

CHARIOTS OF FIRE

of moral force. When we look at the opposition and then at the task, we see at once that on the ordinary planes of political argument there is little to encourage.

But are we restricted to the ordinary plane? We stand before a disaster beyond precedent; is it impossible to believe that the moral forces it generates will also be unprecedented, that it may usher in a new epoch?

I once travelled through one of the driest and sandiest plains of Northern China. Where the country was left to itself, the sand was encroaching all the time on the better soil. Yet the cultivated areas were peculiarly fertile. The secret lay in the fact that a very short way below the surface there was a fine water-bearing stratum. All the day and almost all the night the irrigation wheel brought up water, and the stream ran hither and thither like a thing alive. On the surface there was no hope or promise, yet it was only necessary to drive down to strata below to conquer the desert and turn barrenness to brilliant green. That is exactly our case at the present crisis. We must drive down to new planes of spiritual experience, and when we do, we shall find the water waiting for us.

Now to any Christian it is a matter of mere intuition that the water we need to find and draw, is the power of God. The Christian believes that there is no crisis beyond the reach of that power, and that at such a time as this we may regard it as only normal that God should say, 'Now will I arise, now will I lift up myself, now will I be exalted.' The central fact of this whole cataclysm is that God will still the storm and use its devastations for His own great purposes. Even amid the barren brutalities of a world at war we may draw the refreshment we need from the 'wells of deliverance'.

But upon this central subject others have written better than I. The purpose of this paper is to encourage and support such a faith by showing that the power of God is even now working among men in order to prepare the way for those moral changes by which alone our great object may be gained. Some of us do not find