressing their views on the fortunes of the war, which was going badly for us.

"The British will be beaten all to nothing, and the Turk will be free," said one, to which an old man replied :

"If the Turk is beaten there is an end of all courage in the world."

"Do not forget (said another) that if the German is beaten that is an end of all science."

A third said: "But if the English are beaten there is an end of all justice."

Upon which an old mullah put his hand above his head and said: "In that case, my brother, God will not allow the English to be beaten."'

Is this, then, a characteristic of the English? Can we feel, without national bias, that the love of justice belongs to our race?

I think that we can. Foreign tribute is often paid to this trait in our character in circumstances which preclude any hint of fawning or flattery.

When Norway was still picking her precarious way along the tight-rope of neutrality, and the *Altmark* incident held the attention of the world, the sharpest complaints were expressed in the Norwegian newspapers against the disregard of their neutrality by a British destroyer on the ground that it was not '*fair*'. Then they added this: 'Everyone knows that it was the English who gave the concept of fair-play to the world.'

Most people *do* know it. A keen concern for what is 'fair' is characteristic of our people and acutely felt not only in a church but on a football field, in a public-house, and in an air-raid shelter. It is not surprising, therefore, if, as a people, we are ready, and even eager, to fight for justice.

But while a concern for justice is a national

characteristic, it would be absurd to suppose that it is a national monopoly. Other nations have ideas about justice. No one who has travelled freely in foreign parts but has heard at times aggrieved or cynical comments on the wide areas of the earth's surface controlled by Britain. No one who met the parties of German students visiting England in the years before the war but will recall their regimented minds, their fanatical Nazism, and their reiterated demand for the return of their colonies. Nor could one escape the conviction that to their minds, at least, they were asking for nothing but what was plainly ' just '.

And there is the dilemma. When no court exists commanding world authority or, if existing, is everywhere ignored, how can one reach an equitable judgment upon a disputed point? The litigant is judge in his own case. Racial antipathies are aroused. Greed and self-interest play their part. Misunderstandings multiply and savage things are said. Finally, nothing remains but a resort tc arms.

And arms prove nothing about the justice of the case. How can they? They prove who is more powerful, but not who is more right. It follows, therefore, that, from a logician's angle, war is one vast and tragic illustration of the *argumentum ad baculum*, and when the smoke drifts from the battlefield, justice still waits to be done. The Russians

landing at Hangö, the Germans entering ruined Rotterdam, the Japanese rapers loose in Nanking, are all of them victors, but none of them justified. To talk of 'fighting for justice' is, in the strict sense, to talk loosely. The same shallowness invests this popular term as invests the other terms it has been our business to consider. One can fight—almost all of us feel that we *must* fight—for the chance to administer justice, but justice itself is not achieved by arms. Force can curb evil, but it cannot cure it. Irrelevant as the words of the Galilean Teacher may seem to many, He would say on this as on all our war-aims: 'Apart from Me ye can do nothing.'

Nor is it hard to indicate ways in which our inability apart from Him will be proved, and proved as soon as hostilities cease. Economists warn us that after a short-lived boom we will face a prolonged slump from which there will be, of course, no deliverance by reparations. Not even the most inveterate optimists now seek to delude us with the cry 'Germany must pay'. While the conviction (or illusion) holds the field that money and wealth are the same thing, howsoever we seek to adjust ourselves to the new conditions, we shall be a people burdened with debt.

But we shall be at peace—and inevitably old selfishnesses will begin to assert themselves again. The spirit of sacrifice begotten in a war usually

vanishes with the peace treaty, and men, left to themselves, will begin to manœuvre for their personal and class ends. The simple poor believe that a new and better order will arise from this war. They are suffering incredible hardships in that faith. They huddle in air-raid shelters uncomplainingly because they believe that something will come out of the struggle worthy of the agony they have endured.

But will it come?—during a slump?—with the world all torn and bleeding, and every country licking its wounds?

It can come only one way. It can come only by the willing sacrifice of privileged people: their recognition that we are sisters and brothers together in the family of Christ: their full acknowledgment that a class-less society is a simple inference from the Fatherhood of God and their resolute determination to work out the Divine plan.

The promptings of self-interest which would urge them to band together and campaign against Super-Tax and heavy Income Tax must be quelled, and the sense of unity which has been recognised in our common peril translated into a common, if simple, prosperity. Any fire-spotter knows the secret. Selfishness is madness. An incendiary bomb on your neighbour's house is a peril to your own, and, conversely, there is no well-being possible to the individual if it is not open on similar terms to his fellow-man.

But can we honestly anticipate such halcyon days?—for halcyon days they would be, however scarred our cities were and however great our debts. Even to people not disposed to cynicism it seems more than a little fanciful to imagine the privileged eager to serve the unprivileged: sharing what they have, not of charity, but of plain justice: recognising (and acting on the recognition) what Dr. Oman acutely calls 'the essence of hypocrisy' . . . 'the identification of privilege with merit.' [1]

Who could so change human nature? What teacher is equal to this double and titanic task?—first, to set the justice of it in so plain a light, and then to mould the hearts and minds of men to do it?

Only Christ!

Justice seems a chill term for all that He can do, but love without it is sentimentality. The chance to establish justice may result from war . . . but not justice itself! Social justice is one of the fruits of that radical change wrought in individuals by Jesus Christ.

Or, if we widen our thought, as we must, beyond the confines of our own island and consider the needs of other people in the British Commonwealth of Nations, we shall confront the same question, posed in a harder way. Mr. Bevin, whose preoccu-

[1] *Grace and Personality*, John Oman, p. 196.

pations with winning the war do not prevent him from glancing at the problems which will arise when the fighting is over, stated recently that the best way to deal with the difficulties arising from the importation of the products of cheap labour from other lands is to lift the standard of living of the workers who are there.

Exactly !

But what would this involve ?

It would involve a higher cost of living for people in this island. Suppose it was sugar. Would we be willing to pay more for our sugar, even in a slump, that native workers elsewhere in the Empire should have a higher standard of life ? Or would old racial animosities be stirred, and people talk contemptuously of ' niggers ', and repeat the well-worn fable which suggests that any coloured man can live and work on ' a handful of rice a day ' and that God Almighty made white people the lords of creation and means to keep them so ?

Justice does not willingly accept limitations. It knows no natural boundaries short of humankind. Yet, how can we hope for a change of heart and mind so radical that it can deal with the matted problems of race and colour, faith and class, and make the powerful willing to extend the principles of fairness to the weak ?

All these alluring roads of human ' progress ' are obstructed by the immense boulders of natural self-

ishness, class and race prejudice, religious rivalries, and personal and national pride and greed. If human nature cannot be changed, then the cynic is the only wise man. Better, by far, be honest and admit the jungle nature of our life than to lure succeeding generations along a road marked 'To Utopia' which all experience and all sound philosophy compel us to believe will end in a bog of disillusionment. Can human nature, in any radical sense, be changed? That is the hard core of all world problems. The claim of the Christian religion, put simply, is just that. 'It can! Christ can do it.' To entertain robust hopes of a new world without faith in Him seems, to the present writer, a miracle of self-deception.

Nor is it hard to show in His teaching that these problems were in the forefront of His mind. The lash of His terrible invective falls not upon the sins of the flesh, but upon religious bigotry, racial hate, greed, and pride. Opposed as He is to all curable circumstances which obstruct the path of men to purity, He is plain that sin does not reside in circumstances, but in ourselves. He says: '*Out of the heart* cometh forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man.'

And *in the heart* of man sin must be met and overthrown.

Against racial hatred He set His face like a flint,

and how powerful He was to remove it may be tested by the change He wrought in the name 'Samaritan'. In the days of His flesh it was a name of such evil odour among the Jews that its use was always interpreted as an insult of the foulest kind. It was synonymous with 'dog', 'devil', 'illegitimate'. It could hardly be said to belong to polite speech.

So Jesus told a story; a simple story of a robber-infested road, a bleeding victim, a callous priest and Levite, a despised Samaritan, a wondering innkeeper, and a receipted bill. Quite a simple story (!), but it picked that name out of the gutter and washed it clean, rid it of all its foul associations, and made it shine among the fairest terms in our tongue. The insult has become a compliment. The aspersion is now a eulogy. It is desperately hard to change a bad name, but Jesus did it. We use this name now for hospitals and social servants of the first order. By this means He banished all the limitations of the word 'neighbour'. Your 'neighbour' is anyone you can help, and racial prejudice can have no place in those who have 'the mind that was in Christ'.

Left to human endeavour alone it would be fanciful to expect that these old animosities can ever be overcome. 'With men this is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.'

Or, if we widen our thought even beyond the British Empire and compass (as we must) the whole of humankind, the problem of justice is posed in the hardest form of all. Mr. S. M. Bruce, the High Commissioner for Australia, says that 'victory in this war shall be followed by a real peace, based upon security for all peoples, upon equity between the nations and on social justice between all classes'. 'A *real* peace'! 'Equity between the nations'!

Do any of us believe that we can achieve these heights alone? What of Japan and its multiplying population overflowing the volcanic islands which provide its people with a home? And what of vast and empty Australia, comparatively near, inviting, sparsely peopled—but quite forbidden? Does 'equity between the nations' require that this simple contrast be looked at patiently and openly? Should it quicken understanding of the Japanese claim to *lebensraum* in Oceania? Does justice involve a fair consideration of people you do not like? Or is the bare suggestion to be dismissed as 'unpatriotic', 'impossible', and 'a thing from which reason recoils'?

Not that the problem is felt by any reflective thinker to be easy. By no means! It is, in fact, extraordinarily hard. It would not be difficult to set out its dangers in full and castigate the race of the Rising Sun as 'a bandit nation', the least pacific of all Pacific peoples, demanding not the

right to live but the power to dominate. Justice might say 'No', but it would be the fair denial of a judge and not the contradiction of a rival.

We have to find the way to 'a real peace', and 'equity between the nations', and we must take account of 'justice'—that high and austere thing.

And, when one pierces to the heart of this problem, the greatest difficulty does not centre in inescapable circumstances, but in the complications of racial pride. Two ancient Empires face each other across this gulf, and the pride of the white and the pride of the yellow are sharply opposed. It does not admit of doubt that, however hard the problems which are there, they would come immeasurably nearer to solution if this pride were undermined and steadily removed. A sense of 'belonging to one another' must supplant the lie that we are 'natural enemies', but how to create the sense of 'belonging to one another', except by deep religion, defeats the wit of man. Every naturalistic argument in its favour can be rebutted by another naturalistic argument in opposition to it. It is soluble only by Christian conviction. Paul saw it two thousand years ago: 'Ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. . . . There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'

IV. SECURITY

SECURITY

THE RIGHT HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL,
C.H., M.P.

PRIME MINISTER,
First Lord of the Treasury,
Minister of Defence

HOUSE OF COMMONS

20 *August* 1940

'Before we can undertake the task of rebuilding we have not only to be convinced ourselves, but we have to convince all other countries that the Nazi tyranny is going to be finally broken. The right to guide the course of world history is the noblest prize of victory. We are still toiling up the hill, we have not yet reached the crestline of it, we cannot survey the landscape or even imagine what its condition will be when that longed-for morning comes. The task which lies before us immediately is at once more practical, more simple and more stern. I hope—indeed I pray—that we shall not be found unworthy of our victory if after toil and tribulation it is granted to us. For the rest, we have to gain the victory. That is our task. There is, however, one direction in which we can see a little more clearly ahead. We have to think not only for ourselves but for the lasting **Security** of the cause and principles for which we are fighting.'

SECURITY

THE other day I went through a part of London I had not seen of late, but which used to be pleasantly familiar to me in the piping days of peace. It had been ravaged by bombs. The shops were windowless, roofless, and bare: there were gaping holes in the streets, and the gas mains stuck out at grotesque angles, as though hell had been thrust up from beneath: a slice had been sloughed off from a block of flats and spilt across the road. Whole areas of pert little villas, looking no longer pert but tragically sorry for themselves, stood in rows of semi-ruin, and, as I looked on the desolate scene, an old phrase crossed my mind: 'Safe as houses.' 'Safe as houses. . . .' And a mocking cry seemed to echo from within those gaunt shells.

How satirical it sounds to-day! It was an axiom once. The phrase has been familiar for years. The small investor regarded it as a settled maxim. 'Put it in property: it's safe, safe as houses. . . .' And few things are more unsafe than houses to-day.

And that is a parable! Men and women are always seeking security. Look into the mind of your friends and neighbours, and look into your own

mind as well, and this great longing will be found in the forefront of your desires: 'Security! I must have security! Where will I find security?' There is no explanation for the war or for the toil, and effort, and saving, and struggling of millions of people, except as one takes account of the word 'security.'

Here is a man who scrapes for twenty years to buy the house he is living in. He wants to be rid of the incubus of rent and he wants to be there when old age comes. He wants security.

Here is a girl who pares her expenditure in order to save a shilling a week and, with religious regularity, she puts it in the Post Office Savings Bank. Ask her the reason for her care and zeal, and she says 'I want a bit behind me for a rainy day.' She wants security.

Here is a man about to retire from business, and he has a smile on his face not altogether explained by his cessation from work. 'What makes you so happy?' he is asked, and he answers: 'I shall be all right. I have got an annuity.' And there it is again. Always in these human hearts, as some deep expression of the instinct of self-preservation, there is this longing for security.

Because we are human, and because we live in a material world, we seek always to satisfy this longing by material means—a house, hard savings, an annuity, a few shares—and, whenever the thought

of trouble crosses the mind, it is to this material reserve that our hopes first turn.

And that is natural. God understands. And yet He is all the time seeking to show us that we are wrong. That is one of the uses to which He is putting the tragic events of the present time. Earthly moorings are slipping. The anchor no longer holds on the things of this world. (It never did really, but we deceived ourselves in days of peace and lived as though we should live here for ever.) Our old, accepted maxims, so far from sounding true, now sound like a silly joke. 'Safe as houses.' 'Safe as the Bank of England.' 'Safe as St. Paul's.' And each of them is scarred and smitten. Perhaps they will believe the preacher now, who all the time has said to the unheeding multitudes: '*There is no security except in God.*'

Years ago, during a great storm at sea, a passenger on a much-buffeted ship went to the captain and asked him if there was any hope of their safe arrival in port. And the captain said: 'There is no hope now—except in God.' The passenger replied: 'Phew! Is it as bad as that?'

It was always as bad, *or as good*, as that. But it takes a storm to make most people realise it. And it is a positive tempest now! But this, at least, can be learned while houses sway, cathedrals crumble, and our capital city reels beneath the bombardment: *there is no security except in God.*

Not that men will cease—or ought to—from their own efforts to find a dependable basis for social and international security, but few men and women more than forty years of age will feel, concerning Federal Union, or any similar nostrum, the bold confidence in the future they probably felt over the League of Nations. In the same way that this second war 'to end war', however unavoidable it was, keeps bringing back the disillusionment of other days and the sheer madness of mass murder, so the prospect of building again constantly recalls the vain hopes that were entertained when the last great struggle came to its slow end. If one had nothing more to depend upon than man's reason and good will, one might well despair. No alternative, indeed, would be left for many but that taken by the distinguished French surgeon Thierry de Martel.[1]

He made no secret of it to his friends. He said, as the Germans marched on Paris: 'My mind is made up: the moment I learn that they are in the city I shall kill myself.'

When they tried to expostulate with him, he brushed their pleadings aside:

'I *cannot* go on living,' he said. 'My only son was killed in the last war. Until now I have tried to believe that he died to save France. And now here is France, lost in her turn. Everything I have lived for is going to disappear. I cannot go on.'

[1] *Why France Fell*, André Maurois, pp. 115 ff.

As the German Army entered Paris, this fine gentleman, who had spent his money with immense prodigality on free clinics and used his skill so willingly in devoted service to the poor, killed himself by an injection of strychnine.

The true antidote to despair is simple faith in the power and purposes of God : the iron conviction that even when calamity comes, by our own ignorance, sin, or folly, or by the ignorance, sin, and folly of other people, He is still able, if we are willing, to wrest it to good. We shall have the opportunity to build again because *He* does not despair of our race.

How shall we build again that we may build secure?

Men say sometimes that we need a short-term policy and a long-term policy. We do ! Mighty as the Spirit of God is to work swift revolutionary changes, no method which God uses, and which respects our personal freedom, can bring the Kingdom to the hearts of men overnight. The long-term policy for Christians can only be the willing surrender of all men's hearts everywhere to God in Jesus Christ, and the co-operative out-working of His social purposes over the wide earth. How distant it seems ! But can any other long-term policy be put in its place? And, if it were put in its place, would anything less serve?

For a short-term policy, many Christian men and women will seek to work out the ideas of Federal

Union, or some similar scheme. It is pitifully easy to point out the flaws in them. They do not even need to be voiced : they announce themselves. But to lapse into cynicism, or to deny all value to human effort, or, in pursuit of the long-term policy, to question the worth or need of the short, is no occupation for a Christian. When the Church sets out her aim in plain terms as the abolition of the extreme inequalities of wealth, equal opportunities of education for all, the safeguarding of the family as the social unit, the restoration of a sense of divine vocation in daily work, and a fair distribution of the riches of the earth to all, and seeks to carry them over all frontiers because they belong to men, as sons of God, and not to men as members of a nation, she is essaying a great task even in her short-term policy, and is not to be denied merely because all this was implicit in earlier schemes which have come to nought. She has a foundation for them which human schemes, as human schemes, do not possess.

It is customary now to jeer at the League of Nations, but that is only to join the ranks of the people who, in varying ways, combined to destroy it. With all its imperfections it attempted a mighty task, and had more success than its critics care to allow. To outlaw war was its chief, but not its only aim, and in some of its subsidiary purposes it did a bold and brave work. Even in the biggest task, and where its failure is most complete, it failed less

by any weakness inherent in the scheme than by the lack of good-will to work it.

So we come back again to those most obdurate problems of human nature which prove to us that the long-term policy and the short-term policy are inextricably interwoven and only new men, working under God, can make new societies and a new world.

Meanwhile, for people no longer young, and who have endured two great wars at least, the willingness to work for a better world here does not carry with it any large expectation that they will live to see the fulfilment of the dream. And, for those among them who have no great confidence in the future life, there is not much comfort or hope when the preacher seeks to lift their eyes from earth to heaven, and make them believe that the only security really worth talking about is security in God. Longing and doubt are at war in their soul. They fear to fly to some fantastic world of escape. If they could express their dubiety, it would be in these terms : ' We *have* this life : we only *hope* for the next. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. It is security in *this* life that we want.'

One cannot have that security. It is not possible now : it never was possible. Even when there is no war, there is cancer and there are street accidents. Death blunders in and, for those who live, old age must come. We live our mortal lives under the tyranny of time. Soon or late, death rounds it off

or cuts it short. Even peace would not alter the basic structure of our days. When men say: 'We want that kind of security *now*'—they ask the impossible.

And notice this: the truth of that old quip about a bird in the hand being worth two in the bush all depends on whether or not you doubt your ability to catch the other bird. To the devout believer, relying confidently on God's plain word, there is no doubt about the bird in the bush. Look at it this way. If I have a ten-shilling note in my pocket, that ten-shilling note is not worth the two ten-shilling notes in my desk. By no means! They are twice as precious because I am confident about them, and they are mine.

The Christian is not less confident about his standing in the eternal purposes of God. Death to him is but the gateway of life. He is confident about them, and they are his. God's interest in him is not exhausted when this span of life is past.

Nearly thirty years ago a group of Englishmen were waiting for death in an ice-hut in the wild Antarctic. One of them, the doctor of the party, was writing home to his wife. This is what he said:—

> 'Don't be unhappy. . . . We are playing a good part in a great scheme arranged by God Himself, and all is well. . . . We will all meet after death, and death has no terrors. . . . All is

> for the best to those who love God, and . . . we have both loved Him with all our lives. . . . Life itself is a small thing to me now, but my love for you is for ever and a part of our love for God. All the things I had hoped to do with you after this Expedition are as nothing now, but there are greater things for us to do in the world to come. . . . All is well.' [1]

In such immense confidence did Doctor Edward Wilson wait for death. He knew where all his security was lying—the only place where real security can ever be laid: where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal.

Having this confidence, the Christian lives secure while all his world tumbles about his ears. Despite all the speeches made to convince him that the war is being fought for security, he remains unconvinced. The word as used by statesmen is—as Bergson might have said—a bit of 'the language of solids', and the word for him has spiritual and eternal implications which, in Browning's phrase, 'break through language and escape'. He does not deny or affirm the statesman's point, but it becomes increasingly clear that they are really discussing two different words and two different worlds. The Christian cannot escape, and does not desire to, the burden of

[1] *Edward Wilson of the Antarctic*, George Seaver, pp. 293 f.

his mortality, but more and more he lifts his eyes to that country ' afar, beyond the stars '. Security is *there*, or nowhere.

Meanwhile, he endures the buffetings of the times with courage and even with a secret exultation. He knows that they cannot rob him of his treasure. He recalls the poise of Christians in other ages and copies it : not in slavish imitation, but by willing reception of the same divine gift.

In the extent of scientific destruction no age has endured more than this, but no one would claim that previous generations knew nothing of disaster. And, when he asks how the Christians of those ages comported themselves, he can find the answer in Isaac Watts :

> ' Let mountains from their seats be hurled
> Down to the deep and buried there,
> Convulsions shake the solid world,
> Our faith shall never yield to fear.
>
> Loud may the troubled ocean roar;
> In sacred peace our souls abide;
> While every nation, every shore,
> Trembles, and dreads the swelling tide.'

People are amazed at a Christian's calmness in trouble, but that is because they do not understand his inner resources nor how he rides upon the storm.

I took my dog for a walk the other day at the side of St. James's Park. He is little more than a puppy,

and was very glad to be out. He pranced along, and seemed particularly interested in the pigeons. Indeed, it became his half-hour of fun to dash at every group of them in vain efforts to seize a bird. The pigeons remained quite calm. They watched him with their wobbling eye and went on eating undisturbed until he was all but on top of them, and then they just floated away. I was amazed at their calmness, their lack of fluster, their nonchalance even in the face of imminent danger, but the whole answer is here: they have wings; they have wings.

The Christian has wings. He can fly from the troubles of earth to the breast of his God. He can say:

> 'Jesu, Lover of my soul,
> Let me to Thy bosom fly,
> While the nearer waters roll,
> While the tempest still is high.'

And, while the tempest still is high, he rides upon the storm.

V. FREEDOM

FREEDOM

THE RIGHT HON. ANTHONY EDEN,
M.C., M.P.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

NATIONAL DEFENCE
PUBLIC INTEREST COMMITTEE
LUNCHEON

3 *September* 1940

'In some respects our position to-day before the world is more enviable than it has ever been in our history. There are times when it is good to stand alone, especially when you know that you are not going to stand like that for ever; and we do know that. Every nation that Hitler has overrun is his unwilling captive. All the propaganda in the world will not make a man who has once tasted true freedom of mind and spirit accept as genuine the Goebbels counterfeit. In this country to-day are contingents, and they are growing contingents, from the armies of all these peoples now under Hitler's rule. They are our comrades. The armies of the British Commonwealth greet them as such, for together we are the armies of the free peoples, pledged to redeem the **Freedom** of the world.'

FREEDOM

FREEDOM is one of the epidemic words of the hour. Everybody is talking about freedom. From His Majesty the King to the homeliest philosopher in the bar-parlour, the word ' freedom ' is being freely used. The leaders of most countries now at war say that they are fighting for it. The bereaved relatives of men who have fallen in action say that their dear ones have died for it. On all sides we hear this word used, sometimes over-used, and not seldom mis-used. It is time we took it in hand and carefully thought out what we really mean.

On the lips of some people it is clearly a word of deep and solemn thought : with others it is just as clearly a cliché, a blur of indistinct meaning. With some it is so precious that life without it would be worthless : with others it is simply a parrot-cry to be raised the moment their personal desires are thwarted. Perhaps no better beginning could be made with the understanding of this too-familiar word than to begin with a promise of Jesus Christ : ' If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'

And there we are at the paradoxical heart of this

word in one stride, because—as every student of personal religion knows—to give oneself to Jesus Christ is to enter into a very close bondage, a bondage which extends to all areas of life and has no limit. All His followers feel this bondage, though perhaps none feels it so keenly as the new disciple whom Christ has lifted from some low level of life. He realises his imprisoned state quite soon. He gets into a fix, and the way out is a lie. To lie is easy: he has lied before: indeed, he has come to look upon a lie as 'a very present help in time of trouble'. The risk of detection is insignificant, and escaping the consequences is sure. Why not lie? But he cannot! He is in bondage now: in bondage to Christ and hence to truth. Let others lie and escape if they can, but he must remain and bear the consequences. He is a bondman.

He feels it in other ways. His lot may be cast among people whose regard for moral prohibitions is very slight and who tempt him by many specious arguments to follow their way of life. He may be sorely tested, his own desire backing up their invitations, the swelling impulses of impetuous nature within coinciding with the opportunities without; but he recovers himself the moment they begin to boast that they are free. 'Free you may be', he says, 'with all your talk of free thought and free love, but I'm not free. I am bound: bound to Christ and hence to purity. Abandon yourself to

your own pleasures if you will. I must be loyal to Him.'

He feels it also in regard to the unprivileged people about him. He is constantly meeting folk whom he can serve, and he cannot shut his heart to their need. They have no claim upon him which society would recognise as a claim, but they are Christ's, and to be bound to Christ is to be bound to His friends. Others can seek their own advancement and success without a thought for anybody else, but he cannot. His duty is unmistakable: he is a bondman.

Sometimes a servant of Christ is called to make a supreme sacrifice. His bondage is never more apparent than now. He may be arraigned, like Dr. Martin Niemöller, by the opponents of the Cross and called upon to deny the heart of his gospel. To deny is easy: utter the word and go free. But he is bound! Let others take the sop and deny Him if they will, but the bondman?—never! He must suffer imprisonment for his Lord. How clear it is that to give oneself to Christ is to enter into the closest bondage!

Moreover, it is true that the more complete the giving the closer the bondage, and the closer the bondage the nobler the life. Men give themselves to Christ in varying degrees, and the measure of their self-giving is the measure of His power to transform and ennoble them. Some of them are just

'occasional helps': others are full-time servants. Some of them serve Him when they can serve Christ and themselves at the same time: others have lost self in utter devotion to their Master. Some of them are mercenaries, following Him for what they can get: others are slaves; slaves in the truest sense, for a slave, properly understood, was one who had no other ambition than to do his master's will. Now, it is with this second group that Christ has been able to do His work in the world. It is only the men and women who are utterly given to Him whom He can really use as He desires, and I do not recall a single instance of one great in the service of the Kingdom of Heaven who was not great in consecration to His Lord.

Not that this is peculiar to Christianity, for behind all forms of human greatness you will find an enslaved spirit: a soul given in utter devotion to some principle, or cause, or person, or art. Behind the work of Bach, Handel, and Mozart, you find a spirit enslaved to music: had they loved less they would have achieved less: more freedom from its imperious sway must have brought them to a lower level of attainment. Behind the pictures of Raphael, Michael Angelo, and Reubens, you find a spirit enslaved to art: had she been less firm a taskmistress, their names might be unknown to us to-day and we should have been poorer by the loss of their inspiration. Behind the saintly life of St. Francis,

the earnest scholarship of Erasmus, the strenuous soul-winning of Wesley, you find a spirit enslaved to Jesus Christ. Men of like talents have followed Him in other ages but with less devotion, and their achievements have been correspondingly less. Human greatness is inseparably connected with human enslavement: if you would do great things for any cause, it must become your master passion. Paul described himself as 'a *bondservant* of Jesus Christ', and therein you have the secret of his power.

But, if we admit that entering the service of Christ means entering into a close bondage, are we right in admitting that those who do not enter His service enjoy a fuller measure of freedom? I do not think so. It has been ably said that man's only power with freedom is to give it away: he is free to enter into bondage, and he can choose the form of bondage it shall be; but free in the sense of being utterly independent he most certainly is not, and a man who will not enter the service of Jesus must, of necessity, enter into some other. We are like the limpets: they are living creatures, but life is only truly possible to them while they cling to some post or stone or rock. Cling they must! All that they can do, in the measure that choice can be ascribed to such tiny creatures, is to choose the post or stone or rock to which they shall

cling. So it is with men and women! We are free only to choose the form of our servitude, the cause or principle or ambition to which we shall cling. A man may choose to cling to the satisfaction of his own desires for pleasure, and run the risk of becoming the slave of his appetites: he may limit his outlook to this present existence and cling to some fostered ambition of merely worldly success: or he may fix himself to the Rock of Ages which stands unmoved through all the passage of the years. We all live on some principle, expressed or unexpressed. The fact of being alive forces it upon us. The important question is this—to what do we cling?

In any fair discussion on the forms of service into which a man may enter, I have no doubt that the service of Jesus Christ will prove to be the best, and real freedom found only in this way. There is no servitude more abject than the servitude of self, and it is from this that Jesus Christ delivers us. Let us take an extreme instance. Call early one morning on a man who is living a dissolute life. The world is a sickly place to him. He will probably admit that the morning after isn't worth the night before. If he is honest, he may go further and confess that he would give a great deal to break his evil habits and live a really decent life, but somehow they have gripped him and he cannot. Is this freedom? It is the most revolting servitude! Do you remember the terrible picture of de Mau-

passant, the French novelist, that Axel Munthe gives in *The Story of San Michele*? He spent a few days with him on his yacht. A ballet-dancer was the mistress for the moment—a girl of eighteen—so soon to die neglected in a rescue home. Munthe says, in the course of his narrative: "Yvonne woke up, asked half-dozed for another glass of champagne and fell asleep again, her head in his lap. . . . I knew that she had given her heart as well as her body to this insatiable male." Then Munthe adds this. "He had no use for anything but her body." Do you wonder he died, at forty-three, an old, half-mad, and worn-out *roué*? And men call this freedom! Sometimes they boast their superiority to all the stupid prohibitions of religion and morality. Freedom! It is the most disgusting servitude.

Go to a rich man who has not learned the stewardship of money and ask his help for some really needy case. Impress upon him its genuine character and give him the privilege of befriending a fellow-man, and then hear him turn you away. Oh! he has the money, but he has learnt to love it for itself, and he cannot bring himself to give a part of it away. Is this freedom? It is one of the commonest and most miserable forms of slavery. Go to a man with time to spare and ask him for an hour a week to read to the blind, or run a boys' club, or engage in some other form of social service,

and then watch his selfish soul wriggle out of it. In all the plenitude of his leisure he murmurs something unconvincing about having 'a lot of irons in the fire, and it would be rather inconvenient. . . .' Is this freedom? It is an unpleasant and undisguised form of selfishness.

You do not give me freedom if you guard me from the Gestapo, or if you safeguard the Press from propaganda and grant me liberty to speak my mind. All these are only the conditions of freedom, immensely important as conditions but not the thing itself. Freedom itself is spiritual; it is a state of the soul. The bravest soldier cannot win it, nor the most astute of statesmen shape it into law. It is a gift of Jesus Christ.

Years ago I lived next door to a small boy who was learning to play the piano. I do not know if there was any psychic connection between our minds, but whenever I resolved to give myself to some deep thinking, the child resolved to give himself to the instrument, and the elementary exercises began with deadening reiteration. He played it, moreover, on New Testament principles: he never let his left hand know what his right hand was doing. Despairing one day of doing any work until he had finished, I fell to wondering what agonies a master-musician would suffer who lived where I lived then. I went further. I proposed this question to my mind: 'Who was more free

with music, the master-musician or this persistent child?' Certain I was that there were many things the boy could do of which the master was incapable. The master was bound by his art: in bondage to canons he could not possibly ignore: there were many things he simply could *not* do. There was *nothing* the boy could not do! He thumped his fingers where he would. Was he more free with music because of that? 'Certainly not,' you reply, 'the master is more free than the child. Freedom is not displayed in the discords, but in the harmonies, and when I want harmony I turn to the enslaved master and I get it from him.'

It is not less true with life. Freedom in life is not displayed in the discords which jangle our nerves and fret our minds, but in the harmonious life of a soul attuned with God. There is a sense in which Christ was the most bound of all men—bound to righteousness and bound by love. Though He was tempted in all points like as we are, His character was such that He could not sin. Free!—in a sense men cannot understand, but a freedom which ever showed itself in the unerring choice of the good. When His earthly ministry drew to its close, and the towering Cross blocked the path He trod, one disciple could denounce Him, another deny Him, and all desert Him, but He must go on. They could run, but He must stay, the helpless prisoner of undying love. Was He free? Yes!—perfectly

free, but it was the perfect freedom of the God who can't! Visualise Him on the Cross! Completely free: securely bound. Transfixed—not by nails, not by a Roman spear, not by soldiers, priests, Pharisees or people—transfixed by an infinite and everlasting love.

He alone can make men free: free of self by bondage to Him. He claimed to do it and He fulfils the claim: 'If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.'

God forbid that any word of mine should minimise the courage, resource, and daring of those men who count not their lives as dear unto themselves that we might be free. But truth demands our clear recognition of the inwardness of this, lest we suffer again the disappointments of victory. Real freedom is not won that way. Nelson had the chief share in preserving our national freedom four generations ago, but he was bound by the wayward desires of his own heart. When he lay dying in the cockpit of the *Victory*, the memory of it filled his mind and he said to his Chaplain-Secretary: 'Doctor, I have *not* been a *great* sinner.' So the proud victor of Trafalgar passed over more conscious of failure than of triumph.

The greatest feat of arms fails to achieve full freedom: it is a gift—on terms—of Jesus Christ.

VI. A NEW ORDER

A NEW ORDER

THE RIGHT HON. ARTHUR GREENWOOD,
M.P.

Minister without Portfolio

WAR WEAPONS WEEK,
DAGENHAM
24 *March* 1941

'Victory for us would mean an escape from the "new order" of domination which Hitler sought to fasten upon Europe. It would also mean opportunity for the nations of Europe and of the world to fashion, in harmony, a **New Order** based on freedom, tolerance, and mutual respect, which would protect the political independence and security of all nations, foster their economic health and strength, and promote improving conditions of life and enlarged opportunities for the peoples.'

A NEW ORDER

WE are all talking about a New World Order. President Roosevelt, Mr. Greenwood, Adolf Hitler, and a multitude of undistinguished men and women. Nobody is satisfied with things as they are. Hitler desires to dominate Europe and, perhaps, the world. On the most kindly interpretation of his new order the place assigned to non-German people is small indeed. Norway must provide the fish; Denmark, the butter; Holland, the cheese; Belgium, the cakes; and France, the wine for the table of the *herrenvolk* of Germany. A new order certainly, but one grotesquely impossible.

President Roosevelt says: 'We still strive mightily to preserve intact that New Order of the ages founded by the fathers of America.'

Mr. Greenwood puts it this way: 'Victory for us would mean . . . opportunity for the nations of Europe and of the world to fashion in harmony a new order based on freedom, tolerance, and mutual respect.'

The plain man longs for a new order because the present one is so obviously insane. A system—or lack of system—in which man can slaughter man,

death rain down from the skies, and the finest products of human genius, which have taken years to erect, destroyed in as many moments by high-explosive bombs, seems unmistakably mad.

But how to get the new order is the problem which tantalises statesmen and social philosophers alike. The ideal shines alluringly before us, but the flinty and obscure road which lies between must somehow be traversed. Men are crying out for leaders to show them the way to the new world.

I

Various answers are being made to the question. Some pin their faith to *the violent way of overthrowing the existing order.* Their magic word is 'revolution'. They may engineer a movement in their own country, like the Nazis did, and then carry it with fire and sword and treachery to their neighbours. There are those in this land who conjure with the same word, though with a class bias, and say that nothing but a violent revolution will effect a radical change. If, at the moment, they are a little quieter than they were, it is only because the war has checked their exuberance and they are waiting for peace and a more suitable hour. A nation in arms is not easily overthrown by revolution.

But some of them do not hesitate to say that the hour will come.

Christian people, however earnestly they may

desire a better social order, emphatically reject the way of bloody revolution. They do so for the following reasons.

(1) Jesus Christ was against it. There were revolutionary movements of that character in His own day, and He took no part in them. There were patriotic Jews who believed that it was the duty of every zealous young Hebrew to plot the complete destruction of Rome. But Jesus never countenanced such schemes.

There is some evidence for believing that certain of His own disciples joined Him in the expectation that He was such a revolutionary leader, and He deliberately disappointed their hopes. There are men in England and in Ireland to-day who, for different reasons and with different political motives, still pin their faith to this kind of revolution. Some of them believe, in their bigotry, that they are doing the right thing, but none can claim the imprimatur of Jesus Christ.

(2) Moreover, a revolution of that character always begets a counter revolution. The world has come to regard Mussolini as the unchallenged victor in Italy and Franco in Spain. 'Fascism', they say, 'has now been established for twenty years and Franco's Party in power for two. They are sure to last!'

But twenty years is a very short time in human history and less than a moment in eternity. Be-

neath the surface of life in every country subjugated by gory revolution there is latent hate patiently waiting its moment to spring. No régime is safe whose prisons are crowded with political opponents and which needs vast concentration camps to hold men who are not criminals and whose only fault is that they differ in political view. There is only one kind of revolution which never brings a counter-revolution, and that is the spiritual revolution wrought by Jesus Christ.

(3) It is plain, also, that no order founded on murder and bloodshed can hope to endure. How can it? The only firm foundation of society, be it as small as a family or as large as a nation, is mutual respect and forbearance. Is it conceivable, short of a vast spiritual revolution, that the boys in Spain will forget who murdered their fathers, or the wives forget who murdered their husbands? Political amnesties have no power to 'pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow'.

Or, to take an illustration from the opposing school of thought, does it not occur to the kindliest observer of life in Russia that everything cannot be well in a land which periodically requires a 'purge', and sends, every few years, another batch of leaders to the executioner?

In the face of these accumulating facts, the Christian cannot but reject the violent way of ending the existing order by gory revolution.

II

Other people, equally concerned about the future, urge *the complacent method of preserving the existing order*. This abandons the quest for a new world order altogether, though they argue, with pitiful *naïveté*, that it will seem 'new enough' with the war over. They talk like this :—

> 'Things are not too bad under the present system : not in peace time. We get along somehow. It is not perfect, but perfection is not for this world. We must maintain things as they are. It will be worth all the struggle and sacrifice and pain if we preserve what we have.'

It will not ! Too many of our fellow-countrymen have next to nothing to preserve. Nothing but casual work, a home in an odorous slum, a long, grim struggle on a pittance, and the 'house' at the last. The 'existing order' as they see it is not worth fighting for.

How little some of our propagandists realise this may be judged by a film displayed some months ago at most of our cinemas purporting to show 'what we are fighting for'. It was a series of 'shots' of sporting events punctuated by the reiterated phrase : 'This is what we are fighting for.' The race-course had special prominence. They were all there : the bookmaker, the touts, and the tic-tac men . . . and again the raucous

voice blared out: 'This is what we are fighting for.' I cannot remember a word from beginning to end of the spiritual values at stake, or even a hint about God.

There is only one word to say about this. This is *not* what we are fighting for. It is not worth it. No desolate mother or girl-widow seeing that picture would visualise with any more courage the lonely grave of their dearest. The present order, humanistic, unredeemed, selfish, and organised in neglect of God, is not worth preserving. It is under the condemnation of heaven. That is why it has broken down. The war itself is only one expression of the dread disease which has laid hold of our life, and cannot be understood in mental isolation from the system which made it possible.

However much, therefore, Christian people may approve the best elements in the existing order, the complacent method of mere preservation, they must, most emphatically, reject. And for these reasons:—

(1) It is not a serious and God-directed effort to establish His Kingdom on earth. Without making amateurish inroads into economic problems, it will be enough to point out that, in our modern highly-organised world, competition plays a larger part than co-operation, and profits are more sacred than human personality. The difficulties of correcting those errors are formidable, and a stout defence of

the system can be made by a trained economist. But if our contention is sound that this is God's world, that He intends a family on earth, and that nothing is more precious to Him than human personality, the difficulties must be conquered and His will done ' on earth, as it is in heaven '.

The laws of economics are not ' laws ' in the same sense as the law of gravity. It will not prove to be beyond the wit of consecrated and professional economists to work out, stage by stage, the Christian view of the social order. The work will not be done first in a pulpit, though the pulpit will have its own part to play in the preparation of the public mind for the plan and the education of the public conscience to sustain it. But, howsoever the change come, the present order will not do.

(2) It follows from the fact that the existing order is organised in neglect of God that it includes vast injustices which cry aloud for correction. The world has not developed at a similar rate in all its parts. The enlightenment of truth, the kindly rays of the Christian message, and the mastery of modern science have given advantages to the West denied to the native peoples of Africa, and beyond the wisdom of the wise East. These advantages have often been twisted to an evil use. The backward areas of the earth have been regarded more as markets for our goods than as fields for our missions. The tardy efforts made to correct this have not

sponged out the slow stain of years of exploitation. When a country like Japan emerges with some suddenness from feudalism to modernity, we succeed in giving it an army and a navy—but hardly a religion. The consecrated labour of a handful of Christian missionaries was quite incapable of preventing the national fanaticism fostered by Shinto becoming a menace to world peace. Europe had simply provided more terrible weapons.

Add to our mistakes abroad the obvious and neglected problems at home (slums, unemployment, vast inequalities of wealth, class snobberies, the concentration of the chief industrial resources of the community in private ownership), and we do not expect to be denied when we say that the present order includes such obvious injustices that its preservation is no adequate aim for life, and no worthy reason for a soldier's death.

(3) Finally, the unsatisfactory nature of the existing system can be shown quite simply and vividly by its insane sense of values. Some of our most distinguished scientists, men who have pioneered the path of true progress and made discoveries of benefit not merely to their own nation but to the whole race, have lived and died in penury, while, at the same time, we have been making princesses out of film stars and paying them sometimes as much as £1,500 a week.

That is not intended as an oblique criticism of

the cinema. Rate motion pictures as highly as you will, and I shall still insist that there is something wrong with a society which starves a poet like Sir William Watson and impoverishes a research student of the calibre of Sir Ronald Ross and, at the same time, makes comediennes and pugilists and base-ball players into minor millionaires.

For these multiplying reasons, therefore, the complacent method of preserving the present order we unhesitatingly reject.

III

To what, then, as thoughtful men and women, can we commit ourselves as being an adequate way of securing the new world of our dreams? Surely this: *the Christian way of transforming the existing order* under God's direction and according to God's plan. Not bloody revolution; not supine complacency; but guided transformation. This is the robust faith we have: that God, who desires this infinitely more than we do, will lead us in the mighty project He holds before our eyes and bless our consecration with Divine wisdom and power.

Yet the hard question remains. How is this to be done? What part may the Church legitimately hope to play in it?

Some people urge that the whole task of Christians is to make more Christians. They see the

Church's responsibilities limited to evangelism, and limited in the narrowest way. Every problem is solved, they say, when men are changed: evangelism, therefore, is not the Church's *chief* task, but her *only* task. They listen with critical concern to the preacher's message, and disapprove his treatment of social and national problems. In the conversion of the individual they see his complete work.

Perhaps the best reply to this attitude is given in the findings of the Madras Conference:—

> 'It is not enough to say that if we change the individual we will of necessity change the social order. That is a half-truth. For the social order is not entirely made up of individuals now living. It is made up of inherited attitudes which have come down from generation to generation through customs, laws, institutions, and these exist in large measure independently of individuals now living. Change these individuals and you do not necessarily change the social order unless you organise those changed individuals into collective action in a wide-scale frontal attack upon those corporate evils.'

Two duties, then, are clearly implied here. Changed men first: and then those same men organised under God to change whatever is seen to be evil in our social system.

But, if some people err in approaching this great task by being concerned only with individuals, the opposite error is to be laid to the charge of others. They appear to think that salvation can be achieved by some particular social theory or system, and they preach it as though it were the Gospel itself. That is why (so it seems to the present writer) the findings of the Malvern Conference are true findings in their insistence that we cannot be saved by a system alone.

> 'There is no structural organisation of society which can bring about the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, since it is the gift of God, and since all systems can be perverted by the selfishness of man. Therefore, the Church as such can never commit itself to any proposed change in the structure of society as being a self-sufficient means of salvation.'

The Church quickens thought most on social problems by asking questions: asking them pointedly and insistently. She would ask employers, for instance, why they pay wages, and employees why they go to work? The questions seem silly, alas!—and they are not new. But they are deep, pertinent, and tear their way to the heart of things.

It is surprising how many Christians in both categories give the answer that is the answer of Communism—even though they may fancy them-

selves the opponents of this political theory. The employer says: 'Why do I pay wages? The question is silly. Because I can't get the work done any other way. . . .' The employee says: 'Why do I go to work? The question is silly. Because I can't get wages any other way.' Then he laughs. 'It isn't the work I want,' he adds in explanation, 'it is the money.'

Both of them—Christians though they may claim to be—are thinking of themselves only as 'economic men'. Their faith has not penetrated this area of their life. Unconsciously, they are conceding the principles of Marxianism. The shallowness of their thinking is fully measured by their sense of the absurdity of the questions. They have no awareness of divine vocation in their toil, nor do they see how revolutionary is the mind of Christ once it has been received.

Nor, in this modern day-dreaming about the shape of things to come, should the idea be too easily indulged that a democracy could be changed swiftly to a theocracy (and the rule of the people transformed into the rule of God) if a State was ruled by men whose chief claim to notice was their fine character; by a Supreme Council, for instance, of Doctors of Divinity.

The relationship between a man's character and his mind is not fully understood. There is no doubt whatever that the spiritual change wrought in

a person by the operation of God's spirit is radical, and affects the whole of his nature, sharpening his wits and enlarging his mind. But conversion does not make a dull man a genius, and a saint is not necessarily an administrator. Catherine Booth, the mother of the Salvation Army, said, when a girl, and speculating with amazing maturity on the man she might one day marry: 'I couldn't be happy with a fool even if he was converted.'

Or, to approach the same question from another angle, what answer would most of us give to the test question which has been posed: 'If you were drowning, would you rather see a burglar on the bank who could swim, or a bishop who couldn't?'

The relation of character and capacity is complex. Converted men are not of necessity able men. That they make better citizens is beyond all question, but if, being concerned with government, men toyed with the idea that any man could hold high executive office if he had the clear marks of sanctification upon him, it is not certain that we would be better served.

One of the best men who ruled this country as a monarch was Henry VI. He was both learned and devout. He founded Eton College for poor scholars (something has gone wrong there!), and King's College, Cambridge. There are grounds for regarding him as a holy man. Unhappily, he was a weak and ineffective king.

It is a plain fact of history that when temporal power and spiritual power have been united there has been a blurring of the spiritual vision and a dreadful mismanagement in affairs. Two instances will suffice. Consider the condition of the Papal States in Italy before Garibaldi. They were among the worst-administered provinces in the whole of that unhappy country and one of the saddest examples of corruption in high places. The cruelty of the priests who served as judges appalled the most hardened laymen.

And—lest I appear to write with Protestant bias—let the other illustration come from Geneva. When Calvin ruled in Geneva it was, in some ways, a rule of darkness. The tiniest infraction of his rigid puritanical law was punished with all the severities of State. People were fined if they did not attend church. Blasphemy, heresy, and idolatry were punishable by death. Servetus was burned alive for erroneous views on the Trinity and Infant Baptism, and religious overseers were appointed to watch the people for their moral fidelity and to visit them in their homes.

That, alas, is what happens when temporal and spiritual powers are identified. Power corrupts, and the Church has a special obligation to keep herself unspotted from the world.

If, then, it is held that evangelism is not the whole task of the Church, and if, on the other

hand, the Church can neither desire temporal government nor identify herself completely with one particular social theory, what is her plain mission and to what end should she be pressing 'with every grace endued'?

It is a dual task, as the passage we have quoted from the Report of the Madras Conference makes clear. She has, first, to make new men and, secondly, to hold before them the New Testament ideal of ordered communal life. To say that the Gospel has social 'implications' is to understate the truth: it is social in its very nature. 'Family', is the key-word. Even the Lord's Prayer (if it is not blasphemous to suggest it) half mixes the metaphors in the interests of truth. 'Our *Father* . . . Thy *Kingdom* come.' It is the Kingdom of a Father—and the Kingdom of a Father is a family. To toil with God for the establishment of that family life is half the Church's task: to keep faith with His purposes when a mad world makes them look like nonsense is difficult indeed, but peace follows war as dawn the night, and for those who have watched and prayed through the darkness, the dawn is the eager hour for building again.

So the two tasks work in with one another, and to set them in opposition is to force a false antithesis. The enterprise is unified. It is both individual and social, personal and corporate. If a particular servant of Christ gives himself entirely

to personal evangelism, believing that to be God's special task for him, but recognising the responsibility of those of his colleagues who are outworking Christ's social ideal . . . that is understandable and no doubt as God wills. But if, giving himself to this task of paramount importance, he denies any need for the other toil, and talks glibly of all problems being solved by simple conversion, he proves himself a false teacher and in the direct descent of those 'pious' men who, in the mid-years of the last century in America, prated about 'the blood of Jesus', but still kept slaves and even made the last defence of that 'sum of all the villanies' from a Christian pulpit.

If, on the other hand, the servant of Christ becomes so enamoured of a certain social theory as to suppose that its acceptance would solve all the matted problems of our individual and communal life, he is like a man seeking to build a stout wall with bad bricks. A rebuilder he may be, but not a rebuilder with God.

New-made men are the prime need of the new world-order, and God condescends to use His Church more than any other agency for the making of new men. To send out, therefore, into the stream of the nation's life men of all types who 'walk with Him in white', and do their work to the glory of God, is a task which will not be done at all if the Church fails in her mission: printer

and premier: judge and journalist: cabinet minister and cabinet maker.

So the new world-order will come! Through what toil and travail we can barely guess, but to be right for direction is a great deal. Neither soldiers nor statesmen can achieve it alone. If the Church fails, all their 'blood, toil, tears, and sweat' will be unavailing. The Kingdom is a gift of God.

VII. PROGRESS

PROGRESS

THE RIGHT HON. THE VISCOUNT HALIFAX,
K.G., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., T.D.

His Britannic Majesty's
Ambassador Extraordinary
and
Plenipotentiary
to
The United States
of
America

PILGRIMS' DINNER
NEW YORK CITY
25 *March* 1941

'There seem to me and my fellow-countrymen certain principles that are essential to life as we wish to live it and to see it lived. These principles are now in dire peril, and we believe, therefore, that we are truly fighting for our lives, since life to us is worthless if the principles on which it is built are to be destroyed. There are, of course, other nations who have different systems of government but who are not less concerned than ourselves to secure a way of life which these principles reflect. And this is because it is on their maintenance that rights fundamental to human life and **Progress** plainly rest.'

PROGRESS

THERE are few words which have been more used, and more misused, in the last fifty years than the word 'progress'. Lord Halifax is not guilty. When he speaks of progress it is linked in his mind with the 'maintenance of certain values', but the commonest error is to suppose that it is dependent on the development of 'things'. To prove the one, alas, is not to prove the other.

This sad and common confusion can be shown in many ways. One of the favourite topics, for instance, of amateur debating societies is the question whether or not the world is getting better. The proposition is differently phrased on different occasions, but the purport is always the same. 'Are modern times better than ancient times?' 'Was primitive man more fortunate than we are?' 'Has civilisation been purchased at too great a price?' In almost every debate the discussion ranged over similar areas of thought and the conclusion was invariably the same. Modern times *are* better: we are fortunate to be born now: civilisation has *not* been purchased at too great a price. A feeling of smugness entered the minds of the

debaters, and the topic wearied for want of real controversy.

Nor can it be denied that there is a great deal of evidence which seems to prove the point.

Think of the tremendous advance our age has witnessed in the *comforts* of life. Some people affect to despise them, but it is largely a pose. An electric light is far better than a tallow candle for lighting a house. A telephone is a boon to any hard-pressed business man. He may complain of its incessant ringing, but he would not consent to be cut off. Electric lifts, carpet-cleaners, gas fires, and hot-water pipes all have a useful ministry in lightening the labour of life, and the people who protest against them on the ground that they ' weaken the fibre of the nation ' might as well save their breath.

After all, as they have been told, they need not use them. They can climb the stairs while others take the lift : clean the carpet with a brush and pan : trudge round the streets for hours making trivial enquiries which can be made in as many moments on the phone. It is foolish to label these things as ' dangerous luxuries ' merely because they were unknown to our forbears. Life will always leave scope enough for toil and travail without these forms of self-denial, and people who are bent on the best things will not find them a snare.

It has been pertinently pointed out that the poorest

person to-day enjoys comforts beyond the dreams of Queen Elizabeth. Her best coach was a bone-shaker beside a modern bus. The sanitary conditions which prevailed in her palaces would not be permitted to-day in a slum. The lighting, heating, and ventilation of Hampton Court when she was Queen are now far surpassed in the simplest council house. When the Spanish Ambassador arrived at her Court in the latter years of her reign, he took a look at the Queen of England and then went to his room to write a letter to his Imperial master. He said: 'She has two big black teeth which stick out of her mouth like tusks.'

The only comment that one can add to that ungallant remark is just this: modern dentistry would have whipped them out and given her a new set, and modern surgery would effectively have dealt with that hideous ulcer from which, it seems, she suffered for years. There are many ways in which it is better to be born a nobody in the twentieth century than a Queen in the sixteenth.

Not only have we gained tremendously in the comforts of life: we have gained also in the swift *transmission of news* and in our *ability to move quickly from place to place.* Neither of these gains is to be despised. The world shrinks as our transport gets more swift. A nation can no longer ignore other nations. The philosophy of isolation becomes irrelevant because the facts themselves have settled

the issue, and interdependence at some level is forced on the most unwilling.

The speed of news to-day can best be shown in contrast with its ambling gait at the beginning of the last century. The result of the Battle of Trafalgar took sixteen days to reach London. The distance was not far, but the news could travel no faster than a sailing-ship and a galloping horse. But to-day an important decision in London is known in Australia (twelve thousand miles away) five seconds after it is announced.

And not only does news travel fast: people travel much more rapidly, too. The swift steamer: the swifter train: the swiftest aeroplane seem almost to have annihilated space. If war had not cut communications, Paris would be just across the road and Berlin merely round the corner. When a man went to the Continent in the eighteenth century, he usually called it a 'Grand Tour': in the peace-time Europe of to-day it is an afternoon call. The world has shrunk. The passion for speed has seized all classes of the community, from the boy on the motor-cycle to the pilot of a Hurricane. There is no particular virtue in speed as such, but it has certainly made contact possible between the corners of the earth; and if God does desire the human race to live a family life together, it is fitting that all the members of the family should be on visiting terms with one another.

Nor does this exhaust all the gains of modern progress. Some of the most amazing advances have been made in the realm of *medicine and surgery*. The cure of cancer may still elude us, but within living memory many incurable diseases have been crossed off the fatal list. Banting did not cure diabetes, but his discovery of insulin gave every diabetic a reasonable chance of life. Minot found the liver cure for pernicious anæmia. More recently, a specific has been offered for meningitis. Research students who are not diverted to the science of slaughter pursue their high vocation in all corners of the world, and their discoveries are not for one age or one people, but for all time and every race.

Old folk can still remember when the very mention of an operation sounded like a death sentence. Sir Frederick Treves was fond of telling how, in his early days at the London Hospital, and before Lister had done his great work on antiseptic surgery, every surgeon had a black, blood-stained frock coat for operations, and the longer his experience and the greater his eminence, the more disreputable the old coat was. Announcing to a poor woman one day that her daughter must be operated upon and asking her consent, Treves received the reply: 'Oh! it is all very well to talk about consenting, but who is to pay for the funeral?' There was no disposition to humour in the sad soul at that grave moment. It

was a remark wrung from her by poverty and by the usual sequel in those days to an operation.

People are not overjoyed even to-day to hear that they must bare their body to the surgeon's knife, but they do not prepare for it by summoning the undertaker.

When, to all these advances in comfort, travel, and surgery, we add also the sensitive social conscience of our day expressed in old-age and widows' pensions, unemployment pay, better housing for the poor, and improved conditions of labour, it will not be hard to understand how easy people found it to be sure that we were progressing and, indeed, to be so sure that they could be smug.

It is when we turn from progress in 'things' to progress in persons that the question gets harder. Nobody can deny the tremendous development in things, but the greatest thing in the world is not a 'thing'—but a person. If one were to stop the average man in the street and ask him if the world is progressing, he would probably point, even in war-time, to an aeroplane, or a wireless set, and say: 'Look at those. Of course, we are progressing.'

But, clearly, it is no answer. Mechanical inventions tell us nothing about the moral development of men. Because we travel five times faster than our grandparents, it does not mean that we are five times as good, or twice as good, or just as good.

The moment one crosses the line from 'things' to men and women, one crosses the line from mechanics to freedom, and must face the incalculable element of the human will. That 'things' have developed is beyond all question. The question, however, which still remains is simply this: 'Have men and women developed too?' 'Has there been an obvious advance in them?' 'Are they clearly nearer to the purposes of God?'

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace said (after ninety years of life and seventy years of science): 'Our scientific development has outstripped our moral progress.' That was in 1913.

Sir James Alfred Ewing, when President of the British Association, said, in his Presidential address, substantially the same thing. That was in 1932.

Both were eminent scientists. This anxious and reiterated word was not the comment of a theologian or a student of ethics. *Scientists* were saying before both the World Wars that our scientific development had outstripped our moral progress. They had become afraid of their own genius. Even the ignoramus believes it now. He looks up into a sky darkened by enemy bombers and sighs for the days when man had no weapon but a bow.

Dr. Wallace went even farther. He made no secret of the fact that if he could unlock more of the power in the universe he would die with the discovery undisclosed in his breast. Lord Trenchard, who has

spent some of the best years of his life fostering the art of flying, wishes the aeroplane had never been invented. How odd it sounds ! Men win distinction in science and mechanics and then fear, like Frankenstein, the monster which they have made. They have come to see themselves that the mind is betraying the soul : that our brains are swift, but our morals uncertain : that nothing can save us from the hell of our own making but some deep and radical transformation of a spiritual nature.

All the splendid possibilities of this new knowledge are clear before their eyes. Better than most men they see the remedial ministry which sanctified science can exercise. They see chemistry strong in the service of those who would cure incurable disease, and the aeroplane carrying the specialist in one country to the speedy aid of a patient in the next. They see—and still draw back. The moral development of man is so stunted that they believe he is not to be trusted even with the power he has, and they halt before a dilemma no statesman or philosopher is able to solve.

Some, indeed, attempt to put the clock back and plead for a return to the primitive life. They exhort a nation to cultivate a rural simplicity—as Mr. Gandhi has done—urging the Indians to sit at the spinning-wheel, eschew Western inventions, and live as near to Nature as they can.

But how hard it is to be consistent. Not many months ago Mr. Gandhi was X-rayed !

Not there is the solution to be sought. To check our brains because our morals are so sluggish is a counsel of despair. The harder task must be essayed: how to grow in morals in such a way that our mastery of 'things' will be no impediment to our true progress, but rather serve the higher interests of the soul.

And the first step towards that is the abandonment of the idea that men *must* improve: that there is something automatic in 'progress': that just as planes get faster, men get better: that it is as certain as sunrise and as inevitable as the tides. The widespread dissemination of that false idea was much older than Darwin, but took new impetus from men's interest in evolution. So sure were they that form evolved from form in some ascending spiral of perfection that they carried the idea over into the realm of freedom and asserted it with the same confidence there. Herschel committed himself to the statement: 'Man's progress towards a higher state need never fear a check,' and Herbert Spencer was 'certain that man must become perfect.'

Of course, it is *not* certain. If men are free, they are free to choose the evil. *If* there is a mechanical development in things, there can never be a mechanical development in persons. The evil in the world will not just *come* right: it has got to be *put* right. There is no escalator to perfection on which the untoiling race can rise by steady degrees to spiritual

distinction: only by redemption, grace, discipline, and effort will the height be made.

That is why the acceptance by many Christians of this mechanistic idea of perfection is all the more bewildering. If men could reach perfection of themselves, what need was there of the Cross? Why had God's Son to toil through the Garden of Gethsemane to the Place of the Skull? These glib talkers of progress took no account of sin and, when they did glance at those ugly things in life which contradicted their optimistic forecasts, they regarded them as growing-pains which the evolving race would soon forget it ever had.

But how hollow that sounds to-day with hell let loose: with our boasted science straining to produce something more devilish than it has ever found before: with millions huddled in air-raid shelters and children torpedoed as they sail to safety.

Sin is not a growing pain: it is a cancerous growth. It is not something innocently natural and easily left behind in the course of normal development: it requires a Celestial Surgeon. In a world which *must* get perfect, Calvary is an aberration, an irrelevance; not an event so much as a meaningless bit of news. But in *this* world, it is the most glorious story any man can tell.

It holds, moreover, the key to the dark dilemma which confronts us. The only progress worth talking about is progress in men, and preaching the Cross

is, as all wise and practised advocates of the Faith will agree, the way to secure that progress in men.

Nor is it hard to understand how it happens. The Cross deals with men as individuals. It cuts to the heart of things with a directness which no speculations about the 'group mind' can ever do. Plain men and women are the units of personality in their individual separateness, and to these individual men and women the Cross, effectively presented, makes its own mighty appeal.

Where else can sin be met but in individual hearts? Sin shapes circumstances, but it is not, in the strict sense, *in* circumstances. It can no more reside *in* 'things' than virtue can. Nor does it exist as some rarified gas in the air, nor yet in the psychologist's 'race-mind.' Its entrenchments are all dug in individual hearts, and he who would fight sin must fight it there. The preacher, who holds up the Cross before sinful men and women, does that very thing. He fights it there.

The challenge of the Cross to sin is fourfold in character. It treats it as real, makes it self-conscious, condemns it, and transforms it. All four.

It treats it as real. It does not call it a 'growing-pain' or describe it with Browning as 'null or void', and regard it as though it were just the shading in the picture put in to heighten the beauty.

It makes it self-conscious. Precisely *how* it does, must be left to a Christian psychologist to explain,

but all ethical experience witnesses that evil becomes aware of itself in the presence of awful purity.

It condemns it. Sin is never seen for what it is so plainly as in the crossed pieces of wood. It is not merely the obvious fact that it must have been a foul world which nailed the spotless Son of God to the tree: it condemns it in the heart of men living 1900 years after and who might be expected to answer its challenge by asking: 'What has this got to do with me?' Yet none that has felt it, and seen it come blindingly to others, can ever doubt it.

It transforms it. The symbol of shame becomes the symbol of glory. The badge of the criminal is the joy of the saint. And in the heart of the penitent sinner the Cross works a mystic alchemy and the loss yields a gain. What was all retrogression is made to serve progress. In ways one can witness but hardly explain, the poor bankrupt's deficiencies pay him a precious dividend.

To 'a man of the world' all this will seem half-stupid and irrelevant. It is, indeed, foolishness to him—as it was to the Greeks.[1] Yet it grapples with sin where alone sin can be met and blasts the impediments to progress where they are hardest to dislodge. We have seen reason to believe that a spiritual change in individuals would not of itself guarantee a changed world, but without it a changed world is impossible.

[1] 1 Cor. i. 23.

VIII. DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY

THE RIGHT HON. W. L. MACKENZIE KING,
C.M.G., M.P.

PRIME MINISTER,
President of The Privy Council,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Canada

HOUSE OF COMMONS,
CANADA
29 *July* 1940

'I believe it will be agreed that the record which will be unfolded represents a remarkable transformation of a peace-loving nation of eleven millions into a people unitedly and effectively organised to fight for the preservation of freedom and **Democracy,** and determined unceasingly and increasingly to give of their utmost to the cause of human freedom which, alone among the nations of the world, if the orient be excepted, Britain and the British dominions are defending in arms at the present time.'

DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY is that form of government in which a people rules itself, either directly or through its elected representatives. It is distinguished in political science from the rule of an absolute monarch (or tyrant) and the rule of an aristocratic few. In the famous phrase of Abraham Lincoln, 'It is the government *of* the people, *by* the people, *for* the people . . .' and it was one of the great watchwords of the West before the First World War. Indeed, according to President Woodrow Wilson, it was one of the reasons why that war was fought. He said: 'We must make the world safe for democracy.'

And now—in the judgment of Mr. Mackenzie King and thousands of others—unrelenting war must be waged again, and for the same high purpose. Democracy, he believes, is in peril. For democracy a man should be prepared to die. The youth and wealth of a great Empire must be freely spent to guard this precious thing. How comes it that men should value democracy so highly? Can the ideal which shines at its heart be really achieved by war?

It is not hard to understand the thrill which democracy can excite in the minds of men. It sounds like the death-knell to tyranny; it seems to establish for ever the worth of common people and to secure everything for which revolutions have been fought. The French revolutionaries stormed the Bastille with their watch-word: 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' and democracy seems to achieve all three. He would have been a bold man who had declared in the first quarter of the present century that democracy would fail.

Yet, that is commonly said to-day, and has been said, with increasing positiveness, for more than twenty years. It has been said not only by responsible men speaking on responsible occasions, but it has been said still more emphatically by certain impressive events. Democracy seems to have disappeared over large areas of Europe, though some countries from which it has vanished had only a semblance of it at any time. This glorious thing, for which wars were fought and heroes died, has almost died itself. In place of democracy the dictators have arisen and, though they give a different name to their political evangel, they all share this in common, that they are opposed to democracy. If the ballot-box has not been abolished in their countries, its power has been seriously curtailed, and behind the dictator stands, in impressive solidarity, not the thoughtful opinion of a free

people freely expressed, but the armed forces of the black-shirts, or the red-shirts, or the brown-shirts, determined that the will of their forceful leader shall prevail.

It is an astonishing phenomenon, and proves beyond all doubting that we live in extraordinary times. The war which was to make the world safe for democracy seems almost to have buried it, and the whole contest has to be fought over again.

I

Let us pause to enquire why this great change of view has come about and why faith in democracy has come to so low an ebb. There is a variety of reasons, not all of them sound ones, put forward by the people who criticise it.

(i) Democracy, it is said, builds on the belief that all men are equal. The American Constitution opens with those words: 'All men are created equal.' While the phrase has an academic accuracy, the critics believe that, in all practical senses, it is nonsense. Nothing is more unequal than human nature. Marked differences are noticeable even in the same family. One child is born with a gift for music and grows up to find melody in everything: another cannot get through the National Anthem without getting off the note. One is born with a brain like a sponge which absorbs everything it is put upon: another cannot pass an examination for

love or money. One is handsome: one is plain. One has personality: one is bovine. One is keen for work: one is keen to escape it. All men equal? —why, there are not two who are really equal. Nothing is more varied than human nature, and only a doctrinaire, it is said, talks to-day about the equality of man.

(ii) Moreover, democracy, as its own advocates are prepared to admit, is often slow and clumsy. Autocrats can always act more swiftly than a democracy. That is why a democracy almost demands a dictator in time of war and willingly forgoes its freedom.

The first thing one must do under a democracy to effect a reform is to get a majority. It can come no other way. The effort to get the majority meets with many impediments. Vested interests fight stubbornly for old privileges, and the years go by with little progress to be shown. John Howard, the prison reformer, spent half a lifetime to initiate reforms the need for which was patent and clamant, but died, at the last, not having received the promise. So slowly comes the golden age. It *must* come slowly with democracy, say the critics, because democracy proceeds on majorities and lethargic human nature never hastens.

Nor can it be denied that the ballot-box is remotely far from being a 'sensitive instrument'. It can count opinions, but it cannot weigh them.

Imagine that a general election is being held and four men are going to the ballot-box. On one side is a thoughtful artisan and a keen-minded business man, both of whom feel the responsibility of their vote and who express hours of patient thinking in the cross they put upon the card. At the same time, two other men are going: some rich fop, thinking only of his class, or some drunken sot, thinking only of his glass, and these irresponsibles cancel out the expressed opinion of the keener men, so that it is just as though they had never voted. That is all democracy can do. It can *count*, but it cannot *weigh*. It says 'One here' and 'one there', but it has no means of saying: 'This is a better one than that one.'

(iii) Not only is it slow and clumsy: it is felt by many critics to be largely ineffective. Since 1918, in Great Britain, we have added millions to the electorate. Women have been enfranchised. Youths left the Army in 1919 saying, 'Old enough to fight: old enough to vote.' The vote has been given here at twenty-one, and in some other countries at eighteen. In lands which have preserved their democratic institutions, more people crowd to the poll (or *could* crowd to the poll) than at any other time in the world's history, and yet it is seriously to be doubted whether, in adding millions to the electorate, the nation has added one jot or tittle to its corporate intelligence.

(iv) Moreover, the achievements of the dictators in peace-time have reflected adversely on the slow methods of democratic countries. Mussolini has drained the fever-laden Pontine Marshes and recovered hundreds of miles of good earth for Italy. Hitler put heart and hope into the German people when they were most depressed, and preached to them the dignity of work. A certain swift efficiency marks the dictatorial rule, and not even the critics of such a régime can deny the improvements this forceful means effects. The time which would be lost pleading for a majority is employed on the work itself. The dictator claims to be a hundred times more useful than the demagogue, and many men, not easily persuaded, came to believe him.

So faith in democracy ebbed, and the dictators built up the power by which they unleashed war on an over-sanguine and complacent world.

II

Yet, however plausible some of the reasons may seem which have been used to defend the rule of the dictators, there is an answer to most of them and counter-criticisms to be posed as well.

(i) Dictatorships, however benevolent, are a denial of liberty. It is customary with tyrants to say that their ultimate aim is the *enlargement* of liberty, but they insist that they are themselves to be the judge of that. Yet nothing is plainer in the mean-

while than that the freedom of the individual is ruthlessly taken away.

(ii) It is clear, also, under such a régime that no worth is placed upon the individual with the single exception of the supreme individual himself. That is why Mr. Punch so pertinently remarks that the smallest volume in the world is *Who's Who* in Italy. The State is all. The plain man is lost like a drop in the bucket. There is mass thinking and mass servility. Whole populations prostrate themselves before the national leader as though he were a god, and private thinking is frowned upon. Nations are told, like the private soldiers in the Army, that they are not expected to think, but only to obey.

It follows, therefore, that the ordinary man of such a nation is kept in continual pupilage and denied the development which freedom alone can give. The tragic consequences of this may be foreseen by an analogy taken from the home. If a wise father were offered the pledge of unquestioning obedience from his son all his days, on condition that his son remained at the mental age of twelve, he would unhesitatingly repudiate the offer. With all the risk which growing-up involves in a world like this plain before his eyes, a wise and affectionate father would scorn the bargain.

Indeed, this universe was founded on that same risk. If God had made us marionettes and not

men and women : puppets and not persons : automatons and not free beings, He could have had a world without sin. But it would have been a world without virtue, for virtue is the fine fruit of freedom. God took the risk : the dictator does not. He fears freedom, and seeks to keep the nation in the kindergarten. He offers efficiency, solidarity, and speed of action—but not freedom. The Press is controlled, broadcasting limited, and the pulpit gagged.

(iii) Nor can it be denied that the rule of the dictator is almost always a fiercely nationalistic rule. Whenever stress is put upon race, there are certain negative consequences of a sad character. They follow by necessary inference. Insist on the supreme distinction of being a German and it is so easy to persecute the Jews. Insist that there is something essentially different in being an Italian and it is not hard to ' civilise ' the Abyssinians with liquid flame and poison gas. Whenever the distinction of one section of the family is stressed against the family as a whole, race-barriers are built and war is certain to supervene.

III

And that brings us to the dilemma for which no solution could be found but the awful arbitrament of war. Western civilisation seems forced to choose between two political theories neither of which

seems to command the whole mind. The war will decide which is stronger, but not which is right. That is one of the bitterest follies of war: it leaves the most important question still unresolved. A thoughtful man is left with the question, 'Shall we have democracy with its slow, clumsy, and oftentimes inefficient methods—and yet preserve our liberties? Or shall we forego our rightful freedom in order to have efficiency, unity, and speed of execution? Shall we trust the ordinary man and put power in his hands, or shall we trust only the super-man and give all the power to him? Is the ordinary man worthy of trust? When one remembers what slight value most people place upon their vote: what fleeting moments they give to forming an opinion, preferring to buy it for a penny in a newspaper, can one really feel that democracy is so precious that the youth of an Empire must be spent to keep it safe?

On the other hand, who among us desires a dictator, the newspapers controlled, trial without jury, the limitation of liberty, and the constant necessity of doing just what we are told? We appear to be in a cleft stick. Neither side of the alternative is really to our taste. How can we resolve a dilemma which is almost as old as man?

Most of us would say that we prefer democracy, but surely not the *old* democracy. No thoughtful man with a son of his own in the Forces can believe

that to have things just as they were before is worth the sacrifice of a million mothers' sons. Democracy is the system which makes the greatest demands upon the individual, and it simply will not work unless we have fine men to work it. Not all the toil and the tears, the losses and gains of bitter struggle, the heroism and grit of countless men of mettle can really establish democracy. They may establish the chance to establish it. The thing itself depends, more than any other political system, on new men.

If the question is raised: 'Can the common man be trusted?' the answer is: 'Yes! if he is a new man in Christ.' If it is said that a man may be converted and still not be a genius, the point is conceded at once. But it would be better to trust power to a multitude of such men than to the cleverest man who was just out for himself.

And that is the Church's great task—the task in which she has, and can have, no rival: to be the instrument under God of making new men. That is why evangelism—in all its varied methods—must be her chief preoccupation, and everything which pulls her from it is a distraction. It is probable that every political theory seriously expounded by keen thinkers could be successfully worked by men who had committed their lives to Christ. Capitalism or communism: authoritarianism or democracy: constitutional monarchy or plain republic. That

is, most emphatically, not to say that one is no better than the other, or to argue that, at this point in the world's history, what is best for one country is best for all. But it *is* to say that the supreme thing with every scheme is the character and spiritual quality of the men who are working it. And, if it is a low character or poor spiritual quality, the best scheme will fail.

Hence, we repeat, that is the Church's task!—her essential part in world transformation: to send out into the community a constant stream of new-made men who have victory over the deep selfishness in their hearts and long, under God, to build the Kingdom here below: men in whom love has supplanted hate, who think of others as themselves, who view time in the light of eternity, and who have heaven before them as a model of what earth might be.

Much of the talk in praise of democracy is shallow and silly. Democracy as we have known it is not worth dying for. It has become a catch-word in the very age when it should have changed from a truism to a battle-cry, and it can never be established by the force of arms alone. It is the system which puts the greatest demand upon the individual, but, fine as it is, it will become simply a phase in a cycle of confusion if it is not worked by fine men.

And Who is it that makes fine men?

IX. DECENCY

DECENCY

THE RIGHT HON. SIR ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, BT.,
C.M.G., M.P.

The Secretary of State for Air

HOUSE OF COMMONS

20 *August* 1940

'The men fighting for us in the air have shown courage in facing the enemy, and unity and a team spirit in working together. Crews and fighter pilots, supporting each other and working among themselves, have shown the faith which is the moral energy which the people of this country and all of us require to carry us through the difficult times which lie ahead of us. We are fighting a conspiracy of two gangsters, governments in Germany and Italy, against the liberties of Europe and the **Decencies**, restraints and moral values of our civilisation.'

DECENCY

THE religion of the average man is 'decency'. Only a small percentage of our fellow-countrymen attend divine worship and can be said, in any strict sense, to practise religion, but that does not mean that they are morally bad. Their religion is 'decency'. A conversation on religion in a railway carriage often includes a statement like this: 'I don't go to church, but I do the decent thing. I never harmed anybody. If I get a chance of doing a good turn, I take it. I am a decent sort of fellow, and I think that, if a man lives a decent sort of life, it does not matter much what he believes.'

There it is. That is the nebulous idea of millions of men and women in this and other countries. It is so firmly held that Sir Archibald Sinclair says the war is being waged for this very thing. Let us examine the belief that belief does not matter and that decency alone is enough.

From *some* standards Hitler is 'a decent fellow'. The youth of Germany, of course, believe that he is perfect, but, judged by the Puritan standards familiar in religious circles in England, he would emerge from part of the test quite well. He does not

drink. If he goes to a beer cellar, as he often does, he only sips a mineral water. He does not smoke. He is industrious, but not avaricious. Many of his friends describe him as open-hearted and generous. Despite the tales which are current in some quarters, it is not certain that he has ever philandered with women, though he is fond of children. Looked at in this limited way, he seems almost to be shaping for a deacon in a nonconformist chapel, and to be quite eligible as a husband even in the critical gaze of the most fastidious mother! He just *believes* a few things that are odd: that Germany is the greatest country in the world; that the Poles and the Czechs and the Jews are inferior races and in their proper place when they are underneath the Nazi heel; that the world will never be perfect till Germany is over all.

Is decency enough? Does it matter what a man believes?

Decency is not enough. It sounds plausible: it can be made to seem tolerant and broad-minded, but it will not bear examination. Decency is not enough.

To begin with, despite the statement that the war is being waged for it, there is no sacrifice in decency as such. It goes on no crusade. There is no cross at its heart. None of the great things which have been done in the world have been done at the dictate of mere decency. When a man says that the

world would be perfect if everybody in it was decent, the answer is plainly this: the world, being what it is, will go to hell if decency is the only thing to stop it. Would Grenfell have spent his life in the frozen wastes of Labrador if he had just been 'a decent fellow'? No! He would have stayed at home, and, when he heard about the need of the people in that little-known colony and of the unfair treatment of those hardy fishermen, he would have said, 'It is very sad; very, *very* sad', and then he would have filled his pipe and read the paper.

Would Josephine Butler have undertaken her marvellous crusade against the white-slave traffic if she had just been a decent kind of woman? No! She would have stayed at home, and when the unpleasant topic was mentioned in her hearing she would have said, 'It is very sad; very, *very* sad. What dreadful things happen in the world!—but this is obviously one of those things that no *lady* would have anything to do with.' Then she would have got up and had an orange.

If Plimsoll had just been a 'decent fellow', the brave sailors of our Merchant Navy would have been sent to sea in coffin ships for another generation.

This is the simple truth. There is no crusade at the heart of decency. It is not enough, because it includes no element of sacrifice. It is indolent, comfort-loving, and far too debilitated to deny itself.

In the second place, decency cannot conserve itself. When people say, 'Never mind about God, just do the decent thing,' they are divorcing two things which cannot be divorced. There is a causal connection between God and decency. If you do not mind about God, decent things pass under sentence of death. It is impossible to play fast and loose with causal connections.

One might as well say, 'Never mind about the foundations: just build the house on the sods. Never mind about the rudder: just put the ship out to sea. Never mind about the laws of health: just go out and have a wild time. Never mind about God: just do the decent thing!' But the house won't stand, the ship won't steer, health disappears, and decency decays. Is it an accident that it is in those countries where religion is proscribed or persecuted, where God is abolished or reduced to some tribal deity, where piety is ground for mirth and the Bible a despised book, that liberty, freedom of speech, fairness of trial, and security of tenure are all under sentence of death? I cannot think that it is an accident: there is a causal connection here. Multitudes of people believe that one can have decency without religion, but one might as confidently expect the grapes without the vine.

Some months ago I took my children to see a film about Stanley and Livingstone. It was said to be good missionary propaganda. As I went in the door

I proposed to my own mind a little ruse. I said to myself, 'I will look at this picture just as though I were one of the ordinary decent-minded non-church-going people from the street, and try to test the impression it would make upon me.'

It was a good film. We journeyed with Stanley from New York to Africa, and, in his company, we hurried through the bush to Ujiji. Livingstone was at Ujiji. We noticed the clean and orderly character of the little village; that the people were healthy and sensibly clothed; that there was no slavery or squalor, and that peace reigned over all. We watched fascinated as the good doctor performed an operation upon a sick boy. It was all beautiful. In my rôle as the ordinary decent-minded non-church-going man from the street, I approved everything I saw.

And then we caught a glimpse of something else. Stanley woke one morning to hear some strange noises, and looking out of his hut he saw Livingstone teaching a group of coloured people to sing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers.' The famous missionary banged his book and marched up and down in a way which would have reminded most people of the Salvation Army. It looked slightly ridiculous, and then it was that the ordinary decent-minded, non-church-going person I supposed myself to be began to have an argument with the real me.

'Very silly', said my pose.

' Very good ', said myself.

' Why can't we have the one without the other? ' said the non-church-going man.

' You cannot have the one without the other ', I answered back. ' No one who studies Livingstone's life can be in any doubt about that. The drive, the dynamic power, the intense longing, the mercilessness with self—they all had a divine origin. The fire which glowed in Livingstone's heart had been lit from " a coal taken with the tongs from off God's altar ". In my judgment, that fire can be found nowhere else. There may have been a touch of caricature in the way the picture showed Livingstone offering his message, but there could be nothing of caricature in the offer itself.'

And now let us try to put our finger on the reason why this old fallacy that decency is enough, and it doesn't matter what a man believes, really came to gain currency. It was made plausible by sectarian trivialities and by a stress on things of slight importance. Shallow-minded people love to argue over trivialities and raise a pyramid upon a point. A woman told me once, when I was a very young man, and had gone into an Anglican church to say my prayers, that she knew I was a nonconformist because I was so irreverent. And when I remembered how quietly I had slipped in and knelt down, and how quietly I would have slipped out if she had let

me, I wondered how she had discerned irreverence in me. Then it came out. She said, ' You did not genuflect to the altar.'

Or look at it the other way. I have known a robust kind of nonconformist who seemed to think that a man could not offer a sincere prayer if he read it. They were contemptuous of all written prayers. I have heard them say, with a touch of scorn : ' He can't pray unless he has a book.'

I remember when I was in the Army being refused the Holy Communion by a Chaplain because I had not been confirmed. ' If you had only *not* told me you had not been confirmed, I would gladly have given it to you; but now you have told me, I can't.' I felt at the time that it was strange that honesty should be penalised in that way, and it is when the plain man hears things like that, little scraps of bigotry and little bits of logic-chopping—' You are not reverent if you do not genuflect to the altar.' ' No prayer is real if it is not extempore.' ' You cannot come to the Holy Communion; a bishop did not put his hands on your head '—then it is that the plain man says, ' Away with all this foolery. I am tired of it. It seems to me that it doesn't matter what a man believes so long as he lives a decent life. . . .' And there, while you are dealing with trivialities, I believe that the plain man is right. It does not matter, so I hold, whether a man genuflects to the altar or not, as long as there is a sense of

reverence in his heart : it does not matter whether a man reads his prayers in public worship so long as he offers them in sincerity : and, if a man has not been confirmed but is a devout believer in the Lord Jesus, it seems to me that he should be admitted to the Holy Communion in the only circumstances when he would desire it—namely, when he cannot get it in his own way.

But where the plain man goes wrong is surely here : the fine scorn he uses over trivialities he extends to the things which are not trivial. He is tempted to believe that *all* differences of religion are bits of logic-chopping and supremely unimportant. And there, as I believe, he goes seriously wrong.

A ministerial friend of mine often tells of an experience he had in a London Tube train as he was travelling to a preaching appointment on a Sunday afternoon. He says that there was nobody else in the carriage but one other man who fixed him, to his intense embarrassment, with an unblinking stare and finally broke the silence by saying :

' I perceive, sir, that you are a Roman Catholic priest.'

My friend replied, ' No, I am not.'

' In that case,' went on the stranger, ' you will be an Anglican vicar.'

' No ! Not even that.'

Gazing at him still more curiously, the questioner went on : ' Indeed, sir, what are you, then ? '

And being in puckish mood, my friend replied: 'I am a Nonconformist High Churchman.'

'Are you, indeed?' said the perplexed man slowly. 'I have never heard of that kind. Well, I don't mind telling you that I'm an atheist. *An atheist!*'

Then he added with disarming geniality, 'But what does that matter really? *We are both going to the same place.*'

I have tried to convince my friend that his acquaintance may not have been so woolly a thinker as he sounded, and that perhaps a roguish insinuation lurked beneath his guess about 'the same place' for which they were both bound (!), but that scrap of railway conversation will serve to illustrate what I mean by those questions which have ceased to be unimportant. Questions of genuflecting and printed prayers may both be, in their degree, of slight significance, but here is a man suggesting that if he lives as though God were not there, ignores the Almighty, and simply conforms, in some limp way, to the conventional code of morality, then nothing else matters and his destiny (which he has already, by implication, denied) is precisely that of a man who has dedicated his whole life to the purpose of Christ and 'scorned delights and lived laborious days' to bring the Kingdom in. Is it so unimportant that God is there: that He has made the universe and made it so that it will only work His way: that when we ignore Him and His divinely-ordained laws we take

the path to Hell? Decency cannot save us. The same man who seems to one nation so great that the word 'decent' is a blasphemous understatement, and concerning whom they are ready and eager to use the most fulsome expressions, seems to honest men in another nation to be the anti-Christ himself. Belief it is that matters: the belief on which one lives and for which one will die.

In 1929 John Middleton Murry, critic, author, and leader of advanced 'intellectuals', wrote a book called *God*, in which he dismissed God from His own universe, derided the Churches, and sought to establish a religion which should have man at the centre. In effect he said: 'Glory to man in the highest.'

In 1939, and at the age of forty-nine, he was studying for the ministry of the Church he had once despised, and this is what he said:

> 'When I wrote my book in 1929, I was much too optimistic about the evolution of man. In spite of the war, and in spite of my disillusions after the war, I still had a very optimistic faith in human decency. But when it comes to standing up to the power of the organised State, then human *decency is not enough*. You have got to have sheer religious faith and an organised Christian Church.'

There is something rather shallow in saying that the war is being waged for decency, and something

both painful and pathetic in the idea of men dying for it. It proves on examination to be such a vague and unsubstantial thing, and unsecured when a river of blood has been poured out.

Everything precious at the heart of this blurred word—and infinitely more—is in the Christian Faith, clear, reinforced and secure. Arms may achieve some of the conditions of it, but only God can make it sure.

X. SPIRITUAL THINGS

SPIRITUAL THINGS

GENERAL THE RIGHT HON. J. C. SMUTS,
C.H., M.P., K.C., F.R.S.

PRIME MINISTER
Minister of External Affairs
Minister of Defence
South Africa

UNITED PARTY CONGRESS
OF
THE ORANGE FREE STATE
4 *December* 1940

'The conflict now going on in the world goes to the roots of human society and of those things we stand for and hold dear in life. I feel that if Hitler wins the war and Nazism becomes the world's creed, there will be a setback of a thousand years in human history. We have come to this country with a tradition and a destiny. We believe in the Christian principles handed down by our forefathers. What we are fighting for are **Spiritual Things**.'

SPIRITUAL THINGS

FEW reflective men would deny the statement of General Smuts that we are fighting for 'spiritual things'. Many would want to qualify it, and make it clear that we are not fighting *only* for spiritual things. Motives are difficult to disentangle at any time, and we seldom, if ever, get them single and pure. Considerations of safety, economic stability, and racial pride mingle with other aims to produce the unanimity and resolution of our national will; but few who think would deny that spiritual things are at stake and that religion is playing no unimportant part in this immense contest.

It is easier, perhaps, to prove that we are fighting against a false faith than to prove that we are valiant for a true one.

The keynote of German religious propaganda changed at the Christmas of 1940, and was set to a different tune in 1941. This was most noticeable in the Yuletide and New Year speeches of all her leaders. Religion was pulled in. God received more than a reference. The concern of Providence for the triumph of Germany was stressed—and it is interesting to enquire why.

There have always been two schools of thought on religion in Nazism: one in uncompromising opposition to Christianity, and the other ready to accommodate and use it. One has been in the ascendant for a while—and then the other. Only in this way can we explain the two voices with which the Party has spoken.

As an instance of the school of uncompromising opposition we may quote the Letter of Instruction issued by Dr. Ley in April 1937 to the School Teachers, Storm Troopers, the Labour Front, and the Hitler Youth. This authoritative word—not the irresponsible babbling of an unrepresentative fanatic—but the chiselled speech of a high Minister of State, is set out in creedal form:

> 'Adolf Hitler, to thee alone we are bound. In this hour we would renew our solemn vow; we believe in this world on Adolf Hitler alone. We believe that National Socialism is the sole faith to make our People blessed. We believe that there is a Lord God in Heaven, who has made us, who leads us, who guides us, and who visibly blesses us. And we believe that this Lord God has sent us Adolf Hitler, that Germany should be established for all eternity.' [1]

Still more emphatic is Herr Rosenberg in his *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, in which it is insisted that Jesus Christ was Aryan and not Jewish: that the

[1] *National Socialism and Christianity*, N. Micklem, p. 9.

traditional faith is a vile travesty of the original gospel and that the corruption was due to St. Paul : that such weak and repellant ideas as universal love, long-suffering, gentleness, meekness, and humility, are all of them alien to Christ's ' true ' teaching, which would produce, one must assume, ' supermen ' on the Nietzsche model.

Inevitably, in a country with its own strongly established Christian traditions—in short, in the land of Luther—some revulsion was felt towards this accent in Nazi teaching, and those leaders in the Party who believed that Christianity could be ' accommodated ', and the deep religious convictions of the people not outraged, gained the Führer's ear. It is a shrewd guess to say that ' the word went round ' at Christmas 1940, and has affected all subsequent official speech. Speaking from the Beer Cellar in Munich on 24 February, 1941, Herr Hitler himself had his own words to say about God and Providence, and the German people, who believe that he is divinely led, will be grateful that he seems conscious of the ' guidance '.

But what does this ' accommodation ' of Christianity to National Socialism involve? What has happened to the Faith when the Nazis condescend to ' use ' it?

This! It becomes a poor, attenuated thing. It is reduced from a universal message, leaping over race barriers and girdling the globe, and becomes the tool of national ambition and the dope of those

who do not, and dare not, resist. While Christianity remains a form of personal piety, complete freedom is granted to it, but if it begins to talk about its implications—that in Christ, for instance, there is neither Jew nor Greek—it is said to be preaching politics and suppressive measures are taken. Dr. Ley intrudes again and says :

> 'The Hebrews are parasites like tuberculosis germs, like bacilli. They are a biological phenomenon. It is absurd to have compassion on the Hebrews. Those who suffer from tuberculosis do not have compassion on the germs of their disease.' [1]

So the Faith is denied whenever its teaching runs counter to party politics. Karl Barth must fly. Martin Niemöller is silenced. Rupert Mayer is imprisoned.

The lowest estimate of Christians in concentration camps is 200,000. More than 80 per cent. of the unhappy occupants of these prisons are not Jews. No wonder that Albert Einstein, the world-famous scientist and German Jew, says :

> 'Being a lover of freedom, when the revolution came in Germany, I looked to the Universities to defend it, knowing that they had always boasted of their devotion to the cause of truth; but, no, the Universities immediately were silenced. Then

[1] *National Socialism and Christianity*, N. Micklem, p. 6.

I looked to the great editors of the newspapers whose flaming editorials in days gone by had proclaimed their love of freedom; but they, like the Universities, were silenced in a few short weeks. . . .

Only the Church stood squarely across the path of Hitler's campaign for suppressing truth. I never had any special interest in the Church before, but now I feel a great affection and admiration because the Church alone has had the courage and persistence to stand for intellectual truth and moral freedom. I am forced thus to confess that what I once despised I now praise unreservedly.'

If the Germans win in this contest, the cause of true religion will inevitably be set back.

But if *we* win, that fact alone will not establish spiritual things. The *opportunity* to establish spiritual things will be within our grasp, but God alone knows if we will take it. Military history is littered with the records of inept commanders who have won their battles but failed to follow them up. Nations are similarly—and tragically—foolish. It is only in a limited, preparatory, and half-crude way, that one can fight with arms for spiritual things. There is a deeper contest at issue: a contest for which our nation is not stripped or fighting-fit: a contest in which, if we lose, not all the valour of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen will have achieved

much. In the last resort 'our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness. . . .' [1]

The pity of it!—that only the few see the *inwardness* of the struggle, and that so many who are enlisted, in various ways, in the one war, are ignorant of, or indifferent to, the fortunes of the other.

Nor can it be denied that certain features of our national life cause us grave concern when we look at them from a spiritual angle. When Mr. Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, *first* announced in the House of Commons that under an Order in Council he was proposing to permit the Sunday opening of theatres and music-halls, the information was greeted with cheers. Cheers! Not the perplexed and reluctant decision of men aware that our Day of Rest and Worship had had its own great part to play in all that was fine in our national character, but who felt painfully compelled not to oppose a public demand the size of which had been exaggerated to them—but anxious, eager, thrilled to throw another bit of our valued heritage to the scrap-heap. And cheering at the prospect of doing it!

But when the issue was put to a free vote it was found, as often, that the minority had been doing the cheering.

Or consider the problem of drink. Milk and

[1] Ephesians vi. 12.

bread apart, all the chief foods of the country are now rationed, and the farmer can only get food for his cattle with a ration card. Barley is controlled in that way. But while the use of barley is strictly regulated when it concerns cows, pigs, and poultry, it is limited to the brewer by nothing more serious than a 10 per cent. cut on what he used in the year ending September 1939. The consequence is that, even with the country at war, no one is denied a pint of beer, however many pints he may have consumed already. If he can 'carry it' without obvious intoxication, he can go on swilling it to his heart's content.

Tea must be rationed—but not beer!

If it is argued that beer is a large source of revenue—so is petrol!

When the brewer says that his commodity is 'home-produced', he knows quite well that that is only partly true.

It is small consolation to people who find it hard to get coal because of transport difficulties, to know that neither weight nor bulk have prevented the brewer getting his goods to the customer.

No man who has had wide experience of large shelters but will admit that drink is one of his chief problems. He may have authority now to exclude a 'drunk', but, in the first place, he has no mind to deny the door to any fellow-creature when the bombs are falling and, in the second place, his trouble arises in large part from people

who could not be called technically 'drunk' but who are in a state of sub-intoxication, and whose language, stupid arguments, quarrelsome tempers (and quite often disgusting vomiting) run back to their excessive indulgence in drink, still unrationed to the individual consumer.

An earlier closing hour at night for public-houses, and for the liquor bars in clubs, is an urgent need. If, together with this, we could have a Government Liquor Control Board, as in the last war, we should be better able to deal swiftly with this menace when we meet it in the neighbourhood of munition factories, in certain areas overcrowded with evacuees, and in the environs of camps.

Or consider the national brand of humour as illustrated by certain well-known places of entertainment in the West-End of London—and sampled on occasion in the Forces Programme of the B.B.C. How soiled and suggestive some of this humour is! What unpleasant innuendoes and nasty asides! And when one remembers what honest efforts are made by the B.B.C. to filter their programmes, one is half-prepared for what these dealers in the dirty can do when the radio censor has no longer to be respected. One feels like going home and having a bath.

It has fallen to my lot to organise many concerts for bombed-out people. In my own modest way, I am something of a specialist in humour, and I love to see the crowd rock with wholesome fun. But I

have come to the conclusion that many of these professional humorists have dealt in thinly-veiled obscenities so long that they do not know how to be clean, and if one was utterly rigid in censorship of their patter they simply could not go on.

They are poor craftsmen. They cannot engineer a joke except out of vulgarities, and they have no defence against a rebuke but the hoary gibe about 'kill-joys'. I have heard more side-splitting laughter in the social activities of a healthy church than I ever heard in halls given over to revues and cabarets. And there was no taint about it! It did not set out to inflame lust and hang evil pictures on the minds of young men and women.

Returning from a military concert recently, and feeling deeply incensed at the foul suggestiveness of much that I had heard, I turned on the wireless and listened to an address on our war aims. It was part of the speaker's point that we were fighting for religion: he described our soldiers as 'crusaders', and sought to impress upon us the holy character of the cause. I believe in the cause. I have made clear in what sense I strongly hold that we are fighting for spiritual things—but scraps of the dirty jokes I had just heard kept rising in my memory, and the sad contradiction of it all tore at my heart.

My own Army days came back to me. I joined up in the last war on the day I was eighteen, be-

lieving in the justice of the cause and feeling like Sir Galahad embarking on a knightly project. But into what utter misery I plunged !

Perhaps they were a particularly tough lot—but the language, the filthy stories, the sexual looseness, the scorn of serious religion expressed towards any man who knelt to pray ! It gave me a new revelation of the horror of sin. Not being fully sanctified (!), I thrashed a man who hit me across the back with a bayonet while I was at my prayers. After that, I was respected.

Our Army to-day is sometimes called a ' citizens' army ', and it includes every type. It includes some of the finest men alive. But it is in the nature of evil to claim notice, and seek to propagate itself wherever men are herded together in large numbers, and no men more deserve remembrance in prayer than those who valiantly stand for Christ in a crowded camp.

And those men discover this. Their worst comrades often have the most amazing elements of nobility in them. The courage and sacrifice of which some of the most foul-mouthed men are capable are simply beyond praise. You cannot consign them to the devil. Just when you are satisfied that a certain man is a blackguard without a redeeming trait, he will go and risk his life to do something so incredily unselfish that you know God cannot let him go. Their nature is so

mixed. Dividing them into sheep and goats is impossible. Falling in one day with a Christian from another battalion, he told me of a man in his platoon who went over the top into No-man's land and, at great risk to his own life, brought a wounded officer in. And, on the way back, he picked the pocket of the man he had saved!

Yet, still the yearning aches within the heart. If these men are, indeed, defending precious things: if, in an hour of mortal danger to freedom and religion, they stand in the breach to save the citadel, how grand it would be if they could see the inwardness of the contest and 'lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset them and run with patience the race that is set before them, looking unto Jesus. . . .'

It will seem to some people that I am unduly concerned about things which are trivial in the nation's life. Sunday observance. Drink. Humour. They all appear trifling to men who do not share my concerns.

But they are not trifling—because they are symptoms. The first little white spot which betokens leprosy is trifling *in itself*. Does it really matter? But it is a symptom of *leprosy*—and leprosy kills.

Those of us to whom is committed the care of the nation's spiritual health, and whose task it is to guard against the leprosy of the soul, must not

be one whit less dutiful than the soldier on the field, or the surgeon with his knife. Each has a duty to do, a duty from which nothing must deflect him; laziness, cowardice, unpopularity, or fear. All is not well with our nation's spiritual life. God has been left out. Occasional Days of National Prayer are not enough. We leave our churches empty—and then weep over them when they are bombed. There is need for repentance and moral rejuvenation. We shall lose the bigger war if we do not get back to spiritual things.

It is sometimes said that the supreme chance for the Church will come after the war. Not till then.

But that is a dangerous statement, not to be received without scrutiny.

If men mean to imply that religion must be relegated to the reserve while the conflict is on, and that any lazy shepherd of souls can clutch at this as an excuse for doing nothing until a peace treaty is signed, then the suggestion must be rejected. The times are times of opportunity. There is a willingness to hear a man who has a sure word about God. Burdened and sorrowing hearts welcome ministry. Karl Barth said: 'God enters through a breach.'

And yet there *is* a sense in which the statement is true. When the smoke drifts from the battle-field and the time for rebuilding has come, will men listen to God, seek to work out the Divine plan, give the Church a central place in national life,

resolutely try to realise the New Testament ideal of the family . . . ?

Or will God be ignored, the serious tasks neglected for a wild and prolonged orgy of pleasure, and the Church lampooned as a slow, outmoded institution incapable of planning the new age?

A thing is often slow—but too fast to get off!

When I was with the Army of Occupation in Germany, I obtained a pass for a day's holiday in Cologne. The journey of thirty kilometres was made in the cattle-trucks used for transporting troops, and called forth my usual sallies at their pitiful slowness and constant stops. My chums were long used to my caustic comments on the speed of the trains.

But a strange thing happened as we were coming home. The hour was late, and the trucks did not stop at my station, but kept steadily on for the terminus six kilometres ahead. I yelled out to the train to stop, but I was either unheard or ignored. The prospect of a long, dark walk back through an alien country was not to my taste, and when I expressed some wonder as to what I should do, my comrades reminded me of my opinion of the speed of the train and urged me to step off.

I went to the door and swung a leg over the abyss, but as I looked at the track it seemed to be rushing past. Once . . . twice . . . three times . . . I nearly jumped, and then I gave up the idea and sat down on the floor of the truck amid a howl of

laughter. As I walked home to my billet that night I had plenty of time to reflect on the fact that a thing may be slow and yet too fast to step off.

I would say that about the Church. I have known men complain bitterly of her sluggish social conscience, her failure to challenge wickedness in high places, and her somnolence while the poor were oppressed. God forgive us! There is more than a little truth in all this.

But, slow as she is, she moves too fast to step off, if, in stepping off, men fancy that they can travel faster alone. A new order will not be built quickly by the most impatient idealists working by themselves, and it will not be built at all by those who ignore Christ. The Confessional Church has proved in Germany, as Einstein so gladly admits, that an institution which seems to people outside it to be half-moribund can be as triple steel when her deep convictions are assailed and, in the very teeth of death, fling up worthy members of the goodly fellowship of the prophets and magnificent recruits for the noble army of martyrs.

Such an institution has claims to be heard in the counsels of the nations. As God chastens and cleanses and strengthens His Church, her claims will prevail over all others.

THE END