

Thoughts for the Thoughtful

All the past, read true, is prophecy.

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A perpetual calm will never make a sailor.

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Though the past is irrevocable, it is not irreparable.—F. B. Meyer.

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It is no burst of enthusiasm that God demands, but the working of a patient life.—E. Thring.

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It is only by trying to understand others that we can get our own hearts understood.—R. L. Stevenson.

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To work with all one's heart is the right thing, and whoso does this may feel satisfied, whatever the result of his labour may be.—G. F. Watts.

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I have learned at last to be patient with hindrances, for things that seemed contrary to my success and happiness have always proved to be really helps.

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Plough thou the rock until it bear;
Know, for thou else could not believe;
Lose, that the lost thou mayst receive;
Die, for none other way canst live.

—Selected.

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Let us not forget that life is brief; that time hurries; and that what we do to make our memories of earth beautiful in heaven, and heaven itself more populous than ever, must be done at once.

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When will Christians learn the lesson so well taught by Rutherford when he said: "I have been benefited by praying for others, for in making an errand to God for them, I have always gotten something for myself?"—Exchange.

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As you go on and have begun to love Him a little, you will watch for His sake, and be careful to practise yourself more continually in all acts of dutiful love. For love to God is like love to anyone here: it must be kept up by acts of love, or it will soon fade away.—Kemble.

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If we would endeavour, like men of courage, to stand in the battle, surely we should feel the favourable assistance of God from heaven. For He Who giveth us occasion to fight, to the end that we may get the victory, is ready to succor those that fight manfully and do trust in His grace.—Thomas à Kempis.

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We are born for higher destinies than that of earth. There is a realm where the rainbow never fades, where the stars will be spread out before us like islands that slumber on the ocean, and where the beings that pass before us like shadows will stay in our presence forever.—Bulwer.

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Our dead are with the undying love, and moving on with Him. Our business is to mourn no more, but to love them as if we saw them, and to live for them and with them in spirit and to wait in work for the hour when they will welcome us into the re-united life. This is part of our faith.—Stopford Brooke.

The Cloud of Witnesses

By the Archbishop of Canterbury

Preached in Westminster Abbey on the occasion of the Third Anniversary of the Declaration of War

"Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses let us run with patience the race that is set before us."—Hebrews xii. 1.

THE words form part of an intensely solemn appeal to the disciples of Jesus Christ, an appeal that they be faithful to their great calling and loyal to their living Lord. It is not quite in that deepest sense of fellowship with Christ that I use the words now. I take them in their application to what is, indeed, a very sacred thing—the trust laid upon us as citizens of this nation and Empire at an hour more "tremendous"—in the strict sense of the word—than any that we or our forefathers have known.

When the Crash Came.

Three years and three days ago—on Sunday, August 2nd, 1914—it was my solemn duty and privilege as Archbishop to stand in this place and to try in God's Name and by God's help to suggest some thoughts which would fit a moment of the very tensest strain and of eager, but dwindling, hopes of peace. A few hours later the crash came, and, in spite of our putting forth on behalf of peace every effort which honourable men could make, we were at war. Three years ago! It seems like ten. Some of us find it hardly possible to "think ourselves back" into the pre-war days, or revivify in vision the sunny homes, the radiant hopes that then were ours. Then came the first weeks and months of war. To most people it is becoming increasingly difficult to feel again the glowing impulse which throbbed in every fibre of British manhood as we gave ourselves in serious purpose to the high emprise whereto, as we unhesitatingly believed then—as we unswervingly believe still—we were called by every obligation to which an honourable man must rise. We are no more doubtful of it now than we were in those August weeks three years ago, but the long, long strain does tell upon nerve and muscle; and a stiffened upper lip and a sternly firm endurance must in some measure replace the comparative buoyancy and spring with which in those first eager days we deliberately faced the dread ordeal of a vast world-war. At this anniversary time we pause and take stock of the three years' outcome. Face it squarely at its grimmest and its saddest; try to belittle nothing, to exaggerate nothing. Is it all worth while? Does the issue which shone out so clearly in those first days hold good? If we could have foreseen in all their wide ghastliness these three years of human strife and devastation, should we have acted as we did? Would we reverse it now if we could? Ask that question up and down the land, and the answer from almost every thoughtful man and woman would roll back overwhelmingly: We were right then. We are right now. Horrible as it all is, and was, we could do no other. And yet, God knoweth, it is not quite easy to keep the earlier, the more sharply-cut issue clear and pure and unconfused. So much has happened to blur and besmirch it. We are very human, and in fields so vast, and in conditions so unlooked for, there has been abundant room for mistake or for vacillation; for weakness or for cross-counsels; for rash experiment or for over-caution. Human passion and vengefulness, righteous wrath, (and sometimes unrighteous wrath, have flared up. The picture

has lost the cleanness of its first colour, and has become scratched and blotched. Yet there the plain facts are, if we look for them and get back to them. There did come an issue in the world's story, and we could not and did not evade it. That definite issue of "right and wrong," of honour and dishonour, has been no whit impaired, and through the confusion we can get back to it if we will. So getting back to it, as it is well we should, we find ourselves in touch with what is highest and purest in our country's history, and the knowledge nerves us to the patience which is so difficult and yet so necessary now. Look again at the text I chose. That is just what the writer of the letter says: "Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Witness of National Heroes.

You remember how the words come. The writer has reminded his Hebrew readers of the national heroes whom they loved to honour—Abraham, and Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Samuel, and many more. He bids them, when they are weak or perplexed, remember what those men witnessed to, remember that they had borne witness time after time to one great presence in their lives, one great principle guiding their conduct. That presence, that principle, he says, is yours. Those witnesses to it are themselves in a sense round about you now. Hold strenuously to that faith, and press on when difficulties are thickest, with courage and enthusiasm—yes, but especially with what you need most of all, with patience. If God allow us that gift, our cause can and will prevail.

My friends, can we not, in this building, of all places in our land, transfer that in-junction straight and plainly to ourselves? *Respice—Circumspice*. Here beneath our feet lie the bones of scores of the men who, in nine centuries of change and chance, have upheld in and for our country, high witness to the principle of loyalty to truth, of stainless honour of dauntless courage, of tireless patience. Their forms look down on us in marble from the walls. Their example—the example of that cloud of witnesses—is at once a reassurance and an inspiration to the weakest-hearted and the most wayward of us all. There is no epoch, there is scarcely a great episode in English history but has its representative among these great witnesses. In this transept, to quote Macaulay's stirring words, "Chatham seems still, with eagle face and outstretched arm, to bid England be of good cheer." Over the western door his yet more illustrious son seems once again to "pour forth the lofty language of inextinguishable hope." So we might run on. Take modern times only. Johnson, Wilberforce, Gladstone, Salisbury, and many more have each of them a message for to-day. And their witness, after all, is one.

Faith and Honour.

And now upon us, the men and women of this generation in the world's life, the duty, the privilege has at a supreme crisis been laid of upholding on our country's, our Empire's part, the principles of good faith and honour; and as it seems to us of liberty and of ultimate peace. We are not alone. Our great Allies have, in their own way and with us, the same grave task to fulfil. Notably we thank God for the incoming on our side of the great Republic of the Western World. That fellowship, arriving when it did, is the surest human witness that could be borne to the greatness of our cause. It knits a strong and sacred bond, which is to outlast these tempestuous