

Good Tidings



NIGHT FIRES BEHIND ST. PAUL'S.

THE NATION AND THE WAR.

GENERAL SIR WM. R. ROBERTSON, K.C.B., K.C.V.O., etc., made in 1918 the following appeal that may well be re-echoed to-day:

"I fear that even yet too many of us are putting an undue amount of trust in 'chariots and horses.' We may confidently rely upon our soldiers and sailors fighting bravely and count upon having abundant ammunition, but we must not stop at that. I am old-fashioned enough to think that this great War, like those of which we read in the Old Testament, is intended to teach us a necessary lesson, and if this be so it follows that we ought to examine ourselves and take the lesson to heart. A serious determination on the part of the Nation to seek and deserve Divine help would, we may hope, enable us to take a true perspective of the War, and it would undoubtedly furnish valuable help to our gallant sailors and soldiers at the front, as well as lighten the heavy burden of responsibility now carried by the various authorities at home and abroad."

These weighty words formed a preface to an eight-page programme inviting to two great public meetings in the Queen's Hall, Langham Pl., W., on Tuesday, Feb. 5th 1918. The chairman at the morning meeting was Sir Andrew Wingate, K.C.I.E., and in the afternoon Maj.-General Sir Charles H. Scott, K.C.B., presided.

Of ten hymns appended the last ran as follows:

Our Country.

Now in this our hour of need
For Thy mercy, Lord, we plead,
For our land we intercede;
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

Our Cause.

In the battle for the right
May we ever blameless fight,
Win through darkness into light;
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

Our Soldiers.

Guard our soldiers, leaving all
At their King and country's call,
Be with them whate'er befall;
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

Our Sailors.

Guard our ships that never sleep—
In the ceaseless watch they keep
Out upon the mighty deep;
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

The Dying.

When our dear ones faint and fall,
When the pains of death appal,
From the depths to Thee we call!
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

The Suffering.

Comfort all in their distress—
Prisoners, exiles, fatherless—
In their loss and loneliness;
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

For Peace.

Grant that war at last may cease,
Love and brotherhood increase,
Till all strife be hushed in peace
Hear our prayer, O Lord!

But what did General Robertson mean by "a necessary lesson," "self-examination" and "taking this lesson to heart" and thereby gaining "a true perspective of the war"? He referred to the Old Testament history as showing the moral, spiritual causes of the war. They are, as we see there, **departure from the fear and service of God! Indifference to the voice and will of God.** In one word: "Doing evil in the sight of the Lord" (cf. Judges 3. 1; 4. 1; 8. 33-34). Therefore resulted for Israel of old, **war, oppression and distress.** Expressed in the words of Deborah, the prophetess: "**They chose new gods; then was war in the gates!**" (Judges 5. 8).

Has it not been largely so with us, as a nation, ever since the last great war? And that **in spite of Divine warnings and appeals** by men of God! Has not sport, pleasure-seeking, self-pleasing, business, anything and everything but God's will, taken the place that should have been God's in our hearts and lives? Listen to one of those widely spread **appeals** by Sidney Collett (author of that splendid work on the Bible: "The Scripture of Truth"). He has truly gaged the moral, the spiritual state of Britain since the last World-War, when he writes thus on

BRITAIN'S PERIL.

O Britain! thou privileged nation,
How greatly thy people are blest!
Thou hast since the great Reformation
Had liberty, riches and rest.

The Bible has laid thy foundations,
The Sabbath has given thee rest,
Thy wealth is the envy of nations,
Thy land by no foe is oppressed.

These blessings are not of thy making,
Thy God is the giver of all;
But, if Divine laws thou art breaking,
Like Babylon, thou too shalt fall.

What spirit can now have possessed thee?
What means all this unrest within,
Forsaking the God Who hath blessed thee,
For worldliness, pleasure and sin?

The Bible, God's great revelation,
Thy people neglect and despise;
While doctrines of man's commendation,
Are "highly esteemed" in thine eyes.

Thy Sabbaths no longer kept holy,
Are given to pleasure and gain;
And thus with gross impious folly,
God's rest-day thy people profane.

By preachers—how few preach God's message!
The services pleasant are made,
And Sunday amusements all presage,
Thy Glory beginning to fade.

Thy leaders for "party" contending,
Seem blind to the country's true weal;
On human devices depending,
They promise thy troubles to heal.

Thy people—some drunken with pleasure,
While others with cares are engrossed;
For God—oh! how few can find leisure
And soon, alas! all will be lost!

Thy army and navy will fail thee,
If thus the Lord God thou forsake;
Political schemes won't avail thee,
If sacred commandments thou break.

For God has His eyes on this nation;
O Britain to thee will be sent
The doom of thy just condemnation,
Except, ah! "except thou repent."

Then humble thee proud British nation,
Give diligent heed to God's Word;
Appoint now a day of confession,
And turn from thy sins to the Lord.

For God is a God of Compassion;
So, if thou His mercy implore,
He'll stay thy deserved retribution,
And favour Great Britain once more.

Before God almighty, infinite and eternal, the Creator of the heavens and the earth **all the nations together** are (as we read in Isaiah 40. 15) as a "drop of a bucket," as the "small dust of the balance" yea "as nothing."

Has not He the right, as Creator and Redeemer (Isaiah 43. 1, 7, 21) to claim a hearing and obedience to His Word. And if in the mad rush and din of pleasure and worldliness and of self-seeking His voice is not regarded or rejected shall He not judge?

When in 1914 the Kaiser declared war, a German Christian General (v. Viebahn) issued a befitting tract for soldiers which went into all the barracks. The title was: "**The Kaiser calls to arms, God calls to repentance!**"

Surely that is what **General Robertson** meant when he spoke of self-examination and taking the lesson to heart."

But what is **NATIONAL REPENTANCE**? Is it not **COLLECTIVE INDIVIDUAL** Repentance? When **each one individually** turns from all that is contrary to the will of God and returns as the prodigal son (Luke 15), confessing his **sins and sinfulness** to God (1 John 1. 8-10) asking as the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16. 30) "what must I do to be saved?" then the **blood of Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God**, can "be of sin the double cure, cleansing from its guilt and power." **Faithful is He that invites**: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). **Faithful is He that has promised**: "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6. 37).

In 1915 an able writer (Alfred E. Knight, in "The World War and After") asks: "Our ever growing army, our improved munitions of war, our watchful navy, the wise resourcefulness of our trusted leaders, the splendid courage of our soldiers and sailors—what are these things, or any other qualities or equipments, if our ways are not right with God?" And again he says: "God Himself links humiliation with prayer in His gracious promises to a backsliding Israel." "If my people which are called by my name, **shall humble themselves and pray**, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and I will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7. 14).

We, too, have sinned, each individually and all collectively as a nation . . . and God is holy. Yet this thrice-holy God is Love, and so, even before the foundation of the world, God so loved the world, including you and me, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3. 16; 1 Tim. 1. 9).

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WHAT SHALL I DO ?

"**PILATE** saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified." So runs the words of Matthew 27. 22, and so is brought home to us the fact that the creature had no room on the earth for his creator.

Will you try to forget for a moment these circumstances, and where you are as you read this paper, ask yourself the question "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?"

"Oh, well, you know, I was never a very religious person, but I try to do the best I can; I pay twenty shillings to the pound, and as far as morality goes, well I suppose I am as good as the next." I've heard it all before, and it's not a very convincing recitation. Face the question like a man; what will you do with Jesus? Don't be hypocritical; if you don't want Him, say so, and take your place with those who hurried Him to a cross of shame and ignominy.

"But I'm hardly as bad as that. In fact there are folks who profess to be Christians, and I should not like to be guilty of some of their conduct." True, very true, but tell me, did God ever ask your opinion of those who profess to be Christians? Do you not even now hear Him say, as He may rightly say, "What is that to thee?" This is the question upon which hinges the eternal salvation or damnation of your soul. What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? After all when you stand before God and have to answer a similar question, it will be of no avail then to suggest that someone else who professed to be a Christian did you some very bad turns on earth. Be wise, leave the other person to God who alone judgeth righteously, and see first of all that you answer this question aright.

What will you do with Jesus? An old Scots body on being asked the same question replied "I'll juist tak Him hame wi' me, that's what I'll dae wi' Jesus, I'll juist tak Him hame wi' me." Will you receive Him so gladly as did she? He stands at the door of your heart waiting until you swing it back and let Him in. Do not turn Him away. Do not adopt the cry of that throng at Jerusalem. W.L.