

THE CHURCHMAN

December, 1914.

The Month.

The First
Sunday in the
New Year.

THE first Sunday in a New Year is always an impressive occasion, and clergy rarely fail to make the most of the opportunity. The first Sunday in 1915 promises to be one of peculiar solemnity for the whole nation, and we pray God that it may prove a turning-point in our national life. In the last issue of the CHURCHMAN we pleaded for the appointment of a Day of National Humiliation and Prayer in connection with the war, and we can now join our voice with that of all good Christian people in thankfulness that a day is to be set apart for national intercession. The authorities, no doubt, examined all the precedents available, yet they have resolved to adopt a line of their own. We do not wish to question the wisdom of their decision, although we should have preferred a more direct reference to our national sins and shortcomings than appears in any of the published announcements. It may be that this will come later. We are persuaded that our ecclesiastical rulers are fully alive to the situation, and it may be hoped that in any Call to National Prayer they may issue this point will not be lost sight of. It is a subject for profound satisfaction that the King himself has moved in the matter. Lord Stamfordham's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury bore evidence of the keen interest His Majesty takes in all matters affecting the life of his people; and it is clear that, in determining the question as to the form of intercession, the King had in

mind the highest interests of the country. The appointment of a Day of National Humiliation and Prayer had been urged upon him, but the King was "disinclined to advocate the use of any term which might plausibly be misinterpreted either at home or abroad." In this respect, as readers of our last issue will recall, the King's view coincides with that of the late Queen Victoria. His Majesty, however, recognizes "the national call for United Prayer, Intercession, Thanksgiving, and for remembrance of those who have fallen in their country's cause." To this call His Majesty readily assented, and said that it seemed to him that the beginning of the year would be a fitting season to be thus solemnized, and that Sunday, January 3, might well be the chosen day. The King's decision has been loyally and heartily accepted, and it is symptomatic of our national unity that all branches of the Christian Church in this country—the Anglican, the Free, and the Roman—have determined to observe the first Sunday in the New Year as "a Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession to Almighty God on behalf of the cause entrusted to our King, our Empire, and our Allies, and on behalf of the men who are fighting for it on sea and on land." Much will depend, of course, upon the spirit in which the day is observed, but the nation has before it a great opportunity. If it is used honestly and sincerely as a means whereby the nation as such draws near to God in humble penitence and prayer, a great blessing must follow; but if the day is observed conventionally and perfunctorily, the result may be grievous beyond words. God grant that it may never have to be written concerning the nation's Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession, "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

That there is need for "preparation" for the
The Need for rightful observance of the Day is everywhere recog-
Preparation. nized, although there is room for differences of
 opinion concerning the steps that should be taken to bring
 home to the people at large the solemn significance of the

occasion. In the Diocese of London the Bishop's Evangelistic Council have decided that the need may best be met by a Twenty-Four Hours' Service of Watching and Prayer to be held at St. Paul's Cathedral on December 16. Until we have seen the programme of this novel effort, we hesitate to express an opinion upon it. Of the good and honest intentions of those who proposed it we have no doubt, and it is of hopeful augury that the suggestion has, we hear, the warm support of representative clergy and laity such as Prebendary Webb-Peploe and Professor Beresford Pite; but the point which needs attention is how far such a service, or series of services, will affect the people at large? It will reach pious Church-people, and we can well believe that the Cathedral will be crowded with such all through the time appointed, but it seems to us that what is needed before all else is something which will touch the hearts and consciences of those who either do not attend our services at all, or, at the best, are only seen there at very irregular intervals. We confess that we are not prepared with any practical plan—it is always easier to criticize than to construct—but it ought not to be beyond the powers of our leaders to formulate some scheme by which every household in the kingdom shall be reached with a clear and pointed message explaining the purpose of the Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession, and inviting co-operation. The parochial system of the Church of England is eminently suited to such a purpose, and, in the absence of any other proposal, we suggest that the Archbishop of each Province, or the Bishop of each diocese, should draft such a message, and arrange with the parochial clergy that they shall deliver it at every house, not, however, as mere tract or bill distributors, but as men charged with the solemn responsibility of calling the people—their people—to prayer. This, indeed, is the *crux* of the whole matter: let the clergy for themselves recognize the greatness of the opportunity, and they will soon find ways and means to bring the subject prominently before, not merely their congregations, but before their people generally. This is but a haphazard suggestion; what we are

really concerned about is that some vigorous effort should be made, covering the English nation as a whole, to arouse people to the need for Humble Prayer and Intercession in connection with the great war. If nothing more is attempted, we venture to express the earnest hope that there may be, at least in every diocese, the determination not to fall behind the diocese of London in making a genuine attempt to prepare the people for the solemn observance of the first Sunday in the New Year.

A Call to
Greater
Seriousness.

We are sometimes tempted to wonder whether anything will really shake or disturb the light-hearted, easy-going attitude of the English people. The nation is engaged in the greatest war known to history ; many thousands of our best men are engaged in an awful conflict at the front, fighting, suffering, and dying, for the nation's cause ; there has been—and still may be—grave danger of invasion ; and yet—life goes on much as usual. The theatres are open, and (although we hear from time to time mournful wails from managers about the decrease in receipts) there is reason to believe that they are still extensively patronized. So also the music-halls. It is no uncommon thing to find a long *queue* of people waiting outside for admission to the “second house” even in the poorest districts. Luxuries are not appreciably curtailed. Men are still playing football, and thousands more are standing idly by watching the game. The public-houses are open, and, although the hours have been shortened, there is still a great deal of excessive drinking. Vice still flaunts itself unblushingly in our midst, and nowhere is the evil more apparent than in the neighbourhood of camps and barracks where are located young men who, when they go on active service, may be summoned at any moment to the presence of their Maker. The desecration of the Lord's Day continues unabated, and it is even accentuated by the wholly unnecessary publication of Sunday editions of some of the daily newspapers. “Shall I not visit for these things ? saith the Lord.” But does England care ? That is the real point at issue. An easy life,

a fast life, a good time—too many of our people have no higher ambition than this; and all the while God is speaking to us, speaking to the nation in a way He has never spoken before. When the war first broke out there were many who thought they saw signs of greater attention being paid to the serious realities of life, but such change as there was, was only temporary, and now that the danger seems to be past—we wish we could believe it were so—there is a return to the old manner of life, to the same forgetfulness of God. These are the grave things that call for the most anxious consideration, for the most faithful and energetic resistance. When men talk of national sins there will always be some ready to point to things which are at least debatable, whilst they leave out of count altogether those which are palpable, notorious, and deadly. The great need of the time is for a greater seriousness amongst the masses of the people, seriousness of thought, seriousness of life; and not until the nation, as such, has been brought to its knees in penitence and prayer can we rightfully look to God for His blessing. The war is a time of great opportunity; let those who have influence with old or young, whether as clergy, teachers, employers, or in any other capacity, see to it that they use it to call the people to turn to God in true repentance, with the determination of amendment of life.

**Papers for
War-Time.**

But it is not only the careless and the worldly who need to have their minds recalled to the seriousness of the present position. Professing Christian people have still much to learn concerning their own attitude to the grave issues which are at stake. War is a terrible evil; it represents, as has been tersely said, the bankruptcy of Christian principle; yet there are Christian men and women who seem utterly unable to think out calmly and seriously the problems raised by this awful war. We welcome, therefore, most cordially the publication of the series of "Papers for War-Time" (Humphrey Milford, Oxford Press, 2d. each), which is being brought out under the general editorship of the Rev.

William Temple. The following passage from the explanatory note will make the scope and purpose of these papers clear :

“The desire of all who love their country is to serve it in the hour of its need, and so to live and labour that those who have fallen in its service may not have died in vain. While this may suffice to make immediate duty clear, the war remains in the deepest sense a challenge to Christian thought. The present bitter struggle between nations which for centuries have borne the Christian name indicates some deep-seated failure to understand the principles of Christ and to apply them to human affairs. This series of papers embodies an attempt to reach by common thought, discussion, and prayer, a truer understanding of the meaning of Christianity and of the mission of the Church to the individual, to society, and to the world.”

Six of these papers have been issued, and others are to follow. The strength of their appeal lies in the fact that they do not represent one school of either religious or political thought. The writers are drawn from different political parties and different Christian bodies ; but “in spirit they are united, for they are one in the conviction that in Christ and in His Gospel lies the hope of redemption and health for society and for national life.” Mr. Temple’s own paper, “Christianity and War,” is a clever piece of work—calm, thoughtful, broad, and deep. If it does not reach any very definitely practical conclusion, it at least discusses with a fulness which leaves little to be desired certain problems of the war which, as he rightly says, challenge our whole faith. He recognizes the certainty of disagreement, but he outlines a policy upon which all Christians can unite :

“The task of the Christian Church is clear. It must strain every nerve to insure that in the conduct of the war Christian standards of honour, generosity, and love for our enemies are not forgotten ; that the settlement, when it comes, should be in accordance with the Christian postulate that all nations are needed for the building up of the Kingdom of God ; and that our own country, whether in defeat or in the more searching test of victory, should open its heart and mind to learn the lessons which God can teach it, and should go forward into the future which He appoints, knowing that its supreme mission is to discover and to do His will.”

From such a starting-point we are entitled to expect much, and, it may be said at once, the subsequent papers do not disappoint us. The Rev. Richard Roberts sets out (in No. 2)

to answer the problem, "Are we worth fighting for?" and the cast of the question in itself compels attention. We can but quote one eloquent passage :

"Out of all this emerges one plain fact : Great Britain is charged with the obligations of a great tradition. Within its own borders and its Empire it has achieved liberty ; and with liberty, domestic peace. It is its splendid mission to pass on this gift to the world. The ideal that is implicit in its history is that of 'a world set free.' It makes no boast of a culture which it would impose upon the world for its good ; it is simply vested with a gift in trust for the world. But the conditions of this gift are inviolate trustworthiness and adventurous trustfulness in public policy. It is the vocation of Britain to proclaim and practise the faith that in the supremacy of moral ideas lies the promise of the liberty and the peace of the world."

But if England is to be true to her mission, she must be true to herself ; and so (in No. 3) we find some salutary advice from Mrs. Luke Paget, who, although claiming to write only on "The Woman's Part," lays men equally under a debt of obligation for her insistence upon the virtues of courage, prudence, simplicity, faith, and love. In No. 4 ("Brothers All") Mr. Edwyn Bevan discusses most ably and thoughtfully "The War and the Race Question," bringing into strong relief the glorious fact that "the whole human race is all potentially one in Christ," and discussing the consequences which flow from it.

Mr. Oldham's paper (No. 5) on "The Decisive Hour : is it Lost?" demands a paragraph to itself.

Those who recall the happy fellowship in prayer and service amongst Christian men and women representing many countries of Europe at the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 may well stand aghast at what seems at first sight the shattering of all their most cherished ideals by this terrible war. But is all lost? Mr. Oldham clearly thinks not. It would be affectation to deny that our ideals have received a check for the time, but there are some aspects of the war which lead us to hope that they may yet turn out for the furtherance of the Gospel. Thus does Mr. Oldham strengthen our faith, widen our hope, and inspire our love :

"The difficulties of the situation may be the means of bringing about a larger measure of unity in the Church of Christ. The experience of the mission-field shows that the result of a great calamity such as the Boxer uprising in China has often been to draw the missions closer together, and to lead to reconstruction on better lines. One of the most striking results of the outbreak of the present war was that each of the nations in the hour of its destiny knew itself one. May not the Christian Church, in a new apprehension of the magnitude of the task to which it is called, attain a larger, deeper unity?"

But if there are new possibilities, there are also new duties :

"If the decisive hour in missionary work is to mean not defeat, but victory, a spiritual warfare has to be waged no less exacting than the conflict on the battlefields of Europe. The awful experiences of the struggle for national existence help us to understand the reality of the fight in which the spiritual destinies of the human race are at stake. Success in this warfare demands no less fortitude, perseverance, endurance, and devotion than victory in the war against Germany. Does the Church understand this? Is she prepared to accept the conditions? She will surely be willing if in the secret place of meditation and prayer she allows God to reveal afresh to her heart the captivating vision of the Kingdom of God. If our country, with all its faults, can command such devotion as we are witnessing in these days, has not the cause of Christ, with all its promise of peace and joy and strength for mankind, the power to evoke a yet more ardent loyalty?"

The Christian Church may well thank God for such a message as this. There are signs that the Church is beginning to realize the possibility of the position. May God multiply them, to the hastening of the coming of His Kingdom. With just the mention of No. 6, "Active Service: the Place of the Non-Combatant," we commend these papers to the careful attention of readers.

Our last notes must be reserved for domestic
 "The
 Churchman." references. With this number the CHURCHMAN completes another year of what we trust we may claim to be useful service in the life and work of the Church. We thank our many friends and numerous subscribers for their steadfast loyalty and warm support, and we ask them to believe that we are sincerely appreciative of the value of their cordial co-operation. The many communications which have reached us, particularly during the last few months, have cheered and

encouraged us much, and embolden us to ask that readers, who are interested in the Magazine, will be good enough, in addition to continuing their own support, to use their best endeavours to make the CHURCHMAN known to a still wider circle. To say that we live in difficult times is a mere commonplace; it is becoming more and more realized that there is an almost daily increasing need for Churchmen, who hold a common faith, and are animated by a common purpose, to unite together for the maintenance, strengthening, and extension of principles which they hold dear. Beyond all question, one of the chief means of fostering such unity is to be found in the regular and steady support of a Magazine which represents their own special interests. It may be claimed, we believe, for the CHURCHMAN that for nearly thirty years it has rendered conspicuous service to the cause of sound and loyal Churchmanship. It has witnessed faithfully and well to the foundation truths of the Bible; it has endeavoured with no small amount of success to strengthen and stimulate interest in the practical work of the Church at home and abroad; it has maintained a firm attitude in defence of the established position of the National Church; it has insisted upon the necessity of wise measures of Social Reform. It is because we believe that the CHURCHMAN, by the strength of its large company of contributors, is well qualified to render still greater service to these important causes, and to offer a common rallying-ground for all who are in general sympathy with its point of view, that we commend it with confidence to the sympathy and attention of loyal Churchmen.

1915. The new volume is already in preparation, and we may venture to express the belief that the CHURCHMAN will be able to offer its readers real help and guidance towards the discussion and ultimate solution of the many problems—Biblical, Theological, Ecclesiastical, and Social—which are pressing themselves upon our notice. Special attention will be given to questions concerning the Christian Faith, and in this connection a series of articles will appear

(commencing in January next) on "The Christ of the Gospel," which will include the following papers: "Begotten of His Father before all Worlds," by the Rev. E. A. BURROUGHS, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Hertford College, Oxford; "Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," by the Rev. DAWSON WALKER, D.D., Professor of Biblical Exegesis in the University of Durham; "Crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate," by the Rev. J. KENNETH MOZLEY, Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge; "Rose again according to the Scriptures," by the Rev. A. J. TAIT, D.D., Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge; "Ascended into Heaven," by the Rev. A. W. GREENUP, D.D., Principal of St. John's Hall, Highbury; "Shall come again with Glory," by the Rev. F. S. GUY WARMAN, D.D., Principal of St. Aidan's College, Birkenhead. A series of papers will also be contributed by the Right Rev. HANDLEY C. G. MOULE, D.D., Bishop of Durham, entitled, "What the Spirit saith unto the Churches," being studies on Rev. ii. and iii.; the Right Rev. J. E. WATTS-DITCHFIELD, D.D., Bishop of Chelmsford, will write on "The Problem of 'The Man'"; and His Grace the ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY has also promised to contribute an article on "Australian Church Affairs." Large space will be given during 1915 to the review department, and notices of all the best books (contributed by experienced reviewers) will appear month by month. We trust that in all its undertakings the CHURCHMAN may ever seek faithfully to serve the Church and promote the extension of God's Kingdom.

