

PATRIOTISM

only patriotism which he can respect is that which bows before the God of truth and righteousness. Now this Christian patriotism, because it is moral, is capable of being international. A patriotism that cannot be international, that can find no room for the wider loyalty to humanity or the deeper loyalty to the Church, always becomes criminal, and so long as it endures will continue to stain the pages of history. Loyalty to the kingdoms of the world may indeed become treason to the Kingdom of God. The true patriot must be able to say to his country—

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

When he has to choose between faith and fatherland he will not hesitate.

At the root of all the diseases of patriotism, as of religion, lies the spirit of hatred. The history of Christendom indeed would have to be entirely rewritten had Christian nations and churches even tried to love their neighbours, not to mention their enemies; and we are what we are because of the rarity of Christian charity. War could hardly have come upon us now, if the gospel of hate had not been preached for many years, and a boggy England created by the great national historian of Prussia, just as a boggy Russia is made by many sincere English and German pacifists. We, on our side, perhaps not unprovoked, give rein to the vice; many who have never doubted themselves to be Christians are sincerely annoyed if they are told they must love Germans; and I know of one person who left a society because its secretary was feeding a German family and giving them drink. We reproduce horrid outbursts of spleen from the German press, though this can have no result but to inflame hatred on our side; and it has been openly proclaimed that the goad of