

Address by Col: Sn C. Ballance

To the soldiers at

Imtarfa Hospital Malta

At 3pm on Jan 6th 1918 (Kings Sunday) and

Repeated on the following Sunday Jan 13th

At St Andrews Presbyterian Church at 6.30pm

(The Evening Service)

Soldiers of the Armies of Britain

Some of you are probably surprised at the place which I occupy this evening. You cannot be more surprised than I am myself. My part in life's work has hitherto lain in another field and has had to do rather with silent deeds than words. It is profoundly distasteful to a neurotic surgeon to appear in public, but during the last three years, you and I have gained a sense of duty which perhaps we did not possess before, and, it is this sense, which, at the insistent request of my friend Major McKinnon, brings me here. My plan is to talk to you on certain questions of great moment as one soldier to another.

The British people are a shy and reserved people. It is looked upon as bad form, or at any rate un-British, to make a parade of our virtues; and when strangers are present or foreigners, we have a curious habit of asserting and indeed protesting, that, at any rate, we lay no claim to be the chosen people. This evening we are a family party, there are no strangers present, and it seems to be justifiable to let ourselves go, and to talk about ourselves, our beloved country; and the place and duty which under Divine Providence the British people are called upon to occupy at the present time in the world

This is all the more to the point because our king set aside last Sunday (January 6th, 1918) for prayer and for the consideration of the mighty conflict which is raging in the world, and which each of us to the best of his or her ability is trying to take part.

From various ancient sources there is evidence of a petition having had a place in the Lord's Prayer, which is not in it now. A prayer for the Holy Spirit took the place of the Petition "Thy Kingdom Come". Now a prayer for the Holy Spirit is one of the best prayers which can ever be made. It is a prayer any man can make who believes in the existence of an All Holy God, a Supreme God, even if he is unable to assent to the mysterious doctrines which have a place in the Church's creed. To be inspired by the Holy Spirit of God must be to possess a tone or intention of highest moral goodness; a Spirit all unlike,

The aggressive Spirit of Selfishness and the devilish Spirit which may dominate an individual, a class or whole nation and of which Shakespeare speaks when

"Everything includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite,
And appetite a universal wolf".

Now Prussia is the Universal Wolf.

Force has been called into existence of set purpose to override moral scruples and humanitarianism generally, and by overriding them especially in the guise of appearing to meet them (as it has done in the case of the Russians): it is committing a felony, which becomes all the more positive when fraud is made to operate, when Force has failed to obtain a decision. Force and Fraud then are the methods of the

Prussians. Fortunately as the writer of the Proverbs says – “Hell and Destruction are never full” for the eyes of the Prussian Wolf for frightfulness are never satisfied.

I know the Prussians better than the majority of people in this Island. I have a deep and abiding detestation of them and all their works. Knowledge strengthens the moral fibre of a man’s being and I propose to tell you a little of what I know. It is not my custom to mince my words. I intend to call a spade a spade. Of course everyone does not hold the strong opinions I shall express:- So much the worse for them when right is at stake.

“Tis with our judgments as our watches; None
Go just alike, yet each believes his own”.

I will proceed “To sketch our world exactly as it goes”.

During the coming five or six months all the infernal powers, all the “embattled squadrons” of hate and hell and cunning will be concentrated as never before to utterly destroy the life and fortune of our country. We know not the why and the wherefore for “He writes in characters too grand for our short sight to understand”, but we know that,

“Gold must be tried in the furnace”, that “God moves to His great ends unthwarted by the ill”, and that “Behind the dim unknown, within the shadow, keeping watch above His own, standeth Him whose name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace”.

If you are in need of inspiration in this time of strain read in the sixth book of Milton’s “Paradise Lost” of the war waged by the celestial Armies against the rebel thrones in Heaven or read Bunyan’s “Holy War”. These stories are allegories applicable to the present conflict. They paint in wonderful language and imagery the final triumph of righteousness; and

“If we be but faithful and true”
“If honour’s thought reigns solely in the
Breast of every man”

They forecast the coming of Mankind’s immortal victory; the final and certain triumph of those principles for which Britain threw down the gauge of battle.

Peace is not yet in sight. Great trials and tribulations may still be in front of us.

“Knocks go and come. God’s vassals drop and die.
And sword and shield
In bloody field
Doth win immortal fame”.

You cannot kill the Kaiser by your mouth, you cannot conquer the Germans by abusing them; you must fight them. If you are asked by Mr Faint-Heart “do you think we shall win? The answer is “Certainly, we’ve got to “.

The Prussian must be taught that his principles do not work, that in other words, war does not pay. To understand the Prussian his nature must be apprehended. The French call the Prussian a wild beast. But he is more – he is the incarnation of Egoism in a wild beast.

Kipling has caught something of the spirit of Bunyan's "Holy War" in his "War Cry of Bunyan"; -

"One watchword through the armies
One answer from our lands
No dealings with Diabolus
As long as Mansoul stands".

The simple principle of holy warfare appeals to the good sense of Britishers. It is worth more than all the ambiguous advice thrust upon us by the politician or by "the brittle intellectual or man of high lineage who cracks beneath the strain".

The late Sainly Archdeacon Basil Wilberforce of Westminster before he passed to the better land preached week by week the war, and raised it, in the minds of thousands, by his spiritual advocacy to the dignity of a holy crusade. No one has been more scathing in criticism of German atrocities and frightfulness. I shall return to the views of Basil Wilberforce later. Meanwhile let me say this.

1. There is only one reason why Edith Cavell was murdered – because she was an Englishwoman.
2. There is only one reason why Captain Fryatt was murdered – because he was an Englishman.
3. There is only one reason why prisoners were treated with infamous and atrocious cruelty – because they were Britishmen.

I grant that the Hill Difficulty of our Pilgrims Progress is no easy task to climb and might well daunt any but a British heart. All the more we must see to it that we have not with us as companions in the coming climb Messrs Mistrust and Timorous, for such companions lead along the by-ways of Danger and Destruction; but rather must we choose those trusty companions Messrs Greatheart and Valiant.

I have no sympathy with the few people at home who are croakers, wobblers, grouzers, slackers, strikers for higher and higher wages, sham conscientious objectors, people who face both ways, half traitors, and would be whole traitors only that they are cowards and lack the courage to take the German gold. These wretches masquerading under the guise of a mamby pamby emasculated and sham Christianity want to make friends with and shake hands with murderers, torturers, pirates and thieves. They present an easy field of action for the hidden hand of Germany. Let us remember how Christ treated the money changers and those who bought and sold in the temple. He roughly cast them out. Why not cast out of the temple of our homeland this unholy and treacherous crowd which is a serious danger to our country in the present tremendous crisis. At any rate I would prevent these people from being the

fathers of the next generation of Britishers! And I would absolutely forbid them to be teachers of the little children in the Elementary Schools of our country.

It appears to me that in this holy war any group or class of men who claim exemption from the primal duty of defence of the homeland for any reason whatsoever are forever disgraced. The men at the front are doing their bit to the extremist limit of human endurance. I know the terrain – the mud is about ankle deep and all the rest is an abomination of desolation, honeycombed with crater holes full of water, with little heaps of bricks and rubbish here and there which had once been villages. Why should the home of one man be defended by the exertions of another? Justice is only satisfied when all the men of the nation are conscripted on equal terms and suffer the same hardships and dangers.

I suppose we have all imagined we are Socialists at one time or other of our lives. There are even now some amongst us who would like to create in Britain the chaos of ruthless force, of murder, of cruelty and untold misery through which Russia is now passing. Some people who have a slipshod way of thinking talk of Christian Socialism. There is no such thing. I shall point out presently that Christianity is an imperial power. It is also commonly said that all men are born equal. I utterly deny this proposition. I never heard of a man being born, but I have heard of a man child being born. And I have considerable experience of babies. Now babies are not alike. They are all unlike in physical and brain development. I am in favour of all children having equal educational advantages, but even then only the few will be found of brain power capable of great mind results, just as the few alone are capable of becoming great cricketers. The future leaders of our race, the future aristocracy of the British peoples should be those who are distinguished before all others by character and intellect. It is for each British nation to see to it that the schools in which its children are educated inculcate in the young and receptive minds of their pupils the noblest ideals of life and conduct, as well as teach them those subjects of knowledge which are commonly found in the teaching programme of all schools. Thus alone will the future generation of Britishers be fitted to occupy their rightful and purposeful place in the battle of life and in the Divine Economy of the World.

Germany has recently mobilised a so-called peace crusade – that is a peace by negotiation at the dictation of Prussia.

Let me tell you what the late John Bright said about peace by negotiation. Years ago I was brought into personal contact with this remarkable man. He was a member of what Wilberforce called “The lovable Society of Friends”. (He was not one of the scoundrels who become Quakers as soon as war is on.) War was anathema to John Bright. He held that the British Navy and Army should be abolished, and that the colonies were an encumbrance and should be cast adrift. He would angle all day for a salmon, but would not shoot a pheasant, though at dinner I observed that he enjoyed both salmon and pheasant. His influence contributed largely to the emancipation of the slaves. He wrote to his friends in North America during the American Civil War; one cause of this war being the opposition of the South to the emancipation of the slaves, as follows (and this from the most prominent peace at any price man in England):-

“I want no end of the war, no compromise and no re-union till the Negro is made free. When the white flag is hoisted by the South and when you come to negotiate then will be the time of real danger. Men might be so glad to have peace that twenty years later war again would come. Any compromise which gives up the emancipation proclamation will be the most deplorable event in history”.

And we can say that any compromise which gives up the Magna Charta principles for which Britain is fighting will be the most deplorable event in history. The enemy cannot beat us – Britain can only be beaten by the happy go lucky slackness of her own sons.

“Come the three corners of the world in arms
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue
So England to herself do rest but true”.

Have you ever attempted to realise the matchless heroism and constancy of the vanguard – the first seven divisions of Britain’s mighty armies? Does not your blood kindle when you think that these men were your brothers, at any rate all of the stock from which you come? Do you realise that the vanguard numbered all told 80,000 Officers and men, that the Germans numbered 850,000 men, that the British field guns were 300 in number while the Germans were 3000, that the British had only 100 machine guns and the Germans 1000, Our vanguard was never defeated, it was almost destroyed, but day by day it imposed its will upon the enemy.

“Oh little mighty force that in your agony
Stood fast while England girt her amour on,
Held high our honour in your bleeding hands,
Carried our honour safe with bleeding feet! –
We have no glory great enough for you,
The very Soul of Britain keeps your day!
Oh little mighty force, your way is ours,
This land inviolate your monuments”.

The appalling conditions of slavery, hunger, deportation and untold misery existing in the occupied districts of North Eastern France and Belgium have long been known, but have recently been brought to the mind again by the proclamation of the German Governor of the occupied territory in Northern Italy. “All men women and children over fifteen years must work from 4am to 8pm. Disobedience or laziness of an adult will be punished by six months’ imprisonment and in certain cases by twenty lashes daily. Lazy children will be beaten.

Think for a moment of the horror of the retreat to the inhabitants of Belgium, North-Eastern France and North-Eastern Italy. Village after village a heap of ruins. Old men, old women and children streaming away from the advancing terror. My son in the retreat from Brussels told me that it seemed as if every British soldier was carrying a child and that the sides of the road were lined with old men, women and children dying of hunger and exhaustion, and for whom no help could come and nothing could be done. The strongest alone escaped. For the rest their lives were sacrificed to make a German holiday. They died, but in their deaths the battalions of those innocents

have joined the mighty mysterious army of souls who shall haunt the German people till time shall be no more and Germany ceases to be. These are among those who have come out of great tribulation. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The times are indeed very unusual. Britain has been for more than three years face to face with a foe who for decades has planned her destruction. It is very necessary for the safety of our Island home that every individual among us should keep as fit physically and spiritually as possible. In this way alone can we play our part manfully in the defence of our country. Before war came upon us there were many in high positions in our country who suspected that the enemy was likely at any moment to plunge us by sudden attack into a struggle for our very existence. For,

“By a Divine instinct men’s minds mistrust
Ensuing dangers, as by proof we see
The waters swell before a boisterous storm”.

Indeed I was conscious of (as Byron puts it)

“The murdering prelude to the ruder gale”.

Five years before the war I gave the introductory address to the students at the opening of the winter session at the Liverpool University of which the text was “The preparations of Prussia for the destruction of our Country”. It fell on deaf ears.

Lord Roberts alone had the courage to warn our people. England can say of all the pre-war years with the clear conscience of the psalmist “I laboured for peace but when I spoke unto them thereof, they made them ready to battle”.

Before the War games and amusements occupied, I think, a too prominent place in English life. There was an undue absence in the lives of many of us of the noble virtues of self-respect, unselfishness and self-sacrifice. Indiscipline, lazy indolence in amusement, the vice of betting on every game; hustle, bustle and noise; the gingling of money, the thousand and one meretricious allurements of the age seem for a time to have dimmed the fair mirror of English life.

“Judge not what is best
By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet
Created as thou art to nobler end”.

Propose this test, writes Browning,

“The body at its best
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way”.

But beware – don’t believe any one who tells you that the sins of England were the cause of the war. He who dares to make such a statement is a traitor to Britain’s holy

cause, - aye – and a traitor to the King of Kings – the Supreme of Heavenly Thrones, whose minister, it may be, he most falsely proclaims himself to be.

The military autocracy of Germany was deceived. They are quite incapable of understanding England and Freedom. The spirit of our fathers was still alive: at any rate on every wave.

“Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is oe’r the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep”.

And with the crash of war we were all saying,

“England what thou wert, thou art
Gird thee with thy ancient might
Forth, and God defend the Right”.

The call to arms revealed a wonderful spirit, latent, unsuspected, in the hearts of average men; a readiness to serve and to suffer which one hardly thought was there. Men off all sorts and of all conditions from all the British nations saw their plain and glorious duty.

“Not once or twice in our rough Island’s story,
The path of duty was the road to glory”.

There is strength “Deep bedded in our (British) hearts, of which we reck but little till the shafts of Heaven have pierced its fragile dwelling. Must not earth be rent before her gems are found”.

The subject of my talk this evening is the why and the wherefore of the Great War and ourselves as Christians in relation to the great conflict. It is usual with Sunday addresses to found them on a text of Scripture and I will follow the usual course. My text is the last verse of the 46th Psalm, and Prov: 14 v 25.

I propose to divide my subject into three parts:-

- 1st. A few words about England.
- 2nd. Something about Germany.
- 3rd. The relation of Christianity to the war.

In order to find out what a people really believes and what object it pursues it is desirable to discover what the children of that nation are taught.

As far as British children are concerned my reference must be very sketchy. I will only repeat to you three or four verses which I learnt in childhood and which I think will serve as a sign of symbol of the nation’s thoughts. I was taught Godliness and Patriotism but then I was specially favoured. I am prepared to say that my father and mother were the best father and best mother that ever lived in the world and to defend this proposition in tournament against all comers.

In Malta and the East cleanliness comes next to Godliness but neither are very prominent to the naked eye; but in our country cleanliness being taken for granted, holy living and love of country are of all virtues the noblest and the best.

I think Mrs Hemans must have foreseen the present struggle, in writing the poem on the Homes of England”.

You remember perhaps that Mrs Hemans wrote the poem describing the steadfastness and the heroism of the boy Casabianca. Casabianca was the son of the French Admiral on board the Battleship “Orient” at the battle of the Nile. He was only thirteen years of age, but remained at his post, and perished in the explosion that destroyed the ship. Jack Conwall is the Casabianca of the present war. Mrs Hemans also wrote the hymn entitled “The Better Land” whose melody and sweetness many of us were familiar with in childhood. I will repeat two of the verses.

“I hear thee speak of a better land
Thou calledst its children a happy band
Mother! Oh where is that radiant shore,
Shall we not seek it and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the Fireflies glance through the myrtle boughs?
Not here, not there, my child.”

The following are a few lines from the poem on the

“Homes of England”

160,000 square miles of country in North-Eastern France have been utterly destroyed. Attila said when he led his Huns to the conquest of the world:- “Where my horses pass, the grass shall grow no more”. The Prussians of today have done far worse – no living thing remains – not one tree and the site of some villages cannot be identified” Think what would have happened if the Prussians had invaded our homeland.

“The stately homes of England,
How beautiful they stand,
Amidst their tall ancestral trees,
O’er all the pleasant land”.

“The cottage homes of England,
By thousands on her plains,
They are smiling o’er the silvery brooks
And round the hamlet fanes,
Through glowing orchards forth they peep,
Each from its nook of leaves,
And fearless there the lowly sleep,
As the birds beneath their eaves”.

“Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,

This is my own, my native land!”

“Oh! Where’s the coward who would not dare
To fight for such a land”?

(Marmion, Canto IV. XXX)

The “Name of England”, the title of another poem by Mrs Hemans.

“But a mightier power, my England!
Is in that name of thine
To strike the fire from every heart
Along the bannered line”.

“A thousand ancient mountains
Its pealing note has stirred
Sound on, and on, for evermore,
O thou victorious word!”

We are reminded too of the bravest lines that were perhaps ever written. They tell the story of the spirit of the British army at a time when armies were small and universal service never heard of. How different is the camaraderie between British officers and to what obtains in the Prussian army. Some years before the war I knew a small garrison town in Germany where one private at least committed suicide every week to escape the atrocious cruelty of the officers. King Henry Vth addresses his army in the following words – before the battle of Agincourt which took place just 500 years ago:-

“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers!
For he today who sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother – be he e’er so vile
This day shall gentle his condition;
And gentlemen in England, now abed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here
And hold their manhood’s cheap, while any speaks
That fought with us upon St Crispin’s Day”.

It is said that the vogue of Tennyson has wained.

It may be so. But then why is that Tennyson will assuredly receive enduring recognition, and that his essential greatness will survive as long as the English language is the medium of thought upon this earth?

He will survive because he sang of the need, old as death, of belief in a Spirit world, where nothing loving or beloved is lost. Because he gave expression to man’s passionate determination not to let God go; and not to surrender the blest anticipation of re-union with those who have passed within the veil. Thus it is certain that he will live as long as there are souls to aspire or hearts to grieve.

Look on the other side of the medallion. There is no German author during the Victorian or Edwardian era of any eminence or importance who will survive for the same reason.

In all probability the final conquest of the enemy will rest on the efforts which Britain by the aid of her own sons will be able to make. I wrote this sentence a month or two after war was declared. Our fighting strength is proving more crucial as the final stage of the contest approaches than at any period since this German inspired struggle plunged the world into war. What Kipling finely wrote is still true:-

“No easy hopes or lies
Shall bring us to our goal
But iron sacrifice
Of body, will and soul.

“There is but one task for all
For each one life to give,
Who stands if freedom fall
Who dies if England Live”.

Sacrifice is the rule of all that is best in life. You are giving your best for your country and I who am too old to join the ranks am interned at Malta to look after the wounded. The mass of men have joined the army I believe from a simple high sense of duty, and in some cases under direst feeling of personal repulsion against the whole ghastly business.

Many were very young. Many will not return: to their dear memory we render reverently the homage of our hearts. But each one knew what it all meant and deliberately accepted the challenge and made the great sacrifice – wife, hopes, good positions, and all those visions which make for youth its golden glamour and glory.

“Gone in the unutterable splendour of your immortal youth,
One more high souled defender of His truth,
Made your heart bold to brave the wrath
Of this world’s evil.

I often think that mothers and wives and sweethearts left behind at home are making an equal, perhaps greater sacrifice than we are. Men leaving their homeland have the excitement of new experiences and of a new life of action to support them through long dreary and dangerous days.

But for the women and old people at home there is nothing for them to do but to watch and pray fearing always the coming of the postman or the telegraph boy. If the British soldier is splendid at the front, so are those in silent sorrow and anxiety whom he has left behind.

Of those at home as well as those in the firing line we may say:-

“Yours these rough Calvaries of high endeavour”.

One of W T Stead's favourite sayings (he was lost in the Titanic) was "Be Christ's" not "Be like Christ". He used the word in the original meaning – anointed, chosen. As such we, whose boys have gone to the front think of them.

"Ye are all Christ's in this your self-surrender,
True sons of God in seeking not your own.
Yours now the hardships – yours shall be the
Splendour
Of the Great Triumph, and THE KING'S
"Well done!"

Now let us discuss for a few minutes the principles of German education. The rulers of Germany having taught every man, woman and child to hate France and England are innocently surprised that France and England object to the process. Dr F A Smith, who was professor of English before the war at the University of Erlanger has told us about German education, but what I am going to tell you is from my own experience. I know the Germans from the Emperor downwards.

Mr Burroughs an American describes Prussian efficiency. They are efficient at Krupp guns and asphyxiating gas and liquid fire are efficient. They invent nothing but they add a Satanic touch to the inventions of others and turn them to infernal uses. They are devoid of sentiment or imagination. They run to erudition but not to inspiration. They are forceful but not creative, military but not humanistic, aggressive but not heroic, religious but not spiritual, brave but not chivalrous, utterly selfish, scientific and efficient on a low plain, as organised force is always efficient!

A titanic struggle such as Germany is waging at the present time is only possible when the entire nation is heart and soul at the back of its leaders; and before a mass of 70 million individuals can be moved by a single intellectual impulse, a long period of education is necessary before the required momentum is attained which is to hurl them as one man upon the forces which oppose the realisation of their purpose. The doctrines of certain German philosophers have been instilled for some decades like a vile poison into the life-blood of the German Nation. What are those doctrines and what is the vile poison which has been inoculated from the cradle to the grave into the German mind? I will endeavour to tell you. These doctrines have been taught in the Elementary Schools of Germany for many years. A lesson on hatred of England and France has been daily given to the little children. My son has heard this lesson given. Briefly, these doctrines are as follows:-

1. Strength is extolled as the only virtue, and weakness is proclaimed to be a vice and a deadly sin.
2. The weak are declared to have no claim to protection; the highest expression of a Nation's manhood being the aggressive unfolding of its powers.

3. The dogmas of religion and morality, the distinctions between right and wrong upon which all social life is based are taught as having no binding force on the individual.
4. Humanitarian ideas are laughed at as only a contemptible expression, or a sign of weakness, and as such are to be ignored.
5. As with the individual, so with the State. The German is educated to believe that no laws or promises can bind the State, only its own will, while the individuals that compose it exist only to benefit and increase the Nation's might, in order that the Nation's will may be enforced on other States.
6. War is taught as the highest and noblest state to which a Nation can attain.

That these abominable opinions are accepted by the German mind of today is clearly shown by an article in an important newspaper published in Berlin, the Nord-Deutsche Allegemein Zeitung. (February 16th and 17th, 1915, Times 19th).

Referring to the plan of sinking all British and Neutral ships approaching the British Isles with their crews and passengers without warning, the writer says: -

“What is advantageous to us is right; what prejudices us is not only wrong, but actually a crime”.

General Baron Von Freytag Loringhoven – the first writer in Prussia on military subjects – has recently published a book. Its export from Prussia is prohibited, but nevertheless this book has been translated and published in England (January 1918). Its purpose is to prepare the German people for the next war. The book preaches the Gospel of war and proves that the central conviction of the German mind is that war and war alone is the key to everything. The present war, Loringhoven says, is only a rehearsal for a future German triumph. There is to be no cosmopolitan sentimentality for the German in the future though to us it seems that in this war cruelty, frightfulness and depravity had reached abysmal depths of infamy. Every German in the future is to be trained more intensely in one capacity or another for war and a vast extension of the scheme for training officers is foreshadowed. If these things are done, there will be an end of all civilisation. There can be no peace till this kind of Prussian mind is exterminated. Loringhoven's book is a valuable aid to the understanding of their foe by the civilised nations; for it lays bare – naked and unashamed – the nature and arms of the Prussian military autocracy, whose members are of the synagogue of Satan and are the incarnate enemies of the human race.

The Germans have not fought this war as chivalrous men. It is absurd to say we are fighting the Hohenzollern dynasty and not the German nation. This is only the eye-wash and flappedoodle of the politician and idealist. Not a voice was raised in Germany when the “Lousitania” was sunk – on the contrary, the event was received with signs of rejoicing and universal approbation. The Germans know nothing of the meaning of the words “fair play” and “playing the game”. When my son beat the Kaiser tennis player he refused to shake hands and wanted to fight a duel! The Romans were fond of sport of various kinds and they had a saying “Tene Cursum” which may be

translated “Run the straight race”. The Prussians have no such principle to guide them. Their object is to win by any means – generally and preferably by foul acts.

Our losses in merchant ships have been stupendous, and without relating the horrible details which have attended some of these sinkings I may tell you that at least 90 British ships have disappeared leaving behind no trace of themselves, their crews or passengers. The shelling of defenceless sailing ships and the killing at sea of over 10,000 women and children in various ways are such dumbfounding and stupefying facts that no language can adequately convey the horror and vileness of those who are responsible.

Mr Frost, the American Consul at Queenstown, in a recent lecture delivered in America, gave details of 81 ships sunk by German submarines of which he had personal knowledge. These sinkings were in many cases associated with the most diabolical cruelty, which was the source of lively pleasure to some officers and men of the German submarines. It goes without saying that no orders would induce the officers and men of our Navy to debase their manhood in this way.

It seems to me that it is impossible that there can be any forgiveness in this world for such crimes. At any rate, I am resolved that no German shall ever again cross the threshold of my home. When we were fighting the French in the Napoleonic wars, we were fighting a chivalrous nation. For example, “Talavera”. The middle of the day was very hot, and the battle was broken off, both sides went down to drink at the same stream. “Fontenoy”. The French cried out “Fire first, gentlemen”. With one short interval of peace, we were fighting Napoleon for over twenty years. During this time, over 11,000 British merchant ships were captured and taken into French ports. In one period of a little over three years, 2,500 British merchant ships were captured. So we then, as now, suffered great losses in merchant ships, and then, as now, this caused difficulties and distress in our country. It is comforting to read what Admiral Mahan writes about warfare against commerce. He says, and there is no higher historical authority, it has never succeeded in winning a war; and it certainly will not do so now; nothing can avail against the will of Heaven and against the grit of our people.

I believe that the Prussians would long ago, if they could have done so, have scuttled or torpedoed England and Scotland, and destroyed every man, woman, and child; or they would have done the same thing with their devilish inventions of poison-gas or liquid fire, but before doing so, they would have plundered the treasures of Britain and given over our home-land to their foul pleasures of lust and rapine.

The Prussians respect nothing human or divine. They are far below the level of the Turk, and individually and collectively they correspond to Caesar’s description of their ancestors the Huns, who, in Caesar’s time, were frequently crossing the Rhine and ravaging the fair plains of France.

We in the British Isles and in the British Dominions beyond the Seas believe that “kindlier manners purer laws” should mark the evolution of mankind and that the march of mind led ever further and upwards from the instincts of the ape and tiger. But no, modern Germany would have the world believe that there is only one final court of appeal, i.e. that of primeval brute force. In this war therefore there is a clash

of two systems of thought, two national ideals, if the German deserves the name of ideal.

To sum up, Modern Germany has deserted the ideals of Christianity, she is a pagan power and this has made the present war unavoidable and inevitable.

The facts I have just narrated should enable us to gauge in its true light and bearing our hallowed service for the country at the present time and should enable us to come to a clear understanding of the transcendent nature of the sacrifice and the struggle in which we are engaged. Thus the spirit of each of us will be fortified against the dangers of sin and of battle, and will be helped to bear all sacrifices with equanimity.

The conclusion therefore is that we are fighting not for material objects but for a spiritual ideal. When a quarrel is for money, or for a strip of territory, peace can be concluded without moral loss. To make peace when an ideal is at stake is to be false to the voice which tells us that man is born for other things than to enjoy the moral and material heritage of his fathers. No doubt we are fighting for ourselves, for our very existence as a nation, but we are fighting too for the freedom and happiness of all the peoples of the earth. This is why Britain cannot give up fighting, however great her losses, till victory is secured, for to do so would mean treason to all mankind. Nelson prayed before the battle of Trafalgar for a victory not only for the sake of England but for the benefit of all peoples. We may do the same now for our defeat would mean the triumph of German Kultur which is nought save the worship of the Sword and of the Golden Calf.

Our conscience therefore is clear and we can say with Shakespeare:-

“What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted,
Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;
And he but naked, though locked up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted”.

There has been much prayer and intercession since the war began in all parts of the British Empire, but I want to bring before you another side of this question. Let us always remember what the Saintly Canon Wilberforce said shortly before he passed to the Better Land. After regretting that his age prevented him from joining the British Army he said, “It is not we who have to entreat the aid of the Almighty in this great war. That we may take for granted. The fact is it is He who called us to service and to sacrifice to defend His purposes in the world and to defeat the works of the devil”. This view seems to me to consecrate in a wonderful way our enthusiasm for the holy cause of Britain.

We shall all agree that in times of peace it is no easy task for the majority of men to live a good life; but I think it may be truly said that every man who in this holy war loses his life will have lived well. Rhoades has caught the same thought, but takes the conventional view of the British soldier. When we speak of the British soldier now we must remember that we speak of the British Nation.

“O rank and file of England, hold privates of her line,
Whose battle deeds unnumbered in deathless glory shine:

Though oft your lives belie you – Rude hands and ruder lips
At least ye shine transfigured in Death’s apocalypse.
When by one deed that washes each should as white as snow
From less than man grown Godlike, to God at last ye go”.

People, often silly people, talk about the solemn hour of trial through which we are all passing. Solemn and troublous it is; but I would rather speak of the glorious privilege to which each of us is called of being soldiers in the armies of this world, most intimately allied in thought and action with those celestial hosts which Milton pictured as waging war in Heaven, for those eternal principles which, as far as our finite intelligence can judge, are, alike in earth and heaven, sanctioned by Him who hath on His vesture and thigh a name written- King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I believe this war is a war betwixt Christ and the devil. We Britons are fighting for Faith, for Honour, for Righteousness and for Freedom, and the paradox is more true now than ever before “that he that loses his life shall save it”.

“On Fane’s eternal camping ground
Their silent tents are spread
And glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead!”

Their glory shall not be blotted out
Their bodies are buried in peace
But their names liveth evermore”

Of those who have given their lives to the great cause we may use the glorious words of St Paul “Opera sequentur illos”. (Their works do follow them).

“Behold all Souls are mine – saith the Lord. Mark there is no exception. Man makes exceptions but God makes none. Is not this a consolation instinct with universal promise and abiding happiness. The reference is to “the Multitude which no man can number”. Death then is but an incident in continuous and developing life.

“There is no death. Those noble lives on sea and field
So bravely given for King and Right, our Motherland to shield
Live now more truly than in lie; this is the truth revealed”.

“There is no death. Thank God for that. They are safe within His care
And with this thought to comfort us, we can all sorrow bear
Remembering they are ever near, and we shall join them there”.

With this quenchless assurance, with this inextinguishable conviction we may face life patiently. It will not be long before,

“The angel face will smile
That we have loved long since and lost awhile”.

Lockhart’s beautiful lines occur to me – would that they could be sung to us now to Parry’s music:-

There is an old belief that upon some solemn shore,
Beyond the sphere of grief, dear friends shall meet once more,
Beyond the sphere of Time and Sin and Fate control,
Serene in changeless prime of body and of soul,
That creed I fain would keep, - that hope I'll ne'er forego,
Eternal be the sleep, if not to waken so".

There are three reasons which chiefly influence the conduct of a man in this world:

1. Personal reasons. 2. A sense of social duty, and 3. The feeling of religious duty. For my part I hold that religious influence is the only all-powerful influence.

If evil is born in us, it is equally certain that we are the inheritors of a principle of goodness. False prophets have told us for centuries that men are nothing but fields or wolves, half beast, half devil. Believe that, says Ruskin, and indeed you may sink to that. But refuse that, and have faith that God made you upright, though you have sought out many intentions. (And in the proverbs we learn that it is "wisdom to find out knowledge of witty inventions"). So you will strive daily to become more what your Maker means you to be – and daily gives you the power to be – and you will cling more and more to the nobleness and virtue that is in you – saying "My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go".

The words spoken by Alukar to his son about 400 years before Christ seem to me to be ideal even at the present day he said:-

"Son, love the truth and hate lawlessness and false-hood, give ear unto the Commandments of God and fear not the Evil one. For the Commandment of God is a rampart of man".

When war suddenly came upon us, a wave of knowledge (subconscious perhaps) appeared to break upon, or vibrate through the minds of men of all races which inhabit the British Empire, that Britain had thrown down the gauntlet on behalf of humanity to the powers of evil.

All the great world religions are represented in the armies of Britain and none can doubt that the ideals which these religions represent inspire in the hearts of our splendid soldiers of all creeds the noblest heroism and self-sacrifice in battle.

But to us the faith of Christ is the great vitalising, sanctifying and purifying force in the world both for the individual and for the nation. We know too that the example of rule of the Christ in the hearts of men has produced and is producing the best, the noblest, the most virile and the most beautiful lives.

How comes it that we Christians have the assurance that victory will crown our present efforts? Have not the small armies of Britain won undying glory against great odds on many fields of earthly battle? What saith the Lord of Hosts?

"Not by night, nor by power but by my spirit" and this text tells us how in the present tremendous crisis our men and our armies will surely win against the prepared

material forces of insatiable ambition and of vain glorious wickedness, which is bringing sorrow and death to countless homes.

The Indian troops are fighting as our allies and comrades and are not in rebellion against us because for 150 years Christian English men in India, soldiers and civilians, have silently and selflessly lived cleanly, justly and nobly in the vast work of administration. The names of Havelock, Lawrence, Outram, Gordon, Nicholson are known to all, and there are many others. We reap the harvest of these noble lives. But each one of us may live a life equally useful and noble whatever out station and duty.

Lord Roberts may or may not have been a great soldier, that history will decide – but he was a great Christian, his example and character have inspired many thousands of thoughtless people with the desire to live the life of the Galilean. It is said that the Roman Emperor Julian surnamed the Apostate whose struggled so earnestly to revive the dying glories of heathenism, and in whose actions we may see some likeness to the ordered atrocities of the present war, as he lay mortally wounded on the Persian battlefield, exclaimed: “Thou hast conquered a Galilean”, and so I have one bit of advice to give you. Take Lord Roberts’ life as your example and then when the end comes you will be able to say, “Thou hast conquered O Galilean”.

To belong to the British Navy or Army today is to bear a part in the greatest struggle for Right and Truth that has ever been fought on this blood-stained earth. In this noble contest it is required of you to be pure in body as well as brave in spirit. If it is your lot never to return, you will leave an immortal work behind you in the liberation of mankind from a foul and grasping tyranny; you will have become one of the makers of a future rescued from the menace of vile ambitions and merciless cruelty. And if it is given to you to pass into the happier day and share the peace won by the true heart and unfaltering arm of your country, you will find such a satisfaction in the name of Englishman as no man living has ever known.”

“The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till dangers’ troubled night depart
And the star of peace return”.

There is one more point which I should like to discuss with you. The armies of Britain have driven the Turks from Jerusalem and from those other sacred places in Palestine in which our Saviour lived and taught. From every point of view – the historical, the moral and the military, - the fall of Jerusalem is an event to stir the emotions of the world. Jerusalem was not a Christian city when Christ in the flesh was there. Saladin drove out the Crusaders in 1187 and the Turks have been in occupation since 1517. In the years to come countless thousands of our countrymen will visit the Holy Land and will tread the hills and valleys whose names are familiar to us ever since we listened in childhood to stories from the Bible. The question arises, will these pilgrimages, however delightful and entrancing they may be to those who are able to enjoy them, be of advantage to the spread of Christianity in the world? I very much doubt it.

Primitive Christianity, as our records show, lived wholly in the future with the Christ who was to come; and preserved of the historic Jesus, of the world life of Jesus in

Palestine, only detached sayings, a few miracles and accounts of his death and resurrection. For other materials of the life we have only yawning gaps.

It is a mistake to suppose that Jesus could come to mean more to our time by entering into it in greater detail as a man like ourselves. It might indeed not be a help but an offence to religion. Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any further discovery or experience. It is the solid foundation of Christianity. This spiritual force remains mighty in the world, it seems to me, whether the Turks or Christians occupy Jerusalem. Jerusalem in Palestine is not Jerusalem the Golden. Christ came to found a universal dominion in the hearts of men, not a kingdom limited to a small patch of the earth's surface in Palestine. We like the primitive church should live in the future not the past, with the Christ who is to come. Only by so doing does it seem to me possible to understand the paradoxical saying of St Paul "If we have known Christ after the flesh yet henceforth know we Him no more". The truth is, it is not Jesus as historically or geographically known, but Jesus as spiritually arisen within men, who is significant for our time and can help it. Not the historical or geographical Jesus but the spirit which goes forth from Him, and in the spirits of men strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world.

Johannes Schaeffer wrote in 1677 (a German before a Hohenzollern had spoiled German life),

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born
If he be not born in thee thy soul is still forlorn”.

Or in other words a man without Christ is like a picture frame with the Rembrandt missing!

Jesus was not a teacher, not a casuist; He was an imperial ruler. The names by which men expressed their recognition of Him as such, Messiah, Son of Man, Son of God, have become for us simply historical parables. We can find no designation (in words) which expresses what he is for us.

Jesus comes to us as one unknown without a name, as of old, by the lakeside, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same words: “Follow thou me” and sets us to the tasks that he has to fulfil in our time. (And that task at the present time is clear to all of us to see and to fulfil). He commands, and to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings, which they shall pass through in His Fellowship, and as an ineffable mystery they shall learn in their own experience who He is.

“Mine eyes have seen the coming of the glory of the Lord,
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword,
His truth is marching on!

“In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;

As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
His truth is marching on!”

The question which we are all asking is

“Watchman what of the night”

The pathway is dark and dreary: the burden is almost past bearing. Can we see the morning light? Can we see, beyond the war clouds and the reddened ways, the promise of the coming days

“When no more shall might
Though leagued with all the forces of the night
Ride over Right”.

Yes for though

“We saw Thee not when Thou didst come
To this poor world of sin and death,
Nor e’er beheld Thy cottage-home
In that despised Nazareth:
Yet we believe Thy footsteps trod
In streets and plains Thou Son of God”.

“And I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth wherein dwelleth Righteousness for the first Heaven and the first Earth are passed away
And the land and the sea gave up the dead that were in them
And there is no more death
And there is no night there, neither sorrow nor crying,
Neither shall there be any more pain”.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings saying Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth”.