

## The War and Devotion

One effect of the war, in which thoughtful people rejoice, is the clear awakening of devotional feeling. People who knew not God are seeking after Him. In a recent issue of a New York paper two articles testified to this gratifying result. One was by the British poet, Alfred Noyes, who expressed the opinion that never again in the years to come can the people of England grow interested in the vagaries of eccentrics who call themselves by several queer names, and he notes that the English publishers are selling only half as many novels as they were this time last year. The other communication is from Jules Bois, a prominent French writer, who says that "France prays." Not, as he remarks, that it is a question of creeds, but a religion in which all men can stand together. He tells the story of a recent attack, when, the Germans having been driven back, all about lay Frenchmen dying. Some of them were Roman Catholic, others were Protestant, while still others probably had never acknowledged any religion. The only clergyman to be found was a Jewish Rabbi, and he was asked to go among these men and minister to them in their last moments. As he knelt down beside them, one and all, nobody stopped to think about his creed. Not long afterwards he, too, was killed. While we are not able to extend our sympathies to the limit of the Frenchman in his disregard of all creeds, we are, nevertheless, thankful to notice any indications of devotional feeling among those who, apart from the horrors of war, might easily have been without it. These are only slight indications of what is being seen on almost every hand. Men at the front are deeply conscious of the presence and claims of God. As a thoughtless, irreligious British soldier said: "There are no atheists in the trenches."

## A Modern Miracle

A man in a Northern town in England had an infidel friend. The poor fellow had been a drunkard, and had a drunkard's home. He went to the meetings of the Railway Men's Mission, and accepted Christ as his Saviour. His home was soon transformed. Some time afterward he met his infidel friend, who said to him, "You have become a Christian, I hear." "Yes," he said. "Do you believe the Bible?" "Of course I do." "You believe that story about changing the water into wine?" "Why," he said, "of course I do! Nothing difficult about that! You come to my home, and I will show you how Christ can change beer into carpets and chairs and pianos and organs." There is perhaps no proof of Christianity so powerful as that which comes from personal experience.

## CONSISTENCY

By THE REV. CANON N. JONES, M.A.

Though citizens of heaven, risen with Christ, and having our hearts fixed on heavenly things, we have a walk to consider down here—a walk in which the world's eyes are upon us. Therefore, this position calls for consistency of conduct on our part.

It is this that we pray for in the Collect for the Third Sunday after Easter. "Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same." There is the negative aspect of a consistent life. We pray that we may eschew those things that are contrary to our profession.

The word "eschew," Goulburn says, is perhaps connected with the common word "shoo," which denotes scaring birds away. It therefore signifies not merely "to avoid," but "to chase away, to repel." The Latin word in the old Collect is still more expressive; it is *respuere*, "to repel with loathing," to act as Christ said He would act towards the Laodicean Church; this is the way in which we must treat those things which are not consistent with our Christian profession. There is the positive aspect of a consistent life. We pray that we may follow all such things as are agreeable to the same. "Brethren," says St. Paul, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. iv. 8).

Consistency of conduct is the theme of the Epistle for the day (I. Pet. ii. 11-17). The word translated "conversation" in verse 12 means "manner of life" or "behaviour," and is one of the key-words of the First Epistle of St. Peter. He writes to his readers urging upon them such manner of life, in the midst of their heathen neighbours, as becomes their Christian profession. And his words speak to us to-day; although our circumstances in many respects are widely different from theirs, yet we have this in common with them, that we have to live in the midst of people who neither know nor love God. How are these people to learn about God? Often they will not read the Bible, but they will and do read us; and they will probably form their idea of Christianity from what they see in us. Hence we see the importance of our manner of life being such as will truly reflect the God whom we serve. Our Christian behaviour will be influenced by our remembering our position in the world. We are "strangers and pilgrims." This world is not our abiding place; we are citizens of heaven. Here we are—but sojourning for a brief night; soon must we hasten homewards. Let us take heed lest we compromise our high citizenship during our brief stay in this strange land. In keeping with our character as pilgrims and strangers, we have a negative and a positive duty. We must "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The verb implies not merely a state of antagonism, but active aggression. The lusts of the flesh enumerated in detail by St. Paul in Gal. v. 19-21, take the field like armed bands. Like the hosts of Midian they prowl and prowl around, seeking to ensnare and enslave us. Our only safe course is to abstain from them, to hold ourselves off from them. We all have appetites and desires implanted within us by a wise Creator for good and useful purposes. These are lawful and right when regulated by the will of God. It is their unlawful and inordinate gratification which converts them into lusts hostile to the soul, and which if yielded to, will deprive us of strength, like Samson shorn of his locks. On the other hand, there is a positive duty expressed in the words, "having our conversation honest among the Gentiles." "Honest," that is "seemly," such as may attract and command admiration and esteem. In short, we must so live, that men will be constrained to acknowledge the worth of our religion.

Such a life will have its effect upon the world around us. The Epistle goes on, "That, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." "Whereas" should be rendered "wherein"; "wherein they speak against you." St. Peter's meaning is that the very conduct which furnishes these maligners ground for slander against Christians will, in the long run, furnish

them ground for glorifying God. And how will this great change be brought about? How will this wondrous enlightenment be effected? The answer is implied in the word "Behold"; "they may, by your good works, which they shall behold." The word is used in Classical Greek to denote initiation into a mystery. And to unbelievers Christ's religion must be a mystery; they cannot understand it, till the scales drop from their eyes. Then "the clearing of the vision leads them up to faith." This is their day of visitation, the day in which God in his mercy opens their eyes that they may see. It was so in the case of St. Paul; he persecuted the Christians with exceeding violence, but the day of visitation came to him, which, while darkening the bodily vision, gave clearness of sight to the soul, and the persecutor of the faith became the preacher of the very faith he once sought to root up. The rest of the Epistle follows out this consistency of life in various details.

The Gospel (John xvi. 16-22) has one point of contact with the Epistle. See verse 22, "And ye now therefore have sorrow." The "therefore" shows that we have here an application of the figure in the preceding verse—the sorrow of a woman in travail. They were to experience similar birth-throes. "The proper idea of birth-throes," says Bishop Westcott, "is not that of transition from suffering to joy, but of suffering as the necessary condition and preparation for joy. Under this aspect the disciples in some sense occupied the condition of the mother. It was their office, as the representatives of the Church, to realize the Christ of the Resurrection, and present Him to the world." This they would do by their consistent Christlike life. They would in this life have to experience pain and sorrow, but like the sorrow of the travelling woman it would be changed into joy, because unbelievers, beholding their Christlike life, would have their eyes open to see the more excellent way, and then sorrowing ones would be able to rejoice because of men born into the Kingdom of God.

## A SONG OF YPRES

*"Soldier, soldier over the sea  
Pray can you sing a song to me?  
For the hot tears blind and I cannot see,  
The graves lie thick and the blood flows free  
And the crosses stab the heart o' me—  
I call—your mother—England!"*

The men who sleep at Ypres  
Were not afraid to die,  
Those hero-men whose strength was ten,  
Though smitten hip and thigh,  
They paid the worth of their English birth  
And the gleam of their island sky,  
And they sleep a sleep that is sweet and deep  
With the guns for their lullaby

The men who fell at Ypres  
Fought their grim fight alone;  
They trod the shade of a bitter glade  
That ye might see the sun,  
That glorious sun, that set for them  
Ere their noontide had begun,  
But they hurled the flame of thy sacred name  
Through the twilight of the Hun.

The men who die for England  
Are like a pillared fire.  
From East and West to thy behest  
They came—but not for hire.  
Their names shall ring where thy banners  
swing,

Though their bodies choke the mire,  
And each is a gem in thy diadem,  
In the land of their long desire.

*"Mother, mother over the sea,  
This is the song I bring to thee,  
Though the graves lie thick and the blood  
flows free,  
The crosses are for the love o' thee—  
Their gift to thy children—liberty.  
Mother, my mother—England!"*

A. GLYN PRYS JONES.—(Daily Chronicle.)