

soldiers have come, and in the communities where they were reared, the spirit of sacrifice has been awakened and has uttered itself in patient toil and manifold self-denial. The affinity between such virtue and the deepest things in the Christian faith is manifest, and the need of faith to animate and sustain and consecrate such splendid devotion is still more evident.

The opportunity is given us. Shall we, who hold the faith of Christ, not use it. We have the comfort to administer, the reality with which to remake all mockeries, the love wherewith to crown the highest human attainments. We are confronted by infinite need. We are called to be channels of all-sufficient grace and victorious power, and undying hope.

II—A CHALLENGE AND A CRITICISM

In the second place, we regard the War as a challenge to, and a criticism of, the Christian Church.

(1) The **faith** of the Church is **challenged**. The untold agonies of millions, not merely of soldiers, but of those innocent ones whom the war has overwhelmed in its ruthless course, constitute a dark problem for faith. How can we reconcile these things with the justice and goodness of God? Faith is strained to the breaking point. In more cases than we know it has given way, even among those who have been numbered among devout and believing people. On the part of those who have had only a nominal faith, there has been shipwreck of their formal orthodoxy; while unbelief has regarded itself as altogether justified by a tragedy, which makes impossible either the omnipotence or the love of God, and, in either case, man discredits forever the Christian belief.

(2) The Church is condemned for **moral feebleness**. It failed to make this war impossible. The nations engaged in this bitter conflict are nominally Christian. Churches, both established and non-established, have been at work in them for centuries, embracing all classes in a network of Christian agencies. Yet this ghastly thing has happened, which the Church of Christ ought to have prevented and might have prevented. The causes of the Church's failure defy complete analysis. In three directions, however, the failure has been most conspicuous:

(a) In the **lives** of professed Christians. It is vain to plead our orthodoxy, our liberality, our enterprises. The value of these things has been largely discounted by our failure to represent Christ, in character and daily life. The power of the Church, as a witness in the world, is sapped by the unchristlikeness of Christians.