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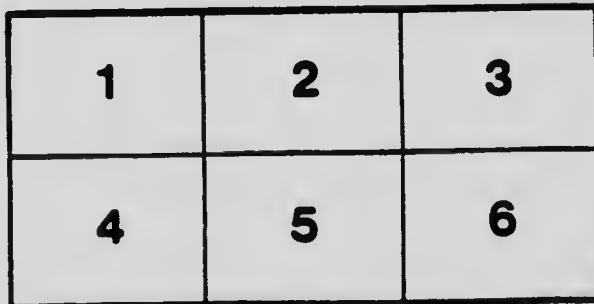
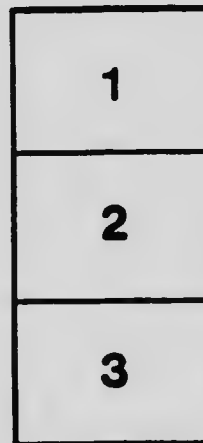
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Second Series

PAPERS FOR WAR TIME. No. 17

PHARISAISM
AND WAR

BY

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BASIS OF PUBLICATION

This series of Papers is based on the following convictions :

1. That Great Britain was in August morally bound to declare war and is no less bound to carry the war to a decisive issue ;
2. That the war is none the less an outcome and a revelation of the un-Christian principles which have dominated the life of Western Christendom, and of which both the Church and the nations have need to repent ;
3. That followers of Christ, as members of the Church, are linked to one another in a fellowship which transcends all divisions of nationality or race ;
4. That the Christian duties of love and forgiveness are as binding in time of war as in time of peace ;
5. That Christians are bound to recognize the insufficiency of mere compulsion for overcoming evil and to place supreme reliance upon spiritual forces and in particular upon the power and method of the Cross ;
6. That only in proportion as Christian principles dictate the terms of settlement will a real and lasting peace be secured ;
7. That it is the duty of the Church to make an altogether new effort to realize and apply to all the relations of life its own positive ideal of brotherhood and fellowship ;
8. That with God all things are possible.

PHARISAISM AND WAR

EVEN in January we still talk more of the war than of anything else, and amid our varied conversations it is interesting to notice how the arguments and attitude of certain people first bore and then nauseate us. It is not the strength of their expressions ; for others use stronger language and are more definite in condemnation of German policy, without producing anything like the same senseless distaste. Nor can we trace our revolt to the daily prejudices which will have to be surrendered if we commit our lives to the guidance of reason ; it is born of something noble and Christian within us.

The truth is that we find ourselves face to face with Pharisaism, and we do not like its aspect. Unfortunately Pharisaism is at present epidemic over much of this little world of ours, and the typical Briton, in whom foreigners have always found a marked tendency to the disease, is specially liable to be infected. During this war it is no longer foreign critics but our own trusted and patriotic leaders who warn us that there is no danger to our moral tone so imminent and so grave. On every hand are the evidences that it is very easy to fall under the spell. In a country where such an output is expected from the pulpit and the press, a subject guaranteed to be popular is almost irresistible. What a godsend the sins of Germany have been to many a journalist ! How many Nonconformist preachers, conscious of a certain dullness in their sermons since Mr. Balfour's iniquities in connexion with Education Bills could be exposed no longer, put up the paper edition of Bernhardt and knocked him down with all the old satisfying thrills of pulpit battle ! How many an Anglican, whose flock were getting tired of Welsh Disestablishment Sunday after Sunday, found

PHARISAISM AND WAR

that he could go for forty days and forty nights in the strength of the newspaper references to Nietzsche and Treitschke! The more tempting, the more dangerous: if, as the result, Pharisaism should become more deeply ingrained into the English character than it was before, what an appalling problem the settlement will be, and how miserable we shall make ourselves and others when the war is done.

But at the outset we must clear our minds of the common thought that Pharisaism means hypocrisy in the modern sense. The Pharisees were not hypocrites in our meaning of the word, though it is true that hypocrisy breeds very easily in an atmosphere such as they favoured. If the mass of them had been hypocrites, as we understand it, they could never have conquered and held the respect of the Jewish people, as they plainly did. For the present, therefore, we will sweep away all thought of conscious hypocrisy. Let us try to understand the real thing and how it touches ourselves. Pharisaism was not invented in Judea in the last three centuries before Christ. The Old Testament shows a gradual growth of its influence throughout Hebrew life. Except in Plato and Epicurus, Greek philosophy smelt strongly of its blossom, and the rigidity of Roman civilization had many a trace of its starch. It is not even necessary for Pharisaism to have anything to do with organized religion at all. English party politics are Pharisee through and through, and there is a conventional element in much in our pictorial art and music which, if it is not Pharisaism, at least produces the same weary distaste and shows the same absence of self-criticism and aspiration. Religion by its enemies is often enough identified with Pharisaism, but it is only fair to notice that among those who neglect or attack religion may be found Pharisees of the ripest and most matured flavour, while only an honoured few escape completely. As a matter of fact, a real religion is the only true and permanent cure. Let us then confess

PHARISAISM AND WAR

without recrimination that, as long as we care about morals at all, we are almost all Pharisees ; that you are a Pharisee, that I am a Pharisee, and that as the trouble is one which springs from fallen human nature, the patrons of the *Daily News* and the *Daily Mail*, of the *Spectator* and the *Nation*, of the *British Weekly* and the *Challenge*, are in this respect brothers under the skin.

In this paper there is time to deal with Pharisaism only in its religious form.

1. 'As long as we care about morals at all'—surely that will help us to begin the dissection of Pharisaism that we may find out what it is. For it is impossible without morality. The cannibal tribe cannot be Pharisaic, as long as its warriors eat for hunger or sport or the nourishment of their valour. They can become Pharisees only as they import some moral sanction into the process and decide that their neighbour is to be sent to Coventry because he does not eat their victim with the prescribed sauce, or that the enemy across the water has been guilty of some social iniquity which can only be expiated in the stew-pot. During the present war there is probably far less Pharisaism in Serbia than is to be found in Britain ; one must be somewhat moral to be a Pharisee.

The man of the world, therefore, bids us abolish the disease by getting rid of morality, which is as effective as to cure a victim of lumbago by sawing him in sunder. Further, the man of the world is never bold enough to perform so drastic an operation on his own morality, and thus after a little scrutiny the symptoms may generally be found in his case also. The cure for Pharisaism is not less morality but morality fuller and more progressive. As a matter of actual history Pharisaism has linked itself with and lived upon some of the noblest emotions of human history. The long robes and petty legalisms of our Lord's day went back but a few score years to Maccabean ancestors, who had girt up their garments to conquer Syria and had died by families at a time rather

PHARISAISM AND WAR

than deny the great principles of the law. ' They chose to die, that they might not be defiled with the meats, and that they might not profane the holy covenant : and they died ' (1 Macc. i. 63). Even with all the deterioration that intervened, the fall of Jerusalem showed that they had not forgotten how to die. If we take the period of the English Commonwealth, when Pharisaism was so general, are we not bound to remember the uprising of half the nation to enforce the promises of a king ? It was the same spirit that took wings across the sea in the *Mayflower* and found a body for itself in the manhood of the New England states. It is worth remembering, too, that under Cromwell's régime, with all its scars and mistakes, England was respected on the Continent as rarely before or since. Underneath complacency, priggishness and cant, there has often lain a strong and heroic passion for right. The parasite was an evidence of the life on which it fed.

We, too, at this time need a firmer grip on morality. There is a good deal of talking which ignores the tremendous issues involved. We are weary of the war—God knows how weary—the news of slaughter and the clumsy futility of much of this world-struggle have made us long for an end at any cost. But the motive with which the mass of the British people took up arms in the first days of August was to establish righteousness against those who swept it brutally aside. We know more now of the policies which hatched this evil thing, we see in what a death-grapple our country is engaged, or the news of German deliberate ' terribleness ', taken with the bombardment of unfortified towns, may have changed our emphasis and given greater weight to the motive of self-defence ; but at the end, as at the beginning, right cries out for vindication, and we shall betray our Christianity if we do not keep clearly before our eyes the wrong which has been done as the main justification for war. There are different ways of resisting evil and making

PHARISAISM AND WAR

God's law run operative throughout the earth ; your duty and mine may lead us in different paths, but let us beware at this time that we keep with us the sense of the appalling wrong which has been done to this poor struggling world of ours and to all that slowly gathered, slowly builded conscience of the nations which now stands gaping like a cathedral after the shells have done their work. If the sort of temper is to continue which has directed German militarism, in truth ' the world will be no place for a gentleman to live in '. Without righteousness human life is impossible, the Hebrews taught that to us, and just now the very foundations of righteousness are shaken.

2. But while Pharisaism is closely connected with morality, the difference is fundamental. Pharisaism is morality gone sour. No morality can thrive without a centre of aspiration which gives its sanction to every known law and calls out those tiny thrills of sensitiveness that herald laws unknown and as yet in embryo. Law for its own sake is a very dull thing, and, as St. Paul saw long ago, questionably moral. We need something to live for, something to give ourselves to, and when we have found what we need, morality follows of itself. Now the most effective aspiration is the love of God, mingled, as it always must be, with the love of man. (There may be other centres of a true life, but I do not know them and therefore cannot bring them into the argument.) The love of God and love of man are always above a man pulling him up to them, they make him concern himself with his own shortcoming, and when in his heart they speak of moral law, it is himself they bid him test. Later on it may become his duty to test others also, that he may give them aid, but a Christian must deal with what is in his own eye, mote or beam as it may be, before he begins to criticize another. Christianity lays a man on his face in the dust before God. It is the only way to become fit to rise. The really religious man is always so conscious of how much more he has to learn

PHARISAISM AND WAR

of God's will that he never thinks of morality without first testing himself by it. He is so conscious of his brotherhood with men that in any time of conflict he always tries to understand their action, to say as much for them as he honestly can, and to find out first where he himself may have been to blame. He is slowly learning to believe that it is better to suffer wrong than to inflict it. He is not bound by law, for he can take each clause back to love and bid love, which is also holiness, fit it to the need of the moment. Love which made, can also remake at need.

It is just this nerve-centre of morality which in the Pharisee is dead or atrophied ; and so we may attempt to define Pharisaism by saying that it is *the temper of moral self-approval and of disparagement toward others, which is possible to those whose spirit is not controlled and sweetened by love to God and man.* It depends on morality, but on a morality which has lost its first principle, a morality which sours just because it is without a centre of aspiration. Why a Pharisee should turn the treadmill of duty, when the life principle is absent, it is very hard to say ; sometimes it pays in respectability, and sometimes it pays in cash ; some find it easier to be bound by a definite code which saves them from the need for consulting God to find His will, and some do 'right' to-day because they have done it for ten thousand yesterdays. But perhaps the majority of Pharisees are glad to pay the price of morality in order to secure the luxury of self-esteem. In each and every case there is no central principle guiding always to something higher. The religion of the Pharisee therefore has in it no capacity for evolution, no germ of progressive life. It has no sense of the background of half-apprehended duty, still less of the far-stretching land of passionate search newly opening with each new advance of the explorer. Because it has no principle, it is feverishly tenacious of its 'principles'—we do well to distrust all morality which can only be put into the form of external

PHARISAISM AND WAR

rules. Owing to this same absence of a principle it dare not tolerate discussion of its precepts. We are all mentally indolent, and when we suspect that we have no foundation on which to establish our case, we are apt, as Stevenson puts it in his Fables, to 'gobble like a turkey'. Thus to stifle the spirit of honest inquiry can only lead to the blind distrust of truth so characteristic of all really seasoned Pharisees, and that distrust degenerates imperceptibly into the rank hypocrisy commonly associated with the name, in which devouring widows' houses is not felt to be any barrier to public prayers. The Pharisee is wanting in love to man, and therefore is always disparaging and condemning others; he lacks in love to God, and therefore does more than justice to himself, nor has the spring of penitence within his soul. Europe just now is a stage on which all the actors, hand on breast, pose before heaven in a quite unconscious monotony of self-approval.

3. Plainly Pharisaism is a much worse thing in those who are leaders of the Christian Church. That Church was born in a revolt against this very thing; the need for penitence is part of its central message, and if its priests and prophets prophesy smooth things to their own side and damnation to their opponents, how far the Church will go astray! If the ministers of the gospel of love are afraid or unwilling to bid us love our enemies in this difficult time, how shall men believe that their God is love? At times it looks as if there were no place for penitence; our day of intercession, for instance, might not include humiliation, lest humiliation be misunderstood. Germans seem to be excluded from the benefits of the Sermon on the Mount, and to try to understand their case is unpatriotic. In some utterances of the ministry Germany has become so black and England (with individual Englishmen) so innocent, that there could be no need of repentance for anything in our national policy, present or historic.

PHARISAISM AND WAR

The fact is that none are so exposed to Pharisaism in its more insidious forms as those who are the guardians of morality. The guardian of morality is almost bound to be a sort of professional reprover. One remembers schoolmaster after schoolmaster who fell into the trap. If English art is Pharisaic, the rabbis are to be found in the ranks of the art teachers. When a parson once forgets that

penitence comes after all
Imploring pardon,

there is nothing that can save him. The agnostic lecturer on ethics is in like case. For the professional reprover finds it almost impossible to admit his own sins or even to face them with clear and open eyes. To do so would make it impossible to correct those put into his charge, and therefore self-examination would be dangerous and confession a breach of trust. If this is true, we can see now why Britain is in such a peculiar danger. Her cause is for the most part good : why, then, should she 'weaken' it by examining what of wrong may be found in herself ? Moreover, the danger became more serious when, because of her detached position, the championship of public morality was thrust upon her. She stands in Europe as the foe of organized militarism and the protector of a small and injured state. Finding herself thus on the side of the angels, how natural it is for her to close her eyes and to forget that she has ever been on any other side or that there are any of her children who fall short of the highest chivalry. How inappropriate is the language of the General Confession to the champion of righteousness ! Many of the clergy of every denomination, feeling specially concerned by the immoralism of German action, stretch anxious hands to keep the jolts of criticism from the ark of the British covenant. Some who have fought English militarism in the past have for the first time found themselves in accord with a great popular enthusiasm, and they are so glad to be done with weary opposi-

PHARISAISM AND WAR

tion, that they recoil more than others from any misgiving that would drive them out into the wilderness again. Here and there the strongest language comes from members of peace societies. Now this is not unnatural, when there is so much cause for indignation; and yet indignation, if it escape the bounds of love and self-criticism, is apt to praise self and condemn the enemy in language which smacks more of the imprecatory Psalms than of the Gospels. If the teachers of the Church belittle our Lord's command to love, will they put any rein upon their prejudice? If leaders put no bridle upon their tongues, what must we expect of the rank and file?

4. Let us look at a few concrete instances of the trouble. We must make full and glad allowance for the splendid temper of the nation during these trying months, and perhaps most of all in those first days when, fearing the worst that war could bring her, she dared in blind faith to follow duty. If in time past Britain has not always thought for the small nations, that is no reason that we should not be proud that she can help Belgium now. But let us rejoice with trembling. On our side there has been and still remains so much of evil, that it is impossible to condemn Germany in the indiscriminate manner general during the last five months without laying ourselves open to the charge of being Pharisees. It is not that Germany is not wrong, nor even that we have not the duty to say so, but that we have no right to say it in the tone we commonly adopt. It is hard to exaggerate the harm that may have been done by Treitschke or Nietzsche, and, even if Bernhardt was less influential than the puffs of his English publishers would have us believe, he was important as a symptom, for his morality coincides closely with that shown in conduct by a considerable portion of the German Staff. Yet those who escape from Germany tell us that the Germans are culling the spicier morsels from our Jingo papers in order to convict us of the same malice prepense, and that they are convinced of the

PHARISAISM AND WAR

Bernhardian ascendancy of Leo Maxse over English political ideas. Nietzsche's 'Live Dangerously' may be intended as an attack on what we mean by morality, but the motto of an increasing proportion of our English life seems to be 'Live Comfortably', and that, if less incendiary than Nietzsche, is scarcely more moral. To put Odin in the place of Christ is revolting enough to a sincere Christian, but if the half of every population in Christendom takes Odin no more seriously than it has taken Christ, the moral balance will not be greatly upset. Or again, we are astounded at the arrogance of German plans for a military empire, and protest that we desire no territory. Yet almost before the echoes of our protestations have died away, we sound the war-cry against the future trade of Germany, wilfully forgetting that under modern conditions such a war is more protracted than the conflict of swords, more aggressive and more essentially cruel than annexation.¹ As to territory in the strictest sense, Egypt has already become a British Protectorate (to say nothing of Cyprus); and, if the war brought us no advantage beyond that exchange of fiction for confessed reality, there might be little enough to regret; but there are ominous anticipations as to the division of colonial spoils and pickings, which assume that what is 'greed' in Germany, is with us merely the shouldering of 'the white man's burden'. Again, we are sure that we must object to Germany's occupation of any port that threatens British colonies, yet are equally sure that we can be trusted, and we alone, to hold the key of the Mediterranean and the eastern seas. German war-apparatus has scandalized us all by its prostitution of science and engineering to the purposes of pure destruction; but let it once be proved that we can provide apparatus a little more effective—mines, aeroplanes with 'a definite ascendancy', artillery to equal the 42 cm. guns—and

¹ Purely as a war measure and for the duration of the war the destruction of German trade seems to be justifiable enough.

PHARISAISM AND WAR

British indignation seems to cool. The very people who with tears in their voices lament the moral failure of the German Socialists and thank God for the courage of the *Vorwärts*, are bitter against any Englishman who dares to discuss the policy of his country in July, because he is hindering recruiting.

There is nothing which has been so frequently on the lips of the crowd as the stories of German atrocities. There seems to be evidence enough that the policy of terrorism is dictated by the General Staff of Prussia, and once that is so, the brutal elements among the soldiery are only too likely to break loose. The sworn statements of Belgium and France are, and must long remain, unclean stains on the name of Germany. But many in England who have made the loudest outcry about the shooting of civilians in cold blood, acquiesce in, and make money out of, the system by which their fellow countrymen are sweated through weary years of slavery. Again, the stories of outrage upon women have rung like an awful bass accompaniment through the varied strains of the popular wrath. 'How would you like to have that happen to *your* sister!' is the chorus. I doubt whether it is possible to overestimate the degree to which this aspect of German brutality has eaten into the common mind of Britain. But one has at times been pained by the suspicion that those who shouted loudest were least trained in chivalry towards women. We must at least remember that Germans believe us to be given over to sensuality. If they visited us on boat-race night, or if their spies are able to report to them the voluntary and widespread surrender of purity that has been notorious on the outskirts of some of our camps, they might perhaps have some excuse. Outrage is wicked enough in all conscience, but if our indignation is real, should it not take account also of the ruin of chastity by consent and under what are practically peace conditions? The report of German crime in Belgium is horrible; but have we any

PHARISAISM AND WAR

right to speak as if our nation were guiltless, while Britain allows the annual sacrifice of womanhood required, war or no war, to provide the prostitutes of our great cities? 'How would you like that to happen to *your* sister?' —the question is insincere if its only purpose is to inflame us to war, and if in peace it is forgotten.

The situation may be summed up by saying that we idealize our own country and our own people, while in relation to a hostile nation we practise that kind of realism which, in politics as in literature, involves the selection and emphasis of all the ugly and sordid facts. In both its halves this is Pharisaism; when we idealize ourselves we fall short of love to God, and when we give another less than his due, we fail in love to man. Indeed if this is not Pharisaism, nothing is.

5. It is plain, then, that the danger is an insidious one. The moment we condemn, we are on the edge of the precipice. It is obvious that in writing these pages I am likely enough to be more of a Pharisee than usual. The reader who sympathizes with the paper may find that he too is near to the very fault he condemns in others. How shall the danger be met? Once more we must repeat it: *not by slurring over the demands of morality.* The world and the Church need a stronger sense of righteousness—in public matters a far stronger sense. We must keep and develop all the moral passion that we have. Yet there is one condition: we must turn it as readily on ourselves as upon others. That is the shield by which Pharisaism may be turned away.

But the sword by which it may be slain is more difficult to come at and very hard to wield; for the sword is Love. It is rare to find Pharisaism in a mother's relation to her child, and, when you do find it, very horrible. No true lover was ever a Pharisee. Love involves an atmosphere in which self-approval cannot live.

Plainly, if it is to be effective, love must turn toward man and God. First, love toward God. If we love God,

PHARISAISM AND WAR

we shall share His mind sufficiently to know that it is absurd for us to stand before God as prosecutors, while Germany is the prisoner in the dock. If there is any dock at all, we are both in it. The charges are different, that is all. It is certain that no true love to God will ever allow us to forget our own failure to reach the standard He sets for His children. But love means more than sharing the *mind* of God. If we really love God, we become spiritually identified with Him who endures and redeems all our sins. Love always involves self-identification, and though our capacity for union is small and our desire smaller, through Christ we do become identified with God and share His mind. Now the historical sufferings of our Lord show, as by a momentary flash, what generation by generation the age-long iniquities of the world must mean to God. For instance, He endures this war. His heart is filled with pain that men He loves can guide their corporate life by principles so evil, and that in the best of our politics the Spirit has so scanty a dominion. Throughout this crisis and through all the unnoticed iniquities which our dull minds ignore, He says to men: 'Why will ye die?' Now exactly in so far as we are identified with God in our thought and imagination, the sin of another will produce in us the same pain, the same poignant sympathy, and the same longing to redeem at all costs, that we see in the Cross. Where we see wrong, then, in enemy or in ally, we shall find no satisfaction till condemnation is superseded and we suffer to put the sin away. There is no place for Pharisaism here.

Second comes love to man. If we love men, the same effect follows in another way. Here, too, love means identification; we and they are one and their heroisms and their sins belong to us.¹ Unless we are to refuse to

¹ If any one thinks that this is too visionary for actual humanity, let him notice how any mother of real goodness identifies herself with the sin of her child. Also see Moberly, *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 116-26.

PHARISAISM AND WAR

accept our Master's command to love our enemies, this identification is ever true in relation to them. The solidarity of the race is as true of its sins as of any other attributes.

During this half-year some nations have raised themselves and some have stumbled and fallen ; but over and above the experience of the individual peoples, humanity itself rises with the heroism of each and is lowered by the general fall. Whether we like it or not, we are members one of another. The Christian sees this more clearly than other men, and therefore he must regard the sin of his brother to some extent as if it were his own. It will be impossible for him in callous disapproval to condemn his enemy—he is one with the foe, and by love the sharer of his sins. And so it will be impossible for us to cry the German sins from our camp into theirs, like Goliath challenging the children of Israel : if we know what spirit we are of, we shall call down no fire from heaven upon them ; we shall remember our own sin, and even while we believe their greater sin forces us to fight, our spirit will stand by their side in humility and confession that these our brothers, these so close akin to us, have done this thing.

We must cease to regard ourselves as God's debt-collectors. In face of our own debt to God, whether it be five hundred pence or fifty, such a commission is not for us. But let us say in sincerity and sympathy, as we look upon Germany in her wrong and her isolation : ' There, but for the grace of God, goes England '.

