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the righteous outcome of the repentance and the understanding—'Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.'

The work may be the very work that Uzziah was doing. At the beginning of the war, when one brother was taken another stepped into his place. We saw it again and again. At every stage of the war, when one mother lost her son she gave herself to the comforting of other mothers, and the healing of other mothers' sons. It was good for Isaiah that Uzziah was taken. For it is work that makes us. It is service for others that creates character. The work—God will see to that. But we must have our share of the work, otherwise it is not well with us.

He serves his country best
Who lives pure life and doeth righteous deed,
And walks straight paths, however others stray,
And leaves his sons as uttermost bequest
A stainless record which all men may read.
This is the better way.

No drop but serves the slowly lifting tide;
No dew but has an errand to some flower;
No smallest star but sheds some helpful ray:
And, man by man, each helping all the rest,
Makes the firm bulwark of the country's power.
There is no better way.

Providence and the War.

By the Rev. W. P. Paterson, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh.

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland recently appointed a Commission on the spiritual and moral issues of the war. The instructions given to the Commission were wide and far-reaching, and its labours are destined to issue in a national mission with a comprehensive religious and ethical programme. Among other directions the Assembly has advised that steps be taken to forward the understanding of the things which God has been speaking from heaven through the visitation of the war, and it has suggested that the Presbyteries of the Church should meet in conference and seek for more light upon this deep and solemn subject. The writer was present, as a representative of the Commission, at the first of these Presbyterial conferences; and the present paper represents the way in which, after interchange of thought with his brethren, the field of debate was mapped out in his mind, and it also makes the attempt to state and weigh the chief contributions which have been offered towards the solution of the great Providential problem.

The scene of the conference was well suited to a meditation on war and peace. The place of meeting was a sequestered village which nestles at the foot of a range of hills bordering the upper valley of the Forth, and which looks across a broad plain to the towering masses of the Grampians. The panorama that spread out before us reminded us how much of the story of Scotland has been the chronicle of wars. The distant Bens that guard the region of the Trossachs, and Stirling with its river that 'bridled the wild Highlanders,' recalled the ancient feud and the bloody reprisals of the Gael and the Sassenach. There were the landmarks also, in the Wallace Monument and the castled crag of Stirling, of the more famous conflict in which Lowlander and Highlander were comrades in arms, and threw off the yoke of the English kingdom. A mansion in the neighbourhood, in which Prince Charlie once dined and slept, brought back the year in which Scotland last knew the tumult and the agony of civil war. Of the present struggle there was a reminder in the aircraft which hovered like giant birds over the Carse, and exulting in their wings (as Homer says), rose and dipped in the air, and headed for their nests. But there, too, were evidences that war is an episode in the history of nations, and that their settled habit is peace. The broad strath which

lay at our feet, once a waste of swamp and bog, had long since been reclaimed by human industry and skill, and with its teeming cornfields and its tinted orchards it seemed beautiful, in the sunny glimpses of the summer morning, as a garden of the Lord. The atmosphere was like that of a Sabbath, falling in the midst of the reign of the Prince of Peace, as we wended our way, a goodly company of ministers, to the village church on the tree-clad slope and, after a lesson from a prophet and a prayer in the name and the spirit of Christ, took up the first part of our duty, and essayed to trace the hand of the Almighty in the dark dispensation of the world-war.

The discussion was naturally on much the same lines as the speeches in the Book of Job. As in Job, the text was a stupendous calamity, and the problem was to find a satisfying explanation. In the conference four distinct voices made themselves heard. One was an echo from the world, being repeated mainly for the Church's consideration, while the other three started from the axiom that God is the ruler of history, and sought to expound the chief end of the divine permission of the war.

I.

The first voice reported the purely secular explanation, which is satisfied with finding causes, and disclaims the assumption of a higher purpose. The only explanation which need be looked for, it protests, is that a great nation felt the need of more breathing-space and elbow-room, and that the impulse arising from its wants was intensified by its ambition. Germany has a population of 65,000,000, which has been increasing at the rate of 1,000,000 a year; it was driven by a natural necessity to seek new outlets and additional means of subsistence; a very intelligible sentiment made it wish to have colonies in which its sons would remain German in blood and speech; its exaggerated sense of its greatness led it to form extravagant dreams of dominating Europe, and building up a new world-Empire; its unparalleled military strength gave it confidence to embark on a career of conquest; and the present European chaos is the result of its collision with other nations which were no less vitally interested in opposing and frustrating its designs. The war, in short, was what was to be expected of human nature under the aforementioned conditions, at least if to need, cupidity, and opportunities we add the dangerous ingredients of a morbid vanity and a morbid suspiciousness and anxiety for the future; and to go in quest of a purpose, which even from the religious point of view has often been thought to be presumptuous, may well appear to the ordinary man to be foolish and fruitless.

The kind of explanation which is offered by the secular voice is, of course, essential to the understanding of historical events, but it is not exclusive of the supplementary explanation of a higher providential purpose. In the ordinary affairs of life men perform many actions which are dictated by private motives, and directed to narrow personal advantages; and their doings are nevertheless embraced in, and are made contributory to, larger schemes, which may lie outside of their intentions and even of their knowledge. In a great city, for example, we see multitudes of persons going about their daily business, and scarcely conscious of working for anything save their own interests, or those of their dependents; while yet the outcome of the haphazard self-seeking is that they are fitted fairly well into the social mechanism, and that they help to make, not indeed an ideal, but at least a surprisingly effective, provision for meeting the numerous and complex wants of the community. Perhaps an even more impressive illustration is the way in which a presiding power, working through passions and instincts which are themselves blind, takes order for the perpetuation of the human race, and for the suitable education of the units of the successive generations. When a building is erected we do not suppose that the whole process is explained by giving a list of the workmen who have had a hand in the labour, and showing what reward each expected for his work. The still more important agents are the person or persons who desired that a building of a particular kind should be erected, and the architect who was entrusted with the design. And similarly it is very conceivable, and indeed most credible, that the temple of humanity, though reared by human hands, originated in the mind of a master-builder, has progressed under his direction, and will one day be finished in accordance with his plan.

But here the secular voice protests: 'The analogy of the building is more damaging than helpful. There may be some evidence of a mind at work on a large scale, but those who erect houses do not arrange to have the work inter-

rupted. It does not enter into their designs to contrive that dissension will break out among the workmen, or that these will deface and even destroy the edifice which they are employed to erect.' This is obviously true; but the analogy helps us to understand how God might at least foresee and permit the evil without thereby ceasing to be the master-mind of history. The human builder may foresee that there will be trouble among the workmen, and may nevertheless resolve to proceed with the work in the assurance that the difficulties will be overcome, and that the plans will in the long run be executed to his satisfaction; and similarly it is entirely credible that God should have begun and should carry on His work notwithstanding His foreknowledge of the occasional episodes of rebellion and outrage. Furthermore, it is now generally agreed that an employer is better served by a body of free workmen, even if their liberty may assert itself disastrously, than by a gang of slaves; and it is similarly believable that God will eventually win a nobler result from a world of free human beings, even if they occasionally perpetrate the most insensate acts, than He would have secured from a world of beings who rendered Him mechanical obedience and service. In the light of the analogy of the builder we can therefore see reasons why God should have permitted and accepted the conditions of human life from which the present catastrophe has sprung; and further, since God's interest in mankind is much more intimate and many-sided than that of an employer of labour, we may reasonably suppose that He has some other purpose which is served in the permission of such a visitation. What are we to say of this further purpose?

II.

At this point a second voice strikes into the debate. It is the voice of Amos of Tekoah, of John the Baptist, of the Scottish Covenanter. Its fundamental certainty is that the tragedy of the war, while rooted on the earthly side in human wickedness, is in a real sense the act of God; and it feels no greater dubiety as to the meaning and purpose of the appalling visitation. The war, with the sufferings which it involves, is the judgment of God upon the sins of the nations of Europe: by reason of their love of the world, their carnal excesses, their covetousness, their pride, and their ungodliness, they have provoked the wrath of the Almighty, so that He has returned to trample them in His fury, to drench the earth with their blood, and to fill their homes with woe and lamentation. For our own country, the voice proceeds, the providential dispensation has the same intention. We have provoked God by our heinous national sins, the guilt of which is aggravated by the unique favours and privileges enjoyed by our people; and out of the darkness and the whirlwind there comes to us the call to repent of our sins, if haply it be not too late, and to implore of the avenging Judge that in the midst of wrath He would remember mercy.

This voice is entitled to a most respectful hearing —and not merely because it is in this way that our spiritual ancestors would have construed the situation, and appealed for support to the Old Testament. Their explanation at least founds upon a fact which is not open to question—namely, that the war, regarded in its broadest aspect, is the consequence and the penalty of human wickedness and folly. It is because Europe, while Christian in name, has remained essentially pagan in its public policy—its nations instinctively following the natural lusts, and only playing with the principle of human brotherhood, that the Continent which was the chosen home of civilization has been transformed into a chaos and an Inferno. We are also manifestly being punished for the failings of the rulers of the earth. It will seem incredible to a later age that there was not enough wisdom in the diplomacy of Europe to come to some arrangement which would have averted the cataclysm. It does not appear that the general situation was ever thoroughly discussed by those who were responsible for controlling it. Our own leaders have their full share of responsibility. If they had told our people to prepare, or rather compelled them to prepare to use the full might of Britain, in self-defence and on the side of righteousness in the event of aggression, there would probably have been no war; and their only plea is—and this can be said of both political parties—either that they were too ignorant and blind to see what was coming, or that they had not the courage to propound a policy of national armament which would be likely to prove unpopular at a General Election. But can we take the further step, as the prophetic voices urge, of declaring the war to be the punishment of our national sins — as drunkenness,

impurity, profanity, religious indifference, and such like? What is true is that sins are always being punished, and that because of our many and flagrant national sins, the life of our people has been considerably weakened and tainted, and its hands have been less strong than they otherwise would have been for grappling with the heavy business of war. But there was as much reason for saying that God was afflicting us for our sins in 1913, as there is for saying that He is afflicting us in 1916, and there is no reason for regarding the calamities of the war as a more direct and special measure of retribution. We are being punished for our sins, inasmuch as we are always being punished for them, but we are not to think of ourselves as the victims of a heaped-up and retarded vengeance. The general mind refuses to accept the theory of a special penal judgment, and it has a justification. When our nation entered the war, we hold with a good conscience, it followed a call of duty, and put aside a temptation to which it would have been easy to yield—the temptation to avoid the appalling risks, spare the lives of our fellow-countrymen, and gather riches out of the agony of the Continent. It therefore seems more just, as well as more charitable, to say that our calamities are on the whole sufferings which have come upon us because we were found in the way of righteousness, rather than that they come from the vials of wrath which God has poured out upon the heads of our people because of their multiplied and impenitent wickedness.

III.

Here, accordingly, the third voice takes up the parable. It is the same voice which, by the mouth of Elihu, declared to the patriarch Job that the purpose of his sufferings was, not to expose and punish a wicked man, but to make a good man a better man. It also has support in the teaching of those Old Testament prophets who declared that while God in His anger chastised the nation for its sins, He selected those forms of chastisement which were likely to make of Israel a holy and righteous nation. And the message of the third voice is that the essential providential purpose of the war is that it may be a means of blessing to our people, by the purification and ennoblement of its character and life.

Who does not feel to-day, it proceeds, that our people as a whole has risen in the scale of moral dignity? In our national history there has been much that seems merely calculating if not sordid: to the end of time this chapter of our history will shine with a lustre of a heroic age which shrank from no sacrifice, and which showed less of self-interest than of duty and chivalry. A moral regeneration is traceable among all classes: it has been realized, as never before, that the self-centred life is as unworthy as it is unproductive of happiness. Commonplace souls have risen to heights of grandeur in action and suffering. Sympathy has been born or re-born in many a callous or hardened heart. Many who had been living without God, and without any vision of the things that lie beyond the senses, have awakened to the reality of the unseen and eternal world, and have groped their way back from the far country to the eternal home of the soul.

To many the message of this comforter does not seem wholly convincing. He has shut his eyes, they say, to one-half of the facts. 'Was it a blessing that millions of men were torn from their peaceful and beneficent occupations, and hurled back into the conditions of savagery—with anger, suspicion, and hatred as governing impulses, and the maiming and slaying of men as their trade? Is it common sense to say that the nation is substantially improved by an event which is sweeping away tens if not hundreds of thousands of men who were the flower of their generation and the hope of the future? And is there not an incalculable moral loss? In a world in which everything has been turned upside down, how easy must it seem to many to dispense with the guiding principles even of elementary morality. How many souls have been blasted and destroyed by despair. How many have sought forgetfulness or relief in the consolations of the flesh. How many have been tempted to curse God and die.' The rejoinder is weighty, and it is a seasonable corrective of the optimistic sentimentalism which asks to have it all its own way. Though the third voice is right in affirming that our people as a whole has been lifted by the war to a higher plane, the tale of loss is so heavy that we feel something more to be wanting by way of compensation for the tremendous sacrifices, moral as well as material, which have accompanied the partial regeneration. And this brings us to the cognate, but really supplementary, message of the last interpreter.

IV.

The meaning of the visitation, says the fourth voice, is that it comes as the dawning day of new opportunities. The purpose is, not merely that we may become better, but that better things may be done. It may even be that many are sacrificed in soul as well as in body, to the end that a brighter day may be ushered in. Future historians will probably date a new epoch from the world-war of the twentieth century. It doubtless marks the beginning of the end of the chronic curse of war, for it has been demonstrated that war has become not merely too horrible, but also too expensive, to be a permanent institution of our earth. If the present struggle is to be the operation that is to remove the deadly disease which has afflicted the race from its infancy, it does not seem, from the point of view of general history, that the fee was too heavy for the cure. It is also to be expected that after the war a stronger faith will be cherished in the possibility of coping with other malignant evils. We have learned what a great people can do when it devotes itself with one heart and mind to the organization of victory; and it will seem a matter of course that the same energy, earnestness, and method should be applied to the perennial warfare with ignorance and destitution, vice and crime, and that the spirit of brotherhood, so signally exemplified in arms, should be equally realized in the arts and the avocations of peace. The Church for its part, we hope, will see things in new proportion and perspective, and will forget many ancient controversies in the light of the tasks of the present and the future. To many an individual it has come and will come with the haunting message of Robertson of Brighton: 'There is a past that is beyond recall, but there is a future that is still our own.'

Such are the messages of the interpreters of the visitation. I am of opinion that those who see in it a providential judgment upon the nations mistake an incidental feature for the primary purpose, and that those who expound it as a remedial discipline, and still more those who are conscious of the openings of fresh doors of opportunity, have a deeper insight into the purpose of the Ruler of History. Sure at least I am that they are right who hold that God rules, that He brings good out of evil, and that triumphantly, if also slowly and tortuously, He is guiding His world to higher levels. The building in which we met for prayer and meditation bade us cherish this faith. The place on which it stood looked as if it might have been a primitive camp before it became the site of a house of God. Such a transformation has often taken place in Scotland, and one recalled a sonnet which, founding on the like observation, draws from it a lesson of trust in the God who has been the tutor and guide of our struggling race:

When nature with her tools of ice and flood,
Sculptured the peaks and spread the meadow-ground,
She chiselled in the dale a rugged mound
And sprinkled it with earth, and sowed a wood;
Then wild men camped there since the place was good
For thrusting back a foe with gaping wound,
And at the last God's house arose, to sound
The praise of Christ, and love's redeeming blood.

O mighty Power, who by Thy patient art,
While æons ran their course, didst shape our land,
And rear man from the brute, and teach his heart
The glory of the climb and upward view,
I do not pray, I know, that Thy strong hand
Will build Thy Kingdom, and make all things new.

The Chinese Hastings' 'Dictionary of the Bible.'

By the Rev. D. MacGillivray, D.D., Editorial Secretary of the Christian Literature Society for China.

When Dr. Hastings' Five-volume Dictionary of the Bible began to appear in the year 1900, it was at once perceived that it marked a great advance on its predecessors, and many a missionary longed to see such parts of the work as were suitable for the use of the Chinese turned into their own language and placed at their disposal. Of course the books contained much that would be wholly indigestible to the Chinese, even apart from many of the new theories which naturally would be ill-adapted to our theological atmosphere. A few trial articles were translated and appeared