

Ah, did the proud reason of mankind dream that it could diminish our God? Did it smile in irony when, through Christ and through His Church, He pronounced the solemn words of expiation and of repentance? Vain of fugitive successes, O light minded man, full of pleasure and of wealth, hast thou imagined that thou couldst suffice even to thyself? Then was God set aside in oblivion, then was He misunderstood, then was He blasphemed, with acclamation, and by those whose authority, whose influence, whose power had charged them with the duty of causing His great laws and His great order to be revered and obeyed. Anarchy then spread among the lower ranks of mankind, and many sincere consciences were troubled by the evil example. How long, O Lord, they wondered, how long wilt Thou suffer the pride of this iniquity? Or wilt Thou finally justify the impious opinion that Thou carest no more for the work of Thy hands? A shock from a thunderbolt, and behold, all human foresight is set at naught. Europe trembles upon the brink of destruction.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Many are the thoughts that throng the breast of man to-day, and the chief of them all is this: God reveals Himself as the Master. The nations that made the attack, and the nations that are warring in self-defence, alike confess themselves to be in the hand of Him without whom nothing is made, nothing is done. Men long unaccustomed to prayer are turning again to God. Within the Army, within the civil world, in public, and within the individual conscience, there is prayer. Nor is that prayer to-day a word learnt by rote, uttered lightly by the lip; it surges from the troubled heart, it takes the form at the feet of God, of the very sacrifice of life. The being of man is a whole offering to God. This is worship, this is the fulfilment of the primal moral and religious law: the Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt Thou serve. And even those who murmur and whose courage is not sufficient for submission to the hand that smites us and saves us, even these implicitly acknowledge God to be the Master, for if they blaspheme Him, they blaspheme Him for His delay in closing with their desires.

But as for us, my brethren, we will adore Him in the integrity of our souls. Not yet do we see, in all its magnificence, the revelation of His wisdom, but our faith trusts Him with it all. Before His justice we are humble, and in His mercy hopeful. With holy Tobias we know that because we have sinned He has chastised us, but because He is merciful He will save us.

SOMETHING TO EXPIATE

It would, perhaps, be cruel to dwell upon our guilt now, when we are paying so well and so nobly what we owe. But shall we not confess that we have indeed something to expiate? He who has received much, from him shall much be required. Nay, are we say that the moral and religious standard of our people has risen as its economic prosperity has risen? The observance of Sunday rest, the Sunday Mass, the reverence for marriage, the restraints of modesty—what had you made of these? What, even within Christian families, had become of the simplicity practiced by our fathers, what of the spirit of penance, what of respect for authority? And we, too, we priests, we religious, I, the Bishop, we whose great mission it is to present in our lives yet more than in our speech, the Gospel of Christ, have we earned the right to speak to our people the word spoken by the apostle to the nations: "Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ?" We labour indeed, we pray indeed, but it is all too little. We should be, by the very duty of our state, the public expiators for the sins of the world. But which was the thing dominant in our lives—expiation, or our comfort and well being as citizens? Alas! we have all had times in which we, too, fell under God's reproach to His people after the escape from Egypt: "The beloved grew fat and kicked; they have provoked me with that which was no god, and I will provoke them with that which is no people." Nevertheless, He will save us; for He wills not that our adversaries should boast that they, and not the Eternal, did these things. "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God beside me. I will kill and I will make to live, I will strike and I will heal."

God will save Belgium, my brethren; you cannot doubt it.

Nay, rather, He is saving her.

PATRIOTISM IN ACTION

Across the smoke of conflagration, across the stream of blood, have you not glimpses, do you not perceive signs, of His love for us? Is there a patriot among us who does not know that Belgium has grown great? Nay, which of us would have the heart to cancel this last page of our national history? Which of us does not exult in the brightness of the glory of this shattered nation? When in her throes she brings forth heroes, our Mother Country gives her own energy to the blood of those sons of hers. Let us acknowledge that we needed a lesson in patriotism. There were Belgians, and many such, who wasted their time and their talents in futile quarrels of class with class, of race with race, of passion with personal passion.

Yet when, on the 2nd of August, a mighty foreign Power, confident in its own strength and defiant of the faith of treaties, dared to threaten us in our independence, then did all

curate at Etalle; Alexandre, curate at Mussy-la-Ville; Maréchal, seminarist at Maissin; the Rev. Father Gillet, Benedictine of Maredsous; the Rev. Father Nicolas, Premonstratensian of the Abbey of Leffe; two Brothers of the same Abbey; one Brother of the Congregation of the Oblates; Poskin, parish priest of Surice; Hollet, parish priest of Les Allours; Georges, parish priest of Tintigny; Glouden, parish priest of Latour; Zeuden, retired parish priest at Latour; Jacques, a priest; Druet, parish priest of Acoz; Pollart, parish priest of Roselles; Labeye, parish priest of Blegny Trembleu; Thielen, parish priest of Haccourt; Janssen, parish priest of Heure le Romain; Chabot, parish priest of Forêt; Dossogne, parish priest of Hockay; Reussonnet, curate of Olme; Bilande, chaplain of the institute of deaf mutes at Bouge; Docq, a priest, and others.