

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR

affect the validity of this position that it may be misinterpreted and made to serve base passions.

Nevertheless it does seem to involve us in what I have previously called the entanglement of sin. Perhaps this is one of the great lessons that we are to learn. Only the good tree can bring forth good fruit. It was not possible for England on the 4th of August, nor for any Englishman then or now, to act in full accordance with the mind of Christ. Christ lived the life divine in the midst of a sinful world: that is the miracle. But we cannot. It is not the individual Christian, but the whole Church, that is the body of Christ, the organ of His will; only the completed Church, when there has been brought into it the glory and honour of all the nations, is the perfect organ of His will, the measure of the stature of His fullness. A sinful man *cannot* live the life of Christ; a sinful nation *cannot* perfectly obey His law; and the citizen of a sinful nation *cannot* escape altogether from his nation's sin. No doubt this may be pleaded by base people as an excuse for their baseness; but to the Christian it brings home more than ever the fact that he is tied and bound in a chain which he cannot break. 'Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' For it is the hideous result of sin that it brings us into a choice where even the rightest thing that we can do is something evil; the choice is between the greater and the lesser evil. And though we are right, and absolutely right, in choosing the lesser evil, it is still evil, for it is still not perfect obedience to the holy will of God.