

SPENDING IN WAR TIME

ordinary family and neighbour relationships. In the last century the outrageous idea got abroad that economic activities, or the business side of life, could somehow be treated, actually as well as theoretically, apart from ethics and religion. In the present century even economists admit that this was a deplorable fallacy. But Christians have yet to learn how much that admission involves. Good people feel their responsibility dimly; they will tell you that they like to buy expensive things because they like to think that they are causing people to do 'good' or artistic work rather than spend their days in monotonous factory production. But what use is it to multiply fine workers whose work shall satisfy our wants alone—often our whims alone—when the most vital needs of thousands of our brothers and sisters are unmet because there are no workers at all working for them? Every additional hundred pounds we spend on the yearly upkeep of our lives means that we call upon two more workers to devote the whole of their labour throughout the year to making something for us alone, two workers less to devote their labour to meeting the needs of others. Does it help, or does it hinder the brotherhood when we add to the retinue of our own exclusive workers, just because we have money to spend, and imagine that by spending it we are benefiting any one but ourselves?