

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE CHURCHMAN

August, 1915.

The Month.

After Twelve
Months.

ON the 4th of August England will have been at war for twelve months, and the end is not yet. Of the severity of the conflict there are many sad evidences, and the nation to-day mourns the loss of thousands of its bravest and its best. It has been a time of sacrifice, and it may truly be said of those who have laid down their lives that they have suffered martyrdom in the sacred cause of righteousness, truth, and honour. If it is a disappointment that so little apparent progress has been made against the enemy, it ought to be remembered, on the other hand, that Germany has failed absolutely to realize her infamous ambitions. In the West her advance into France has been effectually checked—a feat of supreme moment, the magnitude of which has not been sufficiently realized. If in the East she has been more successful, it needs to be recalled that her advance against Russia has not been one of uninterrupted progress, and that there are signs that Russia will yet roll back the Austro-German invading hordes. The passage of the Dardanelles has not yet been forced, but no one can doubt that this herculean task will be accomplished in due time. Meanwhile, Italy is doing well, and it may be that before long some of the Balkan States will join forces with the Allies. There is no reason to be dissatisfied with the military situation, and we believe that even if it were less favourable than we hold it to be, the country would still be resolved, whatever the cost, to prosecute the war to a successful issue. It is a heartening indication of the spirit of our people that all over the country—and, indeed, in all parts of the Empire—meetings are to be held on August 4, “the anniversary

of the declaration of a righteous war," to record the "inflexible determination" of citizens "to continue to a victorious end the struggle in maintenance of those ideals of liberty and justice which are the common and sacred cause of the Allies." There can be no sheathing of the sword on our part until the enemy has been rendered powerless for further mischief.

The Awakening of the Nation. It has taken nearly twelve months to awaken the nation as a whole to the extreme gravity of the position; the country, however, now realizes its peril, and the necessity for every man, woman, and child bearing a part in support of the national cause. The coal strike, which caused anxiety, is now happily settled in Wales, and the country is united as it has never been before for the accomplishment of one supreme task. The National Government is doing wonderfully well. It has established a Munitions Department; it has raised a War Loan of a magnitude hitherto unheard of; it has assumed control of the drink traffic in certain specified areas; it has formed a Savings Committee; it has passed an Act for the provision of a National Register which will show the extent and variety of the personal service still available for the nation's cause; it has all but justified the voluntary as opposed to the conscriptive method of raising the armies; and it is bringing into being committees and bodies charged with the task of filling up whatever gaps there may still be in the organization of the nation upon a war basis. All this is to the good. The work ought to have been begun eleven months ago, but now that it is well under way, the nation is making a loyal response. "Tell us what we can do," the people say; and we doubt not that before very long there will be a vast accession of strength to the fighting and working forces of the country.

The Lethargy of the Church. But while the State has at last awakened to the overwhelming necessities of the time, the Church seems unable to realize fully the extent either of its opportunity or its responsibility. The Archbishops

of Canterbury and York, in their impressive Pastoral Letter, to which reference was made last month, indicated very plainly what is needed. Indeed, they gave the Church a strong lead ; but, somehow or other, there seems somewhere an inability to follow it up, and it is to be feared that unless drastic action is taken now, the Pastoral Letter will soon be forgotten. Yet we are not unmindful of what has been and what is still being done. The united meetings of Churchmen and Nonconformists—often in the open air—which have been held in various parishes are all to the good ; but unless they are succeeded by a definite endeavour to organize the religious forces of the respective districts on a war basis the effect will be ephemeral. If we proceed to offer a few remarks by way of criticism upon what we hold to be the Church's shortcomings, it is from no want of appreciation of or thankfulness for what the Church has accomplished. It has called the people to prayer—a most necessary thing, of course ; it sent the Bishop of London on a visit to the Front ; chaplains have gone to the Front ; Bishops and clergy have ministered to troops in training ; parochial clergy have been diligent in visiting the anxious and the bereaved. But yet it has failed, and failed badly in some not unimportant particulars. A few facts may be mentioned. The Church has a great organization in the Church of England Men's Society ; yet it is not this body, but an undenominational agency—the Young Men's Christian Association—which has done the major part in supplying huts for recreative and religious purposes, both for the men in camp at home and for those with the British Expeditionary Force abroad. The one Church organization which has in any way risen to the opportunity in this matter is the Church Army, and that is due to the untiring energy and resource of its Founder and Director, the Rev. Prebendary Carlile, D.D., rather than to any initiative on the part of official leaders of the Church. Again, the Church has its own Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—a most valuable agency without which the ordinary work of the Church at home and abroad would be practically

paralyzed—and in the supply of Church Parade Service Books and Forms of Intercession it has done splendid service; but again it seems to have been left very largely to undenominational agencies, such as the Scripture Gift Mission and the Pocket Testament League, to supply the English armies at home and abroad, as well as those of our Allies, with the Word of God, the one indispensable part of every man's equipment. Several instances could be given of splendid efforts made by other voluntary agencies of an undenominational character (such as the Army Scripture Readers' Society, the Soldiers' Christian Association, etc.), where the Church is doing little or nothing to meet the needs of the time. We are referring, of course, to the Church in its corporate capacity, for we well know that several individual Bishops and clergy are doing splendidly—among them the Bishop of Ripon, who is seeking to provide for the new camps of the Northern Command; the Bishop of Chelmsford, who has been indefatigable in East Anglia; and the Bishop of Salisbury, who has shown himself a real leader in work among the men on Salisbury Plain. But the Church as a whole has not risen to the occasion as we should expect.

Yet someone will say, Has not Convocation
Not Debate,
but Action. discussed war questions and the attitude of the Church towards them? Certainly Convocation has talked about the war, and there the matter has ended. The Spring Session of Convocation devoted such time as it could spare from its highly contentious debates on Prayer-Book Revision to a consideration of war problems, but there was an air of aloofness about the whole proceedings which showed how lamentably Bishops and dignitaries failed to realize what was demanded of them. At the July Session the Upper House certainly seemed to get at closer grips with the problem, but, except in relation to the provision of a "War Bishop"—a proposal of doubtful expediency—and an increase in the number of chaplains abroad, there was little of substance in the

debates. Admirable resolutions were passed—but that was all. We venture to submit that these resolutions should be translated into action. We have had enough of mere talk ; the important question is, When is the Church going to take definite action ? We hoped for much from the Representative Church Council, but its session was a profound disappointment. The tone of the debate on the war was quite good, but it is not debate so much as action that is needed. What the Government has done in relation to the State, that Convocation should do for the Church. It should at once order the suspension of all controversial discussions, and should give its whole energies to helping the nation in this time of its need. Just as the Government have created new Departments and organized special Committees for special service, so Convocation, calling to its aid the Houses of Laymen, should bring into being various Committees, each charged with some special duty in regard to the religious and social life of the nation. These Committees would be in the nature of central bodies, and if they gave their whole attention to the matter they could be of invaluable service to the various dioceses in the way of counsel, suggestion, and guidance. There would be no difficulty at all in organizing every parish in the country for the fulfilment of its duty in relation to the war if only a Central Body were established which would lead the way. From the Centre communication could be opened up with the diocese ; the diocese would work through its archdeaconries ; the archdeaconries through the rural deaneries ; and the rural deaneries through the parishes. The Church's system is believed to be the best in the world for the purposes of organization, and why advantage has not been taken of it to set every parish in the country to work, we cannot imagine.

Unless something is done soon, the opportunity will be lost. We fear that many of the clergy are too complacent. "What is it you want us to do?" they ask. The question suggests a curious lack of appreciation of the need of the time. We have nothing to say to the clergy-

*The Need of
the Time.*

man who is satisfied with the religious condition of his parish, except that he is a very fortunate man ; but to the thousands of others who are not, and have no reason to be, thus satisfied, we venture to make the strongest possible appeal that they should make a very clear and a very definite effort to uplift the religious life of their people—not their congregations merely, but the thousands of men and women in their parishes who never enter the Church or any other place of worship, and who, as far as can be seen, are living without God and without hope. The need is urgent. It is acknowledged by all who have been to, or are in any way in touch with, the Front, that the spiritual condition of the men in France and Flanders is infinitely higher than that of the people at home. They have been brought into the closest touch with the realities of life and death ; they are praying now as they have never prayed before ; many have seen the heavenly vision, and, not disobedient to it, they are determined that, if God spare them, they will need a new life. These men—we pray God in their thousands—will be coming home some day, and it is an awful thing to think that they may come back to an atmosphere of wild gaiety and frivolity, of wickedness and sin, where there will be everything to pull them down and nothing to uplift them in their daily life. Is this a possibility that Christian people can contemplate without the most serious searching of heart? Yet if such a contingency is to be avoided a supreme effort must be made—and made now—to change the home conditions, by bringing men and women face to face with the claims of God. It is not for us to make detailed suggestions, as the circumstances of different parishes vary so much, but we do insist that there is a solemn responsibility resting upon the clergy and their lay helpers to bear witness before their people to the call of God in and through this war to the individual soul, with an earnestness and a thoroughness that they have never known before. It may be that the suggestion of a National Mission, which was strongly urged by the *Record* and the *Church Family Newspaper*, was impracticable—it certainly received not a single word of encouragement from any

of the Church's natural leaders—but those who criticized it ought at least to have had some alternative proposal to make. But nothing was done then, and, as far as we know, nothing is being done now. Yet the opportunity is fast passing away. Is there not some great leader who will arise and head a movement for the evangelization of the unevangelized masses of England?

The "Papers for War Time" (Humphrey Milford, *What is at Stake?* 2d.) issued under the editorship of the Rev. William

Temple form a very stimulating contribution to the discussion of War problems. It is not always possible to agree with all the views put forward by the various writers, but the sincerity and ability of the "Papers" is beyond question. We have read with the deepest interest one of the newest in the series, *What is at Stake in the War?* by Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson, and find in it much that stirs our deepest feelings. It is especially illuminating in regard to the peace terms, and the distinction he draws between the military party and the people of Germany is worth noting:

"The blasphemous arrogance with which the Supreme War Lord has claimed the Deity as a kind of Hohenzollern lackey is thoroughly in keeping with his attitude for many years past. At the same time, those who have studied the psychology and behaviour of the military caste in Germany for the last two decades ought not to have been (and generally have not been) surprised at the manner in which its official 'Kriegsbrauch' has been translated into practice in the present war. Neither the pseudo-Christian Cæsarism of William II., nor the brutal theories of the General Staff, are typical of the German national character, though the crimes and errors of both are inevitably visited upon the head of the nation as a whole."

This brings him to ask the questions, "What will the 75,000,000 of Germans think after the war? What will be their attitude to the world around them? Can they be brought to believe, and above all to impose the belief upon their rulers, that there is a higher appeal than to Brute Force? Or, are they so sunk in materialism, so tamed by long years of over-discipline, as to be incapable of realizing the triumphant power of an idea?" "This," says Dr. Seton-Watson, "is the great

riddle of the future," but of the character of the task before us he has no doubt.

"Our aim in this war is not merely the restoration of unhappy Belgium to her former position. That is one of our many aims, and it was one of the determining facts in our action last August. But it is only a small detail in the great task that awaits us—and I use the phrase advisedly, without for one moment minimizing all that Belgium means for Europe and for us. Our task is nothing less than the regeneration of Europe, the vindication of the twin principles of Nationality and Democracy, the emancipation of subject races from alien rule. Restore Belgium, reunite Alsace-Lorraine to France, but ignore the agony of Poland, the irresistible movement for Southern Slav Unity, the new and hopeful dream of an Italian Italy, the growing resolve of Bohemia, the aspirations of the Roumanians, Slovaks, and Ruthenes, the impossible nature of Turkish rule, the vital need for Balkan co-operation, the overwhelming claims of Russia to an access to the Mediterranean—and in so doing you are giving your vote for the old Europe of reaction and materialism, and selling your birthright in the new and transfigured Europe of our dreams."

We confess we are not much in the mood for discussing controversial topics while national issues are so tremendous, but we feel it right to acknowledge the moderate tone of Lord Halifax's address on Kikuyu at the Meeting of the English Church Union. It is true that he subjected the Archbishop's Statement to a certain amount of criticism, but his summing up certainly seemed to suggest that he is against precipitate action such as, it is freely rumoured, some of the extreme men desire to take. "Meanwhile," he said, "the whole matter is referred to the Lambeth Conference, which meets in two years' time, and it is obvious that when that Conference meets a carefully prepared statement of all the difficulties involved in recent occurrences must be laid before it; it will be our duty to see that this is effectively done." The discussion which followed was, however, distinctly more combative, and a resolution was adopted in the following terms:

"That this meeting of the English Church Union, having considered the recent statement of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning questions arising out of the Kikuyu Conference, desires—

"1. To point out that the doctrine of the Catholic Church as to the Holy Communion is expressed by the words of St. Ignatius: 'Let that be held to

be a valid Eucharist which is under the Bishop or one to whom he shall have committed it,' and that only in such a Eucharist can the Divine Gift be sought by Catholic Christians.

"2. To note the fact that His Grace refuses to sanction the proposed practice of seeking Communion at the hands of ministers not episcopally ordained.

"3. To express its unalterable conviction that any invitation on the part of diocesan Bishops to members of separatist bodies, sanctioning their communicating at the altars of the Church, or addressing the faithful in public worship, would be contrary to the principles of the Catholic Church, as well as to a distinct rule of the Church of England, and likely to form a hindrance to the reunion of Christendom, and to accentuate existing divisions amongst ourselves."

The discussions on Prayer-Book Revision are "Revision" for the moment, happily, in abeyance. Meanwhile Objective. note should be made of the objective of the extreme High Anglican party. Lord Halifax, in the speech above mentioned, referred to the fact that some four years ago "several leading clergy and laity" accepted his invitation to meet in Yorkshire to discuss Prayer-Book Revision. They met for three days, and were all agreed to resist any proposal for Revision which should—

"1. Either alter the substance of the Athanasian Creed or remove the duty of reciting it on certain holy days.

"2. Fail to restore a better and more primitive 'Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper,' the irreducible minimum of improvement being—

"(a) The linking together of—

"1. Preface and *Sanctus*,

"2. The present Prayer of Consecration,

"3. The present Prayer of Oblation,

"4. The Lord's Prayer,

and

"(b) The placing of the Exhortation, Confession, Absolution, and Comfortable Words in their proper place after the Communion of the Priest.

"3. Fail to provide a form for the Scriptural and Catholic practice of anointing the sick.

"4. Fail to recognize or in any way interfere with the continuous reservation of the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood.

"5. Fail to sanction direct prayer for those 'who are fallen asleep in Christ,' together with a Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the celebration of the Lord's Supper on their behalf."

