

A Struggle of Civilizations.

Wars are not accidents. They are not even the caprices of rulers or of nations. A Bismarck or a Napoleon III. may seem to be the cause of a sudden and apparently unprovoked war, but their actions simply come at "the psychological moment," and as a result of a train of causes which impel them to their action. Of course there are generally formal declarations of war though even these are not necessary, and a statement, usually, on both sides affirming the reasons and justice of their actions, but the real student of history looks deeper and knows that often the real cause is carefully kept out of view, or at least is put forward as a secondary rather than a primary incentive.

As a matter of fact, wars represent the "irrepressible conflict" of ideas. They are the outcome of a struggle of civilizations. The earliest struggle recorded in history, that which Kndur-lagama (the Cherdorloamer of the Bible) waged against his rebellious subjects of Mount Seir and the Vale of Siddim; that of the Semite Hyksos against the early Egyptians; the conquering activity of Egypt under the great Rameses and his son and successor Menepthah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus, according to Professors Maspero and Petrie, were all of this character, as were also those of the other great monarchies of the ancient world. One civilization gives way to another in the history of the world, with wars and battles merely the great incidents of an unceasing struggle which has been going on from the dawn of civilization itself.

This struggle of civilizations was emphasized last year in Europe in the war between Turkey and Greece, and again at the present time, when modern civilization, with America as its champion, has challenged a decadent and dying medievalism and is hurrying it to its doom. The oak that annually

"Doth wed The blue Adriatic overhead," incorporates the strength of the preceding annual rings, and every year-until it reaches its majesty of growth and strength is silently at work marshaling its forces for perfect fruition.

Nations, in the same manner, are gradually being transformed and changed more to that "One far-off divine event, To which the whole creation moves."

The nation that stands in the way of such development, by that fact merely indicates that its own era of growth and advancement is closing, and that it must give way to the newer and faster forces that make for greater progress. Spain and Turkey and China are in that condition today, and though Europe, through its conservatism, delayed, apparently, the manifest destiny of Islamism, it can not much longer be postponed. The collapse of China as a world-empire and of Spain as a colonial power are but inevitable incidents in the march of nations to the distant, higher goal, and the supreme civilization which, in itself, will embody the aspirations of humanity through all the ages.—Interior.

Christian Outlook for the Twentieth Century.

BY GEORGE DANA BOADMAN.

The Christian outlook for the twentieth century seems to me very bright. Of course there will be occasional retrogrades, and it may be grave catastrophes; for it is in the very nature of life to be subject to crises. Nevertheless, I feel sure that the general trend of the next century will be onward and upward; and this because I feel sure that the Lord of the centuries has not lived and died and risen in vain. Accordingly, I believe that the spirit of Jesus Christ will be the dominant force in the coming century. I believe, for instance, that his mountain sermon will become more and more the supreme constitution for mankind; that as the church understands more and more his mission and character and teachings and work, her conceptions of God will be more and more heightened, and her conceptions of man will be more and more broadened; that the instincts of animalism will be lost in the sense of divine Sonship; that agnosticism will melt in the heat of personal Christian experiences; that anarchy against man will flee before loyalty to God; that the kingdom of God will be less in word and more in power; that sectarianism will be swallowed in catholicity; that ecclesiasticism will wane and Christianity will wax; that character rather than opinion will be the test of orthodoxy; that church and state will dissolve partnership; that church and academy will join hands in glad bridal—the church acknowledging the Bible of Nature and the academy acknowledging the Bible of Scripture; that the standard of ethics—personal, domestic, social, educational, commercial, national, international, Christian—will grow higher and higher; that hereditary will gain Christian momentum; that environment will undergo transfiguration; that the sense of individual responsibility, and also of corporate community, will alike deepen; that society will agree that chastity shall be as binding on man as on woman; that legislation, whether mendatory or prohibitory, will make way for intelligent and cheerful self-regimen; that office will soar

from ambition into service; that wealth and work instead of quarreling, will co-operate; that culture will become more conscious of accountability to God and to man; that society will tend toward equilibrium of forces and of functions; that egotistic insularity will be merged into altruistic terrestrialism; that the Jew will regain the blessings promised in Abraham; that Christendom will disarm; that the whole world will become one neighborhood; that human units will grow into human unity—men into man; that the Golden Rule will become more and more the law of society; that faith, hope, love will be acknowledged the human trinity—in brief, that the twentieth century will be in very truth a century of Christocracy.—Standard.

Ways of Answering Prayer.

In reply to the question, "What place has prayer for temporal blessings in your system of natural law in the spiritual world?" Professor Drummond, as reported, said in one of his talks at Lakeview: "A large, splendidly equipped steamship sailed out from Liverpool for New York. Among the passengers were a little boy and girl, who were playing about the deck, when the boy lost his ball overboard. He immediately ran to the captain and shouted, 'Stop the ship, my ball is overboard!' The captain smiled pleasantly, but said, 'Oh, no, my boy! I cannot stop the ship, with all these people, just to get a rubber ball.' The boy went away grumbling, and confided to the little girl that the captain didn't stop the ship because he couldn't. He believed the ship was wound up some way in Liverpool, and she just had to run, day and night, until she ran down. A day or so afterwards the children were playing on deck again, when the little girl dropped her doll down into the engine room, and she supposed it too had gone overboard. She said 'I will run and ask the captain to stop the ship and get my dolly.' 'It's no use,' said the boy; 'he cannot do anything. I've tried him.' But the little girl ran on to the captain with her story and appeal. The captain came and peered down into the engine-room, and, seeing the doll, said, 'Just wait her a minute.' And while the ship went right on, he ran down the stairway and brought up the little girl's doll, to her delight and to the boy's amazement. The next day the cry rang out, 'Man overboard!' and immediately the bell rang in the engine-room' by orders from the lever in the hands of the captain; the great ship stood still until boats were lowered and the life rescued. Then she steamed on until she reached her wharf in New York. As soon as the ship was tied up, the captain went up town and bought the boy a better ball than the one he had lost. How, each of the three prayers was answered. The little girl received her request without stopping the ship; the little boy by a little waiting received his also; and yet for sufficient reason the ship was stopped by a part of the machinery itself, not as an after-thought, but something put into the ship when it was made."

The Religion That Sings.

Christianity is the religion that sings itself. Atheism has no songs; agnosticism is not tuneful. We have never heard of a Brahmanic hymnal or a Confucian psalmody. The meters of heathendom or savagery, so far as paganism is vocal at all, are not once to be compared with the lively heartiness, with the freeness, fullness and depth of Christian song. There is a spontaneity and abandon to the singing of Christians that is sadly lacking in any of the musical exercises of paganism. The believer in Jesus explains his own songfulness in the conclusive question: "How can I keep from singing?" Christianity is not only a religion that sings. No other faith is so the cult of carols and the school of praise. The Christian sings because he has something to sing about. The believer's face is aglow with joy and his speech inevitably quickens into song. When Jesus Christ put himself into the world he put song into it also. By saving men he saved their music too. And so ever and everywhere the religion of Jesus is a cult of hope, of brave joy, of cheery optimism. Christian faith already puts the heaven to which it is going into its earthly phraseologies and psalmodies. It elevates song while it quickens it. It inspires a poetry which is peerless. Atheism is dumb, but there is music to Christianity. Skepticism is not singable, but Christ today is leading the grandest choruses of the world. English literature is already full of the lyrics of the Christ, while the poets are still searching for new tributes to bring to his dame. The sublimest oratorios have had inspiration from the Nazarene. Christianity is a religion that can sing and that does sing.—New York Observer.

Won With a Word.

I am sometimes startled at the ease with which a soul can be won. And I am often humiliated when I think of the many times and the many opportunities in my life which I have wasted and not used for the winning of a soul to Christ. I want to illustrate the ease with which a

soul can be won. Not very long ago, in a strange city, as the hackman got down off his box and opened the door to let me out, I dropped a quarter in his hand, and as I did so I grasped his hand and said to him: "Good-night; I hope to meet you again in glory." I had often done that, and I thought nothing of it in this case. I went into the house, met my host and retired to my room for the night. About midnight my host knocked at my chamber door and said: "Chaplain, that hackman has come back and he says that he has got to see you tonight. I told him he had better wait until morning, but he said, 'No, sir, I must see him to-night and I know that he will be willing to see me.'" When the hackman came up, a broad-shouldered, rough-looking man, with a great whip in his hand, he stood there in my presence with the tears rolling down his cheeks like rain. Said he: "If I meet you in glory, I have got to turn around. I have come to ask you to pray with me." What a privilege it was to pray with that man! What a privilege to point him to Jesus—and yet I never saw him before in all my life. There are 10,000 men in this country that have not had an invitation to come to God in all their lives.—Bishop McCabe.

Holy Living as Well as Doing.

There is danger in some quarters at present lest enthusiasm for external Christian service overshadow the sense of duty to cultivate personal holiness. It is quite true that the mission of the Christian to the bodies and minds of the needy often has been apprehended imperfectly in the past, and that it is a solemn and ever-present duty to appreciate and fulfil it. But such service cannot take the place of personal consecration. "These ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone." It is clear that some good people need to take care lest they seem to belittle the importance of holy thinking and living in comparison with that of benevolent effort.

The former is the strongest motive and the truest guide to the latter. The chief object of religious service is not to render men comfortable or enlightened, important though it is to accomplish these aims, but to help them to become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Nothing else so promotes this object as sincere righteousness in the one who makes the welfare of others his purpose in Christ's name. If he be unostentatiously yet evidently imbued with the divine Spirit, his goodness wins him access to others, touches their hearts, appeals to what is most sacred within them, and makes his philanthropic efforts, of whatever sort, most successful. To try to be fit for the Spirit's indwelling, therefore, is as truly a duty as a privilege. Humility, penitence, self-sacrifice, and a prayerful temper are to be cultivated both for our own sakes and that we may serve others most faithfully.—Edward W. Moore.

Our Life Melody.

"There is no music in a rest, but there is the making of music in it." In our whole life-melody the music is broken off here and there by "rests," and we foolishly think we have come to the end of time. God sends a time of forced leisure, sickness, disappointed plans, frustrated efforts, and makes a sudden pause in the choral hymn of our lives, and we lament that our voices must be silent, and our part missing in the music which ever goes up to the ear of the Creator. How does the musician read the rest? See him beat the time with unvarying count, and catch up the next note true and steady, as if no breaking place had come in between.

Not without design does God write the music of our lives. Be it ours to learn the time, and not be dismayed at the "rests." They are not to be slurred over, not to be omitted, not to destroy the melody, not to change the key-note. If we look up, God himself will beat the time for us. With the eye on him, we shall strike the next note full and clear. If we say sadly to ourselves, "There is no music in a rest," let us not forget "there is the making of music in it." The making of music is often a slow and painful process in this life. How patiently God works to teach us! How long he waits, for us to learn the lesson!"—John Ruskin.

Once a member of our church came to me to ask what she ought to try to look at when she shut her eyes in prayer. All I could think of was to read her two or three verses about Bartimeus. A smile ran over her whole face as she rose suddenly and said, "Good morning." Then I asked whether her question had an answer. "Oh, yes," she replied, gratefully; "I ought to see what the blind man did before his eyes were opened; he saw he was blind, and he seemed to see Jesus there, waiting to be prayed to."—C. S. Robinson.

Whittier tells us of his pressed gentian, one side of which was but a blurred mass of crushed leaves, while the other showed all the exquisite beauty of the flower. Life is full of similar two-sided views of people and of acts.—J. R. Miller.