

GOD AND THE WAR.

God is the Supreme Factor in the War. This is a fact, not a fancy. The result is entirely in His hands, and that result, being in His hands, and that result, being in His hands, must be a right one. And yet, on the whole, is He not less considered than any other important factor in this great world struggle.

On platform, in press, all other factors are weighed and measured with closest scrutiny, as their importance waxes or wanes, but how little mention there is of God as a factor in the issue?

So far as can be judged how small a place, as a real factor, does He occupy in the world's thought or outlook. "Munitions and the War"—"Submarines and the War"—"Food and the War"—"The Allies and the War"—"The Huns and the War"—etc., are continually discussed, but as a direct, practical, definite factor in the result, God seems to have little place.

If there were some mighty Empire, with righteous ideals, still outside the conflict, whose entry would decide the issue, how earnestly would all men look for the intervention of that power to maintain the right.

But when God is here, with whom all life's issues rest, willing to help all who are willing to receive Him in sincerity and to yield themselves to Him in all things, how little account is taken of Him as a real factor in the outcome.

We would rejoice at the coming from some outside source of ten millions of men with their munitions, but are strangely apathetic to the fact that we have available, yes available, upon His own conditions, which are easy and light, an infinitely greater Power.

If a dweller in Mars should visit us, knowing nothing of Earth but what he could hear and see in the daily work and intercourse of men, would he dream of the existence of a Supreme unseen Power with whom rests absolutely the result of the conflict?

Most of us have an idea that somehow God reigns. There is prayer, public and private, that He would give the victory. But how little do even those of us who pray grasp the fact that He is the supreme factor in the war. The men and guns, the big battalions, seem to us more real.

What infinite patience He has with us in our poor, slighting estimates of Him!

If those who believe in a God would pause for a little, and think; or rather, without pause in the fight, would fix their thought upon this one tremendous fact, with God rests the outcome of the war, until they were gripped by it and surrendered to it, how soon that fight would end in deliverance.

We know the fact, but how few grasp it, or realize it, or act upon it as they fully believed it with their whole heart.

But how is the world to be made to realize this great fact?

Only by each one who knows the fact reaching after it until he grasps it and is grasped by it, and when grasped, impressing others with it, until the Empire turns to God, its only Hope.

Two Practical Lessons:

1. Read and re-read, again and again, the Books of Kings and Chronicles, with

their story of how and why God takes part in the affairs of men and nations, and remember that—"I am God and I change not." As He was with men and nations "yesterday" He is "today and forever."

Then read the prophets, Major and Minor, and learn the same great truths.

2. Turn the learning of these lessons into the doing of them. "Return unto Me and I will return unto you."

But what is it to return unto the Lord. It is not merely to cry for help. A wounded German cried for water and then shot the Briton who gave it to him.

Churches and altars and places of prayer may echo the cry for help, and yet there may be no real turning to God. The heart and desire and will and life may continue as essentially selfish as before. The very deliverance might be used for lives of ease and self-gratification and pleasure and gain and forgetfulness of God.

In such an attitude of mind, the selfishness of the Briton is as alien to God and as offensive to Him as the selfishness of the Hun. It is the same dethronement of God by self and shown in different ways.

The only true return is to replace self with God, in heart, desire, aim, will, life, everything, to give Him His rightful place, a full and complete surrender.

Until this was done, God, in His Infinite Love, left Israel of old to suffer the ills into which their own ways led them, and when they learned the evil of those ways and returned to Him, then He delivered them.

What God wants of the world is not merely physical freedom of one people from another, but freedom of all from selfishness and sin.

Suppose that God were today to intervene in this awful struggle, and in one of a number of ways that might be named were to bring victory to the Allies, would the world be what He would like it to be.

To go no farther afield, is our own country what God wishes it to be? Is our own Church what He wishes it to be? Are our homes what He would like them to be? Are our individual lives what He would like them to be?

"Return unto Me and I will return unto you."—Presbyterian Record.

THE BUSINESS OF MAKING MEN.

The best thing in a community is not a mill, nor a mansion, nor a bank, but a man, and the best wealth of the neighborhood is to be found in the good character, the intelligence, and the health of the people.

"What do you raise in this part of the country?" said the tourist to the farmer, as they went over the rough road between the rocky fields.

"We raise men," replied the farmer.

Blessed is the nation, blessed is the city, blessed is the institution, that raises men.

And that is the supreme work of the Church. All the machinery of religion, all its inner spiritual light and power, all its endeavors and prayers, all its ordinances and institutions, are intended to make men. Ex.

"Were this earth solid gold it couldn't buy a crumb of the bread of life."

In company guard your tongue; in solitude your heart.—Spurgeon.

MINISTERS—FRESH OR STALE.

By Finch A. Clarke.

A few days ago I became interested in an article in a prominent periodical. The first statement indicated that the writer had forsaken the gospel ministry at the age of fifty, while in the prime of life, giving to the church only twenty-five years of his life.

The next paragraph fascinated me still more when I read "As a clergyman I had gone stale * * *

My pastorates were things of the past. I had crossed the ministerial dead line."

Then I began to look about. I thought of ministers of fifty years, or more, who are still doing good work, and whose how no tendency to retire from active service.

I could even think of some ministers more than fifty years of age who had been recently called to larger churches than they had ever held before.

I was mindful also of the fact that some ministers had grown stale, had crossed the dead line, and are no longer in the ministry.

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Then I was willing to agree with the writer that it is possible for a minister to grow stale, but I was unwilling to believe that a minister is more likely to grow stale than any other professional man. Some doctors grow stale—some don't; some teachers grow stale—some don't; some ministers grow stale—some don't.

Observation has taught me that one of the most useful arts is of making a fresh start. To arrive at a period of life when one fails to make a fresh start is to grow stale.

I know a doctor who has not made a fresh start for years. He has learned much by experience, experiment and practice, but he seldom studies, has failed to keep up with the times and is losing his grip.

That may be true of the minister also. A barrel of sermons may make a stale preacher, just as the old ways of practicing medicine may make a stale doctor.

A brand new sermon, perhaps, two, every week—born sermons, not manufactured sermons; messages, not echoes of the dead past—will keep any minister, though he be more than fifty years of age, as fresh as he was at forty.

I have read that the pastor of one of the largest churches in the world destroys his written sermons every Monday.

One reason why so many ministers change pastorates so often is that they believe the only way they can make a new start is to preach in a different church.

If every minister would actually believe that both he and his congregation can get a fresh start without changing pastorate or minister, there would be longer pastorates and fewer stale preachers.—Abridged from *The Continent*.

"When a good man slips, he generally falls on his knees."

"God's design is that every one of His children may become the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost. The abiding Comforter is sent to transform the "Wilderness of Sin" into the Paradise of God."