

# THE CHURCHMAN

October, 1914.

## The Month.

The Great War. SINCE we last wrote the news from the seat of war has been almost uniformly favourable to the cause of Great Britain and her Allies. The German invasion of France is being steadily rolled back, whilst Belgium, devastated and ruined by one of the most cruel and wanton invasions known to history, is being slowly freed of the devastating enemy. In the Eastern theatre of the war Russia has done magnificently. She has so crushed the Austrians that it is doubtful whether Austria can continue to exist as a military Power ; and the next stage in the campaign will be the march on Berlin. Of the final issue of the great war there never has been any doubt. Germany set Europe ablaze for no other purpose than that she might become a world-power, and in her mad lust her armies have been guilty of barbarities which have covered her name with infamy. A war waged for such a purpose and by such methods could not be successful ; if it were, it would mean the triumph of evil over righteousness. Great Britain and her Allies are defending the cause of right against might, and by God's good help we will conquer. The war has had a wonderfully steadying effect upon the nation, and has called forth the best traits in our national character. The young manhood of the country has offered nobly and willingly for active service, counting no sacrifice too great for King and country. Earl Kitchener's appeal has been fully responded to,

and as long as men are called for there will be no lack of recruits. And the solemn purposefulness of the nation has been splendid. There is the spirit of determination to see this thing through at whatever cost. Best of all, there has been a widespread recognition that in and through this war God is speaking to the nation. We do not say that there is not still much to lament in the daily life of the people in some of the poorer districts—for example, there has been a lamentable increase of drinking amongst women—but it is the testimony of all engaged in Christian work in our great cities that a keener readiness to listen to the claims of religion is clearly discernible. It will be the earnest prayer of all who are religiously disposed that the nation may come through this trial strengthened, purified, and ennobled.

Our people are firmly convinced of the righteousness of our cause. The issues are not complicated; they are so clear that all can see and understand them. Nevertheless, we welcome the many pamphlets which have been issued setting forth the principal facts which led up to the conflict. The fullest statement of Great Britain's case is contained in the remarkable volume issued from the Clarendon Press, "Why we are at War" (2s. net). It is the work of Members of the Oxford Faculty of Modern History, and, as we should suppose, is free from all prejudice and bias. It deserves the closest study, and is clearly calculated to become the standard work on the causes of the war and the principles at stake. Specially valuable are the documents quoted from the British White Book and the German White Book. Among the more popular treatises should be mentioned Sir Edward Cook's pamphlet, "Why Britain is at War" (Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 2d.), whilst to many others Sir A. Conan Doyle's "To Arms!" with a telling preface by Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., M.P. (Hodder and Stoughton, 1d.), will strongly appeal. The sermon by the Headmaster of Eton (Dr. E. Lyttelton), "What are we Fighting for?" (Longmans, Green and Co., 6d. net), also puts

the issues clearly and freely. It is of the highest importance to place the true facts well to the front, and we rejoice that Bishops and clergy are seeking to keep their people fully and accurately informed. The following passage from the Bishop of Durham's letter is much to the purpose :

"I am old enough to remember the Crimean War, and, of course, the great conflicts since—the war of the Indian Mutiny, the Egyptian Wars, the South African wars. This, the most tremendous struggle of all by far, is one as to which (putting the suppression of the Mutiny aside) it is more possible than, as to any other, without one reserve, for the Christian Englishman to pray for ultimate victory, supreme and overwhelming, as for a thing certainly well pleasing to God. Our State has entered on the struggle with a conscience clear as the day. It has gone to war that the *parola Inglesa*, 'the Englishman's word,' may be kept at all costs. It has stood out, if ever in history such a stand was made, for right against violent might, for truth against infamous untruth, and now (alas ! that it must be written) for civilized liberty against worse than barbarian outrage."

The war has brought out all that is greatest and noblest in British statesmanship. It was a never-to-be-forgotten incident when Mr. Asquith and Mr. Bonar Law stood together on the same platform at the Guildhall to uphold the honour of the country, and their speeches on that occasion struck a common note. The war has drawn political parties together in a wondrous manner, and we would fain hope that henceforth the lines of difference may be less marked. After all, when both parties are concerned for the welfare of the State, friendly co-operation between them ought to be possible, and a more frequent display of the "give-and-take" principle on both sides would redound to national usefulness. This is a theme upon which much might be written, but our present purpose rather is to emphasize the greatness and grandeur of the speeches made by the nation's leaders in this grave crisis of the nation's destiny. The Prime Minister has spoken twice—once at the Guildhall, the very heart of the Empire, and more recently in Edinburgh. Nothing could have been finer or more spirited than Mr. Asquith's denunciation at the Guildhall of the infamous violation by Germany of Belgian neutrality. The depth of his feeling may be gauged by the

Mr. Asquith's  
Speeches.

strength of his words. "Sooner," he said, "than be a silent witness, which means in effect a willing accomplice of this tragic triumph of force over law, and of brutality over freedom, I would see this country of ours blotted out of the page of history." And to this statement the nation lends its determined assent. At Edinburgh the Prime Minister was equally emphatic. His terse and vivid recital of the reasons why we are at war must be quoted :

"We are at war for these reasons. In the first place, to vindicate the sanctity of treaty obligations and of what is properly called the public law of Europe; in the second place, to assert and to enforce the independence of free States, relatively small and weak, against the encroachments and the violence of the strong; and in the third place, to withstand, as we believe in the best interests not only of our own Empire, but of civilization at large, the arrogant claim of a single Power to dominate the development of the destinies of Europe."

These words are well spoken, and the nation is unanimous in the view that there must be no sheathing of the sword until these great purposes are absolutely and entirely fulfilled.

Mr. Lloyd George's speech at Queen's Hall was, without doubt, the greatest and most moving oration he has ever delivered. No other statesman has the same "popular" gifts, and his well-merited trouncing of the Kaiser as "the road-hog of Europe" will live in the minds of the people. But his peroration was on a grander note: it can only be described as sublime:

A Simple  
Parable.

"May I tell you in a simple parable what I think this war is doing for us? I know a valley in the north of Wales between the mountains and the sea—a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blast. It was very enervating, and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hill above the village to have a glimpse of the great mountains in the distance, and to be stimulated and freshened by the breezes which came from the hill-tops, and by the great spectacle of that valley. We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable, too indulgent, many, perhaps, too selfish, and the stern hand of fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting things that matter for a nation—the great peaks of honour we had forgotten—Duty, Patriotism, and—clad in glittering white—the great pinnacle of Sacrifice, pointing like a rugged finger to heaven. We

shall descend into the valleys again, but as long as the men and women of this generation last they will carry in their hearts the image of these great mountain-peaks, whose foundations are not shaken though Europe rock and sway in the convulsions of a great war."

We view with the keenest and profoundest regret the conduct of the Government in passing the Home Rule and the Welsh Church Bills. In the matter of the Welsh Church Act, their action will never be forgotten and never forgiven. If we are asked why we distinguish between the two measures, we reply, first, that the Government are pledged to pass an Amending Bill before the Home Rule Act becomes operative, and, second, that they have given an undertaking that Ulster shall not be coerced. Of the purpose and sincerity of these pledges we have no doubt. We attach importance also to Sir Edward Carson's decisive declaration, "We will not have Home Rule—never!" for we see in it the clearest indication that, whatever the Government may or may not do, the people of Ulster will not allow themselves to be brought under the domination of an Irish Parliament. Rightly or wrongly, therefore, we believe that the safety and independence of the loyal Protestants of the North is assured. But with the Church in Wales the case is different. The passing of the Government Bill has inflicted upon it a staggering blow from which we see very little hope of recovery. The Act will come into force twelve months hence—or, if the war should not then be over, as soon thereafter as it is finished—but the preliminary inquiries and preparations will presumably have to be taken in hand at once. The blow has been struck swiftly, suddenly, and unexpectedly, and there is no redress.

There is already talk of repealing the Act. We wish we could believe that such a course is possible. If the opinion of the country could be taken upon it—even if the opinion of Wales alone could be taken upon it—we should have no fear about the verdict. But, as far as one can see, the General Election, which is due next year, will not

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What can be  
Done?

be fought on Home Rule or Welsh Disestablishment, or any other domestic issue ; it will be a "Khaki Election," pure and simple, and in those circumstances the result will not be doubtful. Still, the country must be made to realize what has been done. By Act of Parliament the Church has been deprived of £157,000 per year—that is to say, money now used and most urgently needed for God's work is to be applied to secular purposes for which it was never given and is not needed. The deepest sympathy will of course be felt with the brave little Church in Wales in the unspeakable calamity which has befallen it, and we are quite certain that as far as possible English Churchmen will give practical effect to their feelings. We hold, however, that this is not the time when any suggestions can usefully be made concerning what steps should be taken to repair the financial ruin which has been inflicted upon the Church. In due course, and after full deliberation, the Archbishops, in conjunction with the Welsh Bishops, will, we presume, put forth a statement of the more immediate needs, and how they can best be met. For that we are content to wait, knowing full well that such appeal will meet with the warmest and widest response, for the heart of the Church of England is stirred to its deepest depths by the cruel and deadly blow which has been inflicted upon the Church in Wales.

But whilst we must do our utmost to render to  
 Church of  
 England Next. the Church in Wales such help as may be required,  
 it will also be the imperative duty of Churchmen to  
 take in hand at once, seriously and deliberately, the defence of  
 the Church of England. Let there be no mistake on this point  
 —that the next attack will be on the Church of England as a  
 whole, and there is the gravest possible danger that it may find  
 us unprepared to meet it. The capture of the outpost will  
 greatly encourage its opponents to assail the citadel. We have  
 no doubt at all that the Church of England is strong enough  
 to repel the attack if only we are properly led and our leaders  
 get to work in time. The mistakes in the Welsh Church

defence campaign must not be repeated. The Welsh Bishops were alive to the danger from the very first, and fought bravely and persistently all through, but they were not supported by the English Episcopate to the extent they should have been, in the earliest—that is to say the most important—stages of the campaign. And when the English manifestoes were issued, what feeble things they often were!—excellent, no doubt, for drawing-room meetings or parochial tea-parties, but of no force as rallying cries to Churchmen to repel the enemy already at the gate. It was said, of course, that the united Episcopate could not speak with a strong voice because a few of the Bishops were favourable to the Government Bill. The excuse was as unworthy as it was unreasonable. The Bishops favourable to Disestablishment and Disendowment should have been told quite frankly that they must stand aside; in any case, it was intolerable that fear of offending them should have hindered the adequate prosecution of the Church's campaign. We hope there will be no dilly-dallying with the defence of the Church of England. If there are Bishops on the bench to-day who cannot wholeheartedly and unreservedly work in its cause, they need to be told in the plainest terms that they are a source of weakness, and not of strength, to the Church's efficiency. Days of stress and turmoil are coming upon the Church—sooner, perhaps, than we think—and we shall need to know who are our real friends. It is, indeed, a serious question whether Bishops who cannot conscientiously defend the Established and Endowed position of the Church of England, from which, be it remembered, they reap much advantage, ought not to resign their sees and make room for those who can.

