

## The Moral Issues of the War.

A JOHANNESBURG MINISTER TO HIS SCATTERED CHURCH.

In a pastoral letter addressed to the members of the Congregational church at Johannesburg, now scattered abroad, and many of them at the front, Rev. John C. Harris, who is a refugee at Durban, makes some interesting observations as to the underlying causes and the moral issues of the war. He says:

We see now that for long, long months before the wretched Raid was dreamed of, the Boers had been perfecting their plan and collecting their resources, and under all the seeming fair words of conferences and despatches lurked the sinister motive and the stubborn determination to fight at all costs and in spite of all diplomacy. . . . As the real causes of the war becomes more clearly revealed to us, we are driven to a deepening conviction that its far-off issues are moral rather than material, and that justice, liberty, truth are concerned more than mere stocks and shares. We regret to see that some among our fellow-Congregationalists in the homeland are unwittingly turning their backs upon us in this day of storm. We feel sure that with a clearer grasp of the facts, if they could divest themselves of the prejudices of party politics, they would not continue their mistaken support of the Boers. They say, "All war is wrong and unchristian. This war is unrighteous, because better and more cautious diplomacy could have prevented it. It has been brought about by the intrigues of Rhodes and Chamberlain, and those wicked capitalists, the duplicity and greed of an unholo crew of muckraking mammonites." Others drag in the Jameson Raid, and picture the Boers as a simple, pastoral people, piously defending their land from the wicked Uitlanders who made Johannesburg "a hell upon earth." We do not lay claim to any Pharisaic monopoly of the divine blessing, nor do we say that all is right on our side. You will bear witness that again and again have I denounced the greed of gold, the coarse sensualism, the callous materialism and the flippant jingoism which were such powerful factors in Johannesburg life, all of which to some degree have doubtless contributed to make this war possible.

We have all declared the Raid to have been wicked and wrong. Personally, I believe the influences of Mr. Rhodes in South African politics has not been for goodness; it has often been a triumph of unscrupulous opportunism, and has frequently lowered the tone of South African politics to the level of barefaced expediency. Again, we readily recognize the stubborn courage, the ready skill, the wonderful cunning and the profound foresight of the Boers. Many, very many of them are sincerely of the belief that they are fighting for their homes and their liberties—liberties and independence which were long since bartered away by their unscrupulous rulers! We admire their skill, and honor their perverted sense of patriotism. We pity them that they have been thus led by a pitiless and cruel clique of Hollanders and mercenaries to their fate and their undoing. In so far as the Boers are victims of capitalism and of political intrigue we are with them. We would have fought for their flag—had it stood for just government and pure administration. The ecclesiastical heirs of the Puritans and Pilgrim Fathers would have been keenly ready to defend the sons of the Huguenots and the Voortrekkers were they worthy sons and true heirs. But the Boer Government stood for corruption, for bribery, for injustice, for "slimness" and duplicity. The Boer regime stood for racial distinctions, religious disabilities, government by clique and shameless nepotism. Today all the smaller and more sordid elements leading up to this struggle fall away, and we see the moral significances, the wider imperial issues. The corrupt administration of the Liquor Law (against which the Dutch Reformed church itself made such magnificent protest in February last), the whole spirit underlying the treatment of the native races, the dangerous Secret Service, the Education Law, the Morality Law (under which the most diabolical iniquities lurked untouched by the state)—these are not political, they are moral questions. As such most, if not all, of them have been constantly dealt with by the Witwatersrand church council, a body representing at least 15,000 members of Christian churches, including ministers and delegates of the Dutch Reformed church. We can dismiss contentions and conferences, Uitlander grievances and franchise, and declare that this war, even if forced, would have been justified on moral grounds.

But it has not been forced by Britain. I am convinced that when the causes of this war are laid bare we shall discover that this is no "Boer War," that its roots run deeper and wider than African soil, and that certain European nations, professedly friendly, but always intensely jealous of England, have lent more than moral support to a vast intrigue which has for its object serious injury to our nation and our empire. And it was inevitable. It is useless, and worse, to blame our diplomacy—patient to the point of weakness. No diplomacy under the sun could have prevented the war. Nothing but a surrender of South Africa to the Dutch rule and giving back the natives to slavery; nothing but retreating from all we hold as noble in faith and just in law. This was the final issue. The enormous preparations, the secret

accumulation of ammunition, the wide intrigue, the invasion of Natal and Cape Colony, the constant fanning of the fire of racial hatred, and the studied preparation of, by us, forgotten feuds—these reveal the inevitableness of war. Not Chamberlain nor Rhodes made, or could have averted, the war. But Kruger, Steyn and Leyds made it, and Hofmeyer and Schriener, and the ministers of the Dutch Reformed church might have done much more to prevent it. Upon them rests the terrible responsibility and the bloodguiltiness. We are not jingoes, but earnest students of Revelation and history, when we deny that all war is necessarily unchristian. God pity the man and the nation against whom wrong, and injustice and hypocrisy could lift up a castle of lies unchecked. Our national liberties, our religious enfranchisements—all that is heroic and noble in our history, all which stirs our blood and quickens our loyalty and lifts the nation to the height of self-sacrifice—these things have come down to us through blood and strife, wrung from the grasp of kings, and wrested from the grip of tyrants.

As to the future, we are calm and confident. "We do not know when, but we know how the war will end." But if this calamity is to have no repetition, there must be a safe and definite settlement. There must be no more talk of independence. No "independence" to work evil and perpetuate strife and sow discord.

We cannot go back to be at the beck and kick of ignorant and bigotted "sons of the soil," who insult our Queen and trample on our name. We cannot have our families, our characters, and our liberties subject to the breath of hireling and professional spies. We cannot allow the wholesale damnation of the natives for the enrichment of Russian Jews and others, and the bribery of government officials. We cannot allow a gagged or a corrupt and bribed press to mislead the community or wilfully distort the truth—neither by capitalist nor Boer.

Whatever the flag be, the Mother of Nations must stand pledged to secure justice and right. Then we will start life again with packing-case furniture and "roughing it," if need be, for we will have hope and courage. We shall yet thank God for this war. Awful as it is, it is not all ill. Out of our sorrow we are gaining strength. We shall even thank God for reverses and delays, terrible and unexpected though they were; they, too, have had their place in the divine purpose. Men who never thought of God or prayed in a "boom," are chastened and driven back on the Eternal Reminders, the abiding elements of life, and lay closer grasp on those things which sorrow cannot steal, and adversity cannot touch.—Christian World.

## Prayer and Deliverance

BY J. B. GAMBRELL.

In 1 Thessalonians 2:15, the apostle speaks of his persecutors as those who "pleased not God and are contrary to all men." In 2 Thessalonians 3:1, 2, the apostle asked the brethren to pray for him that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and that they, he and his co-workers, might be delivered from "unreasonable and wicked men, for all men had not faith."

Taking these two Scriptures together we get an insight into the rough road traveled by the great missionary apostle and his co-workers. Then, as now, all spiritual progress was made against prejudice, and underlying the prejudice, that limited the sympathy of the people, was a bad spirit. Then, as now, the trouble in extending the kingdom lay with those who, for one cause or another, had little or no heart in the business, and when you got down to the taproot in every case of trouble, there was a lack of faith. Faith is the seeing grace and the interpreting grace. It is not only impossible to please God without faith, but it is impossible to see God, or in any wise to comprehend his great purpose and plans. The Jews were greatly narrowed in their sympathies, even after they were converted, by the remains of Judaism imbedded in their depravity. The Gentiles ever opposed the progress of the gospel because of a lack of comprehension of its real spirit. This opposition was aggravated by their worldly views of everything. Indeed, in the common view of those who opposed the gospel, they minded earthly things.

In the midst of the ever-continuing conflict of the great missionary apostle, whether he preached to the Jews or to Gentiles, he had recourse to prayer. There can be few subjects more worthy of careful consideration than Paul's prayers, or his attitude toward the whole subject of prayer. To the Corinthians he wrote, earnestly, entreating that they would help by prayer. To the Thessalonians, making mention to the difficulties around him, not specially, but as they might be summed up in the conduct of "unreasonable and wicked men," he said finally, "brethren, pray for us." All through the New Testament Scriptures prayer connected itself with everything great and gracious. Whatever anyone in the later days may say concerning prayer, in a half heathen glorification of natural law, no open-minded man can read the New Testament and not be certain that Christ and the apostle believed mightily in prayer. In their

thinking, at least, they were not entangled in the meshes of science, so-called, which leads the shallow thinkers to say that God is some way shut out by the laws which he himself has established. They went straight and confidently to God for what they wanted, and if such a thing as difficulty came into their minds, it was solved by that high faith which leaves difficulties in the hands of God, where there are no difficulties.

It is noteworthy that the apostle, in asking prayer for himself and his co-workers, did not ask it that they might be eased, that their struggle might cease, that the vexations of "unreasonable and wicked men" might come to an end. They asked prayer that the Word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified. The attitude of the great preacher toward all of his troubles was that of one who regarded them as incident to a life's work. His business was to glorify God; whether that was by life or death, as he says in Philippians, he was glad to tell his Philippian brethren that all his troubles had fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel, and that living or dying, the main thing in his life would come to pass—God would be glorified.

Here is a model, then, for those who are in any trouble. Let our prayers take a higher range than our own heads, and we have done well when we sink our own selves in the glory of the Master. When faith soars as high as this it goes as a conqueror, and real good will be secured in the good of the cause.

"Unreasonable and wicked men" beset Paul on every side. Their generation has not failed in the earth, even down to our present day. They are in many of the churches. They appear along the whole course of events as the knowledge of Christ spreads in the earth. Some are notoriously unreasonable, perhaps more unreasonable than wicked. There are some who are foolish in their unreasonableness, but with all of the unreasonable tribe there is the element of wickedness, and in every case the fundamental trouble is the same—they have not faith. Faith purifies the heart, broadens the view, ennobles the nature and brings wisdom from above, which is first pure, then peaceable. We may not say unreasonably that all unreasonable and wicked men are unconverted men. The scripture is too full of proof to the contrary. The unreasonable and wicked men in the churches and in the path of progress are far worse than those who stand clear out on the other side.

Paul's method of handling these obstructionists was of a kind with his whole Christian life. Where it was necessary to meet them openly and boldly and to speak the plain truth to them and about them, he did it, but he did not forget that the highest resource was in the infinite wisdom and power of God, and therefore, he asked the brethren to pray that the workers might be delivered from such men. Is it not time that a mighty flood of prayer was turned directly on this point? O, unreasonable men, the wicked men, the captious and thoughtless men and women in the churches, who set themselves against the work and the workers, obstructing every effort to build up the churches, and who hinder the progress of Zion, as far as their influence can go!

There are complications so delicate and far-reaching that the wisest pastor does not know what to do with these unreasonable people. Only the infinite wisdom of God can entirely comprehend the situation. In some cases to deal with them as they should be dealt with, is to tear up the church through kinships and friendships. These unreasonable and wicked people are given room and sway in many cases because of the harm they can do if they are brought to justice, and this impunity from discipline only causes them to increase in their unreasonableness and arrogance. And then there are many all around us, mighty leaders of wickedness, from whom in multitudes of ways true servants of God ought to be delivered. In some cases they need to be delivered from a seductive influence which leads the servants of God from the path of duty. From all these different cases, prayer is a sovereign remedy.

This writer recalls the case of a church rent asunder by two men who, in their passion and wickedness, could not be reasoned with at all, and who had reached the place on the down grade at which, for the sake of the mastery in the church, either one was willing to sacrifice the church and the religious welfare of his family and the whole country. Every effort to bring them to their senses had failed. A few faithful men and women covenanted to pray that these two men might come to their senses. There was an interposition of a divine providence, and in a short time the two men were thoroughly humbled, and the difficulty was manageable. The faithful servants of God in that church were delivered from the domineering influence of unreasonable and wicked men. Those whose minds had been so deeply disaffected through the manipulation of these two natures were given the spirit of a sound mind. Repentance, confession and reconciliation followed, and the leadership and influence of the two evil men were overthrown.

Many will recall the supreme crisis that came to Scotland during the reign of "Bloody Mary." It seemed that the light of truth in Scotland would be blotted out with an ocean of martyr blood. John Knox, whose prayers were even mightier than his words, shut himself in a room and for many hours prayed. Emerging from

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