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The Deeper Life

The Revival That Has Come

By Rev. S. G. Bland, D.D.

For some years it has been growing increasingly clear to many students of modern life that there was deep need of a new conscience, a kind of ethical revival. There were many indications that the modern industrial and commercial development had outrun the ethical. The laws and the accepted ethical standards did not seem to meet the conditions of modern life especially in the conduct of corporations, in financial manipulations, in the extraordinary powers gained by great aggregations of capital, and in the peculiar and intimate relations that had grown up between politics and what is popularly called "big business," it had become apparent that there was need of a new morality. Instances were continually presenting themselves of men who in their private life, kindly and honorable and exemplary according to the old standards, seemed to be under new and as yet not illegal methods capable of cruel injustice and downright robbery. The paramount need seemed to be new applications of the old principles of honesty and justice, and with great masses of people possessed of political favor and acutely conscious of being victimized by legalised plunderers, it was felt that the social fabric might be endangered unless there was a great and sweeping ethical revival.

Then came the earthquake of August, 1914. And now it is apparent that the old world is in ruins. And in a measure the ethical revival is here. This war, for the Allied nations, at least, has enormously developed the comprehension of, and devotion to democracy and liberty and justice. Self-interest, or rather self-preservation, undeniably enters into the struggle as far as they are concerned but the main motive is the passionate protest against the unblushing assertion by a strong and skilful and satanically ambitious people that might is right and that the nation that can, is entitled to win the lordship of the world. Perhaps not since the robber empires of Nineveh and Babylon has there been so marked a manifestation of sheer rapacity. And men have been moved to a divine hatred of greed and tyranny and cruelty as they have never been moved in the history of the race. One of the profoundest utterances about the great struggle seems to me the word of a French officer to Rudyard Kipling, "The Boche is saving the world," he said, "because he is showing it what evil is." Not, perhaps, since the crucifixion of the Son of God, has been disclosed the devilishness of what human hearts are capable of under greed and ambition and pride. And never has the world been stirred with such a hatred of wrong. It has swelled like an ocean tide. The ethical revival has begun. Germany, systematically misguided, intoxicated with her military power and her dreams of world-empire, is isolated and abhorred as no other nation has been since her prototype the Huns.

But this divine passion will not wreck itself on Germany only. The recoil will be only less destructive than the explosion. Kaiserism is not confined to Germany. The spirit that excused the violation of Belgium as wrong but necessary is rampant in business and in politics in many lands. There are forces in all civilised nations that are as careless of the lives of women and little children as the men who sank the Lusitania and enslaved the girls of Belgium.

The wild beast savagery of Germany has kindled a holy flame that will burn against all cruelty and all oppression. It will, we trust, by the blessing of

God, burn up the old Germany but also the old Britain, the old United States, the old Canada. The unknown authors of 2 Peter, warns the coming of the day of the Lord "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall be dissolved



Dr. BLAND

with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." "But," he adds, "we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." Physical fire can not do what the Spirit roused by this supreme struggle will do.

Those who looked for an ethical revival were justified. The beginning at least, of it is here. But, perhaps, not so many were looking for an intensely and distinctively religious revival. But God's ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than

our thoughts. God is giving us a revival that is religious as well as ethical.

Some of us, perhaps, in our hatred of injustice, our yearning for a world in which men and women would not be constrained to live as foxes and wolves, forgot that the deepest need of the human heart is not justice and peace and goodwill. The direst and most desperate need of the human heart is a merciful and righteous God. With a God to trust in men can bear, and have borne, a world where evil seemed supreme. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." "For they endured as serving Him who is invisible." But without this rest in God a world of harmony and good-will could not be realized and would fail to give satisfaction if it could. "O God," cried a soul that knew something of the storm-tossed sea of human life, "O God, thou madest man for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

Before this great convulsion the thought of God was not with the modern world as it should have been. Men were often too busy, too self-reliant, too secure to realise very deeply their need of God. And none were self-confident, more masterful, than the Teutonic races, the Germans, the Anglo-Saxons, the Americans. World-mastery in large measure was divided among these. Their souls dwelt at ease. In that atmosphere their souls would have withered. And God in His kindness to them has brought them into anxiety and distress.

We think it is not abhorrence of the German ways that leads us to believe the pride and self-confidence of Germany were the most desperate of all, nor to feel sure that God's love for Germany will not suffer that great but misguided nation to go long without performed and saving humiliation.

But we can speak most accurately and helpfully concerning ourselves. May we not see a Divine purpose in the prolongation of this sore struggle and in the temporary successes of our antagonist? Our pride, our complacency, our carelessness, the selfishness, the unwillingness of many to sacrifice self or coin profit, have been stubborn. But the change is coming. The hard subsoil is being plowed up. Frivolity is giving place to seriousness. Private convenience and profit is being seen as a very little thing. Slowly but surely the baser metal is being purged away. Hearts once fat with prosperity are reaching out hungrily for God. What seemed so impossible, so unthinkable before the war does not seem so now that even the self-reliant, proud masterful Anglo-Saxon may become as a little child. We are going to be ashamed of our self-sufficiency. We are going to drop our snobbery, our wor-

ship of wealth. We are going to see the absurdity of our social distinctions. Our class and political and ecclesiastical animosities and jealousies are being consumed in the fires of this great day of the Lord.

God holds all this wild chaotic storm in the hollow of His hand. The purging fire will not be permitted to do more than its divinely guided work. The victory will be won by the courage of our soldiers and sailors and airmen, by the wisdom of our generals and our statesmen, by the patience and steadfastness of the people, but above all by humility, patience and faith,

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