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“Chosen . . . in the Furnace of Affliction”

THOUGH the hope of many is that 1943 may be the year of victory, we are still in the furnace, and millions are suffering from the ravages of war, and the barbarous brutality of our enemies.

We are reminded that it was when the children of Israel were in the furnace of affliction that Moses heard the voice of God and received his call; it was during the early days of Christian persecution that the Apostle John, an exile in the Isle of Patmos, had his vision of the triumphant Lord and the glory of a new Jerusalem. Instances can be multiplied to prove that days of trial and sorrow can be the occasions when the servants of God may be inspired as pioneers of great spiritual movements, just as in 1804 when Europe was battered by the Napoleonic wars and England was threatened by invasion that a band of earnest men felt the Divine urge to found a Society for the circulation of the Scriptures.

It was during a national crisis that Isaiah saw the vision of the Lord enthroned amid the glory and power of His holiness which issued in an experience which transformed his whole ministry. In that crisis a spiritual leader was raised up, a man of God with the Divine fire burning in his heart.

Many are feeling that the spiritual front is definitely weak, it lacks the dynamic of spiritual leadership. The real danger is that in the splendid determination of the Church to give a Christian impetus in the establishment of a new social order two things should be forgotten—one that this time of trial, while millions are facing death through oppression, persecution and starvation, may be God's opportunity to raise up spiritual leaders—and secondly, that a Social Gospel will not entirely suffice to meet the desperate need of a war-stricken world.

It is being in the furnace of affliction which constitutes our supreme opportunity to proclaim with passionate conviction the message of the Incarnate Lord, who as Perfect God and Perfect Man, “carried our sorrows” and offered up Himself “as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.”

We believe there is no other message and we hope that THE CHURCHMAN may in some small measure help Evangelicals to acquire a more scholarly understanding of its profound truths, a deeper spiritual appreciation of its sublime beauty, and above all a richer personal experience of its power.

To the contributors who help us so generously and the readers who send us their appreciation we offer our grateful thanks.

THE EDITOR.